



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 153 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, December 2, 2014**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1000)

[*English*]

### PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour, pursuant to section 38 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, to lay upon the table the case report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner concerning an investigation into allegations of wrongdoing.

[*Translation*]

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(b) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 24 petitions.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to Bill C-44, an act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other acts.

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

## PETITIONS

### FALUN GONG

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first petition relates to the horrific human rights conditions experienced by Falun Gong practitioners in the People's Republic of China. The petition is signed by people throughout the metro Toronto area, who are horrified by reports of organ harvesting.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of British Columbia from various places, within Saanich—Gulf Islands as well as metro Vancouver.

The petitioners call upon the government to legislate a permanent ban against supertanker traffic along the British Columbia coastline. The petitioners do not want dilbit in tankers on the B.C. coast.

### SEX SELECTION

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions here from my riding.

The petitioners call upon members of Parliament to condemn discrimination against girls occurring through sex-selective pregnancy terminations.

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present to the House today. The first is about suspending the deportation of an individual residing in Laval.

### GROS-CACOUNA OIL TERMINAL

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present is about the Gros-Cacouna oil terminal and was signed by a number of people from the north shore, Laval and Montreal. They are asking the federal government to reverse its decision and reject the Gros-Cacouna oil terminal proposal.

### MIDWIVES

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition is about my bill, Bill C-608. Many people have signed this petition to make May 5 the national day of the midwife.

*Government Orders*

[English]

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on the cuts to postal services by Canada Post. This is one of several petitions that I have presented on behalf of particularly rural communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

The petitioners are saying that the government should in fact tell Canada Post to maintain full postal service, particularly in rural communities, because of the impact it will have not only on the people who avail themselves of the services but on the economy in the area.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have been working on affordable housing strategies for years, and so it gives me great pleasure to present 200 petitions from across Canada.

The petitioners want to see us work on a national housing strategy where we can end homelessness, increase housing affordability, and provide tax benefits to rental investors for upgrading and creating new housing across Canada.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS****ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[English]

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are 68 motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-43.

Motions Nos. 1 to 68 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 68 to the House.

●(1020)

[English]

## MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting the long title.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting the short title.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 102.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 103.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 104.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 105.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 106.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 107.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 108.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 109.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 110.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 111.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 112.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 113.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 114.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 115.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 116.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 117.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 118.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 119.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 120.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 121.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 122.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 123.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 124.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 125.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 126.

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 127.

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 128.

Motion No. 30

*Government Orders*

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 129.  
Motion No. 31

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 130.  
Motion No. 32

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 131.  
Motion No. 33

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 132.  
Motion No. 34

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 133.  
Motion No. 35

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 134.  
Motion No. 36

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 135.  
Motion No. 37

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 136.  
Motion No. 38

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 137.  
Motion No. 39

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 138.  
Motion No. 40

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 139.  
Motion No. 41

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 140.  
Motion No. 42

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 141.  
Motion No. 43

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 142.  
Motion No. 44

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 143.  
Motion No. 45

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 144.  
Motion No. 46

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 145.  
Motion No. 47

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 172.  
Motion No. 48

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 173.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP)** moved:

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 187.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 225.

Motion No. 51

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 226.

Motion No. 52

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 228.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP)** moved:

Motion No. 53

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 229.

Motion No. 54

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 230.

Motion No. 55

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 231.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 56

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 253.

Motion No. 57

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 254.

Motion No. 58

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 255.

Motion No. 59

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 256.

Motion No. 60

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 257.

Motion No. 61

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 258.

Motion No. 62

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 259.

Motion No. 63

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 260.

Motion No. 64

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 313.

Motion No. 65

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 378.

Motion No. 66

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 379.

Motion No. 67

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 380.

Motion No. 68

That Bill C-43 be amended by deleting Clause 381.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleagues for their speeches on the amendments. Since this latest omnibus bill is over 460 pages long, we hoped to improve even a small part of this very complex and problematic bill.

Since getting their majority in the House, the Conservatives have introduced close to 2,200 pages of omnibus budgets, but they have agreed to just one single amendment proposed by the opposition. That is incredible.

This omnibus bill alone will amend a huge number of Canadian laws. The incredible thing is that this omnibus bill will fix a problem created by the last omnibus bill, which fixed a problem created by the omnibus bill before that. That is the kind of government the Conservatives are now running. It is bad for our economy and our country.

[*English*]

In this 460-page omnibus bill, there are many corrections to the previous massive omnibus bill, which fixed previous omnibus bills, because the Conservatives got it wrong and accepted no amendments. The Conservatives think this is a good way to manage the Canadian economy and to govern Canada.

*Government Orders*

This is a process that has failed Canadians. We see it creating conflict and uncertainty. We see it creating bad economic conditions that I will go into in a minute. It is a problem because it is using the power that a majority government has completely irresponsibly. There are a myriad of quotes from Conservatives who are now in cabinet who used to decry the Liberals when they used this exact same technique, ramming together all sorts of different laws that had nothing whatsoever to do with the budget into one package, one Trojan Horse bill. That is also true in this case.

The Conservatives called it anti-democratic and unfair. For once, they were right. However, if it was right in opposition, then it must be even more right when forming government, because the power that a majority government has to affect our country and our laws is a power that must be used responsibly, as opposed to the abuse of power that we see again with this bill, Bill C-43.

To put this into context, which is important with any budget implementation act, under the Conservatives' watch more than 400,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in this country. Consumer debt is at an historic high for Canadians. Canadians owe more money now than they ever have in our history. We have seen a persistently high youth unemployment rate in this country, usually double that of the unemployment rate broadly.

We have also seen consistency of long-term unemployment, which refers to Canadians who have been out of work for 27 weeks or more. It is at the same level as its worst level during the recession. There were Canadians who were finding it harder and harder to get back to work during the worst times of the last global recession, and the same is true now. Twenty per cent of the jobless in Canada are made up of the long-term unemployed. I will leave talking about the unemployed until later. It is something that Conservatives are often chagrined to hear.

In this bill, their feature item is oil. In the midst of global uncertainty and with oil prices falling below \$70 a barrel, dropping almost 40% this year alone, we see no plan B from the government. Plan A is oil, plan B is oil, and plan C is oil. When oil drops below \$70, federal and provincial government revenues go off, but any hope for job creation also goes off because that is the only plan the Conservatives seem to know and have.

It was in previous omnibus bills that the Conservatives tried to put truth to the idea of what the Prime Minister said back in 2006, which was that Canada would become an energy superpower. They would bulldoze their way through the countryside, laying pipeline down everywhere and exporting all that oil to market. They made changes in Canadian law through these omnibus bills to attempt to achieve that goal.

• (1025)

What have we seen but uncertainty and conflict? When pushed against the wall and forced to accept something without debate or input or any decent consultation, Canadians resist. They say they want fairness. They want their government to play an equal role in the economy and not favour one side over another.

Canadians want to see the \$1.3 billion subsidy to the oil sands, a direct subsidy to some of the richest companies on the planet, come to an end. They want to see an alternative. They want to see some

options. They want to see plan B. They want to know we can have a green economy. Despite a complete lack of effort from the federal government and another failed opportunity in this budget implementation act, we see the clean tech sector growing by leaps and bounds. It is up 37% in just a few years, and \$25 billion has gone into the green energy sector in the last five years. That is greater than what has gone into the oil sands in northern Alberta.

Do members ever hear the Conservatives talk about that? Do members ever hear them talk about the great success of the green energy movement in Canada, the clean technology industry's high-paying and high-quality jobs? No. They blow all their capital on one industry alone. It is always wise to have a little diversity in an ecosystem and also in an economy. With Conservatives, we have seen all the eggs put into one basket, with no plan B.

As China's economy weakens, as Europe remains fragile and some European countries enter a recession, as some American indicators are showing weakness even as America rebounds, the Governor of the Bank of Canada said we may have a 0% or near flat recovery in the jobs sector, and in the midst of all that uncertainty and in the face of all that difficulty, the Conservatives bring forward an omnibus bill. In 460 pages, their one economic initiative to help Canadians get back to work is an EI jobs scheme that does not work. It is a \$550 million raid on the employment insurance fund, which even Conservatives admit does not belong to the government. More than half a billion dollars is ripped out of the EI fund in this omnibus bill.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer, who has done the only credible analysis of this scheme, says it will create an astounding 800 jobs. He said each job created by this EI raid will cost upwards of \$550,000.

I have had a number of constituents write me. They want to know where they can apply for these \$500-million-per-year jobs. They wonder why the government is promoting such a program.

We know that far too high a number of Canadians who fall out of work cannot even access employment insurance. That is the worst kind of insurance there is. It is something one pays into but can never draw from. The reason they cannot access it is that the Conservatives, and the Liberals before them, kept rigging and changing the rules so that fewer people, particularly women and low-income Canadians, could actually access employment insurance. It is a scam, a scheme, and that is why it is put forward in this bill rather than as a stand-alone piece of legislation that members could actually debate here in this House.

*Government Orders*

When we asked the government for its analysis of its scheme, its \$550 million EI raid, we heard that the government had done no analysis at all. We asked the finance officials and the minister himself, who came before the committee. We said he was about to rip off the EI fund for \$550 million to create these jobs, but had he done an analysis? He said they had not. They had outsourced it to a lobby group, the CFIB.

However, even the CFIB has said time and again that this employment scheme will not necessarily create the jobs the government hopes for. We see this as a failure of process and a failure of integrity.

Just today in the stock market, the TSX is quoted as saying:

The Toronto stock market deepened its decline on Monday as concerns about the Chinese economy, and discouraging signs from early U.S. holiday sales....the mining and metals sector fell, while energy stocks tumbled.

In the face of all this, we would expect the government, with the powers of a majority government, to take the opportunity here in the House of Commons to do something about our weakened economy, to do something to help the green energy sector, to do something to help Canadians get back to work. We wonder when Conservatives are actually going to do something, drop the ideology, pay attention, and face reality in our economy.

We need to help Canadians get back to work. We need to restore those well-paying manufacturing jobs. We need to do more than what is in this bill.

• (1030)

We have attempted, through our amendments, to make something good out of something bad. My concern, my suspicion, my reality is that Conservatives will do what they have always done, which is ignore the evidence in front of them. They will take an ideological stance and say that they know best. However, the numbers tell the truth. They do not.

Conservatives are failing Canadians and they are failing the Canadian economy.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague across the way for his comments. I want to thank him for leaving out a number of things in part four.

First I will note the extractive sector, which is an important initiative of the government with respect to the reporting of mining companies abroad.

The member also forgot the latest reports on the growth of the economy by 2.8% last month. He forgot about that. I wish he would have put that in, and also the employment growth.

The member made a comment with respect to the refund of the EI premium. I think he used the words “ripping off the EI fund”. If he recalls our comments from committee, there are two major contributors to the EI fund. One is the employees and the other is the employers, who contributes about 60%. This is \$550 million that is going back, especially to small businesses.

In New Brunswick, many of our small businesses have fewer than 10 employees. We are putting \$550 million back in the hands of small businesses, which in my view would not only help them but would help them maintain some of the employment they have today.

The member cannot say that it is a rip-off. In fact, it is a refund of premiums back to a major contributor called the employer.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I heard a question in the member's comments.

There is actually a significant change in the argument we have heard from the Conservatives. If members remember, initially the finance minister said that this was going to create 25,000 jobs, or person years. They changed the metrics a little bit.

The initiative to take \$550 million out of the employment insurance fund, money that does not belong to the government, was to create jobs. That was the headline. That was the news. That is what the minister was saying. However, when we asked for any analysis, when we asked them to defend this argument, they had nothing. What they had were a couple of quotes from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Dan Kelly, who is the head of that organization, said:

On a firm-by-firm basis, I think that's quite right. You are not going to pay for a full job through an EI hiring credit.

It is not a huge amount of money. This is not a scheme that will create the jobs the government claims. In a time of economic weakness, in a time of global uncertainty, to take \$550 million out of the EI fund and not create any jobs out of it seems like a failed opportunity. To not allow people who paid into the fund, because it is not just the employers, it is the employees, to actually access employment insurance, especially if they have lost their jobs, as 400,000 of them just in the manufacturing sector have, seems cruel. It seems bad for the economy.

If the Conservatives are now saying that maybe it will maintain a few jobs, that is a completely different argument than the one the finance minister used. They will have to get their arguments straight. The Conservatives certainly do not have any evidence to back up that this is what they claimed initially.

This will not do what it says, and that is a failure of any intelligence from the government.

• (1035)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, where I agree with the NDP finance critic is in regard to the Conservatives' employment insurance plan.

What we have put forward is a plan that would see EI premium exemptions for every worker hired to fill a new job in 2015-16. This is a program that would ultimately see tens of thousands of Canadians in all regions of the country gain employment.

*Government Orders*

My understanding is that during the last federal election, Jack Layton was actually supportive of this type of plan. Does the NDP no longer support what Jack Layton talked about in the last federal election, or would the member join us in supporting this proposal the Liberals have put forward?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the challenge for the Liberals is that first, they have actually changed that particular proposal three times in the two weeks since they first introduced it.

Second, the Liberals have it completely wrong. We had a small-business hiring tax credit that came out of general revenues that worked. It did not raid the EI fund. It worked so well that the government picked it up, and small businesses loved it, including the CFIB, because it was a tax credit linked to the creation of a job, not the hope and promise of a job.

We have seen massive amounts of tax cuts going to the largest and most profitable corporate sectors, which have not gone back into the economy. We have one of the lowest research and development reinvestment rates in the world. We have seen upwards of \$600 billion that the Conservatives call “dead money”, money that was given back to them in tax cuts that they did not reinvest back into the economy.

If they are going to give businesses a break to create jobs, then why not tie the string and say that when the businesses create the jobs, that is when they will get the tax credit? That is what Jack Layton promoted and what we continue to promote, not these schemes that would only fail workers and hurt those who pay into the EI fund.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, since I was not able to get to the floor when my hon. colleague, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, was speaking, I want to thank him for his remarks.

I am pleased to hear the official opposition turning a light on the question of the economics of this country and what is generally considered an unquestioned benefit of developing the oil sands.

There are, of course, benefits economically to developing the oil sands, but there are huge economic risks in putting all our eggs in the bitumen basket. I appreciated my friend, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, asking, “What is plan B?” It does not seem to me that the current administration has a plan B.

Although it is not the subject or the pith and substance of the bill before us, I want to underline that it is important that we not just examine what is wrong with putting all our eggs in the bitumen basket from the point of view of the threat to British Columbia's wilderness of these ill-advised, risky pipeline schemes and the risk to our coastline of putting bitumen mixed with toxic fossil fuel condensates, called diluents, and calling it “dilbit” and shipping it to refineries overseas.

This whole project is a decision that Canada is better off when we take a resource from northern Alberta and do not process it in Canada but put it in pipelines to ship to other places, without any consideration of the climate impact and without any consideration of the environmental threats. The failure to even examine whether the economics line up is astounding, and I am pleased to hear another member raise that issue in this place.

However, I want to address the bill itself.

As we know, it is an omnibus budget bill. It is, again, over 400 pages long. It is the kind of abuse of Parliament that really constitutes a daily contempt of democratic process in this place.

Here is a bill that covers everything from aerodrome regulation to getting rid of the Canadian Polar Commission and replacing it with the Cambridge Bay research station, which is now called the CHARS.

There are sections of the bill that deal with patent legislation. We are told by experts in patents that they are not properly thought through and will cause real problems.

There are changes in social assistance that appear to be targeting the most vulnerable in our society. I want speak more to this issue and the way this piece of legislation would affect refugees.

There are changes in the way the Chief Public Health Officer is allowed to run the department.

These are very profound changes.

Before getting into the details of the individual changes, I want to make the point again that making changes in myriad, unrelated sections, most of them non-budgetary, is an offence to parliamentary process. I have raised this point in points of order, Mr. Speaker, and take your explanation that it is up to the House itself to set some parameters around omnibus budget bills.

However, it must be said again that up until the current Privy Council and Prime Minister, we have never had omnibus budget bills topping each other each year. There is a spring budget bill and a fall budget bill, so we have had about 900 pages of legislation in 2012, 2013, and 2014 in these omnibus forms. The contempt is compounded, because none of these have been adequately studied. Most of them go through the finance committee, which finds itself trying to deal with questions about high Arctic polar research and how aerodromes should be run. One piece of the legislation should properly be before the transport committee. Another piece of the legislation should properly be before the environment committee, but no, they are all bundled up and stuffed down the throat of the finance committee.

On top of having them in omnibus form, we also have time allocation, so there is not the time to bring in the witnesses who could explain all the provisions and how the bill would affect myriad areas of public policy. That is offensive.



*Government Orders*

On top of that, we had in this place independent motions from 20 different committees, which were, amazingly, what a coincidence, identical motions last fall. They were for the purpose of limiting the rights of members of Parliament from smaller parties, such as me in my own role as leader of the Green Party or colleagues who sit as independents or the newly formed Forces et Démocratie or the Bloc Québécois. Our opportunities to debate and to present substantive amendments at report stage have been eliminated by, I have to say, the Machiavellian expedience of 20 different motions in 20 different legislative committees that created the bogus “opportunity”, which I put in quotes, for members such as me to present amendments at each of those committees.

● (1040)

Some of these committees meet at the same time. I will not go into the details of how coercive, difficult, and unfair this measure has been. Never in the history of Canada has a majority party gone to such lengths to shut down individual members of Parliament.

I would like to turn to the aspects of this bill that are the most egregious.

I am very concerned about the change in the management of the Chief Public Health Officer. The bill changes his role from being the person responsible for his department to being subservient to a president of the organization, and no longer a deputy minister. The Public Health Agency is a relatively new institution in the history of this Parliament, but is an important office. When we face public health threats we need to know that our Chief Public Health Officer will not risk being told, “We would rather you not talk about that now. We want to keep that under wraps for a while.” That is a dangerous road to go down and it is being accomplished in this omnibus budget bill.

I am also concerned about the changes that have been made to the provisions that deal with the ways in which the federal government transfers money to provinces and the requirements around those transfers, changes that were almost under the radar screen before people noticed them because they were not trumpeted. In the past, social assistance transfers did not have residency requirements and there were provisions to make sure that the most needy would always be able to get social assistance. The changes that are being made in clauses 172 and 173 of Bill C-43 would make it much harder for refugees to gain that desperate assistance, despite refugees being the most vulnerable people in our society who get here with just the clothes on their backs. This does not accomplish it in one fell swoop, but is the first step in allowing a province to decide that a refugee claimant would not be able to get social assistance. It opens the door to the provinces to make those kinds of changes.

There are also changes to the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. These changes do not affect questions of justice, fairness, and equity in our society but would make the whole area of patent law much less certain and much more confusing. Amendments were recommended by experts in patent law, but as with all opposition amendments, they were ignored and voted down at committee.

The piece of legislation that creates the Canadian high Arctic research station at the same time also eliminates what was previously the Canadian polar research station and the Canadian polar research commission. It is not at all clear how the two would merge. This bill

repeals the polar research station. Of course, it must be noted that the current Canadian high Arctic research station facility, which is in the front window as the current administration's commitment to science and is being built in Cambridge Bay in the Minister of the Environment's riding, is designed not to do any research on climate or ozone. It is specifically focused on research for resource development in the Arctic. It certainly is to be commended for highlighting the important and essential role of indigenous and traditional knowledge going forward. However, it is hardly appropriate in this day and age to focus so much research money in the Arctic and ignore climate, ozone, and the toxins that concentrate in the body fat of the wildlife that people of the north rely on for country food.

● (1045)

[*Translation*]

Let me sum up. These omnibus budget bills year after year are unbelievable. There was an omnibus bill in the spring and another in the fall. Each one made significant changes to a number of other Canadian laws without allowing enough opportunities for speeches or enough time to study or debate these major changes.

[*English*]

It is an offence to this place that we continually have omnibus budget bills forced down our throats and done so quickly with time allocation.

Once more, as a member of Parliament, I protest against these offensive measures, which strike at the heart of the role of parliamentarians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her excellent speech. She and I share the same concerns about the process that is being imposed by the government.

By taking rights away from MPs who sit in the House as independents, the government is forcing them to participate in a charade. It is a complete sham when they propose amendments. However, those members deserve to have their amendments considered because they, too, represent the public and the people who elected them. We tried to give them a stronger voice and more power. Unfortunately, our voices fell on the deaf ears of this government.

What is more, when the process was proposed in committee, the Liberals sided with the government and voted to force independent MPs to submit to this process, which gives them only one minute to present their ideas. There is no other avenue for debating their proposed amendments.

I would like to ask the member a very specific question, which was discussed at the Standing Committee on Finance in the context of Bill C-43. There is an element in this bill that strikes me as being completely out of place in a budget. It enables the provinces to withdraw or include a mandatory residency period for refugee claimants applying for welfare.

*Government Orders*

My colleague brought this up at the Standing Committee on Finance, and I would like to give her a bit more time to comment on it.

Would she like to say more about whether this is a legitimate measure to have included in a budget bill?

• (1050)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques. We are on the same wavelength. He was right to call this process in the Parliament of Canada a sham.

We have not had the opportunity to really study this. We should be taking a serious look at the changes being made by these kinds of bills because they will impact many aspects of society. It is very serious.

I would like to thank my colleague.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question with respect to the bill's amending the position of Chief Public Health Officer.

At committee, the Chief Public Health Officer himself came in and said that the amendment in this bill would codify the way that the public health office has been operating since 2012. We really appreciated his comments, because he does such a great job for Canadians as the Chief Public Health Officer. He also expressed no reservations in that meeting with respect to his ability to report to the public and to provide scientific evidence. In fact, he still very much has the responsibility to report to Parliament each year.

I wonder if the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands can comment on why she is concerned. Does she not believe the Chief Public Health Officer and his assessment of the changes in this bill?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I am not the least bit reassured by the fact that the newly appointed Chief Public Health Officer thinks that things will be fine. He is an expert in public health and he is a fine medical doctor, but I do not think that he fully appreciates the distinctions and the importance of independence. The fact is that the chief public health officer for the Province of British Columbia, speaking on behalf of all public health officers at the provincial level across Canada, protests this change and believes that it is a big mistake.

I would refer to a letter from Dr. Trevor Hancock, a professor and senior scholar at the School of Public Health and Social Policy at the University of Victoria, whom I know well. Dr. Hancock has warned that this is violating "...the importance of a medical officer of health being an independent officer was established in the 19th century and is as true today as it was then, given the adverse health effects of poverty and of our industrial economy...."

Clearly, the role should be independent. It is important for the public health officer to have the status of deputy minister so that with the other deputy ministers within the Government of Canada, information is shared quickly and directly, and that relationships are built between the Chief Public Health Officer and the other deputies.

This is an enormous mistake. I fear that the current public health officer will come to agree with me.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I wish to speak to Bill C-43 and about families.

The week after the events of October 22, my wife Judy and my daughter Megan and our then 10-month-old grandson came to Ottawa to be with Dad. Like many of us, I underestimated the effect that day had on our friends and our loved ones. Touring this building together, watching my grandson sit where you are sitting, Mr. Speaker, brought home how important our families really are.

Our new family friendly tax measures would make it easier for all kids to get involved in the many exciting opportunities that exist in their communities. For that, as community representatives, we should all be proud. This is the reason that economic action plan 2014 has my backing. It is a tremendous support for Canadian families. This bill would put more money back into the pockets of Canadian families, and work on improving the fairness and integrity of our tax system by closing loopholes and strengthening tax enforcement to ensure that all Canadians, not just a select few, have lower and fairer taxes. Under this plan, every family with children would have money put back into their pockets so they can spend their money on their priorities.

These latest tax cuts and benefits would see an average Canadian family save close to \$1,140 in 2015. All in all, these savings represent close to \$27 billion returned to the pockets of Canadian families over the next five years. These latest tax cuts and benefits include the introduction of a family tax cut, an increase and expansion of the universal childcare benefit, an increase in the childcare expense deduction limits, and a doubling of the children's fitness tax credit, as well as making it refundable.

The new family tax cut is a federal tax credit that would allow a higher-income spouse to transfer up to \$50,000 of taxable income to a spouse in a lower tax bracket. This credit would provide tax—

I remember when my kids were young and we took them to everything. People would say that I must put in thousands of miles just driving my own and neighbouring kids to sports and community events. At the time, it never really dawned on me. After all, there was the excitement of watching my son Devin score the first touchdown for our new football team on the same field where my youngest brother had scored the last touchdown 20 years earlier before that team had folded; or the excitement of watching our daughter, after being fouled at the buzzer during the very first game for the Elnora junior high basketball team, then sink both foul shots to first tie and then win the game. I have seen NBA players who cannot do that. The coaching, watching my kids and their teammates competing at regional and provincial levels in all types of sports, performing in plays and pageants, and even working on the farm together are memories of a family that worked, played, and laughed together. What about all those miles? I have always said I would much sooner drive my kids around than drive around looking for my kids.

*Government Orders*

• (1055)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting my friend.

I was listening to his speech and the measures he was talking about, and I was looking for some reference point back to the bill that we are debating. The measures that he is—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, my friends can argue if they would like, but the measures he is referring to are not in this bill and are not relevant to this bill. This is the budget implementation act. The member is discussing measures that have not yet been introduced and are certainly not introduced through this legislation. It is just a question of relevance.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am at a disadvantage of not knowing that bill well enough to know whether in fact the contents of this speech are relevant. I would like some comment from the member for Red Deer.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, to the point of order, certainly the discussion on tax reform refers to what is in the bill. If that speaks to the relevance of it, I would be happy to continue.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate it is a 468 page bill. I do not know if you have gone through every page yet. I am not sure my friend has, or others in the House, but it is an incredibly complicated bill.

He is speaking very specifically about a number of measures that are not contained in the bill. It is one thing to say that he is speaking about taxes. It may change in the rest of the discourse. He may have a speech that is about the measures contained in the bill. We welcome that debate. We are here to debate the amendments that we brought forward and also the bill itself, if that is the broad interpretation of what this debate is about.

I know he is getting some sage advice, but to get into other measures that are completely not contained in the legislation stretches the bounds of relevance. Again, I understand the disadvantage he has of whether it is in Bill C-43. It is one of those moments where I say “Trust me on this one.” The measures he has discussed so far are not at all contained in the bill. They are not referenced. There is no enabling amendments or pieces of legislation. It is just not contained in the bill.

If he wants to speak to Bill C-43 or the amendments we have moved, then of course we are interested in the debate. He now is getting papers from the lobby, which I am sure will help move this discourse along.

• (1100)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for taking the floor. I have read the bill carefully and I have to agree with my friend from Skeena—Bulkley Valley. However, it is in the tradition of this place to both force down omnibus budget bill measures and to debate things that are not in them. On Bill C-38, we often heard from ministers of the crown about sections of the bill that did not in fact exist.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, it is called the children's fitness tax credit and it is in the bill.

The hon. member had spoken of perhaps discussing some of the salient points that they had in their motions, such as amending by deleting the long title, amending by deleting the short title and amending by getting rid of this clause. Further deep thought involved with the motions were delete, delete and delete.

From that position, they go to the Green Party with more deep thought to delete, delete and delete. This is the type of thing we are seeing. Therefore, if they want to speak to their motions, we could go that route.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am going to end the point of order. The member for Red Deer has made the point that at least the income tax credit is in the bill. That at least ties it well enough to relevancy that I think the point of order is not well taken.

I will allow the member for Red Deer to continue, again cautioning him that all members of the Speaker's office have made it clear over the past few weeks that we will look more closely at relevancy. Therefore, I would ask him to, as much as possible, keep his comments relevant to Bill C-43.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a separate point of order. In the course of defending the hon. member for Red Deer, in the course of rebutting the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley's point of order, he made a gratuitous comment that the Green Party amendments were all deletions.

I would draw to his attention that in my speech I complained of the fact that the Conservative Party members had deprived me of the right I have under the rules of this place to bring forward substantive amendments. I would much rather be able to do what is my right, to bring forward substantive amendments at report stage, but the actions of his majority party have made that impossible.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. It is a matter of debate.

The hon. member for Red Deer has four minutes left in his speech.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, I was talking about families. Perhaps it is an opportunity, if people have listened, to talk about how difficult it is sometimes to bring up issues that are important to families. I am somewhat perplexed by some of the things that have been mentioned by the opposition.

I know that Jack Mintz, one of Canada's leading economists and the current director of the Palmer Chair in Public Policy at the University of Calgary, talked about this tax package. He said, “The Conservative family tax package addresses a current inequity in the tax system, helping all Canadian families with kids.” This is the way we have to look at the different types of opportunities that exist in this bill and the way in which we can enhance them for families.

*Government Orders*

Again, I know opposition members do not really want to talk about income splitting as being associated with that. I know there is a lot of discussion in which there is mention of it. However, when we look at people with taxable incomes, let us say, of \$60,000 for one person and \$20,000 for the other person, they would have to pay \$1,200 more in federal income tax than a couple that had two children with each spouse reporting a taxable income of \$40,000. It is the same \$80,000, but we need to take a look at that if it is split. These are great opportunities.

• (1105)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I am really sorry for coming back to the issue, but that is exactly the point my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley was trying to make.

That measure is not in Bill C-43. Various tax measures have been announced by the Minister of Finance, but they have no place in this debate because they are not included in Bill C-43.

I would ask the member to stick to the contents of the bill currently before the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, when I gave a speech a few weeks ago about Bill C-43, the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour went on a rant for several minutes about the Arctic offshore patrol ships, none of which is even mentioned in Bill C-43. I commented that it was a very broad bill, an omnibus bill, as opposition members call it, yet they found things to talk about that were not even in the bill.

Of course, the Speaker at the time said that there was considerable latitude and the member would get to his point eventually. I wish the opposition would extend that same courtesy and understand that there are things connected to the budget.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Income splitting is not in Bill C-43, and we all recognize that. On the other hand, I will give the member for Red Deer the opportunity to continue. I think he is making a point that, indirectly at least, is relevant to Bill C-43 and to tax policy more generally. I will allow him to continue.

The hon. member for Red Deer.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, I know that making the children's fitness tax credit refundable and these types of things that we have done certainly will help families. The critical part is to ensure we do all we can to help families so they can be part of the community and enhance it. Encouragement is required for such a thing.

Again, we have made changes, which include an increase in the adoption expense tax credit to help with the high cost associated with adopting children. There is also the medical expense tax credit to help with the cost associated with things such as service animals, specialized therapy and plans to help individuals cope with the effects of a disorder or disability. These are the types of things our government is doing. However, we hear the opposition bring in these

obscure arguments and suggest that we are trying, in some way, to stifle debate.

This is good news. We are talking about a lot of great things. To have these opportunities for children and for families, and to show the great care we have for them, is something of which we should all be proud.

To speak to budget implementation acts, we have continuously cut taxes. Since 2006, we have cut taxes over 179 times in every way that government collects them, whether it is through personal tax, consumption tax, business tax, excise tax and much more. We know what the reduction of the GST, from 7% to 6% to 5%, has done. That in itself has put another \$1,000 back into the average Canadian family. We cut personal income tax to 15% and have steadily lowered the general business tax rate from 21% to 15%, as well as the small business tax rate from 12% to 11%. This allows the economy to stay strong.

All we have to do is look at Canada from the perspective of other places in the world. They look at us and wonder how we could get it so right when the rest of them have been struggling. The reason is the whole concept of having a reduction in taxes. The reason for that is because it puts the money into the hands of individuals, and they know how to spend their money much better than governments do.

Also, we have the tax-free savings account, which has become the most important personal savings tool since RRSPs, and we know how significant they are.

We can continue to speak about the ways in which, over the years, and in this budget implementation act as well, we have been able to reduce taxes and put more money into the hands of individuals.

As can be seen, this government has clearly taken steps to make life more affordable for Canadian families, again, by creating family tax cuts along with the previous tax cuts and credits. Canadian families will be able to spend their hard-earned money on the things they believe are in the best interest of their families.

I would ask all members in the House join me in supporting Canadian families by ensuring the passage of this bill.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. More than half of what he said had to do with extremely technical measures that are not included in this bill.

I would therefore like to hear his comments on some of the things that are in Bill C-43. Although it is a budget bill, many elements are not budget-related. For example, I would like to hear his comments on one provision that was not requested by the provinces. None of the provinces asked for it or even said they agree with this measure, which basically allows the provinces to establish a mandatory residency period for refugee claimants. I am not talking about refugees whose application has been refused, but rather people who are applying for refugee status. This measure would take away their welfare benefits before they even have a chance to work or find any other means of supporting themselves.

*Government Orders*

I would like to know why this measure was included in the bill and what the member thinks about it, especially considering that this would have no fiscal, budgetary or economic impact for the government.

[*English*]

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, respecting the provinces and their jurisdiction is something this government has continually done. I am extremely proud of the fact that we do these types of things and we ensure that it is in consultation with the different stakeholders, which is an important aspect of it.

There are opportunities that we sometimes have with the budget implementation act technical briefings. I want to bring that up from the point of view that it is very seldom opposition members take the information they gain when they attend these technical briefings and present it to the House, because it does not really fit into their rhetoric which they would sooner have in question period or in the media.

It is important we recognize the experts in this regard and consider what they have to say in this area.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member indicated, and I suspect it comes right from the Prime Minister's office, that the Conservatives have got it right in terms of taxation policy.

Then he went on to talk about the income-splitting policy that the government recently announced. This is a policy that would assist less than 15% of the Canadian population, at a substantial cost of \$2 billion. It is going to be the middle class of Canada that is going to have to foot the bill for that income-splitting policy, something the former minister of finance in the Conservative Party was very critical of.

Can the member tell the House why the government is penalizing the middle class of Canadian society, forcing them to pay for that \$2 billion income-splitting promise by the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's points; however, it just shows how the Liberal Party does not understand how good government should work.

The hon. Jim Flaherty challenged his colleagues, and each of us took it upon ourselves to make sure that we had budget consultations and that we actually talked to people. The Liberals had opportunities to be involved in these discussions over the years.

These are the kinds of things we would do. I look at the discussions that happened. The Prime Minister and the former minister of finance wanted our input. Our input has given something that is so strong for middle-class Canadians. When they look at that and recognize the situation that exists there, I think they will find that they are extremely proud of the work we have done. Stronger families means stronger communities. With stronger communities, everyone is going to benefit.

The members' comments are similar to the flawed notion that maybe those who do not have kids should not pay education taxes. These are the kinds of strange things that come from the opposition at times.

Let us think about what I am saying. I remember the situation that occurred when the Liberals cut transfer payments, many years ago. I was the chairman of a hospital board. I recognized the damage that had taken place.

The Liberals are trying to make suggestions as we are putting more money into transfers and everything else. They should recognize that their record is not very strong.

● (1115)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was told that technical briefings are something on which we should present information to the House. I am pleased to do that because I was at those briefings, and quite frankly, some things I heard shocked me.

Most important, with respect to the changes in this bill around the ports, not a single port authority across the country was consulted. Not a single municipality across the country was consulted about the changes that are contemplated in this bill. In fact, there was no public consultation. It was simply a change that was foisted upon the House as part of an omnibus bill. It is a practice that has been described as too frequent, too complicated, and unnecessary in the promotion of democracy by Professor Peter Russell of the University of Toronto, who is an expert in parliamentary procedure.

The reality here is quite something. Ports are now being given the power to expand their letters patent arbitrarily and unilaterally by simply acquiring property. When they do that, those lands are then exempt from local zoning conditions. No municipality was consulted and no cost-benefit analysis was done around what this does to local tax bases or the costs of operating the ports.

Further to all of that, we now see in the city of Toronto that the port authority is seeking to regulate zoning permissions right across the city. It can unilaterally down-zone property, acquire it and then rezone it. That is a scam. There was no consultation and not a single conversation.

It does not get much better when one starts to look at changes to aerodromes, which are under division 2 of part 4 of this bill. Instead of having a public process where there are public boards and public conversations about the behaviour of aerodromes and airports in this country, now all the decision making would be concentrated inside the minister's office, not even in the House of Commons.

Again, were municipalities or airport authorities consulted? What we heard in the technical briefings is that they were not. It was simply something dreamed up on the other side of the House. This is the public process that omnibus bills give us: a concentration of power in the hands of a few, often unelected, and a complete departure from debate in the House, let alone public scrutiny and consultations. The government members may talk a good game about public consultation, but the only people they really talk to are each other.

On aerodromes, significant concerns are being raised by pilots right across the country. This is from the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association, who oppose this bill but were never consulted about it, the very people who use the airports:

### *Government Orders*

We are concerned about the manner in which the Act amendment was developed, without consultation, how far the power of the Minister would extend and the one-sided nature of imposing consultation requirements and prohibitions on aerodromes when no such Aeronautics Act consultation requirements or prohibitions exist....

The government is making up legislation, but what is worse is that this bill was introduced as simply housekeeping, a few enabling pieces of legislation to get a budget bill through. This was never in any other legislation. It was never proposed, presented, nor debated in any part of this country. It simply showed up in a committee one afternoon and got into a press release, and then we are supposed to swallow it whole as part of an omnibus bill. That is unacceptable behaviour, and it is wrong.

There is another serious issue that changes to aerodromes deal with, which is the impact on local communities. Many defunct aerodromes are now being used as landfill sites, effectively. When construction happens in one part of the country, the land gets hauled to another part of Canada and dumped, without rules or regulations, because that is allowed. There is no public consultation, rule, or regulation about that.

As a result, the power now resides with the minister, not the House of Commons. Decisions are being made in this House today as we debate this that will have far-reaching impacts in every corner of this country. We cannot and will not support that. Those are the kinds of arbitrary rules that bring all the actions of this House into question.

Turning to public health, not only does the government want no consultation with the public on other items, but on public health it is trying to bury scientific evidence, which is a really disturbing pattern of behaviour. A government appointee, who needs to have no scientific or medical expertise but who is simply a political functionary, is being dropped in on a public health department. The medical advice we need to deal with things like SARS—and God help us if ebola ever arrived here—and the power of the chief medical officer of health to act unilaterally within a federal department when an emergency prescribes is being lost to someone without any medical expertise.

• (1120)

If we take a look at the history of what chief medical officers of health have done in this country, we will find that public works departments—not just of cities and provinces, but also of the country—are a direct result of medical advice and scientific evidence being presented to decision makers. From that, public policy flows.

What are we doing? We are burying that expertise in a bill that purports to be a budget bill but is quite clearly another attack on science and evidence by the Conservative government. It is unacceptable.

The other issue we are dealing with is the employment insurance changes that are forecast in this bill. They are changes that have been denounced by virtually every significant economist in the country. When we went to the technical briefing and asked staff from that department where this idea came from, they had no idea. In the evidence that they produced as part of this debate, when they were asked directly what studies they had done to verify the claims being made by the government, they said not a single study was requested

or done. In other words, the numbers come from a source outside of the government.

Where did these numbers come from? When we went to committee, what we found out is that the numbers came from the very lobbyists that asked for the cut. They are not verified. There was no due diligence. We are spending \$550 million on a whim, on a promise from vested interests, on some conversation that happened in the back rooms of some ministerial office.

When the party across the way asks for us to go to committee and listen, which we do, and asks us to attend technical briefings and focus in on the evidence that is presented, the evidence is that there is no evidence, yet the policy emerges out of the back rooms as if it is somehow well thought through.

When the Parliamentary Budget Office does report on these topics, what do we get? We get a complete contradiction of the numbers that are presented by the ministers. It is not 500 or 1,000 jobs; it is 800 jobs. It is 800 jobs at a cost of \$550 million. On the same legislation, which would freeze premiums, the Parliamentary Budget Office's evidence, which was presented in committee, is very clear. This act would cost the economy 10,000 jobs. That means there would be a net loss. We would be cutting taxes, but we would be cutting employment at the same time and leaving Canadians in a very bad spot.

The information that has perhaps not reached the Conservative benches is very simple. When 10,000 people lose jobs, tax cuts do not help. When 10,000 people lose their jobs, families are negatively affected. The Conservatives can hand out all of the tax cuts they want for kids in sports programs, but if parents are not working, kids are not playing. It is that simple.

That is the evidence that is presented as part of this discourse, yet that evidence never seems to reach the backbenches on the other side, and it certainly does not reach the talking points of the ministers involved.

The final and most horrific part of this bill is the private member's bill, which is not a budget bill. It is political discourse. It is rhetoric that has slipped its way into this omnibus bill. The Conservatives were not confident enough to present it as government policy. They put it in place and then they slipped it into an omnibus bill, hoping that no one would notice, but of course, we all noticed. The reason we noticed is that this notion of denying social assistance to refugees is morally bankrupt. It is wrong.

*Government Orders*

When we went to the technical briefing and asked the staff of the department if they had consulted with anybody, the answer was no. Did anybody comment? It comes back that one province spoke up. That one province, the province I reside in and Parliament resides in, the Government of Ontario, said not to do this. What was the government's response? It did it.

For all of those reasons, this bill cannot be supported. It must not be supported. If the Conservatives were serious about what they heard in committee, they would withdraw it.

• (1125)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague. I wonder if he might want to provide some additional comment with regard to the manner in which this legislation has taken into account numerous other pieces of legislation.

Instead of introducing stand-alone legislation, which no doubt would have had more debate in the House, the government has used the budget bill to pass an abnormally high number of other things that could have been brought in separately, under separate pieces of legislation.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, the examples in recent days have been numerous. However, when the government acts unilaterally on a single piece of legislation, it gets ripped apart. The veterans bill is not even a week old but has already been withdrawn, rewritten, and turned on its head, and the minister is running all over the world trying to avoid any questions about it. Because of the political failings of the government opposite, I can understand why it would want to have an omnibus bill. It is easier to hide bad legislation.

The reality here is that as we start to pick apart even the high water marks of this folly of a piece of legislation we can see that there is no reasoning, no rationale, no factual support, no research, and no documentation supporting any of the claims being made publicly by the ministers or the government backbenchers. What we end up with is opposition member after opposition member standing up and picking apart clause by clause, division by division, explaining why division 14, division 20, and division 19 do not work. Therefore, the Canadian public is left wondering why the government would present such a horrible omnibus bill. The reason is that it is all so bad that people cannot pick out which part is the worst.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a quote into the record from Dr. Greg Taylor, the Chief Public Health Officer. He said this at our finance committee meeting with respect to the changes to public health:

The changes proposed do not diminish the role of the chief public health officer, they enhance it. In essence, they associate internal management and capacity issues with a dedicated agency head and direction on public health issues with the CPHO. It makes good management sense and good public health sense to make these changes.

It's a structure that works well for many provinces and territories, and for countries, including the United Kingdom and Australia. In fact, we've been moving this way as an agency for some time now and have, in fact, adopted this type of management structure since 2012.

The member is saying that the government is not listening. Does he not listen to Dr. Taylor, the Chief Public Health Officer?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, if we look at all of the organizations that have been cited there, in particular Australia, we

will see that the person brought in as chief medical officer of health is also a doctor and a scientist and manages multiple departments within that agency. That does not interrupt the ability for scientific and evidence-based decisions to come forward.

The trouble we have here is that the government shows a clear pattern of not appointing someone with expertise or capacity, but simply people with political skills to do the work that scientists and people with evidence should be doing. The problem we have with the way in which the government is processing this is that we know that it does not like science, expert opinion, and evidence. What it wants is simply to bureaucratize the information it is receiving and politicize it so that it does not have to listen to it.

In this case, there may be a way of rationalizing it as a replication of other jurisdictions, but what we have is the deliberate practice of a government that refuses to engage with science, refuses to look at data, and dismisses evidence. It is saying, "Don't give us the facts, give us the anecdotal evidence." That is how it proceeds case by case. We can see it with the harm reduction strategies around InSite and the common sense firearms licensing act. Every time you run into evidence, you change the bureaucracy and politicize it. That is why the opposition has absolutely no confidence in your ability to restructure this department.

• (1130)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am shocked.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina should be directing his comments to the Chair. I assume he was not directing those comments to the Chair. In any event, in the future could he direct his comments to the Chair, please.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I am pleased to inform Canadians about how our Conservative government is successfully implementing the initiatives in our economic action plan to promote jobs and growth and support families and communities. Our initiatives, which are part of Canada's economic action plan, greatly benefit families in rural regions, such as my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

*Government Orders*

One of the important requirements of municipalities that is being met by our federal Conservative government is the provision of long-term predictable funding for infrastructure. I am very proud of our government, as it has delivered a new Building Canada plan to help finance the construction, rehabilitation, and enhancement of infrastructure across my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. As the people in my riding know, they have been abandoned by the Liberal Party of Ontario. Unlike the Province of Ontario, which discriminates against rural Ontario by withholding provincial gas tax revenues, our federal government returns gas tax revenues to the municipalities to do the needed infrastructure upgrades and take the pressure off the property tax base, which, along with the high electricity energy prices, is forcing people on fixed incomes, like seniors, out of their homes.

Through the now-permanent and indexed federal gas tax fund, last year communities in my riding made needed infrastructure repairs. Communities like the Township of McNab/Braeside received almost \$221,000 for road reconstruction. Madawaska Valley received approximately \$134,000 to reconstruct Tamarack Road; and the Township of Laurentian Valley received almost \$600,000 in federal gas taxes to resurface or reconstruct five roads in 2013: Ema Street, Spruce Street West, Whispering Pines Crescent, Vaudry Drive, and B-Line Road. North Algona Wilberforce received over \$98,000 to begin work on Marsh Road, to resurface Snodrifters Road, and to construct a dry storage shed for salt.

The Township of Admaston/Bromley received \$83,000 to resurface South McNaughton Road. The City of Pembroke received almost \$860,000 to reconstruct the Pembroke Street Bridge, as part of an ongoing federal contribution since 2011 to fix various streets and replace water and sewer lines, amounting to over \$1.7 million. The County of Renfrew received \$2.5 million for road resurfacing and rehabilitation. The Town of Renfrew received \$250,000 in federal gas tax dollars to rehabilitate Queen Street. In 2013, Petawawa received almost \$0.5 million for Herman Street, with a cumulative federal gas tax fund total for that project amounting to almost \$1 million.

The Township of Whitewater Region received \$378,000 to resurface Pleasant Valley Road and Rapid Road and Bromley Line Road to the end. The Town of Arnprior received \$360,000 for roadwork; and the Township of Bonnechere Valley received over \$93,000 to reconstruct and put a new surface on Crimson Maple Road.

The Town of Deep River received \$96,000 for work at the W.B. Lewis Public Library parking lot and sidewalk. The Township of Killaloe-Hagarty-Richards received over \$24,000 for sidewalks, and \$150,000 for roads and culverts. Horton Township received \$40,000 for roads. The United Townships of Head, Clara, and Maria received \$23,000 for HVAC improvements.

Greater Madawaska received over \$84,000 to pay down debt on a waste management project started in 2005, for a cumulative total of over \$400,000, and other federal funding of \$225,000 for a total project cost of \$1.2 million. The Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan received over \$180,000 to resurface a 2-kilometre section of the Jewellville Road and a 3.5-kilometre section of the Addington Road. The Township of South Algonquin received

\$226,000 to do Hay Lake Road repairs, and to repair Maple Drive, Galeairy Lake, and Algonquin Street.

●(1135)

In total, in 2013, \$6.9 million flowed to my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, generating over \$20 million in municipal construction activity.

I remind municipalities, particularly municipalities in Ontario, that the backroom advisers in Toronto who devised the policy to discriminate against rural municipalities and only pay out the provincial gas tax revenues to urban communities have surrounded the inexperienced leader of the Liberal Party here in Ottawa. They want federal gas tax dollars to pay for failed social experiments, like the industrial wind turbines that no community wants, and have cancelled the gas plants.

They refer to the industrial wind turbine white elephants as a green initiative to save the environment. In fact, the Liberal Party in Ontario is being sued for \$653 million for manipulating the so-called Green Energy Act by using “political favouritism, cronyism and local preference”, according to the court filing. Compare and contrast that with the long-term predictable funding associated with the way our federal Conservative government manages federal gas tax funds to municipalities.

Just ask the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, what he thinks of federal municipal partnerships. He said we are open, honest, and transparent.

Moreover, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has acknowledged that our tax relief has successfully targeted low and middle-income families. He said, “Cumulative tax changes since 2005”, which is when our government took office, “have been progressive overall and most greatly impact low-middle income earners (households earning between \$12,200 and \$23,300), effectively resulting in a 4.0 per cent increase in after-tax income.”

The federal tax burden is at its lowest rate in 50 years. We have removed more than one million low-income Canadians from the tax rolls entirely. The average family of four will save nearly \$3,400 this year, and a small business with revenues of around \$0.5 million now saves over \$28,000 in taxes, thanks to our low-tax plan.



*Government Orders*

It is clear that Canada has become an international success story, but Canada is not immune from economic challenges beyond our borders. Those challenges include foreign dirty money funnelled to special interest groups to implement policies that would kill jobs in our forestry and energy sectors. Our government is clear that as long as Canadians are looking for jobs, we will not pursue policies, particularly ones based on junk science, that will put ordinary working Canadians out of their homes and out of work.

With that, I will now turn to the measures in today's legislation that would build on our success and ensure that we would continue to keep Canada on track for job creation and balanced budgets. First, Bill C-43 reaffirms the government's commitment to making our tax system simpler and fairer. It closes tax loopholes and strengthens tax enforcement to ensure that taxes are low for all taxpayers, not only a select few. Allow me to highlight some of the measures we have taken to improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system.

I would like to close my initial comments by saying that for the first time, according to *The New York Times*, middle-income Canadians are better off than Americans. That is something Canadians can be very proud of. I urge my parliamentary colleagues to support their country by voting in favour of all the good measures contained in Bill C-43.

•(1140)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her remarks and particularly for the itemization of the subsidies given to municipalities.

I also took particular note of the fact that the Pembroke Street Bridge will be repaired as a result of federal funding. I have a simple question: will there be a toll on that bridge?

The Champlain Bridge in Quebec is obviously crumbling, not because of gravity but because of negligence, and there will be a toll on the new bridge. I hope that the people who use the Pembroke Street Bridge will not have to deal with these same challenges.

The member mentioned that the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario thinks that the gasoline subsidies program, the return of the gas tax, is extraordinary. However, the member forgot to mention that the president said that the funding is insufficient. There is not enough money to renew municipal infrastructure. The funding that is being granted is not even enough to cover the cost of repairing existing infrastructure.

Will the member tell us where, in this budget, we can find a solution to the problem of municipal infrastructure? Everyone is saying that the budget does not provide a solution to this problem.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, in addition to our gas tax refund, we have the Building Canada plan.

Canada's economic action plan is working. It has had one of the strongest job creation records in the G7 since the height of the recession. Nearly 1.2 million net new jobs have been created in our country since July 2009.

Globally recognized authorities from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to the International

Monetary Fund have ranked Canada as one of the best countries in the world in which to do business.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member opposite's long list of accomplishments the gas tax has brought her riding.

I am very proud to be a member of the party that introduced the gas tax. I remember, as a young reporter, covering that announcement by the then finance minister Paul Martin in Hamilton. I remember then following that announcement up to the Hill to cover the passage of the budget.

I recall distinctly that a party voted against it. She was a member of that party. I am curious as to why she voted against the gas tax when it has done so much good for the community she represents, and how she squares that with the comments she just has made.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, when the third party was in government and was implementing a gas tax rebate, it made the criteria so difficult and so far fetched in terms of so-called green action plans that smaller communities were unable to benefit from the program.

We have implemented long-term, committed, stable funding and municipalities can actually do the planning to do the necessary work so a crisis does not arise when it comes to infrastructure.

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like ask my hon. friend a question.

Let me first put this in context. Let us remember back to when the NDP was in power in Ontario. The only thing that increased back then was the unemployment rate. Ontario entered a dark age in economic performance, from which it is still reeling.

As far as the Liberal Party goes, we saw that the just society was a dismal failure. Now it is trying to enter the Justin society. It is a party that plundered the employment insurance fund of \$54 billion, which the Supreme Court ruled was illegal and that this money belonged to the employers and the employees. Now the Liberals are advocating for increased taxes.

I hope my hon. friend can answer these simple questions. How has our government been staying on track? Our government has a plan that is recognized around the world as a plan that gets results in achieving a balanced budget in 2015. Our lower taxes have helped create employment in our country, leading to 1.2 million net new jobs being created since the end of the recession? Could my hon. friend comment on how lower taxes help create jobs in our country?

•(1145)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, by keeping our promise to Canadians to return to a balanced budget, our government is focusing on moving forward with its initiatives so hard-working people can also benefit from our sound fiscal policies. After all, budgets do not just balance themselves.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-43. I have heard some members talking about the content of this bill, unlike the last two Conservative members who rose, namely, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and the member for Red Deer. They spoke about everything but Bill C-43 in their remarks.

This bill is 460 pages long and contains 401 clauses. Part 4 alone, which deals with measures other than budgetary measures, has 31 divisions. I therefore cannot believe that these members were unable to choose some part of the bill to debate in the House. I find that unfortunate. In my opinion, it clearly shows that very few Conservative members read the bill and understand its scope, magnitude and impact.

I would like to draw attention to something that the member for Red Deer said when members rose on points of order. He said that we should listen to what is happening and attend the technical briefing. I was at the briefing, and I know that the member for Trinity—Spadina and the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley were also in attendance. A number of opposition members were there and yet I saw only one Conservative member.

The questions we ask and the concerns we raise often come directly from things we learned about during the technical briefing, including the issue of allowing the provinces to impose a residency requirement on refugee claimants before they can receive social assistance. We asked the officials questions about this during the technical briefing. We learned that none of the provinces asked for this. In fact, the provinces are perplexed and wonder why the government is going in this direction, especially after being rebuked by the Federal Court on the issue of health care for refugee claimants.

When there is so much stuffed into one budget implementation bill, why are members talking about everything but the budget bill?

As I did at second reading, I get a kick out of asking the different MPs questions about specific aspects of this bill. It is obvious from their answers that they have not read the bill. For example, when I ask them to talk to me about the consequences of changing the electoral process in the Northwest Territories, they have no idea what I am referring to. This is included in the bill, but the members look at me like I am speaking a foreign language.

This bill raises a number of concerns. My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley raised a very troubling issue having to do with the small business tax credit. In fact, the businesses are being given more of a premium holiday than a tax credit. Businesses that pay less than \$15,000 in employment insurance benefits will receive a partial premium holiday with no strings attached. It is clear, as many have mentioned already, that this measure will lead to a tax loss of \$550 million for the government. The government is giving up more than half a billion dollars without any guarantee that a significant number of jobs will be created.

This measure will cost more than half a billion dollars and will come directly out of the employment insurance fund. It seems to me that at the very least, the Department of Finance should do an impact

assessment of such a measure. However, every official, the minister and everyone who could tell us about this said that no such study was done.

What kind of governance do we get with this government, which implements measures without even doing an impact assessment? That runs counter to common sense and also to the principles of good governance. No private company that does business with a vendor would accept an assessment that considers only what is to the vendor's advantage or what is in the vendor's own interest. However, the government voluntarily had another party do the economic and job creation analysis for a major item in this budget without doing its own analysis. The government relinquished its responsibility for promoting sound fiscal and economic policies.

• (1150)

I am still waiting for a clear and sensible explanation. How will this measure, which will cost \$550 million, or about \$700,000 per job, really create jobs when the Parliamentary Budget Officer has clearly said that it would create at most only 800 new jobs over a two-year period?

This is not just about giving money back to small businesses. We must not forget that this money comes from the employment insurance fund. If the fund posts a surplus in coming years, it will be because of higher contributions imposed on employers and employees, and also because of the restricted access to employment insurance. Since 2006, under this government, the number of contributors eligible for employment insurance benefits decreased from 43% to less than 37%.

Therefore, this money that we are giving back to small businesses comes from the pockets of employees who paid employment insurance premiums, but cannot themselves obtain benefits because of more restricted access to the employment insurance program. This restriction affects our regions in eastern Quebec and the region of the member for Tobique—Mactaquac, among others. New Brunswick depends to a great extent on seasonal work, as does my region of the Lower St. Lawrence and my riding of Rimouski—Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

The range of measures in Bill C-43 make no sense. I have asked a few questions about this. I proposed that we let the provinces impose a residency requirement. This is not a matter of respecting the provinces' rights. The provinces receive a transfer from the federal government specifically to finance social assistance. Basic minimum standards were established; these standards, on which the federal and provincial governments agreed, state that a residency requirement cannot be imposed on someone who is applying for social assistance. The system is universal, which means that if someone paid taxes in Saskatchewan and moves to Ontario, they cannot be denied social assistance because they paid taxes in one province and moved to another.

*Government Orders*

Refugee claimants are among the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable. While their claim is being processed, they have no other opportunities to earn an income to support themselves and their family. They cannot work. If their social assistance is eliminated, what will they do while they are waiting for their refugee claim to be processed? They will have to go to soup kitchens and sleep in shelters. That is not an ideal situation.

With respect to health care for refugee claimants, for which the government was rather harshly admonished by the court, this is, once again, a measure that is solely designed to discourage refugee claimants who are living in precarious situations and whose lives are often in danger in their home country, and who no longer see Canada as a haven.

I could point to plenty of other measures. I talked about Part 4, which includes 31 extremely complex measures, most having nothing to do with the budget process. It is clear to me that this government is drifting farther and farther from good governance principles. It is forcing opposition members to oppose budgets, which we will do at report stage and at third reading.

This government has no idea how to govern democratically or even how to use the opposition properly to improve its bills. We found at least five or six measures that exist solely to correct errors that we frequently pointed out during studies of previous budget bills. The opposition's role is not just to oppose. It is also supposed to point out shortcomings in the government's bills.

• (1155)

This government, however, has no respect for the process or parliamentary traditions. Bill C-43 makes it clear that the government has no respect for the budget process.

For all of these reasons, we will proudly oppose Bill C-43 at report stage as well as at third reading.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, his comments, which I really appreciate, and his work as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance.

[*English*]

I would like to pick up on one of the comments that he made with respect to the refund and EI. As I mentioned before, 60% of the monies paid into the EI fund are paid by employers, and the refund is going directly to them.

I know that we had a comment in our committee when we talked about the CFIB. We seem to always to use the CFIB when it is convenient for us, and the other party uses it when it is convenient for them. The CFIB has clearly stated that it sees this as creating 25,000 person-years of employment. I hope that I did not hear the member say that he is discounting the CFIB's analysis on this refund.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say the same to the member for Tobique—Mactaquac. I really like working with him on the Standing Committee on Finance. I have a lot of respect for the work that he does and the efforts that he makes.

Before the Standing Committee on Finance, I made it clear that I have a lot of respect for the Canadian Federation of Independent

Business and the work that it does. However, this federation works on behalf of its own members. Its main role is to lobby various government MPs and departments to obtain benefits and conditions for its members. That is its main role.

The study submitted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business contradicts the study conducted by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Given that these two different studies came up with completely opposite findings, the government's role is to ensure that an independent analysis is conducted. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is already an independent body. However, if there are different findings, the government should ensure that a legitimate analysis is carried out and ask Department of Finance officials to conduct an internal analysis to assess the impact of the measure. Ideally, the results of this analysis would be made available to all members and even the general public.

We do not have access to either of these studies, which is extremely unfortunate. This constitutes negligence on the part of the Department of Finance and the government.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is at this point in the legislative process that the House of Commons examines the work of the finance committee. I was at the finance committee when the particular clause involving the tax credit for businesses that pay less than \$15,000 in EI premiums was considered and when amendments were rejected by the government.

What I would like to complain about is the work of the committee, in that the point was made that for small businesses that pay just over \$15,000 in EI premiums, there is a very large marginal tax on the business. That is a strong disincentive for a business just below \$15,000 to hire more people or to increase wages, both of which are good things. It is also an incentive for a small business that pays slightly more than \$15,000 to lower wages or to reduce working hours for some of its employees.

The point is that there was no response from the government side in committee. In my view, because there was no proper debate in committee, the committee was not able to do its work. This point was not given proper consideration, especially by the Conservative members of the committee. I invite my colleague to comment on that.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, that is an extremely relevant question that has not received all the attention it deserves.

*Government Orders*

The \$15,000 limit on EI premiums paid by businesses is problematic. Businesses can benefit from the contribution holiday only if they did not reach that limit, which could induce them to limit their activities. If a business expands and has to pay \$15,500 or \$16,000 per year in premiums, it might be motivated to reduce its employees' hours of work or lay someone off—although I doubt that would happen—in order to be able to benefit from this contribution holiday.

There is therefore a perverse incentive for companies whose premiums are close to the limit set by the government to take advantage of this contribution holiday. The negative impact of this system must be examined more carefully by the committee. However, we had only five meetings, including the meeting with officials, to look at the impact of this bill. The process was bungled and does not at all reflect the complexity of the issues we examined.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly honoured to be here today to speak to a couple of the key features of the 2014 budget and economic action plan.

For Canadian families, this year's budget demonstrates the fulfillment of a promise made by this government to return the Canadian economy back to balanced books and surplus. Currently, this government is right on track to do so. In my limited time here today, I want to give an overview of how this year's budget would meet such a promise through creating jobs, investing in research and development, and supporting Canadian families.

Let us first talk about jobs.

Since taking office in 2006, this government has made it a central priority to address what has been on the minds of Canadians from coast to coast to coast: the creation of jobs. Since the economic recession, Canada has recovered more than all of the output and all of the jobs lost during the global recession. The Canadian economy has posted one of the strongest job creation records in the G7, with nearly 1.2 million jobs created since July 2009. Over 80% of the jobs created since that time are full-time positions, nearly 80% are in the private sector, and over 65% are in high-wage industries.

When I have a chance to travel on parliamentary business, I see that colleagues from all over the world are obviously impressed with the kind of record that we have and that we have created, and they want to know how we do it. If we just look at the numbers we heard last month, we see that in October we had an increase of almost 43,000 jobs, which dropped our unemployment rate to 6.5%, the lowest since 2008.

This government has created an environment in which businesses can flourish, and almost 182,000 jobs have been created in the past years. That is a pretty impressive record by any stretch of the imagination. When it comes to other G7 countries, most countries can only wish to have the kind of record that we have.

One way in which this government has been able to create this substantial accomplishment is through strengthening the investment, training, and employment opportunities available to our young people here in Canada. When it comes to training young people to develop the skills necessary for key growth industries in Canada, this

government has taken seriously the demand put forth by employers to gain an increased role in training decisions and to gain the support needed to train new employees with minimal red tape.

Several programs supported within this budget, such as the Canada summer jobs program, the Canada job grant, and the Canada apprenticeship loan, have provided funding to not-for-profits, the public sector, and small-business employers to create a great number of job opportunities for young people.

I had a chance to meet a number of these individuals in my riding. It is always interesting to see them. For example, I think of the Jordan Historical Museum and having the chance to talk to the two young ladies who were there last year who were given an opportunity. The field that they would like to go into in some capacity is museums, whether as curators or being involved in exhibits, et cetera. Because of the money that the Canada summer jobs program provided, these two ladies had a chance to see first-hand what was going on, to experience this work in the field, whereas otherwise they might not have been able to have that opportunity. That is just one small example that I think has very practical applications.

By developing an accessible path for students to transition out of full-time studies into job sectors that they are passionate about—and I can assure members that these two ladies were very passionate about their jobs with the museum—this year's budget looks to continue the strong legacy established by these programs in helping move forward the aspirations of Canadian employers and students alike.

Since it began in 2007 and through to 2013, the Canada summer jobs program has helped over 260,000 students, while the Canada job grant and the apprentice program have allowed for an investment of over \$50 million in up to 4,000 internships in both high-demand and small- and medium-sized business sectors. These initiatives all make Canada's labour force more competitive and shape a path toward enhanced national prosperity and growth.

As a member of the Red Tape Reduction Commission, I am pleased to say this government is now implementing another one of our recommendations. We are cutting the administrative burden on more than 50,000 employers by reducing the maximum number of required payments on account of source deductions.

The 2014 economic action plan proposes to continue supporting the elimination of unnecessary barriers for employers and the creation of important programs like these, which put more money back into the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

● (1205)

Youth employment strategy, or its short form, YES, is another program with strong results supported in this year's budget. YES provides skills development and work experience for youth at risk, summer students, and recent post-secondary graduates.

Economic action plan 2014 announces that our government will improve the youth employment strategy to align it with the evolving realities of the job market. This process would also ensure federal investments in youth employment provide young Canadians with real-life work experience in high-demand fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and skilled trades. Creating these jobs for students benefits not only youth and employers but local economies as well. That is why our government will continue to support programs in this year's budget that help connect young Canadians with available jobs.

Let me talk a little now about research and development and the Internet. Investing in employment opportunities is only one part of how the budget proposes to continue to move the Canadian economy forward. The other half of its strategy is that it is investing in the promise of new inventions, new ideas, and new minds. It is these important features that currently give Canada an economic edge over its international competitors.

Our government has helped foster these innovations and discoveries by funding research and development projects throughout the country. In 2014, we continue the trend of increasing annual research and development funding, with the total spending now at \$1.6 billion over 5 years.

We have long recognized that the development of new ideas and new products is key to Canada's future prosperity. It fuels the growth of small and large businesses and drives productivity improvements that raise the standard of living of Canadians.

Improvements to technology and infrastructure, such as our connecting Canadians program, deliver on the government's commitment in economic action plan 2014 to invest in programs that benefit all Canadians. Bringing high-speed Internet to an additional 280,000 Canadian households in rural and remote regions of the country, this program is ensuring that Canadians are equipped with the skills, tools, and opportunities needed to be competitive and thrive in the 21st century.

It is because of programs like these that Canada remains the G7 leader in research and development expenditures in the higher education sector as a share of the economy. Our universities are recognized internationally for providing a world-class education. We must continue this legacy by investing in the intellectual and social capital that culminates in our places of post-secondary and higher learning.

Through our economic action plan 2014, we will continue this legacy through creating funds to support research, academic excellence, and higher learning. Prime examples of the investments the budget makes in the brightest minds of tomorrow are the Canada first research excellence fund and the venture capital action plan. These initiatives help Canadian post-secondary research institutions leverage their key strengths to the benefit of all Canadians. Within the next decade, the Canada first research excellence fund will provide an additional \$1.5 billion to advance the global research leadership of Canadian institutions.

The venture capital action plan aims to make significant resources available to support Canada's booming venture capital industry,

### *Government Orders*

including the allocation of \$400 million to help increase private sector investments in early stage risk capital.

Complementing the investment in research and innovation, I want to conclude my time today by focusing on what the budget aims to do for Canadian families.

In my riding of Niagara West—Glanbrook, families are very important. There is no higher calling for a government than ensuring that every Canadian family with children will have more money in their pockets to spend on their priorities. The family tax cut, a federal tax credit, will provide tax relief by allowing higher-income spouses to transfer up to \$50,000 of taxable income to a spouse in a lower tax bracket.

Increasing the universal child care benefit for children under age six, doubling the children's fitness tax credit, and increasing the child care expense deduction dollar limits all represent measures that make important priorities, like child care and after-school sports, more affordable for parents.

Simply put, these measures put hard-working Canadian families and their children first. Whether it is creating jobs, investing in young people, research and development, or supporting Canadian families, our government is displaying strong leadership and taking important steps in moving this economy and nation forward. The budget benefits Canadians nationwide and puts in place initiatives that cultivate growth and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason that I am honoured to stand before you today and put forward my support for the implementation of this year's budget.

• (1210)

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today and speak on Bill C-43.

The title of the bill is rather misleading as it describes a bill to implement the budget and other measures, which is exactly what I want to start with: the process that got us to this place today. This is yet another omnibus budget bill. It is a bill that would actually do much more than what Canadians might think a budget would do.

A budget would be about economic priorities, fiscal matters, and the like. However, yet again, the bill before us is 460 pages in length with 400 clauses and would do so much more than deal with budget measures. It is misleading, in fact, to call it a budget implementation bill when it deals with matters that have nothing in the world to do with budget. Of course, that is the pattern of the Conservatives. This is number five on a long list of budget bills.

*Government Orders*

I have the honour of representing Victoria, and I sit on the finance committee where, frequently, we deal with matters that have absolutely nothing to do with finance. I have a little trouble back in the riding explaining what I am doing talking about those measures, but that, I guess, is just the way it is. However, I also have difficulty explaining why amendments are proposed and uniformly voted down by the Conservatives, even when those amendments are self-evident improvements to a bill in specific matters.

Having spoken about the failed process, the anti-democratic process that led us to this place, I would like to talk about the substance. I will speak about the things we would support and oppose in the bill, and the things that are glaringly obvious by omission in the bill.

It must be said that there are things that are supportable in the bill. One that comes to mind initially is the NDP's long-standing proposal to deal with the pay-to-pay problem. Seniors in my riding of Victoria constantly complain about paying more for a telecommunications bill if they get it on paper rather than online. They do not have a computer and they do not want to do that. Well, the government, in its typical way, went halfway. The Conservatives went along with the pay-to-pay provisions vis-à-vis broadcasting enterprises and telcos, but I guess the banks had a better lobby, because glaringly obvious in omission is anything to do with bank fees. I guess that is because the banks had a better lobby than telcos, or perhaps there were disputes elsewhere with that sector of the economy. However, at least the Conservatives went halfway, and we give them credit for that half measure.

Second, there were measures to improve the clarity and integrity of the tax code, which is something New Democrats had been proposing for a long time. However, so much more needs to be done about tax evasion, and I will talk about that in just a moment.

There are other issues, such as the implementation of a DNA data code to help solve the crisis in missing aboriginal women and girls. This is a long-standing proposal that the government has now recognized, and we accept that.

Last, there is the backlog on appeals to the Social Security Tribunal. This will be addressed by allowing more members to be appointed, which, again, is something that has been sought by the NDP for many years.

I said that I would talk about what was missing from the bill. There is \$7.8 billion a year that is missing, and that could be available to Canadians if the government were serious about the issue of tax havens. It has been a passion of mine to try to get the government to take this seriously.

However, \$7.8 billion is an estimate, and it can only be an estimate. Contrary to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's attempts, our attempts, and the Senate's attempts to get the government to actually measure the tax gap, as our friends in the U.K., France, and the United States have been doing for years, the current Conservative government somehow thinks it is a waste of time and cannot be bothered.

If we do not measure something, how can we manage it? Is that not public administration 101? However, the government refuses,

and so I can only give an estimate, which can be accused of being high or low, but it is a big number.

Corporate tax avoidance, in particular, is a global epidemic. Even though Canada is proud, and the Conservatives are, of having the lowest corporate tax rate in the G7, we still have corporations that send their money abroad.

● (1215)

An example is tax shifting or transfer pricing. In order to pay even less tax, those companies that have the lowest corporate tax rates in the G7 still have their favourite trick. What is that? They sell a patent to an offshore subsidiary. Then they charge themselves licensing fees for the use of the same patent. That is a good trick.

Other countries have closed that loophole. We do not seem to care.

I have introduced Bill C-621, which would address the economic substance and require that there actually be economic substance before those paper transactions are allowed, costing the Canadian treasury billions of dollars because the government simply does not want to take the time to go after corporate friends on Bay Street.

Bill C-621 would do what Dr. Robert McMechan wrote about in his book *Economic Substance and Tax Avoidance: An International Perspective*. Dr. McMechan, who really helped in drafting Bill C-621, pointed out in his doctoral thesis at Osgoode Law School, having been a practitioner with the Department of Justice and doing tax litigation for many years, that the government could close this loophole if the courts could get back on track with looking at the economic substance of transactions rather than whether or not they appear to be okay on paper. That is something like going after the general anti-avoidance rules vis-à-vis corporate tax avoidance.

That is what my very short bill, Bill C-621, would do. It would basically put Canada on track, as Dr. McMechan points out, as regards our other allies whose courts seem to have stuck to economic substance. Ours, I am afraid, have gone off the rails.

There is a lot of money we are not going after. A few years ago the Conservatives, faced with 106 Canadians with secret bank accounts totalling over \$100 million in Liechtenstein, did nothing. How many have been charged? How many have they gone after? Apparently they have gone after none.

Compare our woeful record of doing little to go after tax evaders with Australia's Project Wickenby or the action going on in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom to go after tax avoiders. Canadians should be ashamed of their government's performance.

*Government Orders*

Back in September, somebody from inside the department wrote us and said the minister announced that the elimination of a host of senior tax office positions at the local level, including in the international and aggressive tax planning programs. Seventy individuals, with over 1,000 years of cumulative specialized expertise in going after these intricate, complicated corporate transactions, were gone. Fifty people in CRA alone lost their jobs. That is the priority of the Conservatives in going after what could have been an enormous source of revenue. That is missing in this budget.

I have talked about what we like in this budget and what is absolutely missing. In terms of things that ought not to be in a budget but that need to be done is more action on youth unemployment and on homelessness. Homelessness is a crisis in my community of Victoria. I attended a lecture by Dr. Gaetz of York University, who pointed out that homelessness costs the Canadian economy \$7 billion per year if we take into account social services, health care, corrections, and interaction with law enforcement. That is an enormous number. If investments were made to deal with that, the return on the investment—language the Conservatives would apparently like—would be enormous. For example, for the hardest to house, for every \$10 we invest in Housing First initiatives to address homelessness, \$22 would be achieved through offset costs.

There is a crisis in affordable housing. We are not using the income tax system to incent the creation of affordable, low-cost rental housing in communities. We have lots of condos, but we do not have housing for those people who are living hand to mouth in our communities and who are themselves just a few steps away from being homeless.

In conclusion, it is politics 011 that a budget reflects the priorities of a government. The government's priorities do not deal with the crises of unemployment and homelessness, nor fairness and equity, nor does it provide income for Canadians by actually going after money in tax havens in a more aggressive way, as so many of our allies have done.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech.

He very clearly highlighted what is missing from this budget. Everyone knows that a budget contains revenues and expenditures. This government has made many cuts in order to reduce expenditures.

The hon. member outlined a way to increase revenues and, at the same time, show fairness to those who pay their taxes honestly. He spoke about tax evasion. It is surprising that, on one hand, the government is eliminating the positions of public servants who deal with the tax evasion issue in order to cut down on government expenditures. On the other hand, this government has cut corporate taxes to historic low levels. Tax evasion is a very important issue.

What would an NDP government, with Thomas Mulcair as prime minister, do to restore tax fairness?

[*English*]

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's excellent, thoughtful question.

There are a number of things. We would invest in return on investment. That is to say, ROI from expenditures on real people doing the job in the CRA would produce the kinds of enormous returns we have seen in other countries. We think it is good business. We think it would deal with the fairness aspect and the equity my colleague referred to so persuasively in his remarks.

That investment would help on both of those fronts. There would be more income for all of us to build roads, schools, bridges, and so on, and of course, it would deal with the glaring unfairness the current tax code reflects.

We would close tax loopholes, stock options, and those sorts of things. Many of the proposals the Canadians for Tax Fairness brought to this place and to the finance committee would find favour in an NDP government.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his visionary speech. Everyone knows that finance and numbers are his forte. I trust his analysis.

We have to admit, as the hon. member for Louis-Hébert said, this is not complicated: there are economic challenges. I think that nearly all of the western world is facing new challenges. At this very moment, the government continues to cut services and transfers, playing hardball when it comes to spending. That being said, to put it in terms of a family analogy, money is being thrown out the window.

I would like to hear my colleague talk about how much money we are losing to tax evasion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, going after tax havens would appear to be the most fruitful way in which Canadians could recover income to do some of the things on infrastructure spending, homelessness, and issues that were alluded to by my friend, which, of course, we think are priorities of the government.

Integrated work with the OECD is an excellent start, but we need to have people who know what they are doing. As a law professor, I saw some of the best and the brightest drawn to the tax field, because it is complicated, intricate, and rewarding for those who have a brain for that sort of thing.

The best and the brightest are there every day on Bay Street figuring out just how to take advantage of this complicated tax code that gets bigger and bigger every year. We need people who can fight fire with fire. We need that kind of expertise to be hired. We need to bring people on in a number of ways to do the job. They are not there anymore, because the senior people, by the CRA's own admission, are no longer in place.

*Government Orders*

How can we fight fire with fire if we do not have the people there to do the job?

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of our government's economic action plan for 2014, a plan that contains many measures that will benefit the constituents in my riding of Richmond Hill and indeed all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is a plan that promises to help foster economic growth, to create jobs, and to reduce taxes.

Today I would like to focus my remarks on how our government plans to provide more flexibility to the provinces and territories on the design of their social assistance programs.

Social assistance payments are the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial governments. Through the Canada social transfer, the Government of Canada will transfer more than \$12 billion to provinces and territories this year in support of post-secondary education, social assistance, and social services as well as early childhood development, early learning, and child care.

As part of Bill C-43, our government proposes an amendment to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act that would give provinces and territories the flexibility to introduce a minimum period of residence before most foreign nationals could access social assistance in their jurisdictions.

While provinces and territories are responsible for determining eligibility for social assistance, if they decide to impose a minimum residency requirement, they currently risk a reduction in their Canada social transfer payments. With our proposed changes, provinces and territories would no longer be penalized should they choose to establish a minimum waiting period.

On this side of the House, we respect provincial and territorial jurisdiction. That is why we are proposing to allow provinces and territories to make all the decisions surrounding social services. These changes would allow provinces and territories to introduce a residency requirement for most temporary foreign nationals.

As is currently the case, Canadian citizens and permanent residents would not be subject to these provisions. Those who have been determined to be in genuine need of protection would also be excluded from this provision. I remind this House that temporary residents include temporary foreign workers, international students, and visitors.

To obtain a visitor visa or a study or work permit, all foreign nationals must demonstrate that they can support themselves and their dependents financially for the duration of their stay. However, temporary residents are just that. They are here on a temporary basis to study, to work, or to visit Canada as tourists. Our proposed amendment is in line with this requirement in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

What we are proposing in the bill is simply to give provinces and territories the flexibility to establish their own timelines, should they choose, before granting residents access to their social assistance programs.

In addition to Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and protected persons, victims of human trafficking who hold temporary

resident permits would also be excluded. That is because our government is committed to protecting vulnerable migrants who find themselves in abusive or exploitive situations. We are simply removing the risk of a penalty if provinces and territories choose to introduce a minimum period of residence before foreign nationals can access our country's very generous social assistance programs.

• (1230)

It is important to note that it is up to each province and territory to determine eligibility for social assistance benefits. This also means that should they choose to introduce a residency requirement, the provinces and territories would determine the length of the residency period. This bill would not change the terms and conditions under which residents access welfare or other social programs. It would simply provide more flexibility to the provinces and territories.

At the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, we had the opportunity to hear from various stakeholders on this very topic. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation was very supportive of these changes. This is what it had to say:

We merely believe that, as the level of government responsible for the delivery of social services, the provinces are also the appropriate level of government to retain the power to make such a decision without the risk of fiscal penalty from Ottawa.

As well, Mr. Bissett, from the Centre for Immigration Policy Reform, commented on how logical these changes truly are. He said:

It seems logical to me that the federal government should live up to its principles of allowing the provinces to carry out their functions without interference. This is an anachronism that exists in the law and I think it should be changed. Remember that there's no compulsion whatsoever on the provinces to make changes. It's removing a penalty and allowing them, if they wish, to impose residency requirements on individuals.

When we heard from government officials, they were able to share some past experiences with the Canada social transfer. We learned that the 1995 federal budget announced that residency requirements for social assistance, a condition for federal cost-sharing of social assistance expenditures under the Canada assistance plan, would continue to be prohibited under the Canada health and social transfer, which replaced the CAP. The prohibition remains in the CST today.

In November 1995, British Columbia introduced a three-month residency requirement for collecting social assistance for those who arrived from other provinces and countries, which was in violation of the prohibition under the Canada assistance plan. The federal human resources minister withheld CAP transfer payments accordingly, ultimately imposing a penalty of \$20 million on the province, which reflected the actual savings to the province achieved by the residency requirements. British Columbia eventually removed the residency requirement.



*Government Orders*

We are proposing to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to ensure that this does not happen again. In short, our government respects provincial and territorial jurisdiction. As social assistance is their jurisdiction, it is entirely reasonable that they have the authority to establish their own rules for these social programs.

While I am delighted that I had the opportunity to focus on the proposed amendments to the FPFAA, I wish I had more time to discuss other provisions contained in the economic action plan 2014 act, no. 2, such as the new small business job credit that would support job creation; the doubling of the children's fitness tax credit to \$1,000, which would now be refundable; the elimination of the graduated rate of taxation for trusts and certain estates; and the extension of the existing tax credit for interest paid on government-sponsored student loans to interest paid on a Canada apprentice loan.

These are all important measures that would benefit not only my constituents in Richmond Hill but all Ontarians and indeed all Canadians in every province and every territory in this country.

The fact is that Canadians trust this Conservative government to support jobs and promote economic growth for families and communities and to return to balance budgets by 2015.

I hope all hon. members in this House will support economic action plan 2014 act, no. 2 by voting for the budget implementation act.

• (1235)

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my friend, who just finished his speech, for actually talking about what is in Bill C-43. Most Conservative speakers before him did not even try.

I take exception to an element he mentioned, the residency requirements for refugee claimants. If I understood what he said, it would be a way of giving powers to the provinces. Residency requirements are actually a part of the agreement between the federal government and the provinces for transfers. It has been agreed upon by the provinces in the past.

Where I do not agree with my colleague is with the rationale of it supposedly giving power to the provinces. If we are going to the full extent of what he said, basically, if the government were willing to give that power to the provinces, it would drop residency requirements for social assistance for everyone. In this bill, it is only for refugee claimants.

Why are these residency requirements specifically targeting refugee claimants, rather than having all Canadians subject to the same clause?

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, these amendments are facilitative. It would be up to the provinces and territories to choose to introduce a period of residence to establish its length.

Unfortunately, from the way that the members of the opposition have presented this somewhat obscure change in the provision, they seem to think it is somehow an attack on refugees. I would point out that protected persons who have been determined to be genuine refugees but are not yet permanent residents are excluded from this

provision. Victims of human trafficking who hold a valid temporary resident permit are also excluded.

I should also point out to the member that when we bring pieces of legislation before the House to facilitate the processing of legitimate refugees so they can get permanent and long-term assistance in our country, it would be nice to see the member and his party occasionally vote in favour of those changes. We are focusing on providing assistance in an expedited way as quickly as possible to those who truly need it.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for providing some new information in his speech and correcting some of the misinformation being spread by the opposition about the provisions and changes to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act.

Clearly, this would help protected persons. We also want to encourage mobility within Canada so that there are no residency requirements for people moving from province to province if they want to collect social assistance. We want to encourage Canadians to move around and chase opportunities. This country was built on people pursuing opportunities, not waiting for the opportunities to come to them, so we want to encourage that kind of mobility.

The point that the member raised, and I would like him to comment on it further, is that when we focus on protected people who are excluded from having a residency requirement, there are then more resources available for asylum claimants, who are genuinely protected people who are accepted as refugees in this country. Could the member comment on how this would potentially increase the funds the provinces have for social assistance for accepted asylum claimants?

• (1240)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for that very important question and for putting things somewhat into perspective.

I would like to do a little bit of comparison. Let us compare it to the Canada Health Act of 1985. Currently, provinces and territories are able to establish minimum periods of residence before an individual can receive health care in the region. It is typically three months. They impose a waiting period of three months for people to be in a specific province before they can get health care. They have the right to do that as provinces.

This would basically give them the same opportunity on the social assistance side in those cases that are not extreme. Those families who require assistance as legitimate refugees in this country are not going to be affected. As I said earlier, those who are here as subjects of human trafficking are not going to be affected. What this measure would do is simply to give the provinces the opportunity to assess and have the right to impose a short period of time, if they so choose, before providing social assistance.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here we are again standing in the House and talking about another omnibus budget bill designed to ram through hundreds of changes with little study or oversight, and without consultation and, I would say, without the consent of Canadians. Canadians do not trust the Conservative government any more, thanks to draconian bills, secret cabinet meetings, the muzzling of scientists, and the continual stifling of our democracy.

These policies are anything but transparent, as the Conservatives had promised when they were first elected. I am sure that we remember the first Conservative bill, the Federal Accountability Act. Accountability is dead because we have before us Bill C-43, another long bill, in this case consisting 460 pages, with 400 clauses, and dozens of amendments to acts that include a variety of measures that were never mentioned in the budget speech.

The point of electing MPs from across the country and from a variety of political parties is to ensure that there is oversight and democratic governance. These omnibus budget bills mock the very principles that Canadians hold dear. It behooves the government to allow MPs to take the time to study the bill to ensure that due diligence and oversight are respected. After all, does oversight not remain the cornerstone of our democratic system?

It is not just New Democrats calling for oversight. In 2002, the OECD report entitled, “Best Practices for Budget Transparency”, stated that draft budgets should be submitted to Parliament no less than three months prior to the start of the fiscal year. It also noted that budgets should include a detailed commentary on each revenue and expenditure program, comparative information on actual revenue and expenditure during the past year, and an updated forecast for the current year should also be provided for each program. None of these practices are currently followed in Canada. If these guidelines were followed, I believe we would have a much more democratic process, one that we could all be proud of and follow with security.

Sadly, as I have said, I am afraid democracy will once again get the short end of the stick and this bill will be rammed through the House. The government has the numbers and has consistently rejected NDP amendments and failed to listen to Canadians. The quick passing of omnibus bills is problematic. There are many issues in this particular bill that absolutely must be addressed and weighed by parliamentarians. Tragically, the bill in front of us is an overt and outright attack on some of the most vulnerable people in our society, particularly unemployed Canadians, who will not be helped by the implementation of the so-called job credit.

This proposal has already been panned by experts like the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who called it wasteful and extraordinarily expensive. Mike Moffatt from the Ivey school of business at the University of Western Ontario said that “the proposed ‘Small Business Job Credit’ has major structural flaws that, in many cases, give firms an incentive to fire workers and cut salaries”. He went on to say:

The way this...system is designed is that the maximum benefit a company can receive from firing a worker and going under the \$15,000 threshold far exceeds the maximum benefit a small business can receive from hiring an additional workers.

As we know, this measure will take \$550 million from the EI fund. It should have been subjected to serious scrutiny by the government, but, as we have come to expect, the Conservatives ignored analysis by the Parliamentary Budget Officer and never sought detailed analysis of the real job impacts from the Department of Finance. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the program would create about 800 jobs, maximum, despite its enormous price. As I mentioned, economists such as Mike Moffatt have written that the proposal actually gives employers a greater incentive to fire workers than hire them.

• (1245)

I cannot in good conscience support a bill that would actually give employers a reason to fire employees instead of permanently hire them. That is exactly what Bill C-43 would do. Quite literally, it attacks the unemployed and the very vulnerable people that this country has promised to protect.

The provisions in this budget implementation act would allow provinces to impose residency requirements on people without permanent status and would deny refugee claimants and those without permanent status in Canada the ability to obtain the most basic social assistance. After the Conservative cuts to refugee health, which are just beyond the pale, the current government continues to attack some of the most vulnerable people in Canada in the name of saving a few dollars. It is absolutely unconscionable.

Let us not forget that the Conservatives are promising a false balanced budget. To get to their so-called balance, they are cutting provincial health transfers by \$36 billion. That smacks of the missing EI funds that we saw not very long ago, and all of this would have a very negative impact on Canadians.

This bill also includes an amendment to the Aeronautics Act that would allow the Minister of Transport to prohibit any development of or change to an aerodrome in Canada that he or she feels is not in the public interest. That means that any airport of any size anywhere in Canada would be subject to a veto by the Minister of Transport. I must say that I do not have a great deal of faith in these ministers. I have constituents who are very angry about this and rightly so. This is yet another attempt by the Conservatives to centralize more power in the hands of the Prime Minister and cabinet, and it is the absolute antithesis of democracy.

I am happy to say that there are a few aspects of the bill that have some positive implications.

It is good, for example, to see that the NDP's long-standing proposal to end pay-to-pay billing by telecommunications and broadcasting companies is in the bill. We will have to see if it actually goes anywhere. I have heard many complaints from seniors from across the country about this unfair charge to receive a paper bill, and I am pleased that the change was included. However, the change falls short and fails to live up to the promise the Conservatives made to end unfair gouging by the banks. Like so much the current government does, it is just another half measure.

*Government Orders*

The bill also includes measures to address a major appeals backlog at the Social Security Tribunal by allowing for more tribunal members. I am pleased to see this. The backlog is absolutely unacceptable. It has hurt a lot of very vulnerable people—I have heard the stories—and I am hopeful that the backlog will be tackled. However, there would not have been a backlog if the government had not decimated the tribunal in the first place.

I wish I had more positive things to say about Bill C-43, but I am afraid I do not.

There are a lot of good things that the government could have done with this bill, things that would have helped Canadians find jobs and make life more affordable. Those are things like a pan-Canadian childcare program that would ensure that families had access to quality childcare at \$15 a day. That is the kind of thing that boosts a community, helps families, and sparks the economy.

The government could also develop a strategy to deal with persistent youth unemployment. It could implement a youth hiring and training credit. The Conservatives did not do it, and unfortunately the youth of this country are going to suffer as a result.

They could have phased out the billion-dollar subsidies for the oil and gas sector. Imagine having a billion dollars to invest in the security of our seniors and in job creation for our youth. Imagine that money redirected into health care.

I am very sorry to say that none of those things have been addressed by the government. The Conservatives could have done some good, finally. They chose not to, and I am very sorry about that.

• (1250)

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague did talk a bit toward the end about youth employment. Certainly as part of our study in the finance committee on youth employment, we did see that it is a stubborn issue that has been a real challenge over the past number of decades. One of the things that we talked about in committee was the idea that too few of our young people were encouraged to go into the trades, which have a somewhat negative stigma to them. Unfortunately, as a result of that, we have missed a generation of tradespeople who are not available to do work in our country right now.

One of the provisions of the budget would extend the existing tax credit for interest paid on student loans to interest paid on a Canada apprentice loan. Does the member not believe this is a great thing for young people to help them to pursue an education in the trades and to be able to provide people for the work we are going to have to do in the future, in particular construction work and similar types of work? Does she not believe that is a good initiative in the budget?

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, supporting the trades and youth is critical. When I taught in London, Ontario, one of the travesties of the situation that I encountered was this undermining of the trades, or this sense they were somehow of lesser value to the economy. We know that is not the case.

I have not seen a great deal of positives from the Conservative government, or from the previous government. It very much seems that in cutting their transfers for post-secondary education, they were

more interested in balancing budgets or doing whatever it was they thought they were doing.

This gives me an opportunity to do a little bragging. Fanshawe College is my riding. Right now, it is developing programs in conjunction with local businesses to support the development of the region and job creation. They are using the expertise of the college and its staff to have an impact on student and regional jobs, and technologies. Will the government support that? I am waiting.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from London—Fanshawe for her speech.

Once again, unlike most of the government members, she focused her comments around items that were actually in the budget bill.

She pointed out many problems with this bill. I would like to know what she thinks of the aspects dealing with the much-touted tax credit for small businesses, which is really more like a premium holiday, given that it is being offered through the surplus in the employment insurance fund. That surplus was achieved largely by making it harder for contributors to access EI benefits.

I know that the people of southwestern Ontario, where her riding is located, are very concerned about this situation.

• (1255)

[*English*]

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, it comes down to the fact that the government fails to understand investment. It talks about tax cuts and all the things it does to reduce the amount of money available to government to do good things in the community, but it never talks about investment.

It never talks about investment in workers and families when they are in need, as with the employment insurance fund. It certainly never talks about investment in small business, or at least the kind of investment needed. In fact, it has cut the tax credits for small business.

The New Democrats would restore hiring tax credits. We would reduce those taxes to small businesses. We saw that in Manitoba already with an NDP government. We would crack down on hidden credit card transaction fees. Imagine the boost to small businesses if they did not have these terrible credit card transaction fees taking away from their ability to deliver to their customers and to generate more business.

We can grow business in our country and in our communities, but not with the Conservative government. The New Democrats would do that.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour for me to stand in the House in support of Bill C-43, the economic action plan, 2014, the second budget implementation act.

*Government Orders*

I represent the great constituency of Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette. It is a natural resources and agricultural constituency, and my remarks will be focusing on those sectors.

First, I would like to talk about Canada's overall economy, which is doing extraordinarily well in a tough and difficult world economy. Our unemployment rate is at 6.5%, and 1.2 million net new jobs have been created since July 2009.

There have been 180 tax cuts. GST has gone from 7% to 6% to 5% under our watch. A family of four, right now, saves \$3,400 per year, money in their pockets.

The previous speaker implied that if a dollar did not go to the government, it was not a good dollar. We believe the more dollars that families have in their pockets, the better off they are and the better off we are as a country.

Our budget is on track to be balanced, the first in the G7 to do so. At 39%, our debt-to-GDP ratio is the lowest in the G20. By contrast, Japan and Italy have debt-to-GDP ratios over 100%. Our economy is on track to grow, thrive and indeed survive in a very tough world. Bloomberg rates Canada as simply the best place to do business.

My constituency has many small businesses in it. I want to focus for a minute on the small business job credit. This credit would lower small business payroll taxes by 15% for the next two years. It would result in savings of approximately \$550 million to small businesses over those years. Again, in my constituency, the small business sector is very significant, and this job credit is very important.

We have frozen EI premiums to provide certainty and flexibility for small businesses. We are cutting red tape. We have reduced the small business tax rate from 12% to 11%. We have increased the small business limit to \$500,000. The results are clear.

A typical small business, with \$500,000 of taxable income, is seeing savings of approximately \$28,600. In total, small businesses have seen their taxes reduced by 34% since 2006.

This bill also ends pay-to-pay billing, giving the Business Development Bank of Canada more flexibility to help small and medium-sized enterprises. Intellectual property has been modernized. More power has been given to the CRTC to encourage compliance in the telecom industry.

I would like to focus on the budget dealing with the environment.

I happen to have the honour of serving on the environment committee. My chair is sitting right in front of me, the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, and my able chair from the fisheries committee is also here, the member for Saint John. Both are vying strongly for chair of the year.

I am making light of that right now, but fisheries and the environment are very near and dear to my heart. When one looks at the government's environmental record, it is clearly second to none. We do not simply just talk about the environment. We actually do concrete, on-the-ground environmental projects and remediation. For example, we are protecting Canada's national parks by providing over \$390 million to make improvements to highways, bridges and dams located in our parks.

I happen to have one of Canada's most beautiful national parks, Riding Mountain National Park, right smack dab in the middle of my constituency. My constituents are very much looking forward to the improvements that this fund will bring.

We are also, and this is a project that is near and dear to my heart as well, supporting conservation by investing an additional \$15 million in the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program to further support projects that support the conservation of recreational fisheries habitats. The results from this program have simply been overwhelming. When this first round of funding is spent, there will be almost 400 fisheries conservation projects conducted and completed right across the country. We are talking about 2,000 kilometres of shoreline and 2.4 million square metres of stream habitat restored and conserved.

● (1300)

Again, what makes this program so successful, and this is how Conservatives deal with the environment, is that for every dollar that we spend on the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, an additional \$2.25 is spent by outside groups as partnerships.

This is a remarkable achievement not by the government alone, but by those hundreds of fisheries conservation groups and anglers groups right across the country from coast to coast to coast. The kinds of projects that have been done, like in the Maritimes, in Ontario, in Quebec and in British Columbia, again, are by local people doing local projects, helping their local environments. That is the way we do environmental conservation, and the results speak for themselves.

We are improving and expanding Canada's snowmobile and recreational trails by investing \$10 million to improve trails across the country. We are encouraging the donations of ecologically sensitive land by making tax relief for such donations more generous and flexible. We are supporting family oriented conservation by providing \$3 million to allow the Earth Rangers Foundation to expand its ongoing work with young people.

All this builds on our government's strong record of environmental conservation and protection, and our commitment to the national conservation plan.

Canada should be very proud of the national conservation plan. Not only are we creating more parks throughout the country, we have allocated \$50 million for wetland conservation, something that is near and dear to my heart; \$50 million would go for on-farm conservation initiatives; and \$100 million will be spent under the national areas conservation plan, preserving and protecting Canada's fragile land on what we refer to as the "southern working landscape".

In total, in terms of environmental conservation, real on-the-ground work, the results have been nothing short of remarkable.

*Government Orders*

Agriculture, which again is very important in my constituency, is the dominant economic activity of my constituents. Family farms are throughout my constituency and across the rural areas of Canada. Family farms are, quite simply, the backbone of country. For generations, our farmers have fed Canadians and the world, while providing jobs and opportunities across Canada. That is why economic action plan 2014 includes a number of measures to support Canada's farmers, as well as new innovations in agriculture, such as expanding tax deferral for livestock that are kept for breeding when sold due to drought or excess moisture, something that is very important. Again, as many in the House will know, Manitoba experienced severe floods in the last couple of years and my cattle producers, in particular, welcome this initiative.

We are supporting innovation and competitiveness in the agriculture sector by modernizing the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, including farmers' privilege, which allows farmers to save, condition and reuse seeds for planting on their own farms.

We will be introducing a new pilot price insurance program to provide cattle and hog producers in western Canada with insurance against unexpected price declines within a production cycle. Again, this will build on our record of supporting Canadian farmers and the agricultural sector since 2006.

Our track record is over \$11 billion, including provincial and territorial contributions to farmers through business risk management programs; over \$3 billion, including provincial and territorial contributions toward investments in innovation, competitiveness and market development; \$500 million to establish the AgriFlexibility fund; \$370 million to the hog industry to support debt restructuring to help sustain the industry through some very difficult times; nearly \$350 million to help western grain farmers cover the costs of adjusting to operating in an open market; and \$50 million to support increased slaughter capacity.

I am very proud to speak in favour of Bill C-43.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I have to seize this opportunity. He talked about some environmental issues, some measures or so-called measures that will be passed with this bill. However, for years now, the people of Beauport—Limoilou have been suffering from the pollutants released by the activities at the Port of Québec.

The legislative changes in part 4, section 16 of the bill will allow the government to use the regulatory process, but on a piecemeal basis.

I would like to ask my colleague why there are no clear legislative measures in part 4, division 16, of the bill that would make provincial laws and regulations on air quality applicable to port facilities, for example? That would have been much simpler.

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, I was taken aback by my colleague's use of the word "supposed" environmental measures. The over 2,000 anglers who worked on our recreational fisheries

conservation program would be mildly offended by that particular word. This government does real, on-the-ground, concrete environmental work that generates real results.

I should point out to the member opposite that on our watch as a government, almost all of Canada's environmental indicators have improved. Quite frankly, that is the only thing that counts.

What is actually happening out there in terms of air quality, water quality, and biodiversity is that they are all going in the right direction. However, we certainly realize that we still have some work to do.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the hard-working member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, for all the great work he is doing in the recreation fisheries conservation partnership program. It is tremendous work, and a lot of our conservation organizations are taking advantage of that program.

My colleague across the way just talked about division 16. However, the Act would allow the incorporation of other acts, such as the Environmental Assessment Act and the Fisheries Act and others. It would also allow for the recognition of the role that the provinces have a role to play in the environmental area. As well, with the efforts that have recently been undertaken by this government over the past number of years, it would make sure that we have only one person for the regulations. We do not need four or five people doing the same thing, which is what we tended to have previously. There was an overlap in all this legislation.

Given the member's experience, I wonder if he could comment on the effectiveness of having only one regulator to oversee things.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, when I was the environmental director at a paper mill many years ago, the regulatory process was extremely confusing. One never knew at any one time what kind of process the company would be in or not be in. It was at the whim of whoever happened to think they had jurisdiction at the time. There was the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and on and on.

The protection of fisheries and navigable waters and so on is all very important, but this can be done and is being done under our government through a streamlined process as part of our responsible resource development policies.

As I pointed out, almost all of Canada's environmental indicators are moving in the right direction. Focusing on process as opposed to focusing on environmental results gets us nowhere.

• (1310)

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the government budget implementation act at report stage.

*Government Orders*

Once again, this is another omnibus budget bill that legislates on far-ranging and diverse matters that have very little to do with an actual budget, and as such, many of the measures in this piece of legislation are ones that are not appropriate for review or voting at the House of Commons finance committee. They should be at committees more specific to their actual subjects.

However, despite its diverse content, one thing is true thematically throughout this bill: the Conservative government is imposing a regressive public policy agenda on Canadians. It is ignoring the needs of Canada's struggling middle class. It is ignoring the challenges faced by young Canadians, many of whom are facing significant challenges in the workforce, as we have a very soft jobs situation for young Canadians. As well, in terms of the long-term unemployed, the number of Canadians who are unemployed for over a year has actually doubled from 2008 till now. In fact, the government brings forward a measure in this budget implementation bill that actually creates a perverse incentive for employers to fire workers.

Overall, this is a continued attack on the social fabric of Canadian society, but it is also weakening the economic foundation of the country.

I want to talk about a few specific measures in this legislation and how I think we could do better.

First is the government's so-called small business job credit. The Minister of Finance admitted to the finance committee that his department did no economic analysis on this measure, zero, before committing over half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money. At the finance committee we heard from experts who testified that this tax credit has a serious design flaw in that it would create a perverse disincentive for employers to lay off workers or reduce hours of work in order to qualify for the tax savings. We have heard from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that this measure would create only 800 jobs over two years, at a cost of \$700,000 per job. That is fiscally irresponsible. It is ludicrous from a public policy perspective. It is highly ineffective and very expensive. It is a failed public policy experiment. There are better ways to spend half a billion tax dollars, and there are better ways and better measures that would do more to strengthen the economy and create jobs cost-effectively.

The Liberal proposal that we have offered would work because it would only benefit employers who actually increased employment. Instead of proceeding with this flawed small business Conservative job credit, the government could adopt the Liberal plan, which would create a two-year EI premium holiday for businesses that actually grow and add to their payroll. This measure would be directly tied to job creation. It would be an incentive for employers to hire. It would be better for employers who want to grow their businesses and better for unemployed workers who want a job. The Liberal plan has been endorsed by the CFIB, the Canadian restaurant association, and the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

This omnibus bill does a disservice to unemployed Canadians, but it is actually even worse for another group of vulnerable Canadians: refugee claimants. Under Bill C-43, their access to social assistance would be jeopardized. Bill C-43 is just the latest instalment in the government's ongoing attack on refugees.

First the Conservatives tried to remove access to basic health care for refugee claimants, but the courts quashed the Conservative government's policy. They called it "cruel and unusual". Now the Conservatives are trying to remove what little source of income refugee claimants have.

•(1315)

Refugee claimants have to wait for a work permit from the federal government before they can work legally in Canada. If they do not have a permit, they must rely on social assistance to survive. Now, however, the government would make it possible for provincial governments to impose residency requirements as an obstacle for obtaining social assistance.

None of the provinces requested this authority. In fact, the government has only talked to the Ontario government, and the Ontario government does not support it. It did not ask for it, yet the Conservative government wants to proceed with this measure regardless. If a province does make use of the authority, the burden of feeding and sheltering the refugee claimants would fall upon charitable organizations, which are already stretched too thinly in our communities.

Refugees are some of the most vulnerable people in the world. Frankly, it is mean-spirited that the Conservative government has chosen to pick on them, first by trying to eliminate their health care services and now by attacking their ability to support themselves. Let us keep in mind that we are not talking about just the adult claimants but about their children as well. The children of these refugee claimants are being victimized by the Conservative government's mean-spiritedness and short-sightedness. We would reverse this punitive measure against asylum seekers.

It is not only the health of refugees that the government has played fast and loose with; it has put all Canadians at risk with the demotion of the Chief Public Health Officer and the reduction in his ability to promote and effect needed change. At the finance committee, we heard from experts who told us that the Public Health Agency of Canada was created in response to Canada's experience with the SARS epidemic. They told us that the Chief Public Health Officer was deliberately made a deputy head at that time so that he or she would have the necessary power and autonomy to work with the provinces and the ability to speak truth to power and effect change.

The omnibus would undo some of that good work. It would demote the Chief Public Health Officer and reduce his authority and ability to effect change. We think this is an unhealthy move. We also think that it is very much in keeping with the government's ongoing disrespect for, and attack on, the scientific community. There was a time when governments were guided by evidence-based decision-making; this government seems to be guided by decision-based evidence-making.

*Government Orders*

It is not just the Conservative policies that are wrong-headed, but also the process that leads to these policies. In many areas of Bill C-43, the government has ignored key stakeholders affected by the policies. When the government changed the rules applicable to aerodromes, it gave the minister overly broad powers and failed to consult the aviation groups that are affected. When the government changed the definition of “international shipping” to exempt cable laying, it failed to work with the only Canadian company that does cable laying, thereby jeopardizing its business and jobs. It showed contempt for the public by implementing new and possibly harmful policies without consulting the constituencies and stakeholders that had the most to lose as a result of these policies. That is not just undemocratic by nature; it also leads to bad public policy and to mistakes.

Another aspect of the process that troubles us is the use of an omnibus bill to effect changes to policies that have, as I said earlier, no relationship whatsoever to the budget. What do the bill's measures on aerodromes and the Chief Public Health Officer have to do with the fiscal framework? Nothing. Why should they be reviewed and voted on by the finance committee, instead of by individual committees that have the expertise to deal with them?

I can assure members that a Liberal government would follow a very different course in terms of both process and policy. The public's top priority is economic growth and job creation. This requires more than simply expensive advertising of non-existent or unimproved programs. The Conservatives' proposed measure on income splitting would only benefit 15% of the wealthiest Canadians. We agree with the late Jim Flaherty, who said:

I think income-splitting needs a long, hard analytical look ... to see who it affects and to what degree, because I'm not sure that overall, it benefits our society.

A Liberal government will pursue an agenda of jobs, growth, and investments that benefits all of society.

• (1320)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could expand on the point of income splitting the Conservatives have brought forward?

The way I look at it, less than 15% of Canada's population would benefit. The government and the Prime Minister are in essence forcing the Canadian middle class to pay for a \$2 billion promise that less than 15% of the population would benefit from.

Perhaps he could just comment as to why the middle class should have to pay this price.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, income splitting will only benefit the top 14% or 15% of Canadians, but all Canadians will be forced to pay for it. Look at the choices of what we could do with that \$2 billion per year.

The income-splitting policy would make our tax system less fair. It would actually deepen inequality. We should listen to the IMF, which is telling us that inequality actually hurts growth. At a time when we need jobs and growth, a policy that deepens inequality is bad socially and economically.

Instead, we should be investing in infrastructure. One hundred per cent of Canadians would benefit from infrastructure. We would create jobs and growth in the short term. We would also create a

more competitive Canadian economy in the long term. We would have increased productivity, a more prosperous future, and more livable communities.

Investing in infrastructure makes a lot of sense. That is what David Dodge is telling us, that we ought to be investing in infrastructure. We are hearing that from the OECD and the IMF. Right now, interest rates being what they are, with bonds yields at historic lows and real interest rates actually being negative, and with our crumbling infrastructure and soft job market, we have never had a better time to invest massively in fixing Canada's infrastructure than right now.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Kings—Hants. It is a great pleasure working with him on the Standing Committee on Finance.

I would like to ask him a question about a specific aspect of the bill, which we have discussed at length. There seems to be a difference of opinion between the government and the opposition parties concerning changes to federal and provincial fiscal arrangements that would allow the provinces, if they so wished, to impose a residency period for refugees or refugee claimants.

The government seems to think that refugee claimants are protected and not affected by this provision, whereas all the analyses we obtained and all the witnesses we heard in committee say the opposite.

I would like to hear what my colleague from Kings—Hants has to say about the real impact of the government's proposal to impose a residency period for social assistance on refugee applicants.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my colleague's question as well as the opportunity to work with him on the Standing Committee on Finance.

It is clear that the Conservative government has once again imposed a policy without consulting the provincial governments. It is ridiculous to develop policies of this kind without consultation. In the past, Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments met frequently with provincial governments in order to develop common approaches to such issues. This is another example of the Conservatives' regressive policies. Attacking refugees is not in keeping with Canadian values. That makes no sense from a social or economic standpoint.

In future, when the Liberals form the government, we intend to reverse such policies.

• (1325)

[English]

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again it is my honour to speak today to the second budget implementation bill. When a young person from my riding who was doing their master's called me to ask about the budget process, it gave me a chance to review it.

*Government Orders*

As members know, the budget is presented in the spring. For members of Parliament who do not know, there is no deadline for when a government presents a budget. There is no legislative requirement to bring a budget forward at any particular time. However, we do it by tradition. Every spring the budget comes forward. It is basically a policy document. It is not an actual piece of legislation that we are able to implement without implementation bills. Therefore, a ways and means motion is brought forward for tax purposes and so are a number of bills to allow for the implementation of the policy issues that are highlighted in the budget.

That is what we are doing today. The tradition is to bring forth an implementation bill in the spring after the budget is tabled and before the House rises for the summer, and then another in the fall, which was done on December 1. Although it would be more ideal to do this a bit faster, the reason the budget is broken into two and requires two implementation bills is that not everything can be implemented as quickly as possible. There is a lot of legal legislation that is required to be developed from the budget. That is why our officials are able to do a big chunk of it at the beginning of the year and then the second portion in the second half of the year to have it in place for the upcoming fiscal year, which in this country and for this government commences on April 1.

That is the implementation bill process, which is why we are here today. I want to congratulate the finance committee for its work in breaking that out. As far as know, it is only since we have been in government that implementation bills have been broken down and sent to different committees for review. I happen to be the chair of the justice committee and there are no justice issues in this implementation bill, so we did not have anything sent to our committee, but I had the opportunity to sit on the industry committee while it reviewed some of what is in this implementation bill. I enjoyed the discussion. We had great witnesses come forward to talk about the different measures in the bill that would affect industry. There was an opportunity for all parties to ask questions and hear comments on what we are doing in this bill.

It is still a finance bill and a matter of confidence, so it is important that the finance committee reviews it at the end. Then it comes back to the House for third reading, which is what has happened. However, there is nothing wrong with the process that we have. We have had a lot of complaints about the process, but we as a government have added layers to that process so there would be more opportunity for input from all parts of the House.

I have heard complaints about the fact we cannot change anything, yet we were unable to change anything before. It is a confidence bill. If members want to go to an election over it, they can move an amendment, and if it wins, we would go to an election on it. However, that is not what happened.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Let's go, let's go.

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, the third party likes to yell about going to an election. Its members hold their collective breath every time their leader is at a microphone, because they have no idea what will be said. If they want to go to an election right now, holding their breath for 60 days, because that is how long it would take, they can hold their breath.

**Mr. Scott Simms:** He takes our breath away.

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the Liberals hold their breath. If they like third place in the House, we can go to an election tomorrow because that is where they will be.

However, the purpose of today is this budget implementation bill, which I am personally excited about as a member of Parliament. When I was first elected to the House I had the opportunity to meet with a former member, Gary Lunn, who had brought forward the concept of a missing persons index for the country. Just for the benefit of members, there are missing persons indexes in every province. However, if we had an individual in our family, perhaps a daughter, a mother, or any family member who has been missing longer than the length of time the police allocate for finding a runaway, or a person who is truly missing and he or she has not been located, then we would have to do the legwork of going from province to province to look through their missing persons index to see if we are able to make contact.

● (1330)

Mr. Lunn told me about the bill for a national missing persons index that he tried to get through the House as an opposition member. He then became a cabinet minister as we formed government and asked me to take up the cause of having that implemented, which I did. I was very new and early on the list for a private member's bill. I did a lot of research on the issue, presented it as a private member's bill, and discovered that I needed to learn the process of this place. The process and rules played an important role.

It got through second reading and the government said it needed a royal recommendation because it was going to cost money. Through the research done on my bill, it was evident that it would have cost money, and I did not understand at the time that if a private member's bill is going to cost taxpayers money, it really should be a government bill and cannot be a private member's bill. There was some discussion about what could be done in terms of lowering taxes—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Scott Simms:** For the sake of clarity for the House, Mr. Speaker, he actually can get a private member's bill through if he gets a royal recommendation. He did not get the right permission. That was the deal.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I will take that as a point of clarification rather than a point of order.

The hon. member for Burlington.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, if the government accepts the recommendation that it needs financial support, it could go through. However, the general rule is that a private member's bill cannot raise taxes. I did not know that at the time and learned a really good lesson as a parliamentarian. It helped to ensure that I understood the rules of the House of Commons, committees, and how everything works around here. Over the last nine years, I have done my best to try to learn the rules, which has certainly helped me as a chair of a committee in understanding how this place operates.

That being said, I did a lot of research on the project. A number of years later, the whip on the government side took up the cause for Lindsey's Law, the law to provide a missing persons database for the country. I am very happy to see that was included in this year's budget. It is important for families and individuals to get closure if someone in their families is missing. It will cost a bit of money and that is why a missing persons data bank is actually in the budget. It is in an implementation bill because putting it in place will require some funding, but it is important for us to do so

I congratulate those who followed the lead. I will give full credit to Gary Lunn, who got this project started in the House; the others who I know had private members' bills in a similar vein; and the government whip for making sure that it was included in the budget. This is what an implementation bill is about. It is about taking what was highlighted as a direction for this government, whether it is creating jobs, helping families or, in this case, helping families who have been suffering, putting it in writing, and making it happen.

I am happy to be here. The government of the day is responsible for doing things, not criticizing. I am so proud of our government. We hear that this is an omnibus bill. Yes, it is 400 some-odd pages long in French and English, but it is a couple of hundred pages of action, of actually doing things for Canadians. At election time, people will judge us on what we did for Canadians and they will have confidence that the Conservative government will continue to do things for Canadians.

• (1335)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to pop my colleague's bubble or anything, but I think he might be deluded as to the public's reaction and response to the style in which the government has been operating. I will ask him perhaps how he even defends this, knowing as I do that he is a committed democrat and chair of a parliamentary committee. I recognize that perhaps he is commenting on the more expansive summary rather than the bill or the issue at hand.

However, in this pre-budget period, is it not offensive to the sensibilities of all Canadians to be on the verge again, or under the shadow again, of this spectre of another omnibus bill? God knows what they will throw in there, everything but the kitchen sink. We know that these omnibus bill are not really about budget implementation; they are about an outdated neo-conservative ideological agenda that the Conservatives try to fold into one big stinking package and then move closure on it, so we cannot even debate these issues.

How does the member defend it, and how does he feign such enthusiasm, in these months leading up to the pre-budget

consultation when he knows full well that it offends democracy at its very core?

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, just so the member knows, today we are talking about the second implementation bill of the 2014 budget. I think he was speaking about the preparation for the 2015 budget.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** He is new.

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** If he were new, Mr. Speaker, I could understand.

There is a tremendous amount of input. I know that the finance committee has been meeting three times a week with full panels of people coming and giving suggestions on what was happening. I know in my own riding I have had a pre-budget program. I had the chamber invite about 20 people who came out and gave us ideas on what they wanted to do.

I have never been on the opposition benches, but I am assuming the opposition members send to the Minister of Finance on the government side their suggestions for what they would like to see in the budget. There is plenty of opportunity for discussion on what should be in the budget and then there is plenty of debate on it.

Even in this case where we split the bill and send it to different committees, I am not asking, or even expecting, people to agree on what is in the budget, but they have an opportunity to question it. What is really important is that they have an opportunity to tell us what their alternative is, not just to be in opposition but to say what their alternatives would be. However, we rarely—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member has consistently said that the Conservatives, as a big generous government, are sending this bill to committee as if they are doing this huge favour. However, once it gets to committee, the member acknowledges that they cannot accept any improvements and we cannot make any amendments, because if anything like that were to happen it would mean that the government would fall, because it would be a confidence vote on the government.

There are many Canadians who would no doubt love to see an election, based on the past performance of ministers of veterans affairs, based on what the Conservatives are doing with infrastructure, income splitting, and the list goes on.

I have this question for the member. Why do the Conservatives feel that there is absolutely no room for improvement when Canadians know that there is a whole lot of room for improvement when it comes to Conservative government policy? One would think the member might even be a bit fretful in terms of going into an election.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague from Winnipeg across the way spends a lot of time in the House. I am not sure how much time he spends at committee to be able to debate these issues, because they have gone there. I can say, as the chair of the justice committee, of the last two bills that we have had, there have been amendments accepted. They are not confidence motions, of course, not unless the Prime Minister of the day decides a particular piece of legislation is confidence.

Finance bills are automatically confidence motions. It is a different beast altogether, and it is based on the tradition of this House and the rules of operating, and we are open to suggestions.

However, I do thank the member for his time and I hope that the activity at committee is useful to our opposition members.

● (1340)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are now at report stage on this Conservative beast. I am not referring to my colleagues opposite, but to this massive bill that has over 460 clauses and 400 pages that we are now debating.

I am following a rather dull speech by the member for Burlington, during which he spent most of his time trying—and failing—to prove the merits of the process. This bill is all over the map and deals with all kinds of subjects. He could have at least focused on one concrete issue affecting Canadians and then defended the merits of that measure. He also could have taken two or three of the measures. It was his choice. I do not think anyone will be surprised to hear that I will be focusing on a very specific part of the bill in order to address the expectations and, especially, the concerns and misgivings of my constituents in Beauport—Limoilou.

I will talk about the process that the member for Burlington spoke about. The summary of Bill C-43 spans seven or eight pages. As I said, it is all over the map.

The member for Burlington spoke about the fact that the parts of the bill had been sent to different committees to be studied, including the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, of which I am a member. That was one of the very few accurate things he said.

This process became a farce, as we were forced to deal with some aspects in the bill that were unfortunately attached with no chance of amendment. This would have been possible if the government had shown some courage and introduced separate bills. However, the members on the government side do not have that courage. Instead, the witnesses, from all backgrounds, all lined up to talk about two or three items making amendments to two or three different acts.

I will focus on the summary and say that at the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, we practically wasted our time on division 1 of part 4, which amends the Industrial Design Act and the Patent Act; division 6 of part 4, which amends the Radiocommunication Act and division 9 of part 9, which amends the Investment Canada Act; division 10 of part 4, which amends the Broadcasting Act; division 11 of part 4, which amends the Telecommunications Act; and, finally, division 12 of part 4, which amends the Business Development Bank of Canada Act.

For the benefit of the House, and to do justice to the testimony provided by the experts who came, I must say that a number of our witnesses deplored the fact that we were unable to conduct separate studies, under better conditions, of the bills being amended by this omnibus beast, which is rearing its ugly head yet again.

I would add that over two years ago, I hung a poster on my office wall that provides a profile of the health of the people in the greater Quebec City area. This health profile is divided by different sectors of the city. Obviously, I have before me the part that is in red, red like a danger zone warning, which has to do with the population of Beauport—Limoilou.

According to the data from this health profile, that part of the population is living in socio-economic and environmental conditions that lead to a greater prevalence of respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

● (1345)

It is striking; the differences can be as much as twofold. There are difference in terms of life expectancy as well, which is six, seven or eight years less for those living in Quebec City's lower town and who are affected by the dust coming from the Port of Québec.

I was leading up to that point so that I can talk once again about the contamination coming from Arrimage Québec, which operates within the boundaries of the Port of Québec. This concerns one section of the beast, although I am not sure if it is the scales, feet or claws. I am talking about division 16 of part 4, which amends the Canada Marine Act.

Contrary to what the member for Burlington said, it is ironic that this part, which really should have been studied by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance. The committee concerned was unable to comment on the amendments.

There is no denying it: we gained some insight into the government's intentions and the scope of the amendments. The government is resorting to one of its bad habits, and that is ignoring a legislative review conducted in the light of day. The government prefers the shady path of measures adopted through regulation, in the offices of ministers, which can then take everyone by surprise. We are ultimately presented with a *fait accompli*.

Clearly, as I pointed out, Conservative government members have no courage. They have been demonstrating this for the past nine years, and now we have further proof.

*Government Orders*

One of the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance, the president of the Association of Canadian Port Authorities, Ms. Zatylny, talked about the amendments to section 64, among others. Those amendments will allow the government to use the regulatory process in order to potentially make provincial laws and regulations apply to port activities in certain parts of the country. This could also be done in some other specific circumstances. Some witnesses confirmed that it could be linked to some liquefied natural gas terminal projects on the west coast, in British Columbia. The government is making legislative changes that will have an impact across Canada, in order to propose a solution or a possible solution to a problem that is actually quite local. Ms. Zatylny stated:

[The amendments will help...] by giving the federal government the ability to enact regulations that will provide additional safety and environmental protection measures.

This has yet to be seen, for this issue is very important, and despite her claims, Ms. Zatylny's comments were in part contradicted by Joyce Henry, a director general at Transport Canada. Indeed, Ms. Henry said that, in any case, federal laws apply as they are at present, and there are no changes in that regard. She hopes to incorporate provincial laws and regulations in the form of regulations under the Canada Marine Act. That is unfortunate.

I talked about the measures that have nothing to do with the budget. During testimony at the Standing Committee on Finance, Ms. Zatylny also shared her concerns regarding financial support for ports to help their development and upgrade their facilities, and this bill does absolutely nothing to address those concerns.

•(1350)

It really is unfortunate, because the Building Canada program will not provide enough funding to meet the serious investment challenges facing Canada's 18 port authorities.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the House recently studied the member for Pickering—Scarborough East's Bill C-585. The bill would have given the provinces permission to establish a minimum period of residence to obtain access to social assistance. Refugee claimants are very worried about this because they could end up getting no financial support while waiting for their claim to be processed.

It seems that the bill has been withdrawn. At any rate, the member did not show up, so the bill was dropped. Then, however, it was buried in the omnibus budget bill, and this is our only opportunity to talk about it. I would like to know what my colleague thinks of that.

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Hochelaga for her question. She is right: this way of doing things is pretty sneaky.

This reminds me of something the current Minister of State for Social Development did in a previous Parliament. She introduced a government bill to change how firearms were registered on the gun registry. She chose to go that route instead of having the courage to introduce it as a government bill. Of course, the Conservatives had a minority at the time, but once they got their majority, they put that measure into a government bill.

As my colleague pointed out, since the bill is now buried in the mammoth bill—call it what you want, but it is by no means a

butterfly because it is nowhere near that light—we have to study it alongside measures we could support and others that we strongly oppose. This way of doing things is totally dishonest, but it is the government's usual way of doing business.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention that under the First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act, there is also the ability of the federal government to create regulations to actually deal with some of the more complex development projects that would happen in first nations communities.

Similarly, under division 16, the Canada Marine Act changes, we are basically saying the same thing. There are complex developments in these port complexes, so the ability to create these regulations will be important to achieving the exact objective my colleague is talking about, which is environmental stewardship.

It also is very important that it incorporates by reference all the major acts, such as the Environmental Assessment Act and the Fisheries Act, and that provincial legislation can also be very much a part of this.

I would just ask the member if he believes that it is important for these complex development projects to create the regulatory authority so that we can manage them properly.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Tobique—Mactaquac for his question. As I said in my speech, we are unfortunately using a piecemeal regulatory process.

This question will give me the opportunity to talk about something this budgetary bill does not address, and that is funding for ports. Ms. Zatylny says that it is extremely difficult for a port authority to achieve a threshold of \$100 million in funding, since these authorities do not have support from the federal government. What is more, the funding level leaves a major shortfall that the ports are forced to make up. They are having a hard time doing that.

However, on March 7, 2012, the Conservatives defeated a motion that I had the honour to move in the House and that called on the government to financially and concretely support the Port of Québec, whose facilities are in major need of renovation. This proves once again that the Conservatives speak from both sides of their mouths, instead of facing the challenges of a modern economy. They prefer to do things their way and on their terms, while ignoring the fundamental and concrete needs on the ground.

•(1355)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with economic action 2014, our government continues to demonstrate the importance of a strong public financial system for creating jobs, growth, and opportunities for all Canadians. We are on track to balance the budget without raising taxes. In fact, we have reduced taxes, and we have done it while protecting the programs and services Canadians count on.

*Statements by Members*

Economic action plan 2014 projects that the deficit for this fiscal year will decline to \$2.9 billion, and a surplus of \$6.4 billion is expected next year, as promised. Our plan before the House, through Bill C-43, would build on our record of achievement since 2006, with positive measures to grow the economy, support employment, and support Canadians.

Budget 2014 has broad components that would benefit every segment of our society, but the two I will touch on are Canadian seniors and Canadian farmers. Both of those are major demographics in my Lethbridge riding in southern Alberta. I will start by talking about our support for seniors.

Our Conservative government recognizes that Canada's seniors helped build our country and make it great. That is why economic action plan 2014 would introduce new measures to improve the quality of life for Canada's seniors, including enhancing the new horizons for seniors program by increasing funding by an additional \$5 million a year. Seniors organizations within my Lethbridge riding have reaped the benefits of this program that ensures access to lifelong learning and upgrades to facilities used by seniors.

We would also launch the Canadian employers for caregivers action plan to work with employers so that caregivers could maximize their participation in the workforce while also providing care for their loved ones.

We would expand the targeted initiative for older workers by investing \$75 million to help unemployed older workers put their talents and experience back to work. We would protect seniors using financial services by requiring enhanced disclosure by banks of the costs and benefits of using power of attorney and joint accounts and would require more staff training related to services used by seniors. This would build on our government's strong record of supporting Canadian seniors.

Since 2006, about \$2.8 billion in annual tax relief has been provided to seniors and pensioners, including the introduction of pension income splitting. Seniors have told me that it has saved them taxes every year. They are very appreciative of this tax break. It helps them meet their day-to-day expenses and helps them overcome some of the barriers from fixed incomes. We hear that reported in our office almost every day.

It is interesting to note that in 2006, when we introduced income splitting for seniors, there was not a cry that it only applied to seniors. Most people today recognize that our income splitting for families is just another measure, not a measure intended to cover all bases.

We would also increase the age credit amount by \$2,000. We would double the pension income credit to \$2,000 and would increase the amount that guaranteed income supplemented seniors could earn through employment, without any reduction in their GIS benefits, from \$500 to \$3,500. A single pensioner, for example, earning \$3,500, would now be able to keep up to an additional \$1,500 in annual GIS benefits.

We would increase the age limit for RRSP to RRIF conversions to 71 from 69.

I will stop here and continue after question period.

• (1400)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Unfortunately, I must interrupt. The hon. member for Lethbridge will have six minutes remaining when this matter returns before the House.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing two huge challenges: a large and growing gap in income and a total failure to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. The Conservatives have no plans to reduce either CO<sub>2</sub> or poverty.

There is a simple solution. A carbon dividend, as proposed by the Citizens' Climate Lobby, would price fossil fuels at the source, and CRA would pay those carbon fees straight back to every Canadian family on an equal basis. Energy conservers and low-income Canadians would make money on the carbon dividend.

The Liberals have yet to say how they would price carbon. The NDP is stuck on cumbersome cap and trade, and the Conservatives are stuck on exporting low-value crude at a 30% discount. The Green Party supports a carbon dividend.

I call upon all parties to join together to reduce poverty and dangerous climate change through a carbon fee and dividend.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### BELUGAS

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we learned that the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada changed the status of the St. Lawrence beluga from threatened to endangered.

This decision comes as no surprise since the population of belugas in the St. Lawrence has dropped by over 10% in the past 10 years and now numbers fewer than 900 whales.

In recent years, dozens of dead beluga calves have been found on the banks of the river, and scientists still do not know why. If they had the resources, they could do their job better, but the Conservatives eliminated the ecotoxicology department at the Maurice Lamontagne Institute, which specifically studied the health of the ecosystem in which these majestic creatures live.

*Statements by Members*

Clearly, the slow decline of the beluga population is an important environmental issue, but it also has a serious economic impact: beluga whale watching attracts thousands of tourists every year and the economic spinoffs of this activity are estimated to be over \$150 million for the Charlevoix and Lower St. Lawrence regions.

The public was not really in favour of the oil port in Cacouna to begin with and it has now deemed the project to be unacceptable. The oil port project must be scuttled.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CORNER GAS: THE MOVIE**

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, we met those characters on *Corner Gas*, and they are back, thanks to a successful Kickstarter campaign to fund a feature film. Last night I was delighted to attend the Ottawa premiere of *Corner Gas: The Movie*, after red carpet galas in Saskatoon and Regina.

Canadians can grab some popcorn to watch Brent, Wanda, Lacey, Emma, Davis, Karen, Hank, and Oscar come to the rescue of Canada's favourite small town in theatres across the country from December 3-7. That starts tomorrow.

Following the big-screen run, I expect that the collector's edition DVD will be found under a few Christmas trees this holiday season.

As the MP for Dog River, I mean Rouleau, Saskatchewan, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the entire *Corner Gas* cast for putting us in stitches once again.

\* \* \*

**CORNER GAS: THE MOVIE**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** The Rouleau area farm where I was raised is just five and a half miles straight east of Ruby's Diner in the town of Dog River in the hit CTV series *Corner Gas*.

Through six seasons, 107 episodes, and six Geminis, *Corner Gas* captivated audiences in Saskatchewan, across the country, and abroad. Each broadcast attracted a million viewers and more. Now *Corner Gas* is a movie.

With the down-to-earth nature of rural Saskatchewan, expressed through the most engaging humour, *Corner Gas* was the brainchild of Tisdale's extraordinary Brent Butt. To him and to all his co-stars, Gabrielle Miller, Fred Ewanuick, Eric Peterson, Janet Wright, Tara Spencer-Nairn, Lorne Cardinal, and Nancy Robertson, and to producers Virginia Thompson and David Storey, congratulations from the Parliament of Canada. I thank them for their excellence. Break a leg with *Corner Gas* on the big screen.

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● (1405)

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is making reasonable and common-sense amendments to Canada's firearms laws. Bill C-42, the common sense firearms licensing act, would ensure that Canada's communities remain safe while reducing red tape.

Prior to the introduction of the bill, our laws had not been updated for over 20 years. The common-sense firearms licensing act would ensure mandatory safety training courses and would end needless and ineffective bureaucracy surrounding the authority to transport firearms to ranges, gunsmiths, and the firearm owner's home and property. It would prohibit the possession of firearms by individuals convicted of domestic violence and would ensure that the classification of firearms was accountable to the public and informed by independent expert advice.

However, all the opposition wants to do is fearmonger. The Liberal leader uses fear and dishonesty to make ridiculous and unfounded claims. Unfortunately, Canadians can expect nothing more from the party that brought in the long gun registry and is itching to bring it back. Only our Conservative government will always stand up for Canada's law-abiding hunters, trappers, and sport shooters.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HOUSING**

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, "A roof is a right" is the campaign slogan for several organizations advocating for basic human rights. Canada is the only G7 country without a national housing strategy. The government's failure to accept its housing responsibilities is unacceptable.

In the 2012-13 budget, the government cut the housing envelope by \$21.7 million. The provinces are already stretched to the limit. The lack of social housing and its deterioration due to insufficient funding have reached critical levels, and 1.5 million households do not have access to adequate housing.

The situation in La Pointe-de-l'Île is no exception. In the borough of Rivière-des-Prairies—Pointe-aux-Trembles, 6,500 people spend more than 30% of their income on housing. According to the director of Infologis de l'est de l'île de Montréal, these figures are alarming because families are often forced to spend less on other essential items, such as food. In Pointe-aux-Trembles, 19% of households spend more than 50% of their income on housing. That makes no sense.

In 2009, the Prime Minister promised the UN Human Rights Council that he would work with the provinces and territories to ensure that Canadians—

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

\* \* \*

**FUR INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome members of the Fur Institute of Canada to Ottawa for the annual fur day on the Hill.

*Statements by Members*

When Canadians hear about the fur industry, they probably think back to their high school history lessons about the traders and voyageurs who helped build this great country. However, do members know that the modern fur industry contributed over \$1 billion to the Canadian economy last year? Retail fur sales in North America topped \$4 billion, and globally they were close to \$36 billion.

There are an estimated 50,000 trappers in Canada, and 40% of those are from our first nations and Inuit communities. About 250 families in each of our federal ridings directly depend on the fur industry for their livelihood, and it is not just trapping. Farmed fur in Canada from 300 operations countrywide is worth \$280 million.

Members can see that the fur trade is not just something for the history books. It is a vital and growing contributor to our national economy.

\* \* \*

#### ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Today we recognize that modern-day forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, child labour, forced marriage, and child soldiers, continue to thrive. Global profits exceed \$150 billion.

Today we also recognize that while virtually every nation has outlawed slavery, 20-30 million men, women, and children are still enslaved, some for generations. This is outrageous. Slavery is a vicious assault on basic human rights that we cherish and uphold.

Let us not forget that abolishing slavery requires far more than lip service and a reflection on past victories in our countries. To abolish slavery, we must be united in listening to the voices of the victims, we must be united in our actions, and we must be united in our partnerships. I am convinced that we can abolish slavery in our generation.

We can do better for victims of slavery. We must do better.

\* \* \*

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since I was first elected in 2002, I have repeatedly called for the government to develop a national automotive strategy. In 2003 the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council released a report calling on the federal government to protect the industry and create a policy, but promise after promise, including from the former Conservative industry minister, fell by the wayside.

Here we are, 11 years after CAPC's first report, and once again these industry leaders and experts have released another call for action to develop a strategy. They are clear that the time to act is now, or Canada will lose its important foothold in this industry.

Who has a national auto strategy? It is the U.K., France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Australia, China, India, Sweden, Mexico, Malaysia, and Nigeria. They are all competing for the same jobs.

The Canadian auto industry has been a large part of Canada's history and our economic strength for generations. It is time for the government to work with industry and labour leaders to create a real policy, one that innovates our industry, challenges our competition, and puts workers back to work with a paycheque and a household.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the constituents in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga believe that mothers and fathers should be able to make the most important decisions that affect their own children. That is why our new family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will give 100% of families with kids an average of more than \$1,100 per year to spend on their priorities. The majority of benefits flow to low- and middle-income families.

Our government trusts parents to invest in their children, but the opposition is against putting money in the pockets of hard-working families. They would rather take that money away and give it to bureaucrats here in Ottawa.

On this side of the House, we will not hike taxes, as proposed by the Liberals and the NDP. Rather, we are proud to be putting money back into the pockets of Canadians, where it belongs.

\* \* \*

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I think that all members in this place agree that Canadians should be able to raise their families in a clean, healthy environment. Regrettably, what is lacking is the political will in the Conservative government to actually extend that right to Canadians and their communities.

What is particularly galling is that two decades ago, Canada committed to do exactly that. Under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, Canada must ensure that Canadians are given a voice in all decisions impacting their environment, yet the pattern of behaviour by federal governments since has been to declare those grandiose commitments in international arenas but fail to act on them back home.

*Statements by Members*

To make matters worse, the government rescinded even the meagre environmental rights and duties once accorded under federal law and did so without public consultation or consent. To remedy this, I once again tabled the Canadian environmental bill of rights. My bill would impose clear duties on the government to protect our environment, empower Canadians to hold the government accountable, and allow the public to participate in all decisions impacting their environment.

In the public interest, I implore the Conservative government to comply with its commitments, restore the rescinded environmental measures, and make Canadians' right to a clean and healthy environment a reality.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 100% of families with children in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and across Canada will be better off thanks to our new family tax cut.

As Conservatives, we are expanding and increasing the enhanced universal child care benefit so that every family in Canada, like families in my riding, will receive over \$1,900 per year for each child under the age of six. Over six years, this will amount to more than \$11,000 per child. A family that decides to have three children could benefit by more than \$30,000. This new money will make a real difference for parents by allowing them to invest in their children's future.

However, the NDP has never met a tax it did not like, and the Liberals have never seen a tax that they would not hike. Both the Liberals and the NDP would reverse our tax cuts and force every Canadian to pay more. Only our Conservative government can be trusted to put more money back into the pockets of Canadians.

\* \* \*

**NUNATSIAVUT**

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the ninth anniversary of the settlement of the Labrador Inuit land claim and the creation of the Nunatsiavut Government. Nunatsiavut, which in Inuktitut means “our beautiful land”, was the first Inuit region in Canada to achieve self-governance, which is a proud accomplishment for all Labrador Inuit and Labradorians.

Under the strong leadership of President Sarah Leo, Nunatsiavut has been vocal in calling for an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women as well as in seeking recognition by the government for the suffering that occurred in residential schools. In addition, it has been looking to the government for an Inuit housing strategy for Nunatsiavut.

Labrador is stronger and more successful thanks to the major role that Nunatsiavut has played in economic development, health, and education. I congratulate the people of Nunatsiavut for their insight and hard work and I congratulate them on this anniversary. I look forward to many more years of successful governance in Nunatsiavut.

●(1415)

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Christmas and New Year's are fast approaching, and it is time to take advantage of the enhanced children's fitness tax credit. Hockey, ice skating, and other winter sports are high priorities on many children's Christmas wish lists.

Now mom and dad have a large Christmas gift as well. We have doubled the children's fitness tax credit to \$1,000 and made it refundable. In addition, families in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex will be able to claim the new family tax cut of income-splitting savings of up to \$2,000 a year. They will receive the enhanced universal child care benefit of almost \$2,000 for each child under the age of six and \$720 for those aged six to 17. They can also start saving receipts for the extra \$1,000 per child in increased child care expense deductions.

The Conservative government is about giving to Canadians. The opposition says that it will take it away. Now, that is not very Christmaslike.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT MINISTERS**

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the further we get into the fall sitting, the further the Conservative ministers sink.

We have a Minister of Veterans Affairs who is failing veterans, who announced funding over six years, which turned out to be 50 years, and who left the country instead of being held to account.

We have a Minister of the Environment who reads the newspaper in the House and who is threatening legal action against the deputy mayor of Rankin Inlet instead of helping her constituents who are getting food from the dump.

We have a Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food who attacks farmers' collective marketing system and who axed the Canadian Wheat Board.

Yesterday, the Minister of State for Social Development said that question period was not the time to ask questions.

An NDP government will not fail veterans, residents of the north, farmers or the homeless. We are approaching 2015, and Canadians realize that it is finally time to get rid of this government.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the horrific terrorist attacks that occurred in late October are a reminder that ISIL is a very real threat to Canadians. It is the reason that we are working to strengthen the tools available to the police and the intelligence community in the areas of surveillance, detention, and arrest.

The protection of Canada from terrorists act is just the first step in our efforts. We will not overreact, but we will not under-react either. I was shocked yesterday to see the NDP oppose this common sense legislation to give our security agencies appropriate powers with robust oversight. The NDP members for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Alfred-Pellan, and Compton—Stanstead need to explain to Canadians why they do not support giving our security agencies the tools they need to do their jobs.

This is further proof that the NDP simply cannot be trusted on important matters of national security.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first the Minister of Veterans Affairs flees the country to avoid answering questions about the Auditor General's damning report. Then we find out that when he did announce new funding for mental health for veterans, he concealed the fact that the funding would be paid out over 50 years. Now we learn that the veterans affairs ministry is actually being taken over by a staffer from the Prime Minister's office, one who we all remember from the Mike Duffy scandal.

Does it not show a lack of confidence that the Prime Minister has had to impose third-party management on one of his own ministers?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition is talking about. I do note that the former chief of the defence staff, General Walt Natynczyk, has become the new deputy minister of Veterans Affairs, which is a very positive thing.

As for the travels of the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Minister of Veterans Affairs was in Italy with veterans of the Second World War who were celebrating the 70th anniversary of that successful Canadian military campaign. I can think of no greater honour than for the Minister of Veterans Affairs to accompany those Canadian veterans.

● (1420)

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, maybe a fifth one is in trouble but we have not heard about it.

How about if he stops denying the facts? The Prime Minister clearly put his own Minister of Veterans Affairs under third-party

management. The person in charge now is the Prime Minister's very own director of media relations. If the Prime Minister has forgotten his name, it is Stephen Lecce, who is famous for his role in the Mike Duffy scandal.

If the minister cannot run his own office, then why is he still the minister?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that man had nothing to do with the Mike Duffy affair.

I would like to point out that General Natynczyk, the former chief of the defence staff, is the new deputy minister of Veterans Affairs. Accepting that appointment was an excellent thing. Last week, the Minister of Veterans Affairs was in Italy with veterans to celebrate the 70th anniversary of their campaign in Italy during the Second World War.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not trust his minister to run his own office. He had to send in one of his henchmen, yet he is going to let the minister look after tens of thousands of veterans. He cannot be serious.

[English]

Since the Prime Minister has shown that he has, indeed, lost confidence in this minister, why is he still there?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all ministers, of course, have chiefs of staff. I gather even the leader of the NDP has a chief of staff obviously watching over the slow descent of that party.

The Leader of the Opposition did raise another question about the accounting of funds in the new veterans announcement. I would point out that using the Auditor General's standards of accrual accounting over a life cycle, the cost of these new announcements by the government are, in fact, \$200 million over the next six years. Obviously, those funds are available to veterans over many decades, over their lifetime. We take care of veterans for their lifetime.

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**NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Those are reasons he does not want Nigel testifying, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, instead of answering serious questions about the Auditor General's scathing report on her hopeless mismanagement, the environment minister just ignored questions and sat there reading a newspaper.

People are scavenging for food in landfills in the Canadian north in 2014. It is shameful, and the government's response is to deny and ignore the tragedy.

Will the Prime Minister tell his minister to put down the newspaper and start doing her job?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the people of Nunavut have never had stronger representation. The Auditor General did not say the words the leader of the NDP would put in his mouth.



The fact is that over \$60 million a year are being put into this new program by the Government of Canada, a record investment. There has been a 25% increase in the shipping of healthy, perishable foods to the north and a drop of \$100 a month in the average family's food prices.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency does not care about those who have nothing to eat, the Minister of Agriculture is unable to deliver grain because he scrapped the Canadian Wheat Board, the Minister of Veterans Affairs has lost the confidence of his Prime Minister, and yesterday, during question period, the Minister of State for Social Development said that it was not the time to ask questions. They are the four horsemen of the Conservative apocalypse.

How many of them will be put under third-party management by the end of the session? The entire front row?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to compare our government's record to that of the NDP.

• (1425)

[English]

Never have northerners, never have veterans, never have Canadian farmers been more supportive of the government. We have the record to show that. Never have people been so little supportive of the NDP that actually had to rob parliamentary funds to pay for its own party—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask the right hon. Prime Minister to avoid using terms like that in the House, as I did yesterday to the opposition. I do not think it is helpful to the tone of debate in the House.

The hon. member for Papineau.

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#### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, veterans deserve honesty and they deserve to be a priority. To mitigate the damaging Auditor General's report, the Prime Minister trumpeted \$200 million in veterans funding, hoping we would not see the small print that explained it was to be given over 50 years.

Why billions for immediate tax breaks that help wealthy families like the Prime Minister's or my own, but only pennies for veterans?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** In fact, Mr. Speaker, this government has invested over five billion additional dollars in veterans programs. I know the Liberal Party has opposed that every step of the way, just as the Liberal Party has opposed every tax cut we have brought in for Canadian families.

#### Oral Questions

No matter how many times the Liberal Party votes against veterans, no matter how many times it votes against tax cuts for Canadian families, this government will move forward with those.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's priority is tax breaks for the wealthy instead of meeting our sacred obligation to our veterans. His new plan is worth even less per year than the savings from closing the nine veterans services offices.

It is by now, clear to all that the Prime Minister owes veterans an apology. Will he stand and apologize?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only party that has to apologize is the Liberal Party for voting against every one of the \$5 billion worth of investments we have made in Veterans Affairs. The Liberal Party tries to play veterans off against taxpayers, saying in some way that we cannot do things for both. In fact, as members know, the tax benefits that we have recently brought in for Canadian families benefit every Canadian family in the country.

Canadians will tell the Liberal Party leader that when he goes around the country trying to figure out how he can take that money away from them to put it into the coffers of the government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our veterans deserve to be treated with respect, a principle that has been violated by this Prime Minister. He prefers advertising and propaganda to offering crucial mental health services. It is clear to everyone that the Prime Minister has his priorities all wrong. Will he finally apologize to our veterans?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the only party that needs to apologize to veterans is the Liberal Party, which voted against \$5 billion in investments for our veterans. Our government is the one that created nearly all of the veterans' mental health services. These services barely existed when the Liberals were in power.

At the same time, we cut taxes for Canadian families. We will continue to invest in our veterans and give tax breaks to families.

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[English]

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the report tabled by the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner today paints a troubling picture.

RCMP flights took off overweight and then logs were falsified to cover it up. This report raises concerns from both a safety and an integrity perspective. What is even more alarming is the lengths the Conservatives went to in order to keep this report from being public.

Why did the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness go to court to try to block the Integrity Commissioner from doing his job?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is right. As this relates to a matter before the court, it would be inappropriate to comment any further.

Let me quote what the Integrity Commissioner had to say about the RCMP: "I am satisfied with the RCMP's response on this matter." So I am. While I expect the RCMP to conduct itself in the highest manner, we fully support it when it is protecting us, and we will continue to do so.

• (1430)

[Translation]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this matter is no longer before the court. The report has now been made public.

The Integrity Commissioner's report is certainly worrisome. What is even more worrisome is the Conservative assault on auditors. The Conservatives took office in 2006 promising transparency and protection for whistle-blowers, but instead they went to court to prevent the Integrity Commissioner from publishing his report on the RCMP.

Why did the Conservatives not want this report to be released?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Integrity Commissioner. He said that he was satisfied with the RCMP's response.

Of course, we thank the commissioner for his report. We expect the RCMP to continue to be professional both in serving the public and in its administrative management. I am convinced that it will continue working hard to protect the public.

\* \* \*

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, people with terminal cancer, people who have had organ transplants, people with severe depression and people who are in debt are among the 14,000 Canadians who are still waiting for their case to be heard by the Social Security Tribunal, which has an ever-growing backlog.

Does the minister think it is acceptable that thousands of Canadians have been waiting for years to get the disability benefits to which they are entitled? What is he going to do to rectify the situation?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are talking about an appeal process. Obviously, we are talking about individuals whose applications for benefits were rejected initially and who are then subsequently filing an appeal.

That being said, we are working to reduce the Social Security Tribunal's backlog of income security cases. That is why we have added 22 part-time decision makers to the tribunal and have moved 12 decision makers from the EI section to the pension section. We are going to continue working with the chair of the tribunal to speed up the process.

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with more than 14,000 people waiting for a hearing now, the Conservatives' mismanagement of the Social Security Tribunal has created a situation where people who are terminally ill or so heavily in debt that they are suicidal have to beg to have their cases heard quickly. This is completely outrageous. Canadians have paid for these benefits with their premiums. They should not have to go begging when they need them.

How could the Conservatives let this happen?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure, inadvertently, the member is misleading us when she suggests that this is a denial of benefits for those who apply, when in fact we are talking about individuals whose applications for benefits were rejected initially and who are then subsequently filing an appeal.

We are working with the chair of the Social Security Tribunal to accelerate the process. We have added 22 part-time decision makers. We have moved 12 decision makers from the EI section to the pension section. We are looking at additional actions necessary to speed up the process.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, things have gotten so bad at the Social Security Tribunal that the tribunal is telling people who have been living without any income for multiple years that they cannot expedite their hearing because it would be unfair to all the other people who are in exactly the same situation and still waiting for a hearing.

Why can the government not get its act together, instead of telling desperate people to get in line behind all the other people living without an income?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, any time there is a process where people are applying, the normal process is for those applications to be considered in the order in which they were received. Only in the sort of fantasy world of the NDP could they all be considered at the same time. That is obviously not possible in the real world.

In the real world, we are working with the tribunal to add additional decision makers to speed up the process and reduce the backlog. Of course there is the good news that there has been a 90% reduction in the number of EI appeals being filed because of a fast-track process of reconsideration by officials in my department, which is working very well for EI applicants.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the real world the Conservatives have failed Canadians just when they needed help the most.

The Minister of the Environment and her Conservative government have failed to rise to the urgent challenge of fighting climate change. The world is gathering in Lima right now to move forward and set the stage for a global agreement on climate change that will be finalized next year in Paris.

Will the minister finally deliver on the government's long-promised oil and gas regulations, or is it happy to make Canada an international pariah?

• (1435)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are playing a leadership role on the international stage. We have contributed \$1.2 billion to more than 60 developing countries to reduce emissions and to adapt to climate change. Last week we announced an additional \$300 million for the green climate fund, and we are a founding member and a major financial contributor to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. We are also addressing short-lived climate pollutants under Canada's chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

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

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives promised oil and gas regulations, they promised to act if the U. S. acted, and they promised to reduce our emissions. The only thing that they are any good at is breaking promises. Now we are not even on side with the Obama administration and what it is doing.

The minister's own department admits that her 2020 targets will not be met by a long shot, so what exactly are the Conservatives going to offer in Lima?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our record. We are a founding member of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. We have made significant investments to help support green energy infrastructure internationally. We have one of the cleanest systems in the world. We have already regulated the transportation and electricity sector. We are planning to reduce HFCs, one of the fastest growing greenhouse gas emissions in the world. Thanks to these actions, carbon emissions will go down by close to 130 megatonnes from what they would have been under the Liberals, and without introducing an NDP carbon tax.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to trust a minister who would rather attack her own constituents than tackle their problems.

As the United Nations conference on climate change gets under way, our partners are wondering whether the Conservatives have taken note of the agreement between China and the U.S., and whether they will once again show up in Lima empty-handed or, alternatively, with a plan and more stringent commitments.

Will the Conservatives finally take climate change seriously and announce a credible plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with 79% of our electricity supply emitting no greenhouse gas emissions. We have

taken actions on two of the largest sources of emissions in Canada, the transportation sector and the electricity generation sector. Canada has also become one of the first major coal users to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation units. Canada's per capita greenhouse emissions are now at the lowest levels since we started recording in 1990, and the total emissions will go down by close to 130 megatonnes.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been irresponsible regarding the fight against greenhouse gas emissions and it is no better when it comes to protecting species.

Yesterday the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada determined that the beluga should be on the endangered species list. According to marine mammal experts, pollution and noise disturbance are the main threats to the species. Even TransCanada has suspended its work off the coast of Cacouna for an indefinite period of time.

Will the Conservatives put an end to the oil port project, which is right in the middle of the belugas' breeding grounds? While they are at it, will they also do the right thing and create a marine protected area for the St. Lawrence estuary?

[English]

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that our government is fully committed to protecting species at risk. That is why we have made significant investments in implementing the Species at Risk Act. We are also taking additional measures under the national conservation plan.

Regarding the COSEWIC reassessment of beluga, we will follow the normal practice of making a status decision after consultations with Canadians, taking a new look at the scientific evidence, and all impacts are considered.

I should note, though, that the St. Lawrence estuary beluga is already listed, so it has already the needed legal restrictions.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this Saturday will mark the 25th anniversary of the tragic events at École Polytechnique and this government is not welcome.

In fact, according to one of the survivors, the government “does not share our values. It ignores the advice of experts, police, and women's groups fighting domestic violence.”

The survivors' group opposes the Conservatives' Bill C-42. Can the minister tell us how he will explain this bill to Quebecers and Canadians?

*Oral Questions*

●(1440)

*[English]*

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week we remember the horrific events that took place in Montreal at École Polytechnique 25 years ago, and while we may never understand what occurred, why this happened, why these women were singled out for this horrific act of violence, we have to stand together. We have to work continually to support victims, to hold offenders accountable, and we are creating a safer and more secure country by doing so.

We are committed to continue in that effort, but it will require tremendous efforts from all sides of the House and from all Canadians.

\* \* \*

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past year, the Conservatives have closed nine regional Veterans Affairs offices, slashed the department's budget, and laid off staff. Veterans I know must wait months or even years to receive the mental health services they require, and the minister continues to mislead veterans and turn his back on those who attempt to voice their concerns.

Meanwhile in the estimates, the Conservatives have asked for another \$5 million for advertising. This neglect of Canada's veterans must stop. When will the minister do the right thing and resign?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are making substantial improvements that are generating better outcomes for Canadian veterans, such as increasing investments while expanding rehabilitation and retraining, faster record transfer between National Defence and Veterans Affairs, better medical treatment, starting with better research, and this is all part of our effort to make things better for Canadian wounded veterans and their families.

That work is continuing, and I am proud to be part of that team.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this has played out like a bad movie, and this minister has been the star in each of those scenes.

We have seen the video clips of him being chased down the hall by the wife of an injured veteran. We have seen him walk into a room full of decorated veterans—veterans bent over at the waist because of the weight of the medals on their chests—and lecture them.

We have seen 3,500 people marching on the streets of Sydney, Nova Scotia, veterans among them. These are men and women who marched into Europe, marched across Bosnia, marched into Afghanistan, and now they feel obliged to march for what is theirs.

When will the Prime Minister remove this minister?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the opposition continues to misrepresent and manifest all kinds of fearmongering, I just want to remind the member opposite of his party's voting credentials.

It did not vote for disability and death compensation, did not vote for veterans ombudsman funding, did not vote for Pension Act payments, did not vote for disability awards allowance, and did not vote for children of deceased veterans education assistance.

I hardly think we need to take any lessons from that party.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***ETHICS**

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the integrity of the Canada Elections Act is a government responsibility. Yesterday, Michel Paulette, another former Conservative candidate, was found guilty of violating the Canada Elections Act and was sentenced to repaying the \$10,000 he stole from taxpayers.

At the same time, the Conservatives acknowledged that they had received \$25,000 from SNC-Lavalin through third parties. The Conservatives cannot just say that it is SNC-Lavalin's fault. They must pay back the money.

Will the Minister of State for Democratic Reform make sure that this happens?

*[English]*

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as members know, there are strict personal donation limits of \$1,200 a year. Of course, no corporate or union donations are allowed. That has been the case since 2006, when this government brought in the accountability act.

If SNC-Lavalin is found to have donated illegally, we would repay those funds, as we would expect of all parties.

●(1445)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up with the member on section 404 of the Canada Elections Act, because in this ongoing investigation into the illegal financing schemes by SNC-Lavalin, the Minister of International Development has now admitted that his riding association received \$25,000 from SNC-Lavalin executives.

We also learned that a Conservative candidate misappropriated \$10,000 to pay for rent and clothes.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. If it is accepted that he received this money, under the Canada Elections Act, does he not believe that this money has to be returned?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, there are strict personal donation limits that were brought in by this government under the accountability act. Corporate and union donations are not allowed. Anybody found in violation of that will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. If SNC-Lavalin has done that, we would repay any of those funds, as we would expect of all parties.

At the same time, we were very disappointed when the NDP accepted \$300,000 worth of illegal union donations, of course, in contravention of the law that we brought forward in 2006.

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**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Farmers of North America, a group of more than 3,000 Canadian farmer investors, recently offered to buy the Canadian Wheat Board for—get this—about \$250 million to \$300 million, which they thought it was worth.

The Conservatives rejected the offer. They did not give a reason. They just said no.

Now, we hear the minister will hand over the Wheat Board's assets to the private sector for a grand total of—get this—zero. That is right: nothing, nada, no thank you; just give it away.

I ask a simple question. Why would the Conservative government give away these assets free to multinational corporations instead of simply selling to Canadian farmers and actually gaining a real value for Canadian farmers—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the easy answer is that absolutely none of that is true or based upon any kind of fact at all.

The Farmers of North America's bid was adjudicated by a third-party auditor and legal team that the CWB put into place. This was not a political process.

As to the assets of the CWB, they will become part of a privatization plan as it looks to recapitalize with another partner. That is exactly what is happening, under the auspices—as I said, all these tenders are looked at through the eyes of a third-party audit team, as well as a legal team.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us see if I understand the Conservatives' business plan for the Canadian Wheat Board.

First, they take the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world and then they give it away, free of charge, to an American agri-food giant which, until recently, was its greatest competitor.

My question is simple, and I ask it through you, Mr. Speaker.

Has the minister lost his freaking mind? Or is he that—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

That is extremely unhelpful.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**TAXATION**

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Quebec government recently announced a legislative measure that will increase the cost of provincial daycare for many families. In its current form, the increase will be tied to family income.

Can the Minister of National Revenue tell the House whether these additional daycare expenses will be eligible for federal tax deductions?

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a direct result of measures recently announced by our government, four million families will receive an extra \$1,100 a year on average. I can tell the House that additional daycare expenses will be eligible for federal tax deductions.

While our government puts money back in the pockets of Canadian families, the NDP and the Liberals take it away.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the World Food Programme suspended its aid to Syrian refugees for lack of money. This program was helping 1.7 million Syrian refugees scattered within Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, and half of those refugees are children. This suspension comes as winter is approaching and it will have an absolutely devastating impact.

What options is the government considering to ensure that this program continues to provide support to Syrian refugees?

● (1450)

[*English*]

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the United Nations actually said is that the problem really is that countries who have promised money are not actually paying. However, I am pleased to inform the House that Canada is the third-largest donor to the World Food Programme, and we are all paid up.

Nevertheless, we are very concerned about the reports today of a shortage at the World Food Programme and are urgently examining ways that Canada can continue to help with additional assistance to the World Food Programme and those affected populations in the region.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's last humanitarian announcement for Syria was almost a year ago. Since then we have seen the government abandon bringing Syrian refugees to Canada. The Prime Minister claimed at the time that he would do everything to ensure there would not be a lost generation in Syria. Now, the World Food Programme says that the upcoming suspension of food will be disastrous for already suffering families and could escalate already high tensions in Syria and surrounding countries.

The question is, will the government increase aid now for Syrian refugees and live up to the Prime Minister's promise?

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, under our government we as a country pay what we pledge. We are the third largest contributor to the situation in Syria and Iraq, and we will continue to examine ways that we can help more.

We are very concerned about the situation for the Syrian refugees. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that assistance gets there.

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[Translation]

**HOUSING**

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question to ask during question period. A girl can try.

Again, community agencies are knocking on the NDP's doors because they feel abandoned by the Conservatives. The minister told us that all the money for fighting homelessness has been spent, but, on the ground, we are hearing a very different story. The agencies submitted their applications. They have not received a response and their deadlines are fast approaching.

When will these agencies get clear responses to their funding requests?

[English]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I tried to explain to the member, who was not at the meeting but sent her staff instead, these project proposals come in and are reviewed in Quebec by a joint committee of federal and Quebec civil servants.

What this is about is the NDP not supporting the evidence-based approach called Housing First. Housing First actually helps end homelessness. It is an approach that we have adopted with HPS.

The opposition does not approve of it. It does not support it, nor does it come to meetings to learn more about it.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was at that meeting and I can vouch for what my colleague is saying.

The minister says that the investments increased, and that the HPS and the Housing First initiative are in place and working well.

In that case, can the minister tell us what will become of the application of the group of non-profit organizations in Hull—Aylmer that I personally handed to her for the second time yesterday? Will

the organizations receive money to help people in the Outaouais with inadequate housing?

[English]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the absolute fact is all of the funding under the HPS program is available for Quebec.

As proposals come in, and as I explained to the member, there is a joint committee made up of Quebec officials and federal officials who make those decisions. Due diligence is taken to ensure that those programs and projects fit within the parameters. I would be happy to meet with her again to look at that specific project.

Again, the evidence is in that Housing First works. We have recommitted our investment and we will keep focusing on getting real results, not putting money into activists, like the NDP would like us to do.

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**NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, reports of Inuit eating from landfill sites in Rankin Inlet, reports of hunger in remote Arctic communities, the Auditor General's damning report on the Nutrition North food subsidy program, and homelessness all add up to the complete neglect of Canada's northern and Arctic residents.

All the while, the minister for the Arctic threatens lawsuits and reads the daily newspaper. When will the abuse and neglect of the Inuit people stop?

● (1455)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the well-being of Nunavummiut and the families there is a top priority, and has always been my top priority. As an Inuk born and raised in Canada's north, I know how important access to healthy food is in our communities for our children and our families.

Developing healthy communities has been and continues to be a top priority.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, northerners are fed up with the environment minister's litany of denial. The people of Rankin Inlet are scrounging through the dump for food.

Does she think APTN hired actors to do this? Is she denying that she contacted the hamlet office demanding an apology to the Conservative Party and an endorsement of Nutrition North Canada? Is she denying that her office threatened to sue officials from Rankin Inlet?

Will the minister just put down her newspaper and do something for northerners unable to feed their families?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the well-being of Nunavummiut has always been and continues to be a priority of mine.

The allegations by the deputy mayor of Rankin Inlet regarding an apology are completely false. As an Inuk born and raised in Canada's north, I know how important it is for northerners to have access to healthy food for our children and for our families, whether that be food we buy from the store or access to country food, like seal, polar bear, whales, and so forth.

I will continue to stand up for northerners, and the food issue continues to be a priority.

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**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative cuts to science continue to take their toll. Their cancellation of the major resource support program has put in jeopardy a national science facility here in Ottawa.

The Ultrahigh-Field NMR Facility is one of the most advanced spectrometers in the world. It has been used by hundreds of researchers for wide-ranging discoveries, including vision and carbon dioxide storage.

We invested nearly \$12 million to build it. Are the Conservatives really so short-sighted that they will let it die for want of \$200,000?

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government, as this member knows, has made record investments in science, technology, and innovation, and creates jobs and opportunities and improves the lives of Canadians.

He should know that the National Research Council has come to an agreement with the University of Ottawa to ensure that research continues at the Ultrahigh-Field Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Facility for Solids over the short term. The University of Ottawa plans to transfer the research to a new facility soon. He would want to know that.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have cut \$1.7 billion from science funding over the past five years. The figures speak for themselves. The National Ultrahigh-field NMR Facility for Solids in Ottawa is another research centre that is at risk of being shut down as a result of the Conservatives' blind cuts.

This facility was built in 2005 and it still needs \$200,000 to cover its annual operating costs. If this facility shuts down less than 10 years after it opened, \$12 million will have been wasted. Why are the Conservatives such bad managers?

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has made record investments in science, technology and innovation, which have helped create jobs and opportunities and have improved the lives of Canadians.

The National Research Council came to an agreement with the University of Ottawa to ensure that research will continue in the short term at the National Ultrahigh-field NMR Facility for Solids.

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[*English*]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about the protection of our national security. Too often, the collective instinct is to under-react to these threats. While I do not believe that the government should overreact, I believe that a full response to these threats is necessary.

Last night, the NDP voted to block the protection of Canada from terrorists act from proceeding, despite the need to give security agencies the tools they need to do their job.

Could the Minister of Public Safety please update the House on the progress of this important legislation?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed to learn that NDP members did not support this common-sense legislation to empower our national security agencies, but I should not be surprised since they opposed the Combating Terrorism Act.

● (1500)

[*Translation*]

How could anyone be opposed to a measure that clarifies the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and ensures that an accused has access to a fair and just process under all Canadian laws?

I thank my Conservatives colleagues who fortunately stand tall to keep our country safe.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we debated the cluster munitions bill in committee, the government suggested that investing in companies that produce cluster munitions would be considered aiding and abetting the production of these devastating weapons.

Is the government aware of a recent report by a Dutch organization called PAX, which lists two prominent Canadian financial institutions that appear to have made investments in companies producing cluster munitions? What is it prepared to do if this report is true?

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to have participated actively in the negotiations on the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We were one of the first countries to have signed on to the convention in 2008.

### Oral Questions

Our legislation fully implements Canada's commitment to the convention. It strikes a good balance between humanitarian obligations and preserving our national security and interests.

Our bill prohibits the use, deployment, possession, movement, import and export of cluster munitions, and assistance in these activities.

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### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the Minister of Justice said this about December 6, the 25th anniversary of the tragedy of Polytechnique. He said that "...we may never understand what occurred, why this happened, why these women were singled out".

We know why this happened. We know why these women were singled out. It is because they were women. That is what Marc Lepine wrote in a manifesto.

Is there anything that the minister would like to correct in his previous statement?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course they were singled out because they were women. That was exactly the point of expressing misunderstanding among anyone out there who would possibly suggest that women and girls should ever be targeted, should ever be subject to violence. That is the emphasis. We want to bring people together around stopping and putting every effort into avoiding violence, or anything that would ever put women and girls at risk.

To try to make this a partisan issue on such a day is deeply disappointing from the member.

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### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like many Canadians, my constituents are concerned about the well-being of newborns, children, and new mothers in the developing world.

I was proud last weekend to see a Canadian woman, Michaëlle Jean, elected as the secretary-general of la Francophonie. I was also proud to see our Prime Minister's continued leadership in the fight to save the lives of mothers and children in the developing world.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development update this House on the announcement the Prime Minister made in Dakar, Senegal?

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was a great weekend for Canada as one of our own was elected to lead la Francophonie. It was also an opportunity to highlight our government's continued leadership on maternal, newborn, and child health.

On the margins of la Francophonie summit, the Prime Minister announced an enormously important contribution that will enable the immunization of an additional 300 million children, and it aims to save the lives of up to six million.

This announcement signals Canada's continued leadership in global efforts to improve the lives and the health of moms and babies.

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### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has just asked us if there is anything he could do to avoid putting women at greater risk.

Actually, there is something that the government could do to avoid putting women or girls at risk. It could withdraw Bill C-42 that is before the House, because it would make exactly the type of assault weapon used by Marc Lepine easier to transport and easier to have in Canada. The Ruger in question should be banned instead of being easier to get and transport in Canada.

Will he withdraw Bill C-42, if he is sincere about having better protection for women in this country?

● (1505)

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I invite the opposition member to get his act together and to support a bill that would require mandatory training for anyone who wants to own or acquire a weapon, that combats domestic violence and that strengthens the standards regarding the import of illegal weapons.

We will continue to implement effective measures and standards, and we will protect Canadians. I urge the opposition member to support us.

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance said that the National Energy Board alone would determine if the west-east pipeline project is safe for Canada's environment and Canadians.

In Quebec, we are not counting on the board. We are counting on the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement. That is the organization that is responsible for the environmental and safety assessments of this pipeline. It will take into consideration whether Quebecers feel the project is acceptable and the repercussions in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

Will the Minister of Finance stop aligning himself with pipeline lobbyists and commit to respecting Quebec's environmental process?

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition, we will not take a stance before the review is completed.

It is up to the National Energy Board to listen to those who are directly affected and have relevant information or knowledge in that area. We base our decisions on science and facts.

We have been clear. Projects will be studied only if they are safe for Canadians and will not harm the environment.



*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** That is the end of oral questions for today.

[*English*]

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, on Friday the member for Hamilton Centre got up in the House and said that I had lied when I told my dear friend that we would beat him in the Grey Cup.

Now that we have beaten him, can he get up and apologize to me, as I did not lie in the House?

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day for those of us in Hamilton, and an even sadder one for me at this moment.

I think we can all reflect back on the Speaker's ruling at that time, when he said that this matter, given that it was in the future, would be resolved over the weekend, and it was, although not necessarily in the way that we in Hamilton would have liked it to have been resolved.

It is with a heavy heart but with a sense of national Canadian spirit that I congratulate our competitors on winning the Grey Cup, but make no mistake: "Oskee Wee Wee". We will be there next year.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1510)

[*English*]

### ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before question period I got into some of the benefits that are being provided to seniors through this budget. We have also reviewed some of the benefits that they have received over the past several years since the Conservatives formed government. Therefore, I will just finish up on some of the benefits of seniors and then move on to the benefits to farmers and the agricultural sector.

We have established a landmark tax-free savings account, which does not benefit seniors only but which is particularly beneficial for seniors, as neither income earned in a TFSA nor withdrawals from a TFSA affect their federal income-tested benefits and credits, such as the GIS.

We have introduced the largest GIS increase over 25 years, which gave eligible low-income seniors additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples, thus helping more than 680,000 seniors across Canada.

Our government's low-tax plan has helped remove over 380,000 seniors from the tax rolls altogether. In fact, in 2014 a single senior can earn at least \$20,000 and a senior couple at least \$40,000 before paying a penny in federal income taxes.

We could go on about seniors, but I want to talk a bit more about farmers.

As everyone knows, family farms are the backbone of our country. For generations, our farmers have fed Canadians and the world,

while providing jobs and opportunities across Canada and stimulating the economy in general. We have been relentless in our efforts to halt country of origin labelling, or COOL, ensuring an open and transparent market for Canadian beef. I have met with Canadian beef ranchers and cattle feeders in the last couple of weeks, and they have announced that their industry is better than it has been in decades.

Earlier this year we introduced rail regulations to increase movement of prairie grain to coastal ports for export worldwide. That was welcomed by our local producers.

Economic action plan 2014 includes a number of measures to support Canadian farmers even further, as well as innovations in agriculture. Some of these measures include expanding tax deferrals for livestock to include bees and all horses over 12 months that are kept for breeding but are sold because of drought or excess moisture; supporting innovation and competitiveness in the agricultural sector by modernizing the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, including farmers' privilege, which allows farmers to save, condition, and reuse their seeds for planting on their own farm; and introducing a new pilot price insurance program to provide cattle and hog producers in western Canada with insurance against unexpected price declines within a production cycle.

This builds on our government's proud support for Canadian farmers and the agricultural sector since 2006.

Some of those measures include providing over \$11 billion, including provincial and territorial contributions, to farmers through business risk management programs such as AgriStability, AgriInsurance, AgriInvest, and AgriRecovery; providing over \$3 billion, including provincial and territorial contributions, towards investments in innovation, competitiveness, and market development for Canada's agricultural sector under Growing Forward 2; investing \$500 million to establish the AgriFlexibility fund, which helps improve competitiveness and the sector's ability to adapt to cost of production pressures; investing \$370 million into the hog industry and supporting debt restructuring to help sustain the industry; providing nearly \$350 million to help western grain farmers cover the costs of adjusting to operating in an open market; not to mention the opening up of the Canada Wheat Board, which will allow farmers to market their grain as they see fit; providing over \$300 million to support an exit strategy for tobacco producers; investing \$50 million to support increased slaughter capacity; making a \$50 million investment for the agricultural innovation program to support the development and commercialization of new products, technologies, processes, and services; investing \$44 million to transition the Canadian Grain Commission to a stable funding model; increasing and indexing the lifetime capital gains exemption to \$800,000 from \$750,000; and doubling the current deduction limit under the restricted farm loss income tax rules from \$8,750 to \$17,500.

*Government Orders*

•(1515)

These are just a few of the measures for just two demographic sectors: agriculture and seniors.

Since 2006, our government has been committed to ensuring Canadians keep more of their hard-earned dollars in their own pockets, rather than use it to pay taxes. Economic action plan 2014 marks the next chapter in keeping that commitment to Canadians.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague and whoever else can answer it. It concerns some quite obscure changes in the tax legislation in this bill that purport to allow the government to deem a capital gain in a trust and then tax it in the hands of the deceased when a person dies. I know that not very many deceased people vote Conservative, so they can say they will not be taxing some Conservatives. However, the fact is that I believe it is unconstitutional to tax people after they are dead.

Would the member like to answer this question? Is it constitutional and will it survive?

**Mr. Jim Hillyer:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the government is taxing people who are dead. It is not only unconstitutional; it is impossible. It is nothing new for estates to be taxed, so I do not think the budget makes a mistake in distinguishing between estates and people who have passed away.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-43, the second bill to implement the 2014 budget. This bill is 460 pages long and forces through hundreds of amendments without sufficient study. We are now at report stage, and the committees involved in studying this bill met less than 10 times. That is not enough for 460 pages and hundreds of amendments to dozens of laws. The bill contains measures that were never mentioned in the budget speech and that often have nothing to do with a budget. They are just bad surprises included in a big bill so that they will be passed with little more than a glance from the opposition.

The government repeatedly makes the same mistakes with its budget bills. They are poorly drafted and rushed through. Canadians do not like this method, but the Conservative government does not listen to them. This is the sixth consecutive omnibus budget implementation bill.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members that 20 years ago, the Prime Minister himself said the following in the House:

...in the interest of democracy I ask: How can members represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block on such legislation and on such concerns?

This is a point that we often raise when we see omnibus bills introduced in the House. He said it so well. How can we say that we are in favour of 460 pages of amendments? Perhaps there is one page that contains amendments that would be catastrophic for my riding. How then can I vote in favour of the bill as a whole?

Since winning a majority, the Conservatives have passed 2,190 pages of omnibus bills and have agreed to only one opposition amendment, and that was a tax-related technical amendment

proposed by the NDP. However, as the Prime Minister said 20 years ago, when so many measures are included in just one bill, it is impossible to determine which measures we support and which ones we do not. For that reason, we proposed a number of amendments at report stage.

However, I would like to point out that the NDP and I are extremely pleased to see that one of our measures was incorporated into this bill. It has to do with pay-to-pay fees. Bill C-43 will finally put an end to the practice of charging Canadians to receive or continue to receive a paper copy of their bills from telecommunications and broadcasting companies. That is a very good thing. However, Bill C-43 does not go far enough. It contains no trace of the government's promise to put an end to this practice for banks or to eliminate exorbitant banking fees.

I would like to talk about one of the measures in this bill that is really bad for the Canadian economy. It is important to understand what has been happening over the past few years. I am talking about employment insurance. This bill would implement a hiring credit for small businesses, which has already been panned by economists and the Parliamentary Budget Officer as wasteful. To pay for this credit, the government will help itself to \$550 million from the employment insurance fund. The government did not carefully examine this measure. Despite the enormous cost of \$550 million, the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that this measure will create 800 jobs at most.

•(1520)

According to economist Mike Moffatt, the measure will actually encourage employers to fire workers, not hire more. This measure, which will cost \$550 million, will create 800 jobs at most and could cause other job losses.

I would like to talk a little bit about the context in which we are discussing employment insurance. In my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, EI cuts have already affected people a great deal.

Service Canada officers are doing their best with the minimal resources they have, but they have admitted that they are increasingly swamped. They are being asked to provide crucial support to Quebeckers and Canadians who need to access the program they pay into, which exists to help them when they need it. That is not trivial; it is a fundamental part of a democratic country. When someone gets sick or loses their job, it allows them to keep paying the bills and putting food on the table.

Unfortunately, ever since the program was gutted, that is no longer the case. People can no longer count on the program while they are looking for another job or while they are recuperating from a serious illness. In my riding, these cuts have created a real problem regarding accessibility. When we talk just about the numbers and the cost of the program, we forget the human side of the story.

*Government Orders*

● (1525)

*[English]*

I want to underline some figures of Statistics Canada. They show that there has been a significant decline in access to EI benefits for unemployed workers. In January 2006, 45.7% of unemployed workers accessed EI benefits. By September 2014 that figure had fallen to 38.1%.

It is also really important to underline that the Conservatives and Liberals misappropriated \$57 billion from the EI fund, money that belongs to workers and employers. They pay into the fund. Now they are doing it again with a \$550 million EI-funded so-called job credit that will only fund 800 jobs. Just in my riding in the past several years, we have lost that many jobs, and that is a small portion of how much of a hit we have been taking and how regions are trying to create jobs.

*[Translation]*

All this is happening in a context where the manufacturing sector has lost 400,000 jobs since the Conservatives took office. Furthermore, employment growth is weaker now than it was before the recession. We have 300,000 more unemployed people now than during the recession.

In my riding, one woman was let go after having worked in her job for many years, because her position was eliminated. She found another job, but her skills and work experience did not fit the new job at all. What is more, it did not provide her with any satisfaction or opportunity for growth.

She therefore decided not to keep it and to focus on finding another job. She was then denied EI and she could not get the support she needed. No one told her that she had to accept any job and that if she refused a job that was considered suitable, then she would lose her benefits.

I also want to point out that Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel is a very large riding that includes quite a few municipalities and rural areas. Residents who do not travel to attend training are automatically refused employment insurance.

I have no choice but to oppose this bill because changes to employment insurance in the past have been so catastrophic. Creating 800 jobs at a cost of \$550 million is completely unacceptable.

*[English]*

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments about the bill, which is being rushed through. It is 460 pages and is yet again an example of the Conservatives trying to do with an omnibus bill the kinds of things that require considerable scrutiny in this House.

One of the things that worries me considerably is the notion that for refugee claimants who have failed one test but have not passed another, the bill would allow provinces to stop giving them social assistance. These refugees would perhaps have to go to dumps to find food, as they are in the north already. As Canadians, we are not comfortable with this kind of approach.

I wonder if the hon. member could comment on this part of the bill.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for drawing attention to that aspect of the bill. Obviously, I was able to touch on just one of the measures that will have catastrophic repercussions. The measure he mentioned is another totally disgusting one. Last time, they decided to stop giving refugees health insurance. That was clearly ideological. These are people hoping to escape a terrible fate in their homeland by coming to Canada in search of a better life. We cannot just tell them that because their case has not yet been ruled legitimate, they do not get to use the health care system. Now the provinces are being prevented from doing that too. The courts have already said that this is unconstitutional, but unfortunately, the government is going ahead with measures that are not in line with Canadians' values.

● (1530)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I must correct what the hon. member just said because it was completely wrong.

To begin, with respect to health insurance for failed refugee claimants, meaning illegal migrants who are in the process of being deported from Canada, it is true that these people do not have legal status to remain in Canada and therefore do not have the right to obtain health insurance. That being said, they still clearly have access to the health care system, as all visitors do. Foreign students, new residents and new immigrants are not eligible for provincial health insurance until they have lived in a province for three months.

The same principle applies in the case of this bill, which proposes giving provinces the power to establish a mandatory residency period before people are able to apply for welfare. Nearly every country in Europe and the developed world has decided that an individual must be a resident for at least a few weeks before being able to access benefits such as welfare. We need to be careful when we discuss these issues. We need to consider the facts and be fair. We will not change a thing in this bill about welfare for immigrants. This is just about recognizing the provinces' ability to establish their own rules in this area.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Mr. Speaker, I will get right to the heart of what the minister just said. He said that the government is handing responsibility over to the provinces, but it is cutting health transfers to the provinces. It is really downloading Canada's health care costs onto the provinces. That is in no way acceptable. We need to be able to give the provinces the resources they need to offer programs that work across this country.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to debate Bill C-43. I will quickly go over the process that has gotten us to this point.

*Government Orders*

The budget is typically delivered in the spring, and then there are two budget implementation bills, one in the spring and one in the fall. I will read a quote that is actually attributed to a gentleman named Jacob Lew, who said, "The budget is not just a collection of numbers, but an expression of our values and aspirations." When we look at this budget, we are really looking at the values and aspirations we as a government have put forward.

It was actually February 11 when our colleague, Jim Flaherty, stood in the House as the finance minister to deliver the budget. He typically liked to joke about his diminutive stature, but we all appreciated and admired the twinkle in his eye. He was anything but small in both his heart and his influence on the direction of Canada.

I am going to frame some of the words he said in introducing the budget in 2014. It was only two short months later that we sat in the House stunned as we heard of his very sudden passing. All of us came together and grieved that day.

His opening comments back then were as follows:

Mr. Speaker, nearly 150 years ago, Canada was founded with fiscal responsibility as its cornerstone. The men and women who carved this great country out of the wilderness simply called it "good government."

That's what Minister of Finance John Rose was talking about when he stood before this assembly to deliver Canada's first budget speech in 1868. He said, "I say that we ought to be most careful in our outlay, and consider well every shilling we expend."

Now, that's just old-fashioned English for old-fashioned common sense. And it is that solid, Canadian common sense that has guided our Government through good times and bad.

He then went on to say:

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to present Canada's Economic Action Plan 2014.

This prudent plan builds on our record of strong, sound and consistent fiscal management. It is a low-tax plan to promote jobs and economic growth and support Canadian families. And it is a common sense plan that will see Canada return to a balanced budget in 2015.

Those were the words that framed the legislation we are talking about.

I now want to look at budget implementation act 2. I often hear the NDP go on about the bill being 400 pages. I would first suggest that it is not really the number of pages that matter. It is the content and what the budget is going to achieve that is important. If New Democrats are really struggling through the 450 pages, I will direct them to the legislative summary, which is about four or five pages. New Democrats often talk about hidden things in the bill, but it is very easy for the NDP or any Canadian to go to the legislative summary. It clearly articulates what is in the bill in a few short pages. Then if there is something that tweaks their interest, they can go to the budget itself.

If we look at the structure, Part 1 deals with implementing income tax measures. Now I am going to have a bit of a micro conversation. Then I will go back to the broader picture of what we are trying to achieve.

Part 1 in this bill has a whole host of income tax measures. Sometimes it is the small things that make a big difference in people's lives. For example, the move that is going to extend the tax deferral for breeding animals to bees might not sound like a big measure, but for beekeepers, that is an extremely important measure.

Throughout Part 1, there are a number of income tax measures. Another piece that perhaps people have not picked up on is the accelerated capital cost allowance for our green energy sector. It is a bit of a boost to help the green energy sector get going.

● (1535)

We then move into Part 2, which implements goods and harmonized sales tax measures, which again is clearly an important piece of what we do.

Part 3 amends the Excise Act. Again, I welcome the New Democrats, if they are struggling with the 458 pages, to go to the legislative summary. It is very clear what the budget is trying to accomplish.

Part 4 looks at a number of different acts in order to implement various measures. I have to go back to the words of Lew. The budget is not just about numbers; it is about the aspirations and goals of the government.

What are some of the goals of our government? In good times, with Minister Flaherty, we paid down the debt and set ourselves up and were in a great position. Of course, in 2008, the global recession hit us and hit us hard. However, we were in a good position, and we had a plan. We have seen that plan go from economic action plan 2006 right through to 2014 with the plan that was recently introduced.

What is our plan? All these measures in this budget look at focusing and supporting our movement. When in 2008 we knew we were going to have some extraordinary challenges, we decided we would put stimulus into the economy. I know that the opposition members kept saying that we needed to put more in, and now they say that we incurred that. In actual fact, we found the right balance. We managed to get extraordinary stimulus out the door. It saw us through that very challenging time. Coming out of the recession earlier than many, we have looked at some of the best job growth among the G7. We are at over 1.2 million net new jobs now. It was a global recession. I remember many countries being very concerned. We all remember Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain and the significant challenges they were facing. However, we had a plan, we were in a good position going in, and we came out.

We were particularly proud, with the delivery of economic action plan 2014, to say, just as we told Canadians, that we were going to be back to balanced budgets. We said that, unfortunately and with concern, we were going to spend some extra money for stimulus, but we made a commitment to Canadians that we would get back to balanced budgets, and indeed that is what we have done. Getting back to a balanced budget was certainly one of the significant priorities.

*Government Orders*

The other area I would call a pillar was supporting jobs and growth. We have to have an environment in which we are supporting jobs and growth. This again does exactly that with items such as the small-business job credit. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which represents small businesses, has said that this is going to make a real difference to the small businesses of this country. When they have payroll taxes that are a little more forgiving, they put that money back into hiring more people and expanding their business. Some of the real experts are the people who run those small businesses, so I certainly look at what they are doing.

Another area we looked at in terms of supporting jobs and growth was the tax credit on interest paid on government-sponsored student loans and extending that to the Canada apprentice loan. We know that with the jobs mismatch, there are jobs available for apprentices, so again, that was an important measure.

There are a number of items in there that support families and communities.

Finally, there are measures that improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system.

In conclusion, people who knew Jim Flaherty might know that he loved to sail. He was at the helm in some very difficult waters. He has now, of course, left that helm for us to take on, but he charted a course. He put us on a solid course, and I know that it has been ably picked up by our new Minister of Finance.

As this is the last time I will get to speak to the direct influence of Jim Flaherty, I will just say thanks to Jim for all his hard work.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague opposite, but I look at the facts.

Bill C-43 implements the small business job credit, which many economists have called a waste. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Budget Officer believes that despite the massive cost of the bill, the program will not create more than 800 jobs. Those are the facts.

Moreover, the bill disregards the fact that growth in the private sector has been essentially at a standstill for 18 months and no jobs have been created. There is nothing in this bill to help the 300,000 new unemployed workers created by the last recession get back to work or to help replace the 400,000 jobs that have been lost in the manufacturing sector under this Prime Minister.

My question is simple. This credit has been criticized because of all of the costs associated with it. Will my colleague acknowledge that economists agree that this measure will not do much, in light of the investment required? This bill has been harshly criticized.

• (1545)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. First, let us look at our government's record. We headed into the global recession. We have come out that and 1.2 million jobs have been created, mostly full-time and mostly in the private sector. Obviously, the government's plan and strategy are working.

On the tax credit for our small businesses, we know small businesses are the cornerstone. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is one of the experts in this area. It only makes sense that when we put \$550 million back into the pockets of our small business owners, they will have the opportunity to put that money into growing their business and creating more success.

Again, we have a plan, and our plan is working.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think if Mr. Flaherty were here, he would be quite pleased with the glowing attributes that were shared about him today, certainly about being quoted.

The hon. member's comments were so glowing about Mr. Flaherty, but there are also his thoughts on the issue of income splitting, which is an important issue for Canadians to be knowledgeable about and understand the implications of that. Mr. Flaherty said, in his last days as finance minister, that he did not think income splitting was a good idea.

I would be interested to know, since my hon. colleague is so interested in and so much a follower of Mr. Flaherty, why does she not support his vision of income splitting being bad for Canada?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to answer that question. I believe Mr. Flaherty would have been really pleased with our comprehensive plan, which will support every Canadian family.

We have increased the universal child care benefit, from which every family with children will benefit. The increase in the expense deduction will benefit many. There is the modification in income splitting.

I think he would be very proud that we have created what is a comprehensive package. We have fulfilled our election platform commitment and we have created something, unlike the NDP and unlike the Liberals, who want to put money into a program that does not help shift workers and people in remote communities. We have a plan in place that will help every family with children. I am very proud of that, and I believe he would be as well.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House today to speak to budget implementation bill C-43. This bill of more than 460 pages is divided into four parts and will create, amend or eliminate about 400 sections. Most of the laws amended have absolutely nothing to do with the budget.

The Conservatives have rushed through many omnibus bills without enough analysis and without respect for the democratic process.

We deplore the fact that this is happening again with Bill C-43. One would think that it is groundhog day in the House of Commons. It is always the same. This is another Trojan horse, and we truly oppose it because we cannot debate all the measures it contains. This is what always happens.

*Government Orders*

A fine example of the undemocratic process that goes along with this Conservative government's omnibus bills is the new section 27.2 of the Telecommunications Act. This section states that any person who provides telecommunications services shall not charge a subscriber for providing the subscriber with a paper bill. This measure has the full support of the NDP. We support it because the NDP has been fighting for years to stop this pay-to-pay practice.

Unfortunately, I cannot vote for this measure because it is buried deep in a mountain of changes that I completely disagree with. I think my frustration is clear. This situation comes up again and again, every time the Conservative government introduces an omnibus bill. That is the most pernicious part of all this.

This situation will probably give the minister the opportunity to repeat again and again that our party did not support eliminating fees for paper bills and that the opposition voted against it.

Let us look at the facts, the situation here, and be honest. We want to support that provision, but only if it is removed from the omnibus bill and voted on in another bill. Once again, this government prefers pettiness to genuine democracy.

I still want to take the time to say, in the House, that I will vote for a proposal to eliminate fees for telecommunications bills. At the very least, I will have said it.

We support other amendments set out in Bill C-43. In fact, Bill C-43 also includes measures to improve the integrity of our tax code, which is certainly a step in the right direction, although there is still a lot to be done to combat tax evasion.

The bill also puts in place a DNA data bank to help in missing persons cases. This is another measure the NDP has long been calling for.

Let us now talk about the negative aspects of this bill. Unfortunately, there are far more negative aspects than positive ones. First, Bill C-43 does not honour the Conservatives' promise to put an end to the exorbitant fees charged by banks. If the Conservatives agree that it is not right for the telecommunications companies to charge billing fees, then why do they allow the banks to keep using this completely unjustified practice?

Omnibus Bill C-43 also has provisions that would amend the federal-provincial fiscal arrangements to allow the provinces to impose minimum residency requirements on immigrants before they can access various benefits. Asylum seekers and others without permanent resident status could be denied access to social assistance benefits.

The Conservatives' goal is to encourage the provinces to reduce the costs related to paying social assistance, at the expense of the most vulnerable residents in our society. Those people already face major obstacles, including the sluggish labour market, discrimination, and lack of experience, to name a few.

Restricting access to social assistance will only hinder the integration process of these vulnerable people and increase poverty and its many symptoms. Society will be left paying the bill.

● (1550)

Moreover, these measures are highly discriminatory and a blatant violation of human rights. Over 160 Canadian organizations sent an open letter to the Minister of Finance voicing opposition to the government's decision to restrict refugee claimants' access to social assistance. Bill C-43 also changes the rules for credit unions, and they have had no say in the matter. We do not yet know the exact consequences of these changes, but this is just like the 2013 budget, in which the Conservatives unfairly increased the taxes payable by credit unions.

Bill C-43 also institutes the hiring credit for small businesses, a measure that many economists consider wasteful. The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that the program will create no more than 800 jobs despite its enormous cost.

Nevertheless, it is what this famous budget implementation bill leaves out that is so problematic for the Canadian economy. Private sector growth has been virtually moribund for 18 months. Not a single job has been created. Approximately 300,000 people lost their jobs in the last recession, but there is nothing in this bill to help them find new work or to help replace the 400,000 manufacturing sector jobs lost on this Prime Minister's watch.

Currently, the youth unemployment rate is twice the national average; that has not changed since the depths of the recession. For young people entering the workforce, getting that first job is a crucial step that enables them to become productive and useful members of society.

Furthermore, we are seeing record levels of personal debt, much higher than what we used to see. In 1980, the ratio of household debt to personal disposable income was 66%, and now it is 164%. That is an incredible increase. The Governor of the Bank of Canada, Stephen Poloz, has stated that household debt in this country is a major risk factor for the Canadian economy. Society is living beyond its means. Our families are in too much debt.

When people have been having a hard time making ends meet for a number of years, they are no longer able to pay their bills. They underestimated how much money they would need to make ends meet. It happens to many people. In Quebec, rent went up by over 40% in 10 years. When rent represents 30%, 50% or 70% of a person's income, that is a lot. It prevents them from being able to pay their electricity bill and buy food. Those are basic needs. I am not even talking about entertainment. Many people can no longer afford entertainment, not even cable.

If we do not acknowledge that situation and if we do not listen to families who are having trouble making ends meet, we cannot come up with effective policies that reflect this reality. It is shameful that this government does not understand the extent of this problem at all.

*Government Orders*

The NDP has real solutions to help Canadians. We want to bring in new regulations to put an end to the abusive practices of banks, money lenders and credit card companies. We want to ensure that all Canadians have access to a credit card with a reasonable interest rate that does not exceed prime plus 5%, and we are going to cap the fees charged at ATMs at no more than 50¢ per transaction. An NDP budget would immediately put a stop to the federal government's plan to raise the retirement age to 67 and would reverse the \$36 billion in cuts to provincial health transfers.

To balance the budget, we are instead proposing to phase out subsidies for the oil and gas sectors, which amount to over \$1 billion. We also want to hire the resources necessary to recover the billions of dollars that are lost because of tax evasion and the use of tax havens.

Right now, the federal government is hardly operating like a real democracy.

• (1555)

Since winning a majority, the Conservatives have passed 2,190 pages of omnibus bills. The NDP always opposes the Conservatives' omnibus bills, just like we opposed the Liberals' omnibus bills in the 1990s.

The government is using the House of Commons to impose its omnibus bills. Canadians deserve better from their elected representatives.

**Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her passionate speech.

She touched on the issue of debt, something I talked about with families in my riding this weekend. People go into debt to buy a car or a house or even to do activities with their children. People get the impression that money is readily available because it is very easy to get credit these days. Then, at some point, they hit a wall and can no longer do anything because they are too much in debt. It is very hard to get out of that situation.

As my colleague said, there are currently no provisions to help families that get deeper and deeper in debt. They are so far in debt that they do not eat as well, the children are less physically active, and their situation is not very pleasant.

Can my colleague elaborate on this issue and speak to our vision of a country that helps families avoid debt and imposes rate structures on banks so that they can no longer put people in these sad situations?

• (1600)

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine. Like me, she knocks on a lot of doors and participates in many events in her riding.

That is why she raises some very real issues in the House. She also understands that we are always getting the same question from people of all ages: why do the banks make billions of dollars in profits every year, regardless of how the economy is doing, but families are more and more in debt?

Rent, food and hydro are costing more and more. We are in debt on all sides. Now, it does not even make sense to withdraw our own

money. It can sometimes cost \$4 or \$5 to withdraw \$20. Imagine the massive profits the bank is raking in. It makes no sense that it costs \$4 or \$5 to withdraw our own hard-earned money, which we deposited.

That is why we need to take this seriously. We are legislators and we represent the Canadian public. We need to put banks in their place. Yes, they can make a profit, but not 700% or 800%. That makes no sense. We need to put banks in their place by adopting a prime plus 5% rate for credit cards and setting ATM fees at 50¢ per transaction, maximum. The NDP is the only party that has proposed this.

[English]

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, there is good reason to be pleased with the 2014 economic action plan. Our hard work is paying off; it is paying dividends; and we are on track to realize a stronger and more prosperous Canada in the coming years.

When I was elected in 2011, the global economy was still fragile following the 2008 great recession. It was a time of continued economic uncertainty south of the border in the United States, around the world, and at home. Our economy, while better than most, was still sluggish.

Indeed, voters in my riding of New Brunswick Southwest, which borders Maine and shares waterways with the United States, were well aware of the economic challenges facing U.S. workers and the U.S. government. A majority recognized that our economy was stronger and our outlook even then was brighter.

Today, as the result of several Conservative budgets, this government has created 1.2 million net new jobs since the economic downturn. I should say that government has not created those jobs, but perhaps it has worked to create the conditions for the hard-working men and women across the country. Businesses small and large worked together in the national interest to create those 1.2 million jobs.

Today, our government's foundation is strong. We have competitive tax rates, and we are marching toward a balanced budget. Overall, it is very fair to say that we have strong economic fundamentals.

We have done all this while maintaining transfers to the provinces and territories, which will continue to rise every year to a new record high. We have helped vulnerable families with children and seniors by taxing them less and ensuring important social programs and transfers are maintained and even enhanced. We have done this all along, while the Liberal and NDP opposition have called for higher taxes and more debt spending.

*Government Orders*

Under our plan, one million Canadians have been removed from the tax roll, including 380,000 seniors. I repeat, one million Canadians are no longer paying federal income tax. There are 1.4 million Canadians no longer living in poverty, including 250,000 children. The after-tax disposable income has risen by 10% across all income levels since 2006. These are real measurable benefits that have helped Canadians from coast to coast.

Of course, there are ongoing challenges, and in some parts of Canada, including my region, unemployment remains stubbornly high. However, recently, the federal government ratified an agreement with the Government of New Brunswick to deliver skills training for in-demand professions through the Canada jobs grant.

We remain focused on job creation and ensuring that the nation's economic fundamentals are strong and will continue to move the country forward. We should take great solace that, according to *The New York Times*, Canada's working families are at the top of the pack compared to other nations. This is remarkable news.

Of course, this is unpleasant news for the opposition, particularly the leader of the third party, who has attempted to depict a worsening situation for Canadians. In the end, the facts just do not bear that argument out.

On that score, it was with great regret that I read today that the new Liberal premier in my home province is moving to stop the fracking of natural gas in New Brunswick. This decision will slow economic growth; it will hurt job creation and cause more young workers to go west. Towns will begin to empty out, and there will be less money for important social programs, and so Premier Gallant is already calling for Ottawa to throw him a lifeline. He wants more transfers.

That is right: the premier is closing the development of natural gas in New Brunswick, yet insisting more tax revenues, earned by other provinces that do frack natural gas, be sent to his government. If it were not so cruel, we would note the deep irony of sending New Brunswick workers to work in the very same industry Premier Gallant is closing.

However, I digress. I will get back to the matter at hand, which is the 2014 economic action plan.

• (1605)

Our work, which has been ongoing over many years, continues in this budget implementation act. It began with Ottawa first looking internally and reviewing programs to ensure they delivered value for Canadians and Canadian taxpayers. As a result, direct program spending has fallen for three consecutive years, and we are on track for a fourth year, which I believe is a first in modern Canadian history. At the end of the day, this means we are delivering quality social programs, maintaining transfers to the provinces, delivering some tax relief, and doing it all within a balanced budget as of next year.

We have also reformed programs to take into account demographic changes, and we have made modest changes to EI in order to encourage more work and less reliance on the state.

This has all been hard work. I do not think there has been a riding in the country that has not been affected in some way or other by

some of these changes. However, they have resulted in a number of things, such as a stronger federal balance sheet, a stronger national economy, and better fortunes for Canadians in the years ahead. I stress the hard work because, as has been said time and time again and will continue to be said right up until the budget next year, budgets do not balance themselves; they require hard work. If members believe budgets balance themselves, I would ask them to consider Greece, Detroit, or even Canada in the mid-1990s. However Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Martin qualified their efforts at the time, I am sure they would not have said that the federal budget balanced itself.

Promoting jobs and economic growth has been our number one focus for the last three and a half years, and it will continue to be our focus going forward until every Canadian who wants a job has one. We have done this through supporting businesses by reducing red tape, making it easy for them to invest, hire, and sell their products.

We have frozen EI tax and have provided EI payroll tax savings for small businesses through the small business job credit.

We are supporting apprenticeship and training programs, and we have also expanded our infrastructure programs. We have done this through the new Building Canada plan, which will provide \$21.8 billion over 10 years through the gas tax fund. Incidentally, the gas tax fund has been indexed, meaning that, as inflation goes up, our municipalities across the country will see modest increases every year to account for that inflationary loss.

We are spending \$10.4 billion over 10 years under the GST rebate to municipalities, ensuring that when they spend money it will benefit their constituents.

We are spending \$14 billion under the new Building Canada fund to support major projects right across this country.

This is real spending that will have a benefit on communities from coast to coast and ensure that infrastructure is upgraded so our products can get to market, our men and women can get to work, and products—whether coming across by land, air, or sea—are able to get across this continent to markets in the United States, within Canada, or overseas.

The budget also has to be taken in context with our overall trade agenda, where we will see greater market access in Asia and in Europe. That is something I talk about an awful lot when I am home, because many of the industries in New Brunswick are closer to major markets in western Europe than western Canada. If people are selling something like live lobster, they want to make sure the product gets to market while it is alive and fresh.



*Government Orders*

The other area we focused in on is responsible resource development. We will continue to do that through the energy east pipeline, running throughout the entire country and into the Saint John refinery in New Brunswick, in particular, as a way to ensure that more hard-working New Brunswick men and women have jobs in their home province. Therefore, when they get up in the morning and go to work, they can come home at night and spend time with their families, as opposed to having to travel across the country for work that they could be and should be doing in New Brunswick, whether building a pipeline, refining oil, or fracking natural gas.

In conclusion, these measures that we have pursued have benefited Canadians and Canadian families. I look forward to seeing a balanced budget 2015 and the additional opportunities that our future measures will bring.

●(1610)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will resist commenting on the whole issue of a Conservative balanced budget because they were able to turn a multi-billion dollar surplus into a deficit and have not yet had a balanced budget.

Having said that, one of the greatest travesties of the government over the last number of months is its lack of commitment to infrastructure in all regions of Canada. Conservatives talk a big line in saying there are record high amounts, in the billions of dollars, going into infrastructure, but what they do not say is that the money is not for this year. They have put off the bulk of that money until future years. There is actually a 90% cut.

Why does the member believe that his own government has dramatically cut infrastructure spending for this fiscal year? There is an estimated cut of between 80% to 90% in infrastructure dollars for this fiscal year.

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, as the previous infrastructure program ramped down, the new program is ramping up. I hear a lot of talk in the chamber by the opposition about there being too few infrastructure dollars, but I have say that when I talk to municipal leaders back home, they are very pleased with the changes we made to the gas tax transfer, which at one point doubled. Then, of course, we took the additional step this year of expanding what would be eligible.

As a result, there are municipalities throughout my riding applying under that program to spend it in infrastructure areas in which they previously could not. At the same time, they are putting in new applications for the new Building Canada fund that is going to see projects begin this year and every year going forward.

On that note, I might ask my hon. colleague a question. On one hand, he talks about the need to balance the books, but at the same time he constantly talks about the need to spend more. I would ask him which it is. Is it a question of balancing the budget or spending more? We believe one can do both if one is responsible and makes tough choices.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that very thoughtful speech that spoke to the benefits of this budget for Canadians across this country.

I heard the Liberal member comment on a balanced budget. Of course, I think everyone in the House knows that when we voted to stimulate the economy with some \$62 billion, the Liberal Party knew very well at the time that we would be operating in deficit. However, we are out of that situation now and are working toward a balanced budget.

The member for New Brunswick Southwest spoke very eloquently about the gas tax refund money and how that is benefiting municipalities in his riding. That is certainly predictable funding that local municipal councils can use to upgrade facilities and parks, and so forth. Could he perhaps expand a little on the importance of that predictable funding to the municipalities in his riding?

●(1615)

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, predictable funding is key to other levels of government, which can rely on it year in and year out and plan around it, whether for one-off projects or ones over many years, which tends to be the case when it is larger infrastructure.

I will give another example where predictable funding has been very helpful. Since 2006, the beginning of our time in office, federal transfers to the Province of New Brunswick, my home province, have increased by 27% and this year stand at \$2.6 billion, which is a very good amount of money for a small province like New Brunswick.

The point I want to make is that under our government, those transfers for health, social services, and equalization have gone in one direction every year, and that is up. We have managed to do this while we have looked at Ottawa's operations and reduced spending that was not in taxpayers' interest. At the same time and in parallel with the question about municipalities, this has ensured that the Province of New Brunswick can guarantee quality social programs going forward, unlike the changes the Liberal government made in its time in power when it cut health and education by 30%.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add a few words to this important debate on a 460-page omnibus bill.

Before I make my comments, I would like to wish everyone, including my colleagues, my constituents at home, and those watching, a merry Christmas and happy holidays. I hope 2015 is a great year for everyone.

I am pleased to be able to speak to Bill C-43, as much as I am frustrated with the 460-page document that I am willing to bet very few in the House have gone through. I know that we certainly attempted to, but no matter how hard one tries, it still is such a large document with so many different things in it, everything but the kitchen sink, as with previous omnibus bills.

*Government Orders*

We will find out later, after things are passed without sufficient scrutiny, that there will be a variety of mistakes and that corrections will have to be made. There will be some pretty poor pieces of legislation as a result of this omnibus bill. That is going to land at the feet of the government. Certainly the opposition points pieces out, but the government does not choose to listen. It will have to deal with those things when people raise them, and there will be no justification to argue back.

In the simplest of terms, I oppose Bill C-43 because it implements a budget that fails to address the real challenges that each and every one of us here faces every day and every weekend we are in our ridings.

Worse yet, the government is abusing the very process for the budget by again tabling an omnibus bill, and then limiting debate and study. It will go through it in a short period of time. It is 460 pages, and it is a joke to think that anyone will get the time to really go through and examine it. The government has also limited the amount of time we can challenge it and give it an opportunity to improve the bill. The government is continuing its same reckless pattern since coming to power. It pursues a reckless and very anti-democratic course.

From my own perspective and that of my party, I will not be supporting Bill C-43. My opposition to Bill C-43 is not just rooted in the government's failure to understand or respect our democratic institution, which it clearly does not, but also in my much deeper concerns with it.

Bill C-43 is clearly the product of a tired, old government that has lost touch with Canadians, or least Canadians outside of the corporate boardrooms of the nation. Sadly, the Prime Minister has forgotten what it is like to struggle to make ends meet. He has forgotten what it is like to make financial choices based on how to stretch a dollar a little further. He has forgotten how hard it is out there for the blue collar crowd sitting around their kitchen tables, figuring out how they are going to make ends meet.

The Prime Minister is the sixth highest paid world leader, and he has a strong and stable retirement income waiting for him. It is too bad that most Canadians do not have a chance to have even half of that.

This Prime Minister's ambivalence to the middle class's struggles was clear when he attacked income trusts and slashed the OAS, making people wait until the age of 67 for eligibility. I do not know about their ridings, but certainly in my riding I have people in their mid-50s coming in who have worked in construction, mining, and other hard labour jobs and who cannot make it to 65, never mind 67. This is only going to make it that much worse.

One needs to look no further than the government's reliance on measures such as TFSAs and non-refundable tax credits to see that this is a philosophy premised on giving people with extra money the ability to put it away at a higher rate of return. For people who do not have extra cash to invest, Budget 2014 offers nothing.

It offers less than nothing actually, because the government continues to chip away at the federal government's fiscal capacity, which hinders our ability to help those who need help the most. Maybe that is the Conservatives' objective, to squander every cent of

money left so that if we are given an opportunity to form government, we will have a really hard time when the money has all been spent and we are running into more debt. Maybe that is the goal here.

In the context of Bill C-43, the question remains, what about those without extra money to invest? What about seniors, students, and working families who have too much debt at the end of the month and not enough money? Again, why has the Prime Minister turned his back on struggling Canadians?

• (1620)

The middle class is working harder under the current government and working families are falling further behind. This year's budget would do nothing to address the very real challenges facing the middle class.

The real problem with Bill C-43 is the missed opportunities with things the government could have done with a good surplus, the things it could have invested in that really would have helped the average Canadian have an easier life.

We Liberals believe that the government must not only create the right conditions for economic growth, but also ensure that growth is sustainable and would finally help middle-class families. This would require investments in infrastructure, training, innovation, and in expanding trade, as well as competitive tax rates. It is not only about taxation. It is about investing in our universities and our colleges, investing in the entrepreneurial hubs we have across the country that are looking for support, for new ideas.

However, instead of creating real jobs and growth, Bill C-43, would encourage businesses to stay small and would actually punish them if they grow. It would actually create an incentive for some businesses to fire workers, as ridiculous as that sounds.

The PBO, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, says that the EI tax credit in Bill C-43 would only create 800 jobs over the next two years, and the big thing is that it would cost \$700,000 per job.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer is an independent officer of Parliament. He does not belong to any party. He does not belong to the government or the opposition. He is an independent officer who is there to examine all of these things. Therefore, his analysis and his figures need to be paid attention to.

The Liberal plan for an EI holiday on new hires would actually reward businesses that create jobs. It has been applauded by job creators like Restaurants Canada, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Then, again, Budget 2014 is certainly not a budget in the traditional form. Bill C-43 is full of changes that do not belong in a budget bill, such as a mean-spirited rule change that would help deny social assistance to refugee claimants.

Bill C-43 would also add GST and HST to various services provided by non-profit health care facilities, such as residential services at old age homes. This would, again, punish Canadian seniors who are already struggling to get by on a fixed income.

*Government Orders*

This is another example of a government bent on attacking the most vulnerable, and Conservative closure tactics are preventing those of us who actually care about middle-class Canadians from offering any level of protection.

At 460 pages, with over 400 separate clauses amending countless different laws, Bill C-43 represents nothing short of a clear abuse of powers. It will be years before we find out the impact of many of those clauses, no matter how much time is spent on them.

It is anti-democratic for the Conservatives to use an omnibus budget bill to limit debate and ram so many unrelated measures through Parliament. It prevents MPs from properly scrutinizing the legislation. It is called a budget bill, and it is anything but a budget bill. It begs the question: what are the Conservatives so afraid of?

I think we all know the answer to that question. The current government is afraid that middle-class Canadians will see the reckless and mean-spirited actions of the government.

However, in addition to the tone and abuse of power problems underscored by Bill C-43, it cannot go unnoticed that Bill C-43 is just poorly written legislation. I continue to be shocked by the level of incompetence demonstrated by the government on such fundamental items as the laws of the country. Certainly, I have long questioned the government's general compassion and fiscal competence, but I would have expected some level of proficiency in preparing legislation.

I am thankful for the opportunity to offer my comments and my disappointment that the government continues to put forward omnibus budget bills that are clearly meant to put everything but the kitchen sink through and which reflect little of what Canadians really need.

•(1625)

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it laughable that the hon. colleague, with all due respect and deference, suggests that the Prime Minister does not understand the struggles of ordinary, hard-working Canadians, particularly when we look at the numerous policies that the government has put out with respect to benefiting workers through various tax credits, the doubling of the fitness credit for kids and, more recent, the family tax relief that was announced to be rolled out next year. Thankfully, we were able to do this because of the tough measures that were taken by the government over the last couple years as we moved to a balanced budget.

I would ask the member to answer a question that reflects on her own leader. How could her leader suggest that budgets balance themselves and do not require decisions to be made by the government of the day?

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, when the current government came to power, there was a \$13 billion surplus. It used it in the following two elections to buy every vote it possibly could by promising everything it possibly could. Through all this period of time, we are now starting to see the 2011 election promises come to reality. However, the government made people wait until the next election. It is simply using the process to buy votes.

As far as how to run an economy and how to build a country, it is by investing in things like innovation and infrastructure that help

create jobs in a positive environment. That is how to balance a budget and that is how to turn around and look after the economy.

Our leader is very competent, very knowledgeable on these things. When we hear a comment like that, if we look into it, what do we get from C.D. Howe and the rest? Invest in infrastructure, the economy and, yes, the books will be balanced.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, could my colleague expand on the issue of the middle class? The leader of the Leader Party and the caucus as a whole has put a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the middle class to Canada's economy going forward and the need to give more attention to the middle class.

The government's recent announcement of the income split would in essence assist less than 15% of the population. It would cost \$2 billion, and it would be the middle class paying for that commitment. Would she like to provide some comment on that policy announcement?

•(1630)

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, the focus continues to be very much more on those who have a lot. When we talk about the TFSAs and the possibility of doubling them, or whatever it is, that really helps an awful lot of people who have money. It does not help the people who do not have the money to put away. We do not find 35-year-olds having a whole lot of money to put into TFSAs because most of them are trying to balance their families.

Having fully refundable tax credits, no matter what it is, then maybe we really are helping those in the middle class. However, to bring in things like income splitting would only help those in the upper levels.

Again, it is very reflective of the government. The people in the lower levels who are struggling, where the mother and father are both working and kids are in daycare, if they have them. Many of those kids end up at home by themselves with no one to look after them. They are struggling to pay the mortgage and put bread on the table.

There is nothing in Bill C-43 at all that would help those families. When they sit around the kitchen table tonight, they will not say that Bill C-43 is wonderful, that budget will help them in all kinds of ways. No, they will wonder how they will get through to the weekend. That is the reality.

[*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, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Halifax West, National Defence; the hon. member for Winnipeg North, Ethics.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this very important legislation. Before I begin, I would like to indicate that a few members of the House were part of the cohort of 2009 that was elected. Not too long before today was the fourth anniversary. I believe a few of them are here, so I wish to congratulate the member for Winnipeg North and the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

Bill C-43 is at an important stage where we will soon see it come into law. The legislation builds on the very strong foundation that has been laid this year and over the past almost nine years. We are continuing on a portfolio of initiatives that have been introduced, such as affordable measures to create jobs, promote growth and support long-term prosperity. This key strategy is working. It is creating jobs, it is keeping the economy growing and, perhaps most important now that our economy is going in the right direction, we are returning to a balanced budget in 2015.

Since we introduced the economic action plan to respond to the global recession of 2008, we have created nearly 1.2 million net new jobs since the depth of that recession. When I say “we”, I mean the private sector. The government can only help the economy, but it is the businesses that are the employers. Thankfully, due to all those hard-working entrepreneurs, we have one of the strongest job creation records in the entire G7 during that period.

I would like to highlight some of the outcomes of our economic action plan. According to KPMG, total business tax costs in Canada are in fact the lowest in the G7, at 46% lower than those in the United States of America. Let us not forget that we are starting to see some large American corporations choose to do business in Canada and, quite frankly, I support that. Even if it is not necessarily a burger of choice of mine, I will still buy that product.

What is more, Canada leapt from sixth place to second place in Bloomberg's rankings of the most attractive destination for business. Both the IMF and the OECD still expect Canada to be among the strongest-growing economies in the G7 over this year and the next. For the seventh year in a row, the World Economic Forum has rated Canada's banking system the world's soundest. It is true that it is very conservative, and during the boom times of the late 1990s and the early 2000s, perhaps it did not lend out as much money as some other countries, but that policy sure kept it in good stead when 2008 hit.

All the major credit rating agencies accord Canada a top AAA rating with a stable outlook, a rating shared by very few countries. A recent *New York Times* study found that after-tax middle-class incomes in Canada, substantially behind in the year 2000, now appear to be higher than in the United States. In fact it is that the Canadian middle class is among the wealthiest in the developed world.

The federal tax burden is at its lowest in over 50 years. Remember that we have removed more than one million low-income Canadians from the tax rolls. The average family of four saves nearly \$3,400 this year. A small business earning \$500,000 now saves over \$28,000 in corporate taxes thanks to our low-tax philosophy. It is clear that Canada has become an international success story.

However, Canada is still not immune to the global economic challenges beyond our border. Our government has been adamant that as long as Canadians are still looking for jobs, our work is not done.

With that, let me highlight three measures that are helping small businesses as well as ensuring Canadians are first in line for new jobs.

Bill C-43 would implement our recently announced small business job credit, which would save small employers more than \$550 million over 2015 and 2016. It would also lower EI payroll taxes by 15%. This is real money that a small business can use to help defray the cost of hiring new workers and to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities, supporting growth and job creation.

● (1635)

That is not all. The legislation builds on our support for small businesses and entrepreneurs by reducing barriers to the international and domestic flow of goods and services. This measure will promote job creation and improve the conditions for business investment.

I am very proud of our government's achievements as it works to prepare the workforce of tomorrow.

Economic action plan 2014 includes training for students and focuses federal investments in youth employment in high demand fields. It also supports young entrepreneurs through mentoring. Students participating in Canada's education system are the largest source of new workers. Providing them with the right skills is essential to furthering the country's economic prospects.

In 2011-12, more than half a million Canadians received direct financial support from the Canada student loans program to help them pursue their post-secondary education. Over \$2.4 billion in loans were provided and over 336,000 students obtained a total of \$640 million in Canada student grants.

In my role as chair of the post-secondary caucus for our government, I have met with many student groups and all of them have universally said that this program is far superior to the millennium scholarship fund.

Canada places at the top of the OECD rankings in terms of post-secondary educational payment, thanks in part to these federal supports for students. However, more can be done to ensure young Canadians receive the training they need to realize their full potential.

*Government Orders*

That is why we have not only reached out to students in a broad, general way, but we have also helped other organizations that are focused on first nations and aboriginal learners. I would like to highlight Indspire, a wonderful program that is led by Roberta Jamieson, and you know her quite well, Mr. Speaker. This program has succeeded where government has not in the past. By helping this organization fund more students, we are seeing more first nation learners than ever before. I would like to again congratulate her for all the work she has done over the years and I look forward to seeing this program continue to receive funding.

The government invests over \$330 million annually in programming for youth through the youth employment strategy, which provides skills development and work experience for youth at risk, summer students and recent post-secondary graduates.

Economic action plan 2014 announced that our government would improve the youth employment strategy to align it with the evolving realities of the job market. This process would also ensure federal investments in youth employment, providing young Canadians with real life work experience in high demand fields such as science, technology, energy, engineering, mathematics and the skilled trades.

Although Canada boasts high levels of post-secondary achievement, the transition to a first job can be very challenging. Youth graduates often lack opportunities to gain the workplace experience and skills necessary to find and retain jobs. In addition, too many Canadian graduates find themselves unemployed or underemployed, while employers are searching for workers.

Recognizing these challenges, our government proposes to strengthen youth programming by dedicating \$40 million toward supporting up to 3,000 full-time internships for post-secondary graduates in high demand fields in 2014 and 2015-16.

This has also in part been inspired by some of the work that has been done over the years by the Mitacs organization, which has helped deliver internships for science post-grads and post-grad engineers into the technology sector, and that has been very successful.

We have been supportive of not only the private sector in helping it employ more individuals, but bringing students into the private sector so they can gain that world experience they need to further their career, and also essentially become an important contributor to our economy and help pay the taxes that support all the programs that benefit Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

I look forward to any questions my colleagues might have.

•(1640)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in regard to the budget implementation bill, numerous pieces of legislation have been incorporated into the budget implementation bill that could easily have been stand-alone legislation.

I am interested in receiving the member's comments on why the government has chosen, since it has achieved its majority, to come in with these massive budget implementation bills.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Speaker, I think this practice has evolved over the years, but our government has introduced quite important measures through its budgets.

Budgets, of course, are effectively the key piece of legislation that our government or any government requires to implement its agenda. I would not be standing here today speaking to this budget if I did not believe in the initiatives that our government is proceeding with. I cannot apologize for our endeavours, because I support them wholeheartedly.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the member opposite has to do with a promise that was made by the former finance minister, Mr. Flaherty, in his 2013 budget, which has not yet been implemented in any of the four budget bills. It was a promise to link infrastructure spending to the creation of apprenticeships for our young people.

Right now our governments, both federally and provincially, spend billions of dollars annually on infrastructure in various regions of the country, and Mr. Flaherty thought it would be a very good idea to tie that spending to the creation of apprenticeships for our young people.

I wonder if the member opposite could tell me why the Conservatives have abandoned that promise.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Having been elected in the class of 2006, I spent my first day as a member in the House with Jim, as he spent his first day back in 2006 when we formed government. I enjoyed working with him through the years on, I believe, nine budgets.

Mr. Flaherty's work had gotten to a point where he had achieved much in our great country. Unfortunately, he was not able to continue serving with us, as I know he wanted to.

I think there is more to come in the future on this matter. We will have to see.

•(1645)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things about the two parties opposite is that when they talk about budgeting, they primarily talk about spending. For them it is spend, spend, spend. They rarely, if ever, talk about the need to create a business climate that creates the wealth that runs our country.

Could my hon. colleague comment? Having been an entrepreneur in a previous life, he knows the importance of a sound business climate. Could he talk about the factors in our budget that go toward creating the business climate that we so desperately need in this country?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have taken a philosophy of reducing the tax burden right from the first day that we entered office, and I would like to think that the record speaks for itself. The outcomes of the record are quite demonstrative of the philosophy itself. I think it has benefited our great country to reduce the tax burden as we have over the years. In comparison to a number of world economies that rate against our own, we are seeing that we have risen through the ranks.

This specific budget now takes that philosophy to the taxpayer. It will have a similar effect on the households of taxpayers, who will now be able to reduce their own tax burden by, for instance, splitting income and having more capital within their own home unit to pay for the important things they need to succeed. I think we will see the same outcomes flow from that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure today of rising to speak to Bill C-43.

[*English*]

It should come as no surprise to anybody that the New Democrats are going to oppose this legislation, and I am going to explain why we oppose it. I am going to provide some reasons to explain why we are going to oppose it.

One of the many reasons is that the Conservatives have used an anti-democratic process to force legislation through Parliament. They have used this trick over and over again. When they have a bill that they know will not pass on its own, they put it into an omnibus budget bill. Even though it has absolutely nothing to do with budget issues, they put it in an omnibus bill and get it passed that way.

My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley moved several amendments that would have improved the bill. They would not have made it perfect, but they certainly would have improved it. I want to go over some of the amendments that were suggested.

The first one was as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

this House decline to give second reading to Bill C-43, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, because it:

a) amends dozens of unrelated Acts without adequate parliamentary debate and oversight...

As I mentioned a while ago, the Conservatives shoved a lot of bills that they knew would not pass on their own into this omnibus bill.

The amendment goes on to say:

b) fails to address persistent unemployment and sluggish economic growth;

c) aims to strip refugee claimants of access to social assistance to meet their basic needs;

d) imposes a poorly designed job credit that will create few, if any, jobs while depleting Employment Insurance funds...

Depleting the employment insurance fund we have seen before. The Liberals took \$50 billion out of the employment insurance fund, and the Conservatives rubber-stamped that—I do not want to use the word “theft”—money that they took from the employment insurance

fund and put it in general accounts. That was a Liberal move that was rubber-stamped by the Conservatives.

The amendment further states:

e) breaks the government's promises to protect small businesses from merchant fees and to ban banks from charging pay-to-pay fees.

Previously, small businesses could use a tax credit to hire more employees to create employment. As we know, it is the small businesses that create employment in this country. It is not the big businesses but the small ones, the mom-and-pop businesses, that are very important.

With regard to pay-to-pay fees, the Conservatives like to cut public service jobs by forcing Canadians to pay their bills by computer, but as we know, a lot of seniors in Canada do not know how or do not want to use computers and are forced to pay these pay-to-pay fees in order to pay their everyday bills.

Bill C-43 is another omnibus budget bill designed to ram through hundreds of changes with little study and no oversight. The Conservatives used time allocation over and over again. I am not sure what number we are up to, but it is certainly 75 to 80 times that they have used that process. The bill is over 450 pages, has more than 400 clauses, amends dozens of acts, and includes a variety of measures never mentioned in the budget speech.

Bill C-43 is an outright attack on some of the most vulnerable people in our society, refugee claimants being one, and the implementation of a hiring credit has already been panned by experts and the Parliamentary Budget Officer as wasteful and extraordinarily expensive. Their way of creating jobs is to spend lots of money. They accuse the opposition party of being spenders, but if we look at their track record, it is not very impressive.

● (1650)

There is nothing in this bill to get the almost 300,000 more unemployed Canadians than before the recession back to work or to help replace the 400,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the Prime Minister's watch.

I would like to go back to pay-to-pay fees. This is one of the things in the bill that we support. We are happy to see the Conservatives finally adopt an NDP proposal—I repeat, an NDP proposal—to end pay-to-pay billing. It was a private member's bill that my colleague from Sudbury introduced, and the people of Sudbury should be very happy to be represented by such a good MP.

Canadians should not be forced to pay these bills. Unfortunately, Bill C-43 would only ban pay-to-pay for telecom and broadcasting companies. It fails to live up to a promise that the Conservatives made to end the unfair gouging by banks.

*Government Orders*

A lot of companies use pay-to-pay fees. It is not only the telecommunications companies. It is Ontario hydro, Hydro-Québec, credit card companies, and a lot of the major companies. A lot of the major companies are using this pay-to-pay fee and making Canadians pay to pay their bills.

The other thing in this bill is about credit unions. Being a former member of the Caisse populaire Vermillon in Chelmsford, Espanola, and Dowling, I know that the credit unions and caisses populaires are very important to Canadians. However, with Bill C-43 the Conservatives are changing the regulatory landscape for credit unions without their input, so again the Conservatives have decided on their own, without speaking to credit union operators, managers, or the people who run credit unions. They did not have an input into what the Conservatives decided to do. The exact impact of those changes is not yet known, but we know they are going to adversely affect the credit unions and caisses populaires.

This is almost like the changes that the Conservatives made in the 2013 budget, which unfairly hiked taxes on credit unions. I happened to have a meeting with the caisse populaire from Verner. The manager was in my office, along with some other people from the caisse populaire. They were very concerned about the effects that this bill would have on the credit unions.

What we would like to see is action to implement a pan-Canadian child care program that would ensure that families have access to quality child care spaces for less than \$15. This would grow our economy, help women enter the workforce, and help families to make ends meet. In today's economy, it is very difficult to raise a family on one income, and that is because of some of the laws that have been passed by the Conservative government. If we were able to organize it as Quebec has done and help families with daycare, it would certainly go a long way toward strengthening our workforce.

I want to jump a few pages and name some people and businesses who are validating our position.

Mike Moffatt, from the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario, said:

...the proposed "Small Business Job Credit" has major structural flaws that, in many cases, give firms an incentive to fire workers and cut salaries.

Paul Wells, from *Macleans* magazine, said:

...by the broadest measure of expenditure on research and development, Canada has fallen from 16th out of 41 comparable countries...

That is not very impressive.

Here is one from conservative commentator Andrew Coyne. Of the omnibus budget bill, he wrote:

Not only does this make a mockery of the confidence convention, shielding bills that would otherwise be defeatable within a money bill, which is not...

• (1655)

This brings me to the point I mentioned previously, that the Conservatives have put a lot of sections in this bill that are not related to money.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the last budgets presented by the Paul Martin government incorporated a child daycare plan that ultimately brought different stakeholders together, in particular the provinces and the providers,

along with the potential clients. There was an agreement that would have ultimately led to tens of thousands of new daycare spots in all regions of Canada.

History will show that the NDP actually helped kill that particular plan. Now it has come up with its own plan that the member has referenced.

I have a question for the member. Does he believe there is any benefit in terms of actually consulting with the provinces, given the importance of the daycare issue, before announcing a plan? Could the member provide some comment in terms of what his party plans to do with the tax break the government is giving to those who have children at home?

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to answer that question.

I would like to remind the Liberal member that the Liberals promised daycare in budget after budget, and in election after election, and they never came up with anything. I would like to remind the hon. member that Canadians, not the NDP, threw them out of Parliament.

Why did Canadians throw the Liberals out of Parliament? It was because they were corrupt.

• (1700)

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I would like to ask my colleague about is the credit unions.

The credit union is a pretty dynamic force in our rural communities, as I am sure it is in rural communities in his riding. I know in Atlantic Canada there are a tremendous number of credit unions that serve a need no longer served by the big banks. One of the provisions in the bill would allow mergers across provincial lines, so it would allow more scope for the credit unions to actually work a little more in the nation.

One of the comments of the credit union folks when they did come to committee was specifically about the implementation timeline. There was not any argument from them with respect to the legislative aspect. However, they were concerned about the coming into force timeline and the regulatory environment on that coming into force, so that they could actually have enough time to solicit their members. It is important in a member-driven organization, as the member would know, to do that.

Generally in the committee, there was a lot of sympathy for the two years. I think finance had indicated to the credit unions that it was somewhere around a two-year implementation period. There was no argument with the legislative aspect; it was the coming into force provision.

Is the member aware of that? Would he support a good consultative process in the next two years to make sure that is brought in correctly?

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Mr. Speaker, my hope was for a better question, and I got one. I thank the member for asking that question.

*Government Orders*

I met with the *caisse populaire* representatives in my office, here in Ottawa. They had specific concerns about this bill. The fact that they were not consulted was their major concern, and they wish to be consulted in the future. As the member said, credit unions are very important not only to eastern Canada but from coast to coast to coast. *Caisses populaire* and credit unions are co-ops run by the citizens of the communities.

If government wants to do a good job and have a good bill, it should consult at all times the constituents in all towns and cities that have credit unions.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-43, the second budget implementation act.

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues on the finance committee from all the parties. It has been what I would call, at best, a hectic fall with the committee actually working on not only the budget implementation act but also a fairly aggressive schedule with respect to the pre-budget consultations. Some of those things have wrapped up in the last week and some will be wrapping up this week, and so I do want to thank them for that.

I also want to thank our great chair, the hon. member for Edmonton—Leduc, who does such a great job in chairing that committee. He is very fair-handed and he works very well with all his colleagues.

I would like to talk about three or four provisions of the bill and then, in whatever time I have left, I would like to spend some time countering some of the things I have heard in debate today and try to give some assurance to people about the objectives that would be accomplished.

The first thing I would like to talk about is the extension to apprenticeship loans of the tax credit for interest paid on student loans.

As we know, with apprentices, about 80% to 85% of their training is called “on-the-job training”. Somewhere in the order of 26,000 people would benefit each year from the provisions in this agreement. That is important because when we look at the study we did on youth unemployment in Canada, it is a little over 14.2% right at this point in time, which is not as high as it has been in the past, but youth employment has been a stubborn issue for successive governments over the past number of decades.

One of the things we saw in the study done in 2013 is that 50% of students, if they had the choice, would actually want to go to university and only 20% would actually want to pursue a trade. That is unfortunate because there are incredible industrial and manufacturing opportunities available for our young apprentices and tradespeople.

This is one of these efforts, with the expansion of the loans and the interest to apprentices in the trades, that would create more interest for people to go into the trades.

The second thing I would like to talk about is clean energy generation. Part of the bill would also include the expansion of the accelerated capital cost allowance for clean energy generation that

would expanded to water current energy and to equipment that would gasify eligible waste fuel.

Earlier this morning, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley said there is nothing in here on the energy, the environment, or anything like that. When we encourage companies with an accelerated capital cost allowance to actually invest in this type of equipment, that feeds all the way up the pipeline, in terms of the R and D in the sector, as well, because more of these types of energy generation that are being supported through aggressive capital cost allowance would also provide the opportunity for that to happen, as well.

I also want to talk briefly about the small business job credit, about which there has been a lot of discussion today.

The reality is that \$550 million would go back to small businesses. I was in committee and heard the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, but at the end of the day, CFIB is the leading spokesman for small business in Canada, and it said this would create not only 25,000 person years of employment but also additional training to help small businesses grow their businesses.

When we look at New Brunswick where probably 80% or more of the businesses have fewer than 10 employees, we see we are talking about a significant number of our small businesses that would be able to take advantage of that. I know my New Brunswick colleagues, including the member for Saint John, would really be happy to hear that.

The last issue I want to talk about is the credit unions and the point that was brought up previously.

I believe we have somewhere around 300 credit unions actually in Atlantic Canada, and the credit union movement is very strong in terms of loans to the agricultural sector and to small business in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well. The ability for these credit unions to go beyond their provincial scope and to come under federal regulation is important, and this would allow them the tools to do that.

● (1705)

We did have representatives from the credit unions actually come to committee. They said one of their major concerns was not necessarily the legislation but ensuring that the phasing in and coming into force of it was stretched out over a period of two years, because that would allow them at least the opportunity to engage with the department and make sure there were no unintended consequences to this. I think it was a very fair proposal they made.

Now I would like to go back to a few things I heard earlier today that are important to get back to. The member for Victoria talked about tax evasion. Some of the aspects of the budget continue to close loopholes and other tax-related things.



*Government Orders*

It is also important to talk about the number of auditors. There has already been an increase of about 750 auditors at CRA. CRA is realigning its operations because we are trying to actually collect more taxes. In fact, up to March 31, 2014, the CRA audited 8,602 international tax cases, identifying over \$5.6 billion in additional taxes that are being collected. In addition to that, we continue aggressive action on the file with respect to tax treaty networks and developing those, as well as tax exchange agreements. Those are all very important aspects to show that our government is very much on the job when it comes to tax evasion.

The next piece I would like to talk a bit about is the Public Health Agency of Canada and some of the changes in the bill. I heard a lot of talk this morning that the Chief Public Health Officer would in some way be neutered by this change. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, when we look at the comments that were made, we see that the Public Health Agency of Canada now has somewhere around 2,000 employees and a budget of some \$600 million.

The Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Taylor, provided us with his comments. Dr. Taylor has done a fine job as a Chief Public Health Officer. In fact, the legislation we are proposing today is codifying what the agency has been doing since 2012. It makes sense to have an administrative arm and a deputy minister level to be looking after the administrative side. Dr. Taylor very clearly said he did feel that his role to talk about health issues to Canadians, and his mandatory requirement to report to Parliament, is still very much in place.

We had comments to that effect from some of our witnesses who also came to committee. A couple of witnesses did express concern, Mr. Culbert and Mr. Hoffman. When the chair, the member for Edmonton—Leduc, asked some very pointed questions with respect to the actual legislation, asking if they saw any portion of the legislation that would prevent the public health officer from actually reporting, they said they did not think so, but they were not sure.

I rely on the testimony of Dr. Taylor very much, because he is the one who has operated in this environment in the last couple of years. He is the one who actually knows how this would work because he has seen it actually work for the past couple of years.

Those are very important changes, and it is very important that we continue because it is crucial to ensure, as part of a budget bill, that a \$600 million agency each year is properly administered. We do not want a distraction between the administration of the affairs of that Public Health Agency and the important role that the Chief Public Health Officer plays.

There are tremendous benefits in the budget implementation act, Bill C-43. There are some very important administrative and legislative changes being proposed in the bill. Even though there were some amendments proposed at committee, certainly all they would have done was take away from the good things already done.

There is strong effort on tax credits for the interest paid for apprentices. It is an awesome thing to get more people involved in apprenticeships. Also, clean energy generation and some of the great things in part 4 would move us forward on continued economic growth in Canada.

● (1710)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I note with interest the amount of discussion on apprenticeships. It is all well and good that people with apprenticeships can have some tax credits. However, there have been four budget implementation bills since Mr. Flaherty's promise two budgets ago that have not acted on the promise to use infrastructure spending by the federal government to create apprenticeships, to actually create the jobs for these individuals who need the tax credits the Conservatives' budget may provide them.

It is all well and good to suggest that there is money being spent on apprentices, but that is once they have a job. We need to find a way to get them the jobs in the first place, and Mr. Flaherty had a great idea.

I wonder if the member could tell me why the government has not put forward that suggestion in any of the budget bills to date, and if the Conservatives will be, when we can see it.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, and it is a good one.

In the previous budget, we talked about having a preference for apprentices working on housing projects and other infrastructure projects, which is going to be very important. However, there are going to be some things we will have to work on with the provinces as well.

As the member would know, some of the efforts the federal government will make on apprentices to do some things will be very helpful, but there are other areas that are provincial, such as the ratio of apprentices to journeymen, and other things. The federal government will have to work with the provinces to make sure that we implement this correctly. I look forward to seeing that in the very near future.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to credit unions. It was not that long ago that the government made an announcement related to credit unions and taking back tax breaks, which ultimately had an impact on credit unions. A number of them provided comment in that regard.

The member is quite right in his assessment that in all regions of Canada, credit unions have played a fairly important role in the development of the economy and the social fabric of the community. I think of the Carpathia Credit Union, the Assiniboine Credit Union, the Steinbach Credit Union, and others. Credit unions have contributed so much.

In hindsight, what does the member think about the tax break that was taken away from our credit unions by his government?

● (1715)

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, that tax break was established for the credit unions in 1972, when they were very small. They were very much like Canadian-controlled private corporations. They have since grown, which put them on an unfair playing field with other businesses of that kind. Therefore, the idea of that specific measure being addressed in 2013 is not a problem for me.

*Government Orders*

As the member has probably noted, if he has been visited by the credit unions, which we all have, they have proposed something, which is part of our pre-budget consultations, to potentially address some of the concerns they have. As member-driven organizations that rely on retained earnings, credit unions have much more of a struggle raising cash, because they cannot have share offerings or anything like that. As they get larger and come under the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and things like Basel III requirements, it is going to be important for them to actually be able to build up their retained earnings. They have proposed some measures that could be helpful on an enhanced retained earnings tax, which is something we should consider in the future.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to oppose the main motion at report stage of Bill C-43, which purports to be a budget implementation bill, but we know that it is anything but.

As is the habit of my colleagues across the way since they have been in government, they bring forward omnibus bills. Buried in those bills are usually totally unrelated matters, unrelated pieces of legislation. Later on, if we oppose a few of those measures, we end up having to vote against the whole piece of legislation. Then the Conservatives get to stand up and say “Gotcha.” Well, “gotcha” does not work in this case.

Since being elected with a majority, the Conservatives have moved 2,190 pages of omnibus bills. In all that time, they have accepted one amendment from the opposition, which by the way was a very technical tax amendment to Bill C-31, in 2014, put forward by the NDP.

Among all those pages, 2,190 pages, are buried changes to the temporary foreign worker program and EI access. Just name it; it is all in there. There are also many changes to environmental issues, to airports, and all kinds of things I could list for hours, but I do not have the time.

What it points to is a government that absolutely has very little respect for parliamentary democracy. If it did, it would bring in pieces of legislation it was proud of. It would put them here, and it would let us debate them. Not only that, but once the government brings in omnibus bills, what does it do? It moves time allocation and does all kinds of other things to end debate.

We are not the only ones saying that. Conservative commentator Andrew Coyne, in the *National Post*, on April 30, 2012, wrote, on omnibus budget bills:

Not only does this make a mockery of the confidence convention — shielding bills that would otherwise be defeatable within a money bill, which is not — it makes it impossible to know what Parliament really intended by any of it. We’ve no idea whether MPs supported or opposed any particular bill in the bunch, only that they voted for the legislation that contained them. There is no common thread that runs between them, no overarching principle; they represent not a single act of policy, but a sort of compulsory buffet...

...there is something quite alarming about Parliament being obliged to rubber-stamp the government’s whole legislative agenda at one go.

That is where disrespect for our parliamentary democracy comes in.

I want to remind us all that in 1995, the Prime Minister, when he was in opposition, had this to say:

...in the interest of democracy I ask: How can members represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block on such legislation and on such concerns?

We can agree with some of the measures but oppose others. How do we express our views and the views of our constituents when the matters are so diverse?

I am standing here asking myself and my colleagues across the way that same question: How can we represent our constituents and fully debate and then vote on disparate matters, instead of being forced to vote on these huge omnibus bills?

Buried in this bill is the temporary foreign worker program, which is broken. I think everyone has admitted to that. Instead of fixing it piecemeal, when the government is caught, usually by the media or the opposition, what it does is tweak it a little bit more. There is another tweak in this bill. It talks about enforcement. First of all, it is a shocker that enforcement was not in place. Second, what will this enforcement look like? We are being told it is going to be mainly administrative, on paper.

● (1720)

I have little confidence that the government will be able to deliver what is promised in this bill, because at the same time that it has made cuts to Service Canada, there is more work being assigned in that area. Where are the resources?

It is easy to stand here and speak against what we do not like, but let me tell members what I would like to have seen in this budget bill.

I would like to have seen a pan-Canadian child care program that would ensure families had access to regulated, quality child care spaces for less than \$15 a day. That is the kind of vision people are looking for from their government, because from coast to coast we are hearing from families who are struggling to find child care spaces, and those who can find them discover that the costs are a burden. Some costs are as high as \$2,000 a month. For most families, that is just not doable. That is the kind of program I would liked to have seen in the budget, instead of all these announcements about providing an extra \$60 a month. An extra \$60 a month does not even buy a day's worth of child care, nor does it help to create additional child care spaces, so there once again we have smoke and mirrors from my colleagues across the way.

I would also like to have seen a real plan in this budget to address the very high youth unemployment. I am sure members have heard from young people who have finished university, have left after high school, or have gone into other kinds of post-secondary education that they cannot find jobs once they graduate, yet some of the jobs that they could get into are being filled by temporary foreign workers. It should be a major concern to every parliamentarian when the youth unemployment rate in some of our cities is at double digits and in the high teens. That is a major concern, and I do not see an action plan or a commitment in this budget to address that issue head-on and in a serious way.

We have recently heard that young people who want to get a job after graduating and who have a huge student debt should find volunteer work and work for nothing. Not everyone can do that. That is one of the other areas I hoped we would see our government address, but once again it receives a failing grade. In this legislation it has failed to crack down on the abuse of unpaid internships to ensure that young people are paid for the work that they perform.

We all know the difference between volunteering and unpaid internships. We are talking here about unpaid internships. There may be the distant hope of a job, yet some young people are working full time without any pay. At another time in our history, we had words for that kind of labour. We should really be addressing that situation, because young people are facing major challenges.

The other provision I would have liked to have seen in this legislation is a relaxation around some of the barriers that the government has put forward to restrict access to employment insurance by the unemployed. People pay into it, and they need to access it when they are unemployed. However, we now see that the access rate has gone down incredibly for many of the unemployed in Canada. Many of them feel duped by their government, and there is nothing in this legislation to say that future Conservative or Liberal governments would not take money out of that fund that workers and employers have paid for and use it for other nefarious activities that they want to conduct.

I would say that this budget fails Canadians.

• (1725)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one thing this budget purports to do is reintroduce a private member's bill that was withdrawn. The private member's bill would have made it much more difficult for refugees to survive in Canada. This bill now contains that same provision, a provision that would make it much more difficult for refugees who have arrived in this country in good faith to continue to survive, because they would be removed from provincial assistance rolls. I wonder if the member would comment on that part of the bill.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Ontario, a hard-working member of Parliament who puts in an incredible number of hours representing his constituents.

Whether I am in Kelowna, Vancouver, Montreal, or Halifax, I hear very clearly from Canadians who are concerned about the meanspiritedness of their Canadian government. Canada is a signatory to UN conventions in which we agreed to take refugees, and yet we hear from doctors, nurses, and front-line service providers about how we are putting people's lives in jeopardy. The

### *Private Members' Business*

further measures in this piece of legislation once again continue the meanspiritedness the government has displayed.

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member opposite to clarify her comment on refugees in answer to the question by her colleague.

First, Canada accepts a large number of refugees every year and fulfills not only its commitment under international treaties but also goes beyond it. All refugees get the proper treatment and all the benefits that are assigned for them. What we are talking about here is people who come to this country, ask for asylum, ask to be determined refugees, and at the end of the process it is determined that they have no grounds for that claim. Those people are eventually cut off from benefits.

Let us not mislead Canadians, the members of the House, or anyone else. The member should clarify it for the sake of the dignity of this place.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleague that there are convention refugees, but asylum seekers are also refugees. By the way, we have signed a UN convention that recognizes asylum seekers as refugees. The government can protest as much as it likes, but the fact is that asylum seekers who arrive here have the right to apply for refugee status and many of them are now being denied access to health care services long before they are finished going through the entire legal process for their claims. I am not making that up, but the medical profession and other agencies have said it.

We live in a country with the rule of law, which provides people with a chance to go through the appeal process, but my colleagues across the way are not clear about the conventions the government is a signatory to.

• (1730)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It being 5:31 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### LINCOLN ALEXANDER DAY

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-213, An Act respecting Lincoln Alexander Day, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC)** moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. David Sweet** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House to speak to all kinds of issues, but particularly today to speak to the bill in regard to Lincoln Alexander day, January 21.

I would like to thank and acknowledge Senator Don Meredith for bringing Bill S-213, an act respecting Lincoln Alexander Day, before the other place and shepherding it through to passage here.

As we conclude the third reading of Bill S-213 in this chamber, I also want to thank all of my Conservative colleagues who showed an interest in the bill and spoke in its favour. As well I would like to thank the hon. NDP members from Hamilton.

We all take pride in the fact that Lincoln Alexander was a great Hamiltonian, as well as such a great Ontarian and Canadian, so much so that designating January 21 of each year as Lincoln M. Alexander day is the very least we can do to honour his legacy and his huge contributions. Once again, as all hon. members would know, January 21 was Lincoln Alexander's birthday.

As I have mentioned before in the House and at committee, I have the honour of being the member of Parliament for a constituency that includes much of Linc's former constituency when he was a member of the House, although I have to admit there is some debate with the member for Hamilton Centre on just how much of his constituency we each had, but we will forgo that aspect of the debate tonight.

When I appeared before committee, I read into the record the highlights of over 20 pages of awards, honours, titles, and accomplishments of Lincoln M. Alexander in his lifetime. I thank Marni Alexander for that list. The length of the list, let alone the calibre of achievements on the list, affirms the appropriateness of Lincoln Alexander day.

I will not repeat all the details, but in my summation of debate in the House, please allow me once again to highlight four important accomplishments, the first two with significance to this place.

Lincoln Alexander was the first black member of Parliament, rising above barriers that he had faced all of his life. He was also the first black cabinet minister, in this case minister of labour in the Joe Clark government of 1979-80. Linc pulled himself up from facing discrimination as a youth to sitting at the cabinet table of our great nation. It was a true testament to his grit and determination.

Lincoln Alexander was also a deeply loved chancellor emeritus of the University of Guelph. I remember hearing representatives from the University of Guelph speak at his funeral about just how important it was to have Lincoln Alexander as their chancellor.

Lincoln Alexander was one of the best loved lieutenant governors in Ontario history. This was his finest hour. He served from 1985 to 1990 and his legacy stands to this day. He was eloquent and he focused on youth and education, the very things that made a difference in his life as he blazed the trail and overcame discrimination.

Is it any wonder why so many schools in Ontario are named after him? Is it any wonder why thousands and thousands attended his funeral in Hamilton in October 2012 and lined the overpasses of the

Lincoln Alexander Parkway as the procession entered Hamilton with the casket en route back from lying in state at Queen's Park?

Lincoln Alexander knew that if a society did not take care of its youth, then it would have no future. It is why he championed youth. He also knew that education and awareness were the essential tools for changing society's prejudices, and that's why he always championed education as well.

Let us recognize January 21 each year across this land to honour Lincoln Alexander, to celebrate youth, and to advocate for education and awareness. Colleagues, join me in passing Bill S-213 so that we can cement forever in Canadian history the great legacy of Lincoln MacCauley Alexander of Hamilton, the 24th lieutenant governor of Ontario, who is forever in our hearts.

• (1735)

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we knew about Linc's professional life, but I wonder if the member would talk a bit about how he was around town and the kind of guy he was as he interacted with people on the street.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, Lincoln Alexander was an extraordinary man. I have already mentioned his admiration for youth and the time that he spent dialoguing with them and encouraging them to aspire to a greater vision than they had when they first met him.

He was not only a very classy man, but a very casual man as well. When he dressed up in his honorary chief of police uniform, I am certain that chiefs of police across the country were jealous because he looked handsome and pristine in that uniform.

If we were doing an event in Hamilton, I remember him coming down on his red scooter and a block away he would be yelling, "Sweet, what's going on?" That was okay. It was never meant as an insult. It was because we had the kind of relationship that he could address me that way. In fact, if he called me "David Sweet" or "Mr. Sweet", I thought something was wrong.

Linc seemed to be one of those mystical, magical, extraordinary characters that could fit into any situation, whether at a black tie fundraising event, an official duty that he was doing as the honorary chief of police, or calling out "Hey, Sweet" to a member of Parliament to find out what was going on as far as what the government was investing in.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he would share his thoughts a little further on why this bill and recognizing January 21 as Lincoln Alexander day is an important thing for the House to do.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the past, he had this extraordinary capability to face the prejudices that were held against him, and he did so in a way that was very respectful and dignified, yet strong and forceful, because it was wrong.

Through his entire career, from the time he was a lawyer to when he was a member of Parliament—and I hazard to say that it was probably the same when he was serving in the Canadian Forces—he always made time for youth. I never asked him this, but we can intuit from his behaviour that he felt that he had an obligation to pay it forward. He had some great opportunities that he capitalized on and wanted to make sure that every young person had the necessary ability, if he could encourage them and make a way for them.

He did that throughout his career and he carried it on right until the time he was lieutenant-governor. He certainly continued that practice even in his retirement years, when I interacted with him mostly on the streets of Hamilton, Ontario.

• (1740)

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as always, it is with pride that I stand in the House today to speak to my colleagues and the Canadian people, particularly on this day, on this bill.

I would like to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain. A year ago, the member put forward Bill C-563 which, in effect, is this bill. It is good to see that even though it has changed its title, it has come to this place to be heard for the third time. I do believe it will pass.

We all have dreams. We all have individuals in our life who we look to and say “I want to be just like that person.” Following up on the question I asked my colleague, this is an important aspect of why we should support the bill. It is why I and my colleagues support this bill moving forward, making January 21 Lincoln Alexander day in recognition of the fine work he did.

All of my colleagues who have spoken to this bill in the past have spoken to the dedication and passion of Lincoln Alexander, former Lieutenant Governor, and of the contributions he has made to our country, to Canadians and Ontarians.

I would like to highlight the contribution that he has made in terms of being a focal point, or a beacon to the black community in Canada. As I said, we all have dreams. When I was about seven years old, I saw Sidney Poitier in *To Sir, with Love*. In seeing that, it solidified in mind that, yes, I would be an actor but not only that, this is how I would do it. That was the beginning of my road. I had, like so many of us, individuals who helped guide me in that direction.

The importance of this bill is that it allows for the story of Lincoln Alexander to represent the same kind of beacon, the same kind of guidance, the same kind of pride to the community of communities; that is the black community in Canada.

Lincoln Alexander, indeed, overcame the barriers and walls that existed in his time to become the first on many levels. We do look at firsts in our community as being significant. There are times where in areas of the world or in certain activities, it is expected that people of African descent will participate, to excel. There are areas of the world or activities where that is not so open.

Before there were the Williams sisters, Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe in the world of tennis, which was a very closed world. Before there was Tiger Woods, there was Charlie Sifford, who became the first person of African descent to play in the PGA tour.

Like these trailblazers, Lincoln Alexander holds that very proud distinction in the world of Canadian politics. In a world where history has forgotten many of the stories that have been forged in Canadian history and in world history, recognizing the accomplishments of Lincoln Alexander on January 21 each year will give a focus to young people.

• (1745)

As my colleague has pointed out many times, the importance of young people to Mr. Lincoln Alexander goes unsaid. Like so many individuals who care about the future, Lincoln Alexander did what he had to do, not only because it was his time to do it, but to blaze a trail forward for those who came after him, including myself. We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before, and I count myself as one who stands on the shoulders of Lincoln Alexander.

The bill is important because it sends a very clear message to those who have a vision. It sends the message that it can be done and should be done. It sends a message that underlines the continuing march towards inherent inclusion and the further distancing from the hard-fought merits of inclusion. It solidifies the history, place, life, times and works of Lincoln Alexander. Therefore, it cannot be lost in the history of our country.

It becomes a beacon, much like the beacons I have followed, for future generations. It becomes a point for young people sitting at their desk thinking they would like to be a part of change in our country, a part of contributing to our country. Lincoln Alexander is a beacon in how that can be done and the fact that it could be done.

My support, and all of our support, for this bill means that we are participating in the making of dreams; the dreams of those who are just beginning to dream as well as those who are well on the road to achieving their dreams. It allows those dreams to be attained. It allows those dreams to become a reality.

Above all else in his accomplishments, if he were with us today, I think Lincoln Alexander would be quite proud to be a beacon for those young people and their dreams.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak with respect to Lincoln Alexander. While Hamilton may claim him as a son, I know that on Draper Street, in the riding I represent of Trinity—Spadina, there is a historic row of houses, one in which he was both born and raised when his family came to Toronto and he started his amazing life.

Draper Street has an annual event when the guards of Fort York march up to commemorate an old stand of houses that used to be military homes, but later became homes to Canada's railway workers. It was in this industry that many of Canada's early black settlers and early African-Canadians found work in Canada and in Toronto.

*Private Members' Business*

We have a proud history in the riding of leading a civil rights conversation with strong leaders. Lincoln Alexander's voice, his presence and his accomplishments are celebrated among a group of Torontonians we all remember. In holding this day for Lincoln Alexander and recognizing it nationally, we also stand and recognize the amazing contribution of people like Wilson Head and Bev Mascoll, one of the early black entrepreneurs in Toronto.

We talk about Stanley Grizzle, the first black judge who also came out of this neighbourhood in the Bathurst Street corridor that linked the railway workers' homes to the rail yards in the south end of the city, and in the riding that I represent.

We know that Harry Gairey, Sonny Atkinson, the Ellis family and the Padmore family were all part of this collection of one of the oldest communities in Toronto, a community that at one time produced a mayor of the city back in the 1890s and that has produced significant folks.

However, Lincoln Alexander holds a special spot in the city of Toronto. Although he represented and worked in Hamilton, his time in Toronto was also well celebrated and his presence in the city was one that made all of us better as citizens, as politicians and as actors in public life.

During his time at the legislature, I was a young reporter covering Queen's Park. I remember when his name was announced. I remember when he was invested in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. I remember the focus he brought at a critical time in our city's history. When racial relations and tensions with police were running high, not only did he bring a strong and clear voice with respect to equity, inclusion and civil rights injustice, he also managed to build a bridge between the communities and the police service in our city. That was recognized with the honour that was bestowed upon him when he became an honorary police officer and fulfilled those duties. He was present while I was a member of the police services board in Toronto, and was present at many of our events.

He brought history to life. He brought the achievements of a community in Canada that can call itself black, that can refer to itself as African-Canadian and that can draw its roots from Nova Scotia, the United States, the Caribbean and from Africa. Lincoln was a leader among all of those men and women.

To honour him today, to stand and to recognize it nationally, is to do a service to what our country has always done well, which is to find a way to open the door to the next community coming in, the next person arriving, the next person looking for a job, and to ensure they get the dignity and the opportunity in the future that all of us deserve and that our families hope will be realized for all our children.

Lincoln Alexander was a strong voice in the civil rights movement of Toronto, of Hamilton and of our country. He was a strong presence in this chamber, in the legislature of Ontario, in the police service of Ontario and in the city of Hamilton. However, most important, for those of us who call Trinity—Spadina home, he was one of the early voices, one of the early leaders, and one of the great contributors to a much better Toronto on the way to becoming a much better Ontario and ultimately a much better Canada.

For that, we thank the member who has brought this motion forward. We look to the support of the House to celebrate this in solidarity with Lincoln Alexander.

I remember the last time we celebrated his presence on Draper Street. He pointed at the house where he was raised and then pointed across the street and said, "But that's the house I had my most fun in." We never heard the end of that story, but if we did, we might not be honouring him today.

Lincoln Alexander is missed and he is celebrated. His gentle smile, his gentle ways and his fight for a better Canada will always be remembered fondly for those of us who call Toronto home and Canada home as well.

● (1755)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It is my understanding that the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, having spoken moments ago, does not see the need for a right of reply, so we will go directly to the question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 3, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

Pursuant to Standing Order 30(7), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-628 under private members' business.

\* \* \*

**CANADA SHIPPING ACT**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP)** moved that Bill C-628, An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and the National Energy Board Act (oil transportation and pipeline certificate), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

*Private Members' Business*

He said: Mr. Speaker, I represent northwestern British Columbia. It is an incredibly beautiful and powerful part of our country, not only in the make-up of the geography, the stunning mountains, the coastal communities, the ocean, the rivers, but as much in the people who live and have lived there since time immemorial. They are some of the proudest first nation cultures the continent has ever known, the Haida, the Haisla, the Taku River Tlingit, Tsimshian, Gitksan, and on down the line. These are people living with and from the land.

There is an expression we use in the northwest. We say that the land makes the people, the people don't make the land. The bill that I bring to Parliament today for debate is born directly from that love of home, that defence of land, and the aspiration to be able to continue to hand it down to future generations in better condition than we found it, while creating the type of prosperity we all hope for.

I represent the northwest of B.C. It has been one of the greatest honours and pride of my life. The stunning land has informed my very way of being. I hope every day I am in this place, the House of Commons, to do it some credit.

Over the last decade or so we have been facing a crisis, a crisis that has in fact borne out to be an opportunity. This has been the threat of an 1,100 kilometre pipeline running from Bruderheim, Alberta to the port in Kitimat, containing upwards of 525,000 barrels of diluted bitumen a day, then transported in supertankers three football fields long and a football field wide through the narrow passage of the Douglas Channel through three hairpin turns and out through the inside passage and the Hecate Strait by Haida Gwaii and on to China.

This threat is to our very core, our very being, as a people in the northwest, because our culture and our economy rely on the natural environment. We rely on the rivers, on the salmon, on the place that has sustained people for millennia. While this has been a direct threat to all of those things, it has also helped bring us together across the northwest, first nations and non-first nations, conservatives and progressives, people who find their love of the land in many different ways but are unified in the defence of that land.

It has also been born out of the crisis of a federal government that, rather than to work with us as a people, has chosen to use terms like "enemies of the state" and "foreign funded radicals" when we had the audacity to raise our voices about the proposed pipeline and the supertankers that threaten so much. Rather than silence our voices, which I suspect the government and the minister at the time had hoped to do, it strengthened our passions in defence of our home. We have been seeing municipalities, first nation communities, and groups across the political spectrum come together in opposing the plans, not only of this particular oil company with its Enbridge northern gateway pipeline, but also the plans of any government that hopes to bulldoze its way through the people it claims to represent.

It does not make us an enemy of the state to raise our voice in our country. It makes us Canadian. It is not to be an enemy of the state to join together with neighbours in common cause. It makes us Canadian. Any government that suggests otherwise is unfit to govern our great country.

This act defending the north coast does three principal things. It bans the export of raw bitumen and oil products from the north coast

of British Columbia, period. It says that and recognizes what we all know to be true, that there are some things that we cannot risk. There are some places that are deserving of our concern and our protection.

The legislation also goes further. It seeks to deepen and broaden community consultations whenever the Government of Canada addresses the Canadian people about important projects like pipelines and mines and anything that might have an impact on our communities and our homes.

One would think the government would learn from the mistakes it has been making time and time again. The Conservatives have gutted the environmental assessment act. They have utterly destroyed the Navigable Waters Protection Act. They have gutted key parts of the Fisheries Act. This is all in an attempt to speed up and ram through various oil pipelines right across Canada.

However, the reaction from Canadians is most Canadian. It has been to oppose such actions, because when the government is not playing a fair and balanced role in a discussion of something as important as the transportation of energy, Canadians notice. Perhaps Canadians are smarter than the Conservatives think because they pay attention to these things, to all of these omnibus bills the Conservatives have been pushing through.

● (1800)

The third component of the bill is finally to ask the question in this place that has not been asked, that we should have an opinion and take some sort of position about the proposed raw export of our natural resources, in this case bitumen out of northern Alberta, with no value-added whatsoever. Not only is it environmentally risky when we move diluted bitumen because it sinks and cannot be cleaned up, it is also economically risky, in fact, economic suicide to export raw resources of such value, leaving behind all the jobs to some other country to pick up, with our resting just with the costs of production alone.

Those three components—to protect the north coast, to encourage and honour public consultation for once, and to finally talk about value added to our natural resources—are the core principles of this bill, borne out of the crisis, borne out of the threat the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline posed to my home, to the people I represent, but allowing us to take it for what it is, which is an opportunity to do something better in this country.

This in fact been a generational debate. Many in this place will not know that we have been debating supertanker bans off the north coast of British Columbia for 42 years in the House of Commons. The House passed a motion by one of my predecessors, Frank Howard, 42 years ago, to do this very thing. The then Liberal government later brought in voluntary prevention of shipping oil in this manner, and just four years ago, the House passed the New Democratic motion to protect the northwest, protect the north coast, and to say no to Enbridge northern gateway.

*Private Members' Business*

It has been 42 years. It is time to have a definitive declaration by the House of Commons and to find out, particularly from my B.C. colleagues across the way, who exactly they work for. I say this because I have been touring British Columbia from edge to edge and north to south, talking to hundreds and thousands of British Columbians at over 20 town halls, in Vancouver Island, Vancouver itself, up through the north and into the interior, packing rooms, church basements, community centres, town halls, with British Columbians from right across the political spectrum turning out, signing thousands upon thousands of pages of petitions that had been flooding into my office, participating online through Leadnow, Avaaz, and the Dogwood Initiative, raising their voices because they cannot seem to get the attention of their members of Parliament on this issue, if they happen to be Conservative

This should know no partisan bounds. This is not about right and left; this is about right and wrong. We know that in defence of home, we are always in the right. When we try to take an opportunity to improve the way we do things in this country, that is right. Anyone who thinks in 2014 that we can simply fire up the bulldozers and ram these projects through communities against their will, against the will of first nations that have right and title to the land, is someone living in a fantasy world. In 2006, the current Prime Minister declared for all the world to hear that Canada would become an energy superpower. We remember that.

Well, all these years on, how are they doing? Every major energy transportation project is mired in controversy, the latest being on Burnaby Mountain just outside Vancouver, where a company that wants to build a multibillion dollar pipeline cannot even get its GPS coordinates right when seeking an injunction through the courts.

The people stand up. Of course they stand up. This is a tradition in Canada. This is a welcome tradition in Canada. When a government refuses to listen, the people come together and join their voices one to the other that there is a better way to do things.

Up north, we call it the "Skeena model", where first nations sit down with industry and industry recognizes their right and title to that land and works from values up, incorporating who we are as a people, as opposed to the top-down, Ottawa-knows-best Conservative model, which says, "We're just going to tell you what's going to happen to you. If you have the audacity to raise your voice, if you have the temerity to suggest that this Prime Minister and his oil executive friends do not know better than those of you who live with the resources, those of you who live in the communities that will be impacted and affected, well, then, we're going to try to silence you. We're going to change the laws of the whole country to silence you. We'll push people out of the conversation rather than welcome them in, rather than use their intelligence."

• (1805)

What has the reaction been? Twice now the Union of B.C. Municipalities has passed resolutions against this pipeline. Twice it has done that. With the Save the Fraser Declaration, more than 130 first nations across British Columbia came together, put their differences aside, and said that this way of doing business is wrong, that the pipeline is wrong for first nations in that province and in this country.

Municipalities right across the northwest, towns that are based on resource development and have been for generations, understand the extractive economy but know that the risks of what Enbridge is proposing, which is supported by the Conservative government, is wrong. From Prince Rupert and Haida Gwaii, to Terrace, to the site in Kitimat where this pipeline is supposed to land, to Smithers, Hazelton, and on down the line, communities have passed resolutions at the municipal level against this project.

One would think all this would matter to the Conservatives across the way, but not as yet. They have not quite been able to hear their constituents. They have not quite been able to hear the people of British Columbia, who just last year were polled on supertankers off the north coast, and 80% said no. A small indication to my Conservative colleagues is that one in five British Columbians who voted Conservative in the last election said they would switch their vote.

If we cannot make an economic argument the Conservatives are willing to listen to, which is that raw exports are bad for the Canadian resource economy, if we cannot make a moral argument about standing against people who have presented their voices in calm and peaceful ways, if we cannot make the legal argument that this thing is not going to go through the objections of first nations, who just recently proved their case at the Supreme Court through the Tsilhqot'in decision that rights and title must be honoured, if we cannot convince the Conservatives on any of those fronts, then certainly we can convince them of the politics, because that is something the Prime Minister claims to pay a lot of attention to.

I can remember the day the Conservatives gave their tacit approval to this pipeline. Lord help the media who were out there trying to get one Conservative MP from British Columbia to make one comment about how enthusiastic he or she was about this pipeline. They could not find a one. They did find one, actually, after a few days of hunting, and his message was, "Do not worry: this pipeline will not be built anyway." What kind of government operates this way? What kind of integrity is this? What happened to standing up for Canada?

The threat is real when a government has so lost its way that it feels it does not derive its power, authority, and legitimacy from the people of this country.

The threat to the wild salmon economy just in the northwest alone is \$140 million per year. Across British Columbia, it is \$1.7 billion from the seafood industry and recreation. It is \$1.5 billion from tourism, which is almost wholly based on the appreciation of what British Columbia is, which is a magnificent and beautiful place, a place all Canadians treasure, certainly those of us who live there, in their imaginations, hearts, and minds.



*Private Members' Business*

Through all of this, we launched the campaign takebackourcoast.ca. Thousands upon thousands of average, ordinary, everyday British Columbians have been signing on and joining, encouraging their friends to participate. They believe in one hopeful idea: that we still have something akin to representative government that seeks to represent the people rather than some narrow interests, a government that if pleaded with at the moral, legal, ethical, and economic level, and ultimately, I suppose, at the political level, we can sway, even the current government when it comes to oil and the oil industry, to do the right thing.

I believe in my heart of hearts that there are friends across the way. I appreciate the support we have heard from the Liberal Party and the Green Party. I believe in my heart of hearts that there are members across the way who understand the importance of getting this right, of having an energy policy that actually fits with Canadian values, and that in this day and age, we can do better than what we have seen so far. In this day and age, we can learn to respect first nations and respect citizens when they come forward. We can understand that this project, as designed by northern gateway, is not in the interest of this country and certainly not in the interest of the people I represent. There is a better way, one that seeks to respect those who send us here, one that seeks to respect rights and title, one that seeks to respect, finally, the balance and harmony we seek with the environment in which we live.

● (1810)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has been building an outstanding safety record with world-class, world-leading liability regimes and preparedness for a response to all modes of transportation of energy in this country.

From my reading of this bill, which the member is presenting, it would prohibit oil tankers on the Dixon Entrance, the Hecate Strait, and the Queen Charlotte Sound. It is very specific in a geographical way.

Is the member opposed to all tanker traffic in Canada?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose if I were, I would have put it in the bill, which I did not. What we put in the bill is a very specific reaction to a government that seems to be either unwilling or incapable of hearing both the science and the voices of the people who live there.

Ultimately, we have to respect the people who do know best, and those are the people who are on the ground, in the communities, taking their living from the ocean and rivers, and who understand how to work in harmony. They have looked at the risks posed by this, which are an 8% to 14% chance of a major oil spill over the course of its life. It would be a spill that cannot be cleaned up, because even now, the federal government admits that diluted bitumen sinks when it hits water, and when it sinks, we cannot clean it up. I would dare the Conservatives to offer any evidence, which they have not to this point.

What we know is that people have consistently raised their voices on a sound and democratic principle that they need to participate in the conversations that happen in this country, and they will not be bullied out. They will bring their principles and voices to this debate, whether the Conservative government likes it or not.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley knows, I support the bill that he has brought forward. It is an important one for British Columbians, and it is an important bill respecting the kind of voices that have been heard over the years to protect the coast.

The bill has a substantive part, which is the amendments to the Canada Shipping Act, and then two aspirational ideas that are incorporated in changes to the National Energy Board Act. Could the member tell me what, if any, are the differences between his bill on this section of the Canada Shipping Act and the bill that I had on the order paper, Bill C-437, formerly Bill C-606 in a previous Parliament?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address that quickly and then get to my friend's other points. There have been many iterations of this conversation in legislation put forward by her, myself, and others.

This is very specific, based on the recommendations and advice we got from the people who live in the northwest. They are my friends, my neighbours, and the municipal and first nations leaders, and they prescribed it very specifically. The elders also spoke to me from the first nations communities about the importance of having some connectivity, some basic connection between the values that first nations people hold in the stewardship of the land.

To the other points about the aspirational, we have seen the Conservative government shrink and greatly limit the amount of consultation that can happen on any of the pipelines going across Canada, rather than welcoming Canadians into the debate and hearing the wisdom, intelligence and passion of people who live along the proposed routes of any of these pipelines. It could be the west-east pipeline, Kinder Morgan into Vancouver, or gateway. This bill seeks to open up the conversation, bring people in, and show them some respect.

The last piece is to finally say that value added should be a component of any consideration of any resource project that the government faces. Why a government would be so infatuated and content with raw export, leaving the cost of clean-up behind while sending the jobs off to some other country, is beyond me. It is certainly not in Canadian interests. It may be in the Chinese government's and other governments' interests, but it is certainly not in our own.

That is what the three components of the bill would do, and that is what it seeks to accomplish, finally, through legislation.

● (1815)

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for this chance to speak on Bill C-628, and specifically on the significant accomplishments of this government with regard to aboriginal and community consultations.

We are proud of the fact that the natural resources sector is the largest private employer of first nations people in Canada. First nations have made and will continue to make important contributions to the development of our natural resources.

*Private Members' Business*

Significant improvements have been made to the review process through the government's plan for responsible resource development. This has resulted in Canada having a more robust, evidenced-based regulatory review process for major natural resource projects.

Included in these improvements is the requirement for enhanced consultation with aboriginal groups. Aboriginal groups who are potentially affected by a project can participate in all phases of the review process. They are also given the opportunity to present their own evidence and test or challenge the evidence submitted by project proponents.

We recognize the necessity of working together with first nations communities to build relationships that are respectful of first nations and treaty rights. We want to ensure that they have the opportunity to share in the benefits of energy resource development in the years ahead.

Through this engagement, we are listening to all the views being expressed, so that we can promote energy resource development that works for each community, not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Our government has taken significant action to strengthen Canada's world-class energy transportation system. Our tanker safety system, which is built around the pillars of prevention, preparedness and response, and liability and compensation, is just one example.

We have also announced our intention to introduce legislation to enhance pipeline safety. However, I find it a bit ironic that the member is proposing the bill after he and his party voted against our increased safety measures for pipelines.

Let us look at what the NDP has done.

The NDP has proposed a bill that would ban tanker traffic, which would hurt Canada's effort to diversify our markets and the Canadian economy. NDP members consistently oppose every single form of resource development, and finally, ironically enough, they vote against increasing safety measures for pipelines.

Canadians know that the NDP cannot be trusted to protect their safety or the safety of the environment. However, Canadians can trust our government to grow the economy while protecting the environment. We know that working with first nations is crucial to doing this.

Having local first nations involved in the development and operation of Canada's world-class tanker and pipeline safety systems is pivotal to gaining their confidence in these systems. It is also essential to benefit from their traditional knowledge of the land and its resources.

Building on this momentum, last May, we announced the launch of the Major Projects Management Office-West in Vancouver. MPMO-West addresses Mr. Eyford's recommendations and serves as a single window for the government to coordinate extensive engagement with aboriginal peoples and industry, and identifies ways to support participation in energy projects. This includes everything from employment and business opportunities to environmental stewardship and safety.

The energy sector is already making a dramatic difference in people's lives in British Columbia. Look at the Pacific trail pipeline.

To date, more than half of the 366,000 construction hours worked on the pipeline have involved aboriginal peoples, and about 85% of the construction spending on the LNG plant so far has been awarded to Haisla First Nation businesses.

Budget 2014 sets aside \$28 million over two years for the National Energy Board to ensure aboriginal peoples have a strong voice in decisions regarding energy projects. The NEB requires the project proponents to consult with all parties potentially affected by those projects.

The board considers the views of industry, provincial and territorial governments, first nations, and affected communities to determine whether a project is in the national interest. The renewed contribution to the participant funding program will strengthen the ability of aboriginal communities to be heard during consultations on major projects.

We understand that one key concern of British Columbians and all Canadians is ensuring environmental protection. That is why we have said time and time again that no project will proceed unless it is deemed safe for Canadians and safe for the environment, based on scientific evidence.

● (1820)

It is also why we have taken a whole-of-government approach to working with aboriginal peoples and first nations to ensure their meaningful participation in assessing and managing the environmental safety of projects. We know these projects can only proceed with the active participation of aboriginal peoples, and the assurance that public and environmental protection are the top priority.

Taken together, these measures I have outlined today make it clear that we have taken significant action to ensure all parties potentially affected by projects have not only a voice, but a meaningful opportunity to play an active part in these projects. Unlike the NDP, our government understands the economic benefits of responsible resource development for Canadians and recognizes the tremendous opportunity first nations can play in the future of Canada's energy development. We are building on an outstanding safety record with world-class world-leading liability regimes, preparedness and response for all modes of transport in Canada's energy products. That is what Canadians expect from their government.

While that member voted against our safety measures, including voting against increasing the number of comprehensive inspections and audits and voting against implementing fines against companies that broke our strict environmental regulations, our government will continue to focus on what matters to Canadians.

Given our government's significant efforts to increase consultations with first nations and communities, as well as the actions we will continue to take, Bill C-628 is redundant and we cannot support it.

*Private Members' Business*

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill C-628, introduced by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Bill C-628 would exclude supertankers from the inland waters around Haida Gwaii, an area of significance to our whole province and an area that I know well from having been an environment minister who travelled up and down the coast in boats and small planes and from having been a tree planter and reforestation contractor who worked in these areas.

I have seen first-hand the teeming wildlife and the quality and fragility of the ecosystems in that area. As the House well knows, Canada's quality of life is closely connected with the health of our oceans and our ecosystems. Those ecosystems and that coast are integral not only to our livelihood and way of life but also to Canada's economy. Nowhere is this relationship more important than on British Columbia's north coast.

I join the vast majority of British Columbians, including dozens of first nations communities on the coast and in the interior, who are of the view that transporting oil by pipeline through the proposed route to the head of Douglas Channel and transporting oil by supertankers in turbulent and hazardous waters pose unacceptable risks to the environment, the communities, and the businesses that depend on that environment and to all Canadians who share pride in the common heritage of this very special place.

I am pleased to support the bill, which is modelled after my own bills, both Bill C-437 as well as Bill C-606 from a previous Parliament. I had the privilege of being in the order of precedence in 2011, after having travelled the area a number of years earlier, as the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has described having done.

In 2010, I had the privilege of travelling from the southern tip of Vancouver Island up to Kitimat and to communities from one end to the other on our north coast, consulting with people and hearing their views and the strong support that inspired me to put this bill in the order of precedence. Unfortunately, it died an early death because of the early election call in 2011, just short of the fixed election dates that are in law in our country.

I am happy to see the House have the opportunity to address this bill again. I think I mentioned in my question earlier in this debate that the bill is substantially based on mine and consists essentially of Canada Shipping Act changes. I did not hear that there were any differences from my previous bill in the substantive part of this bill.

Then there are two aspirational sections in the National Energy Board Act, both of which are eminently reasonable. They ask the National Energy Board to ensure that consultations have taken place and to report on them in their consideration of a project. They also set out that the National Energy Board should consider the impact on employment in upgraders and refineries and in the petrochemical industry. Of course the Liberal Party is very supportive of the idea of consultation and is supportive of having local employment from our natural resources, so those are instructions to consider important issues.

I appreciate that the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has built on the work that I and many others before me have done to protect this area. In fact, it was a long-standing policy of Liberal

governments from the time of Pierre Elliott Trudeau not to allow tanker traffic in the inside passage between Haida Gwaii and the central and north coast of Canada. That long-standing policy put the environment into the centre of the consideration, and our economy flourished notwithstanding, so it is not essential to risk oil spills in this area in order to have a thriving economy.

• (1825)

In fact, our contention is that the economy of the coast is important as well, and that would be at risk. There is a strongly expressed consensus among the communities of the province of British Columbia, and especially first nations and coastal first nations—like the Haisla, the Haida, the Heiltsuk, the Gitga'at, the Lax Kw'alaams—whose heritage is tied into the ecology of shellfish collection, of salmon, of an abundance of sea products, and simply the ability to be able to continue having some of their traditional practices. It is so important for coastal first nations, and I want to acknowledge them for having been strong voices for many years in support of banning tanker traffic in those inland waters.

The Conservative government has unfortunately undermined a very fundamental principle of our country's and our government's ability to balance the various interests and activities that come before it. What the Conservatives have done is undermine the environmental regulatory framework. What that has accomplished for the current government is to block many of the projects that it aspired to complete, because of the erosion of trust by the public in anything that the Conservatives have to say.

I heard the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar talk about public trust in the current government. I want to point out that every time a member from the Conservative Party says that a member did not vote for this, that, and the other, the public should remember that the omnibus bills and many of the other bills are designed exactly to put some positive changes into some very political, ideological legislation. We call them poison-pill changes; they make it impossible for opposition members to support them, just for the very purpose of the Conservative members being able to later say that they did not vote for this, that, and the other. That is actually code for the Conservatives undermining our democracy with the way they put forward legislation, especially these omnibus bills. I want any members of the public reading this to recognize that code the next time they hear it, because they will hear it every day in the House, used as a tool, which undermines the public's trust in the Conservatives because of their anti-democratic processes.

*Private Members' Business*

Turning back to the bill, I want to note that B.C.'s north coast is the home to the Great Bear rainforest and some of the world's most diverse ecosystems, which include 27 species of marine mammals, 120 species of coastal birds, and 2,500 individual salmon runs. This also is an area of the coast of British Columbia that is home to 55,000 coastal jobs, and many of these jobs would be at risk should there be an oil spill. Oil spills happen, whether due to technological or human failure. We know that they happen. Should that happen, our coast would never be the same.

Regarding this particular pipeline project that this bill is addressing, which is the pipeline to Kitimat, rather than having learned the lesson of their failures of consultation and their failures in undermining the regulatory process, the Conservatives have compounded them since then by making changes to the National Energy Board to further limit consultation, further squeeze the time that people are being given to have comment, and further delegitimize any of the projects in British Columbia that the National Energy Board is contemplating. That will then live on in public mistrust of other projects that the Conservative government is trying to put forward.

My hope, in closing, is that the Conservative Party members of Parliament from British Columbia will join us to vote for this bill because their constituents want them to do that. Their constituents are solidly behind this kind of protection of the area around Haida Gwaii from the potential for oil spill, and the Conservatives' constituents in British Columbia are for proper environmental regulation, for communities granting permission for these major invasive projects before they push them through with the National Energy Board.

I invite the Conservative members to consider that and join us in supporting this bill so it will pass. I would like to congratulate the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his initiative in putting this forward.

• (1830)

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise to speak in support of this historic bill introduced by my hon. colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley. It is called an act to defend the Pacific northwest, and a better name could not have been given to this initiative.

When I ran exactly two years ago, I knocked on many doors in Victoria and Oak Bay, in my part of Vancouver Island. I met so many different people, but not one person did I meet in my constituency who supported the Enbridge northern gateway project. They were all fearful of what it would do to our beautiful coast and how it would impact our first nations communities. The bill would codify that resistance British Columbians have, and that is what central to this initiative.

I was shocked and delighted a moment ago to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources rise in this place and say something quite remarkable. She concluded her remarks by saying that this bill was “redundant”. I looked on Google, where we all look for definitions of words, and saw that redundant meant “not or no longer needed...superfluous”. I guess what she is saying, on behalf of the Conservative government, is that

a ban on oil tankers, or VLCCs, in the Pacific northwest is unnecessary because it is already there.

I did not know that. It shows that the Conservatives actually have thought about the impact of a spill in this part of the world, and I was delighted to learn they had accepted that.

Maybe it is not necessary, but if we could therefore simply agree to those conditions, that would be great. However, the bill goes beyond that quite substantially.

It would force pipeline proponents to look at adding value to resources and creating jobs in Canada by amendments to the NEB Act, something I would commend. Most significant, perhaps, given the Tsilhqot'in case and other cases in our courts, it would strengthen consultations between the federal government and first nations communities on pipeline reviews. It would do that for all municipalities, as my friend has suggested, but it would go much beyond that in light of the new obligations we all face all as we deal with first nations in the resource development context.

For us, this is a common sense initiative that would put the environment and first nations back and centrally into the energy conversation, and would ensure that Canadians would get the full benefit of energy development.

In particular, the bill would stop the Enbridge northern gateway in its tracks. I feel I have a mandate to represent the people who sent me here, all of whom are opposed to this. Therefore, the bill, “redundant” though it may be, would definitely put a nail through the heart of that egregious project, which so few people in my part of the world think makes any sense at all. It is grotesque.

It is inspired by the experience of northwest B.C. and its fight against Enbridge. Bill C-628 would legislate immediate protections for the pristine north coast from threats from these oil tankers, while addressing the key concerns raised by the poor process that led the Conservative government to approve the pipeline.

I am very proud to have been the past co-chair of the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria. Those people are now in court, fighting the NEB and the government's decision to accept the JRP's report because of its numerous procedural errors that are so patently obvious to any lawyer who has examined them. This would go some distance, if Bill C-628 were to be accepted, to address some of the deficiencies that were made so apparent during that process. It was a process where literally thousands of people appeared, some 99% of whom opposed this pipeline. Nevertheless, three individuals appointed by the NEB came to British Columbia and said that they knew what was best and that they would go ahead and recommend approval for this project.

Nobody in our community takes that process seriously. Nobody takes it seriously in the Kinder Morgan process. If this bill went some distance to improve it, it would be worth it on that basis alone.

*Private Members' Business*

•(1835)

Three hundred scientists from around the world condemned that joint review panel project as full of errors and omissions. They said that it cannot be used to make decisions about pipelines and demanded that the government finally say no to the lunacy of the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline proposal.

As recently as in today's *Globe and Mail*, we have seen a change in the economy. Green energy sector jobs now surpass the total of oil sands employment in this country. There are 6.5 million people employed now in the clean energy sector, according to Clean Energy Canada in a report released today. There has been \$25 billion invested in Canada's clean energy sector in the past five years.

As I say, more people are employed in this sector than in the oil sands. The world has changed; the Conservatives have not. Projects like Enbridge northern gateway show how much they have their heads in the sand. Perhaps I should say in the oil sands.

A constituent in my riding, Dr. Gerald Graham, works with Worldocean Consulting. He calculated that over a 50-year period, the chance of a major tanker spill is somewhere between 8.7% and 14.1%. These are the same odds, at the top end, as Russian roulette.

Applying a standard model used by governments to project spill risks, researchers at Simon Fraser University have estimated that the northern gateway pipeline would generate a tanker spill somewhere between every 23 and 196 years, a terminal spill every 15 to 41 years, and 15 or 16 pipeline spills on land every year. Overall, they pegged the probability of a tanker spill at 90%.

Yet the joint review panel said that "a large spill is unlikely" and "a large spill would initially have significant adverse environmental effects...[but] the environment would ultimately recover." Tell that to first nations people who depend on the sea in the northwest part of British Columbia. Tell municipalities like Kitimat, which despite propaganda from the Enbridge company decided to vote against even allowing that project in the community. They have spoken. The Conservatives have certainly not listened.

I could go on to talk about the lunacy of a report that said that dilbit may not even sink. I did not know that. Tell that to the people in Kalamazoo, Michigan. They spent over \$1 billion trying to clean up something on the bottom of the Kalamazoo River, but I guess it does not sink. There must have been a lot of wasted money. The report says that when it gets to the waves and the sea water, it is an entirely different issue.

The scientists with whom I have consulted think the report's conclusion on such a central issue was itself lunacy, and of course, we are playing Russian roulette, as I said earlier, with the fate of one of the most beautiful parts of our planet and some of the most dangerous waters on our planet, when one thinks of Hecate Strait and Douglas Channel, with 90° turns out to the ocean.

If we look at the map Enbridge gave, those islands do not exist, apparently, but I have seen them. I have been there many times. It is my favourite part of this planet, and I will not let the Conservatives destroy it by allowing this pipeline and these tankers to go through this part of the world.

I have been an environmental lawyer for most of my life. I have participated in many hearings and have been commission counsel on environmental assessment projects myself. This project was flawed from the get-go. The process has been so inadequate that everyone has spoken against it. The same people are now speaking out about the Kinder Morgan process in British Columbia.

I am proud to stand here in support of my colleague for introducing this bill. We are lucky to have him in the House. He was in my riding a couple of weeks ago with several hundred more people. "Take back our coast" is what he calls it. There were several hundred a year or so ago and several hundred now. We are not going away. Our resistance to this project is only getting started. This bill would make an enormous difference in how we do business in Canada to address these kinds of projects.

I commend my colleague for this initiative, and I hope all members of the House will support it.

•(1840)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to Bill C-628 which calls for, among other things, the Canada Shipping Act to be amended.

The proposed amendments would ban oil tankers from operating off the northern coast of British Columbia, specifically in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, and Queen Charlotte Sound.

I want to put some facts on the table in my conversation. We have certainly heard some passion from the other side, but I think facts become important, and certainly we are committed to protecting the environment. As a member representing British Columbia, I know how important our coastal environment is and how important waterways are, and we take our duty to protect these areas very seriously.

The member's proposal to ban tankers off the west coast is problematic for a number of reasons. First I want to talk about how we have already taken significant action to ensure we have a world-class tanker safety system and how we are keeping shipping safe.

The cornerstone of Canada's maritime regulatory regime is the Canada Shipping Act, also known as the act. The act's main purpose is to ensure marine safety. This includes preventing pollution from all shipping, including tankers. The act is applicable to all vessels operating in Canadian waters and to Canadian vessels worldwide.

*Private Members' Business*

What we are trying to do is balance the safety of shipping with the protection of the marine environment while encouraging maritime commerce. In order to ensure that oil is shipped safely, the act establishes standards that require oil tankers to be double-hulled and sets out how they are built, equipped, inspected, certified, and operated.

Oil tanker traffic in Canada has an excellent safety record under this regulatory regime. Roughly 320 million tonnes of oil are safely shipped off of Canada's coasts annually, with 43 million tonnes of oil shipped annually through the coastal waters of British Columbia.

Even with this high volume of oil shipping, Canada has not suffered any significant oil spills since its current regulatory regime was implemented. This track record can be attributed to the strong prevention measures that have been implemented over the past two decades.

Transportation of goods by vessel needs to be compliant with the act and is vital to British Columbia's coastal economy. Multiple prevention measures are set out in regulations, such as the Vessel Traffic Services zones, which monitor the movement of vessels so that traffic separation schemes and special routing measures are in place where appropriate.

Crews aboard these vessels must also meet stringent international standards for training and certification. In accordance with the Pilotage Act, there is compulsory pilotage in British Columbia's coastal waters. This means that a vessel must have on board a pilot, who is a navigator certified to have specialized knowledge of local waters.

Mariners are dedicated professionals who undergo years of training and experience to advance through the ranks, again in accordance with training and examinations overseen by Transport Canada and other maritime administrations around the world.

Transport Canada has also established the Canadian marine oil spill preparedness and response regime, which requires tankers to have an arrangement with a Canadian response organization to provide cleanup services in the event of a spill. Tankers are also required to have a shipboard oil pollution emergency plan.

The Marine Liability Act, which forms part of Canada's regulatory regime, sets out rules for tankers to carry insurance, not only for the oil cargoes they carry but also for the oil they use as fuel.

Internationally, Canada is highly respected in the maritime community as a country that provides a clear and predictable set of rules to ensure safety and to protect the environment. A key way we achieved this reputation was by being party to international conventions that set rules for how ships, including tankers, operate safely and prevent marine pollution. Being party to these conventions allows Transport Canada the right to inspect ships that call in Canadian ports. The conventions also provide rights for Transport Canada to act if standards are not met. This can include warnings, detaining a vessel in port until repairs are made to comply with standards, or proceeding with prosecutions.

Not only are we party to these international conventions, but we are also very active at the International Maritime Organization, the United Nations specialized agency that governs global shipping.

● (1845)

We have had leadership roles in this International Maritime Organization for several years and have been working to facilitate the world's adoption of maritime standards to protect the environment, so we have been working not only in Canada but also worldwide.

We continue to strive to make our regulatory regime stronger and recently have done so through our world-class tanker safety system initiatives. Of course, as members are aware, British Columbia was interested in having the best system in the world.

In May 2013-14, we announced a number of new measures that have since been put in place. We announced that there would be increased tanker inspections, new and modified aids to navigation, and an expansion of our national aerial surveillance program to increase surveillance efforts while continuing to deter polluters and enabling early detection of marine oil spills.

However, a ban on oil tankers, as proposed by the NDP, would have a lasting negative effect on Canada. I understand that the NDP is anti-trade and does not comprehend the issues of a trading nation. The NDP always wants to say no. NDP members do not ask how we can perhaps have a process in place and look at how we can have a balance.

I have to go back to the recent provincial election where their leader stood up in the riding that I represent and said that they were not even going to support this pipeline, that they did not care about having a process in place and were against it.

However, I think British Columbians spoke clearly when they said that they wanted to find a balance. The environment is critical to them, but they want to find a balance.

I am not sure it has worked out so well for the NDP members to always be saying no. They do not even want a process before they say no. It is just an automatic no. It has not worked out so well.

Banning the tanker traffic would essentially eliminate any chances Canada would have to further diversify energy exports to countries other than the United States. I would also note that the NDP has said no to the Keystone pipeline, to east-west, and to north-south. It seems to be no, no, no. NDP members are not looking for any way to get to a yes, in spite of whatever measures we can put in place to have an environmentally sound practice.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I think the ban would also be seen very negatively by the United States and other countries that view these waters as free for navigation, specifically the waters in fishing zone 3, between the Queen Charlotte Islands and Vancouver Island. As members might know, they are disputed as international waters.

In closing, our government is already keeping shipping safe and preventing pollution in our waters through our current regulatory regimes. We continue to be proactive in our approach to safety and we are proud of recent initiatives, such as our world-class tanker safety system.

Canadians generally and British Columbians can be reassured that our government is committed to protecting our beautiful west coast. As I said, as a member from British Columbia, I believe that we can get to a yes on some of these projects with the important measures that are in place.

Banning a class of vessels operating legitimately within the standards I have just described would be contrary to the comprehensive system that has served Canadians so well. This type of ban proposed by the NDP would have drastic impacts on Canada internationally.

I heard the member for Victoria say that every single person said no. However, many people in my riding are saying yes, and some say no, but I think there are people in British Columbia who recognize that we can get to a good balance on these issues.

For these reasons, our government will not be supporting the NDP's Bill C-628.

● (1850)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of Bill C-628, an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, and the National Energy Board Act, introduced by my colleague the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Let me provide some background information about this bill. Bill C-628 is designed to fully stop the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline in its tracks. The bill would also steer the National Energy Board toward a process that respects communities and first nations and puts Canadian jobs and energy security first.

Enbridge proposes to have supertankers the length of the Empire State Building traverse through the sensitive and difficult waters of the Douglas Channel and B.C.'s north coast. Over the 50-year life span of the project, it plans to do it 11,000 times. Given Enbridge's track record, we do not trust the odds that a devastating accident will never happen.

Polls consistently show that more than two-thirds of British Columbians oppose Enbridge's northern gateway supertanker scheme and the dangers it poses to the coast and communities that depend on it. Thousands of people wrote letters and testified before the northern gateway joint review panel; municipalities and the Province of British Columbia formally declared their opposition to the pipeline; and 130 first nations signed the Fraser Declaration opposing northern gateway, only to have their views discarded by the Conservative government's decision to support it.

The Enbridge northern gateway project would move 525,000 barrels of diluted bitumen per day from Bruderheim, Alberta, to Kitimat, B.C. The 1,177 kilometre length of the pipeline would cross the Rocky Mountains, hundreds of rivers and streams, and sensitive habitat for species such as woodland caribou. B.C.'s north coast is a place of great biological diversity and extreme weather. It is home to 120 species of seabirds and 27 species of marine mammals such as orca and grey and humpback whales, as well as the commercially important wild salmon, halibut, and other fisheries. Spills along this coast are more likely, and they would be devastating.

The supertankers Enbridge plans to send down Douglas Channel have a minimum stopping distance of three kilometres, while the channel itself is a network of sharp turns and narrow passages, just 1.35 kilometres in some places. Winds have been recorded up to 200 kilometres an hour, with waves as high as 29 metres.

The economic cost of a spill would be enormous. The seafood sector in B.C. generates close to \$1.7 billion each year, while wilderness tourism in British Columbia generates more than \$1.55 billion in annual revenues. This sector is a permanent source of income for around 45,000 Canadians who would be deeply affected by a spill.

There were 10,000 individuals and organizations, including the provincial government of British Columbia and several first nations, who wrote to or appeared before the joint review panel for the Enbridge northern gateway, and their opposition was nearly unanimous.

I look forward to continuing this in the New Year.

● (1855)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam will have seven minutes remaining for his comments. He can pick it up from where he left off when the House next returns to debate on this particular question.

For now, the time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

## CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a troubling trend of Conservative interference that is putting a chill on Canadian charities. Canadian charitable organizations now increasingly operate in a climate of fear. The Harper government has made it part of its mandate to target charitable organizations that oppose Conservative policies, especially environmental and social justice groups.

The latest victims include the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists, which received an ominous message from the CRA ordering an end to its so-called “partisan practices”. As far as I can tell, the only partisan practice this charity was guilty of was disagreeing with the Harper government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. Just a casual reminder to the hon. member that we do not use the proper names of other hon. members. Their riding names or their positions can be used.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

As far as I can tell, the only partisan practice this charity was guilty of was disagreeing with the Conservative government. The Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists simply sent letters to the government, opposing the approval of neonicotinoid chemicals that damaged bee colonies. It was contacted just a few days later by the CRA. Are we expected to believe this was a coincidence?

Another charity targeted last year was the David Suzuki Foundation. That organization provides dozens of programs to educate Canadians about the causes of global warming and to support sustainable practices. They are not left-wing radicals. The Suzuki foundation produces science-based analyses by some of Canada's greatest minds.

While there are quite a few climate deniers in the Conservative caucus, they cannot use their power to shut down environmental research. Last time I checked, Canada was a liberal democracy, not a dictatorship.

PEN Canada, an organization that advocates for freedom of expression, has also been targeted for a political activity audit. PEN Canada has been critical, as have I, of muzzling scientists on the public payroll and now it, too, is being muzzled by this audit.

Is the Conservative government so afraid of criticism that it must resort to harassing charities?

These organizations know as well as most Canadians that the Conservative government has been turning a blind eye to the environmental consequences of its policies. From lack of regulation of harmful chemicals to irresponsible energy policies, the Conservatives have made it clear that the environment is just not important to them.

However, this is not the main issue for tonight. The issue is the right to free speech. It is our democratic right as Canadian citizens to use our voices without fear of persecution. These citizens were exercising their freedoms as Canadians and, yet, were met with harassment.

This shift in Conservative policy has created a chill among charities. Despite being within their constitutional rights, organizations have received the message that criticism of the government comes with consequences.

On the flip side, conservative think tanks that are registered as charities have not endured these abuses. For example, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, in Ottawa, is not being audited, despite its clear right-leaning research.

Charities work for the good of a cause rather than any one individual. Their founders and employees give time and effort for something they really believe in. Under the Conservative government, they have had to forge ahead, knowing that they may be targeted. This is simply unacceptable. The Canada Revenue Agency is not meant to carry out a political agenda.

Will the Conservatives stop punishing charities that advocate for science-based conclusions to Canadian issues simply because they oppose the Conservative agenda?

• (1900)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there was so much factually incorrect about the statement from the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North that I really do not quite know where to start. Maybe if I could get him to step out from under that umbrella of conspiracy theories, we could just talk about the facts instead of some fictional conspiracy theory he has.

Here are the facts. Charities registered under the Income Tax Act are afforded the valuable privilege of providing tax receipts to their donors. In fact, in Canada, as the hon. member should know, 86,000 registered charities issued receipts worth more than \$14 billion in 2012. The idea that none of those charities should be checked is ludicrous.

The reality is that in return for those tax receipts, Canadians expect that the government will take all the necessary steps required to ensure that their charitable donations are used for charitable purposes. All registered charities are required by law to have exclusively charitable purposes. Some political activity may be allowed, provided that it is not partisan in nature and that it is connected and subordinated to the charity's purposes.

These rules are not new. They have been around for decades. I know the CRA goes to great lengths to support charities and help them meet their obligations as easily as possible. In recent years, it has provided a wide range of new tools and resources and has updated and improved existing ones to help charities better understand the rules, including those rules that relate to political activities.

Fostering voluntary compliance and helping charities get it right from the start is always the number one priority.



The CRA ensures compliance through a balanced program of education, guidance, and responsible enforcement. Audits are an important part of the CRA's overall approach, as they allow CRA officials to better understand a charity's activities to confirm whether it is complying with the rules.

Whenever the CRA conducts an audit, whether related to political activities or any other issue, it follows an education-first approach and uses the full range of compliance measures at its disposal, including education letters and compliance agreements, to ensure that the rules are followed.

Let me be clear. The rules related to political activities apply to all registered charities, and the CRA's compliance efforts also apply to all charities. No charity, no sector, is singled out. The process for identifying which charities will be audited for political activities is handled by the CRA alone in a fair and consistent way. As with all CRA audit activities, it is not subject to political guidance.

Frankly, the member opposite is attempting to politicize something that is completely removed from the political process, and it is absolutely shameful that he would do that.

That member, along with a few others, should be asking himself why he is attempting to score cheap political points at the expense of public servants. I have full confidence in the professionalism, integrity, and fairness of CRA officials who administer the charities program on a day-to-day basis. I can assure the members of this House that these officials are doing their jobs professionally, competently, and free of any political direction.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Mr. Speaker, sorry, but it is clear that there has been a campaign of political activity targeting charities that have criticized the government. This is an abuse of power and cannot continue in a democratic society. If this does not convince the hon. member, perhaps comments from his colleagues might.

The finance minister said not very long ago that environmental groups have a radical agenda. What exactly is that radical agenda? Is it to lower our carbon emissions so future generations can live safely on a livable planet? Is it to protect ecosystems that have been damaged by mismanagement and an irresponsible lack of regulation?

Perhaps if the Conservatives even looked at the harm they have caused the environment they would see that we need change. Instead of owning up to their failures, the Conservatives are targeting charities, whose main goal is to distribute information and research to Canadians, as they should.

It cannot be a coincidence that of the \$8 million in the 2012 budget allocated to political activity audits, groups critical of the government have been targeted the most.

Will the Conservatives own up to their own policy failures instead of scaring charities into silence?

• (1905)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. member, his comments are nonsensical, incorrect, and incoherent.

To begin with, we do not know who is audited. The only way anyone knows who is audited is if that person or group that is audited chooses to tell. We have no idea who else is being audited in

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

this country, because there is no way to track that. That is private information, kept within CRA.

As I mentioned previously, audits are an important element in CRA's balanced approach to compliance. When CRA identifies non-compliance, it can use a series of progressive compliance measures ranging from education letters and compliance agreements for less serious cases to tougher measures like financial penalties, suspension, or even revocation for the most egregious cases. However, the truth is that the overwhelming majority of charities selected for audit are able to correct identified non-compliance concerns and continue their charitable programs. The CRA's approach is clearly working.

To close, in case the member opposite missed what I said earlier, in a recent message to all CRA employees, the commissioner and deputy commissioner said:

To be clear, the process for identifying which charities will be audited for any reason is handled by the Charities Directorate alone and, like all audit activities, it is not subject to political direction.

There are 86,000 charities in this country and \$14 billion in charitable money out there. The hon. member thinks that there should be no audit of any of that. That is not responsible.

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to rise and speak about a question that I asked last week but certainly did not get a very satisfactory answer to. It was about the Conservative government's lack of commitment to the health and welfare of our Canadian veterans. There is really only one word to describe it, and that is "shameful", I am sad to say.

Too many veterans are too often denied benefits they are entitled to, while others are forced to fight their own government for years before they can get the help they need. In fact, this fall the Auditor General's report presented clear evidence that the government has failed to provide adequate access to mental health services, which are needed by many of our veterans. The report that noted that mental health support for veterans was very slow, complex, poorly communicated, not tracked, and not comprehensive enough. In fact, the Auditor General concluded that Veterans Affairs, believe it or not, was largely unconcerned with "...how well veterans are being served and whether programs are making a difference in their lives."

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The Conservative government has closed down regional support offices to save a few dollars. At the same time, it has allowed over \$1 billion to lapse and go unspent in this department so that it can make claims about balancing the budget. It is a government that shamelessly fudged the numbers with regard to the recently announced programs to enhance mental health services. While the Conservative cabinet minister originally led us to believe that this funding would flow over 6 years, we then learned that it would in fact be stretched over 50 years.

Imagine being a government that presumes it can announce what is going to happen for the next 50 years. The gall and arrogance of that is appalling. Worse than that, to come across and pretend that the government is going to spend it over 6 years, when it is in fact over 50 years, is fundamentally dishonest. The government should be ashamed of that.

Not only has the government failed to deliver mental health services for Canadian veterans, but a new report reveals that after committing to hire more mental health personnel for our Canadian Armed Forces, the Conservative government also failed to deliver. It is no wonder that Canadians do not believe a word the government says when it comes to the treatment of our men and women who serve our country and have served it in the past. The government simply cannot be trusted to tell the truth.

Unfortunately, the lack of adequate and timely support for our veterans is clearly taking a toll. Over the last decade, 160 Canadian Forces members have died by suicide. Many more are struggling with mental health issues like PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. However, as the Auditor General pointed out, under the current system, one in five veterans is forced to wait up to eight months to get help from the government. The Conservatives talk a good game about supporting our veterans and armed forces, but they clearly fail to recognize that we have an obligation to those who serve our country and to their families.

This fall's report by the Auditor General is a reminder of the Conservatives' failed record on Canadian veterans. The Auditor General has found that Veterans Affairs needs to update its outreach strategy to include family physicians and that it needs to educate family members on how to spot possible signs of mental illness. Why on earth is it not doing this already? Why does the government not want this to happen? Is it because it does not want people who have PTSD to be found, recognized, and dealt with? Does it not want to know? What is wrong with the Conservative government?

When we ask why the government has failed to correct this problem, what do we get? We get PMO talking points. I hope that we will not get the same thing tonight when the government has a chance to respond.

Again, why does the government take this approach? Is it because it really does not want to know? That is the question on my mind. Is it because the minister is more concerned with photo ops than being available to respond to the report of the Auditor General? Is it because he would rather try to bully and intimidate veterans instead of listening to their legitimate concerns?

Perhaps the parliamentary secretary, in the minister's place, could answer my colleague, the member for Guelph, who asked why the

current funding for veterans' mental health is stretched over 50 years and wildly insufficient, especially when compared to the \$1.13 billion that Veterans Affairs left unspent and the fact the Conservatives have squandered hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on partisan advertising campaigns.

● (1910)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that it was the Minister of Veterans Affairs who proactively asked the Auditor General to conduct a review of the existing mental health services and supports offered Canadian veterans by his department. I would also like to draw to the attention of the member opposite the fact that it was the minister who acted promptly and announced new and expanded mental health initiatives for veterans, still-serving members, and their families, which was a huge step forward.

The minister did not stop there. He also announced a mental health services for veterans action plan to further support these investments and to continue to be forward-thinking and proactive. We will provide more timely access to psychological assessments and treatments. Also, the new operational stress injury clinic in Halifax slated to open in 2015 in, I believe, the riding of the member opposite, as well as satellite clinics across Canada, will give veterans faster access to specialized mental health services. We will strengthen our outreach efforts, targeting the reserve force as well as families and family physicians.

We will invest in treatment and research and work with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to develop mental health first aid programs for veterans and their families. The expansion of the operational stress injury support program with 15 new peer support coordinators will also help veterans and their families seek treatment.

The member opposite highlighted a number of things. The Prime Minister today highlighted the fact that the announcement that we made recently was for \$200 million. The Prime Minister also highlighted today that it would be over six years, while the member opposite talks about it being over 50 years. Here is a note to the member opposite: not all veterans' issues will be resolved in six years. It might take a little bit longer. That is why the life of this program will be longer than the six years that we announced.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

He talks about funding for veterans services. This government has actually increased funding for veterans services to levels that have never before been seen in this country. When the member opposite and his party sat on this side of the House in government, they had the opportunity to respect veterans and chose to do just the opposite. That is why, when we came into office in 2006, we had to immediately set on a new course of respect with veterans. That is why we increased funding to veterans services, as I said, to record levels, and it is why we have opened up new clinics across this country. It is so that veterans have better access to services. That is why we are improving psychological services for veterans. All told, we have provided in excess of \$5 billion more than the Liberals provided.

One thing we do every single year in this place is make sure that Veterans Affairs has all of the resources it needs to properly fund all of the services that Parliament has approved. We do that every single year. That is what we have done. We are very proud of the work that we have done in government, but, more importantly, we are proud of the work that our veterans and the Canadian Armed Forces have done. That is why on this side of the House we have continued to support them at record levels. We will continue to do that, not only this year but in the years to come.

Yes, the member is right. As long as we are on this side of the House, for the next 50 or 100 years we will continue to support the veterans who have made this country such a great place to live. The member is quite correct. As long as Conservatives are here, we will always stand up for veterans, whether it is 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, or even 50 years, despite the objections of the members opposite.

• (1915)

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I guess what I did get, in fact, was PMO talking points, but I am accustomed to that. It is not a surprise. For example, I did not hear any explanation about how it was that the Conservatives failed to spend \$1.13 billion allocated for the Department of Veterans Affairs, yet apparently had to close nine regional offices that were providing services to veterans across this country.

The fact of the matter is that this report, other reports, and veterans themselves indicate the government is failing them and failing to deal with the mental health problems they are facing. If people were to talk to any member of Parliament who is hearing from veterans in

their ridings who face problems and could see the hurdles they have to go through to get benefits, they would see how outrageous it is.

People would understand that someone who is entering the forces has to go to boot camp and go through obstacle courses, but to make suffering veterans go through that kind of a course and go over obstacles constantly in order to get the benefits to which they are entitled is outrageous, and that is what we are seeing from the government. That is what we are hearing from Canadians all the time.

It is time for the government to change its attitude, contrary to what my hon. colleague says, have a change of heart, have a heart, and pay attention to the real problems that our veterans are experiencing.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite does not listen. It was actually the minister who asked the Auditor General to look at the program so that we could find better ways of providing our veterans with quicker and easier access to the programs they deserve, programs this government put in place after years of shameful mismanagement by the Liberals opposite.

When we came into office, we realized that there was a huge deficit with respect to honouring our veterans. That is why we increased funding to veterans services.

As I said, it was this minister who asked the Auditor General to come in. We identified some shortcomings and accepted the Auditor General's report, and we have made some changes.

There is better communication between the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs so that we can provide better and quicker access for our veterans. We are doing better. We have more work to do, and the minister is undertaking that work as we speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Winnipeg North not being present to raise during the adjournment proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

The motion to adjourn the House is 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 7:19 p.m.)



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