



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, January 29, 2014**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### FRANCINE LALONDE

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, our colleague Francine Lalonde passed away during the night of January 16. Francine leaves behind an impressive political and social legacy. She was the first woman to serve as vice-president of the CSN, and she was the minister of status of women in René Lévesque's cabinet in 1985.

A Bloc Québécois MP from 1993 to 2011, Francine left her mark as foreign affairs critic, serving as a dedicated and respected ambassador for Quebec. She was also an ardent defender of the need for Quebec sovereignty.

There are those individuals who strive to make a difference in society and who leave their mark everywhere they go. Francine was one of those people. A woman of values, conviction and courage, she was one of the first people to initiate the social debate on the right to die with dignity, which will soon become law in Quebec.

The great French author Alexandre Dumas once said that those whom we have loved and lost are no longer where they were, but they are still everywhere we are.

My deepest sympathies go out to her spouse, Guy, and her three children. Farewell, Francine.

[*English*]

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, rape is a crime like no other. It is a violation of the spirit as well as the body. It is an assault on trust, privacy and control. It can leave the victim with a sense of bruising, shame and guilt, and it happens to a woman in Canada every 17 minutes. These are women who are teachers, nurses and judges. They are women whose husbands may be doctors or lawyers.

Thirty years ago, rape was folded along with indecent assault into a new crime called “sexual assault”. It covered everything from unwanted touching to any form of penetration, including offences involving a weapon or bodily harm.

Getting rid of the term “rape” did not stop it. Many argue that it negatively changed the justice system and resulted in lighter not tougher sentencing. The average jail sentence for sexual assault offenders is two years.

Today, I will be introducing a private member's bill that would help to change this. The bill would establish much tougher mandatory minimum sentences for sexual assaults that fall within the definition of rape, and those sentences would be served consecutively. The bill would help keep offenders behind bars longer and help keep Canadians and their families safe.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DEVOLUTION ACT

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the aboriginal affairs committee held hearings in Yellowknife on Bill C-15, which combines devolution with the elimination of regional land and water boards.

A clear message from the hearings was that there is a strong opposition to the Conservative plan to shut down these regional boards.

These boards give a local voice to development decisions, which is a system that works. They were created through constitutionally protected land claims agreements. Even the chamber of mines said they have a good working relationship with the local boards.

The aboriginal governments of the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Tlicho have pledged that they will use every avenue available to fight these changes, meaning greater delays for future development.

*Statements by Members*

“Canada has returned to the old colonial ways of thinking they know what is best for us. They are silencing our voice. This is not the constitutional promise made in the Tlicho agreement,” said Tlicho Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus.

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**MOMPREENEURS**

**Ms. Eve Adams (Mississauga—Brampton South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to praise Mompreneurs.

Mompreneurs are a dynamic group of moms who are also leading business owners, experts and innovators within their respective fields.

On Monday, I had the pleasure of hosting a pre-budget consultation with GTA Mompreneurs from Oakville, Burlington, Mississauga, Brampton and Hamilton. The working moms shared suggestions, offered concrete policy advice and were grateful for the opportunity to be heard.

I was pleased to hear that many initiatives in our government's economic action plan, such as the children's arts and fitness tax credit, the small business hiring tax credit and improvements at CRA are helping make everyday life more affordable for these working families.

As I wrap up this year's pre-budget consultations, I am proud to stand up for my local community in Ottawa to advocate for my neighbours' priorities and to deliver exceptionally constructive feedback to our great Minister of Finance.

The women at Mompreneurs are smart and hard-working, and they are a testament to the business spirit and entrepreneurship that is alive and well in Canada.

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**JOHN ROSS MATHESON**

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. John Ross Matheson, who passed away in Kingston last month, served his country in World War II, in this House as the Liberal member for Leeds, in the Ontario courts as a judge, and in many other roles. He did much of the background work that led to the creation of the Order of Canada. He himself became an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1993.

John Matheson was the co-designer and an advocate in Parliament for the adoption of our Maple Leaf flag. To change the most important symbol of a country, to leave behind the old and journey ahead with the new, required a deep faith in Canada's potential, Canada's future and Canada's place in the world.

To his family, I offer, on behalf of this House, our sincerest condolences.

John was true to the very motto he proposed for the Order of Canada. John Matheson desired a better country, and his faith in what kind of better Canada could be built led him to devote his life to it.

We thank him.

**SCHOOL WORKERS IN NOVA SCOTIA**

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the end of January literally thousands of students across Nova Scotia write exams.

It is a difficult time in Canada, as we have inclement winter weather and many times school is cancelled. This causes increased stress, not only among the students writing exams, but their families who are trying to get them to school on time.

Thank goodness we have the bus drivers and the custodians and the maintenance workers that we do in our school system, who get our students to school on time so they can write their exams and enjoy their school day.

This is a terrible time of year for a job action or strike that prevents students from going to school, particularly those who live in the rural areas of the province. We need our bus drivers, custodians and maintenance workers at school so our students can write their exams during this difficult and stressful time of year.

That is why I want to congratulate both the school board and the union for coming together, putting students first, agreeing to mediation and stopping the strike after only a few hours. For once, we saw great collaboration by the adults who are involved in the school system in making sure that students are put first.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

**PORTNEUF—JACQUES-CARTIER**

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on the night of January 3, a devastating fire broke out downtown in Old Donnacona, in my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. It destroyed four businesses and left six families homeless.

In response to the disaster, the people of my riding have shown absolutely remarkable solidarity and generosity. In just three weeks, \$61,500 has been raised to help the victims of the fire. A significant quantity of non-perishable food items have also been collected.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the generous donors for helping those who have lost everything start a new life.

With less than a year before the town celebrates its 100th anniversary, the mayor of Donnacona, Sylvain Germain, is calling on the various levels of government to help rebuild the nearly 100-year-old buildings in the downtown area, which represent a significant portion of Donnacona's heritage buildings.

I urge the government to show its support and heed the mayor's call so that we can proudly celebrate Donnacona's 100th anniversary in 2015.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDAL OF BRAVERY**

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Fredericton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honour four outstanding members of the Fredericton Police Force who were recently presented with a Medal of Bravery from His Excellency the Governor General of Canada.

On January 8, 2012, Corporal Dwight Doyle, and Constables Shawn Fraser, Samantha McInnis and Jeff Smiley, who was also awarded the Star of Courage, rescued an elderly woman from a vehicle submerged in the Saint John River, in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The courageous police officers ventured on to the unstable ice to reach the car of the unconscious victim. Constable Smiley jumped into the frigid water to bring the woman to the edge of the ice where the other officers resuscitated her and brought her to safety.

On behalf of all Canadians, I wish to sincerely thank those officers and every one of their comrades in uniform for their bravery and dedication to duty. These men and women are truly deserving of the honour that was bestowed upon them for their courageous and selfless act.

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**FOUNDERS CUP CHAMPIONS**

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my riding of Brant is home to an iconic sporting legacy, and I am not talking about hockey.

Today I rise to pay tribute to an emerging legacy of sporting excellence and sheer dominance in the game of lacrosse on the Six Nations of the Grand River.

In 1996, a new lacrosse dynasty was born during the inaugural season of the Six Nations Jr B Rebels. The Rebels have earned a reputation for their high octane offence, which simply overwhelms opponents.

Last summer, they shattered the record books to become the first franchise to win three consecutive and six total national Founders Cup championships. They posted an astounding 37 and 1 record on the season.

Thanks to the leadership of their coaches and GM Wray Maracle, the Rebels are changing the way the game is played and blazing a new trail of unprecedented success.

I can assure the House that their sights are already set on another national championship next August.

Go Rebels!

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**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the joint review panel studying the northern gateway pipeline spent millions of dollars and years hearing from experts, hundreds of first nations, B.C. municipalities, the B.C. government and tens of thousands of British Columbians who were virtually unanimously opposed to this project. They faithfully participated in

public hearings to have their voices heard by the Conservative government.

Yet, in the face of Enbridge's dismal track record and total lack of social licence in British Columbia, the decision from the JRP tells us that they, like Conservatives, could hear just one voice in this country, that of the oil lobby.

Barely a month after the panel's decision, the results are as predicted. Ten lawsuits have been filed finding fundamental flaws in the panel's environmental review, and a total lack of proper consultation with first nations. It is the result of Conservative neglect for the environment and first nations, and disdain for anyone who has the audacity to criticize the government's proposal.

Northern gateway pipeline has been a test of beliefs and values in British Columbia. We will stand with British Columbians and oppose this project.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ABORTION**

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court decriminalized abortion in Canada by striking down section 251 of the Criminal Code. Part of the ruling reads as follows:

Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of security of the person.

The right of Canadian women to decide whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term is not a done deal. The Conservatives have introduced three bills as well as Motion No. 312 to eliminate that right. In addition, young Canadian women are facing more and more economic and social uncertainty because the Conservatives are behind the times when it comes to gender equality.

The NDP believes it is time to take action.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[English]

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, November 11 is an important day of remembrance. It is one where we set aside our differences and remember our veterans for their sacrifices. That is except for, of course, the senior Liberal veterans spokesman who went on national television on November 11 and slammed Canadian veterans, suggesting that providing money to them is like hanging a case of beer in front of a drunk.

It is incredibly sad that 79 days later the leader of the Liberal party continues to stand by the member and his reprehensible and false comments. I call on the leader of the Liberal Party to reject this overtly partisan behaviour of his senior veterans spokesman and find someone else who has his facts right.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**FERNAND LEDUC**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Quebec painter Fernand Leduc, who died yesterday at the age of 97.

Mr. Leduc was born in Viauville, in the east end of Montreal, in 1916. He was educated by the Frères maristes from 1927 to 1939 and graduated from the Montreal School of Fine Arts in 1943. He was an important figure in the Automatiste movement. He moved his art from the non-figurative to the abstract. In 1987, he said: “As an artist, I see myself as working in an Impressionist tradition of ‘painters of light’”.

I invite all my colleagues to visit the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec to see the exhibit of 30 or so of his works. The exhibit opens on February 20. Without question, Canada has lost one of the greatest painters and artists in its history.

\* \* \*

[English]

**JAMES SCHRODER**

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just before Christmas, Guelph and Canada lost a great man, one for whom humility, compassion and care for his community and his country were lifelong tenets. On December 13, former Guelph MP Jim Schroder passed away at the age of 95.

Jim preceded me in the House, serving his country and his community from 1980 to 1984, first as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment and then as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of health where he worked diligently on the Canada Health Act. He was a giant in the community, a devoted husband to Elizabeth, who predeceased him, and father to Elizabeth, Anne, James and Don. He was a beloved veterinarian and professor at the Ontario Veterinary College and a dedicated volunteer, serving as the inaugural chair of the Guelph-Wellington District Health Council and working with organizations like 2nd Chance employment.

Jim was a model for so many in Guelph, and I valued his counsel dearly. We are better for his service and we will all miss him profoundly.

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**CANAL CLASSIC**

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, hockey's place in Canadian culture is more than a simple sporting pastime. It is a unifying force that brings the whole country together, regardless of age, gender, language or political affiliation. That being said, I would like to invite everyone to come down to the Rideau Canal tomorrow morning to watch the first annual Canadian Tire/Sport Chek Canal Classic. It is a hockey game between parliamentarians, NHL and Olympic alumni, representatives from the media and the team at Canadian Tire and Sport Chek in support of Jumpstart Charities.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities is a national charity that helps kids from financially disadvantaged families participate in organized sport and recreational programs by covering the costs of registration, equipment and transportation, thus helping more Canadian kids get physically active through sport and recreation opportunities. With the Sochi Winter Olympics just a week away, what better way to celebrate Team Canada than to strap on a pair of skates and play Canada's official winter sport, even if it is against the opposition?

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have cut vital services that veterans rely on. They have called veterans “NDP hacks” when they complain. Now the minister has held a so-called round table. Why? Apparently it was so he could insult veterans to their faces.

In Thunder Bay, the Conservative government has betrayed local veterans and is closing our Veterans Affairs office on Friday. Second World War veteran Roy Lamore said it is “a disgrace”. This office was helping to support veterans when they were at their most vulnerable.

Our military personnel and veterans are facing a crisis. There have been eight suicides in just two months. Sadly, the Conservatives have been more focused on using the military to boost their brand than listening to veterans.

These brave men and women serve Canada with courage and distinction. Our duty is to be there for them in their moment of need, not abandon them to budget and service cuts. Members should make no mistake. New Democrats have always stood, and will continue to stand, shoulder to shoulder with our veterans.

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**CYBERBULLYING**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the ministers of justice and public safety launched our government's anti-cyberbullying public awareness campaign: Stop Hating Online. The campaign raises awareness of the impact of cyberbullying and makes sure youth know that this behaviour often amounts to criminal activity. Our government took concrete action by introducing the protecting Canadians from online crime act, which would create a new criminal offence to prohibit the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. This bill would give police the tools they need to do their job.

We have also launched a Stop Hating Online website as a comprehensive resource for parents and youth, with the information and tools they need to prevent and stop cyberbullying.

I am pleased that our government is taking strong steps to help protect our children and youth from cyberbullying. They deserve it.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Veterans Affairs was disrespectful of the people he is supposed to be serving. Some of the veterans were in tears.

The Prime Minister must apologize and fire his Minister of Veterans Affairs. What is he waiting for?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has already apologized for yesterday's events.

The record of this government and this minister is clear. Our government has increased services for veterans without precedent and we will continue to do so.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the veterans complained that the minister had missed their meeting, he said he was not going to stand there and listen to that, and he stormed out. How is that acceptable to the Prime Minister?

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, apologize himself and fire that incompetent?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has apologized for the events of yesterday, but the fact of the matter is that this government and this minister have increased services for our veterans without precedent.

It is an important priority for our government—it always has been—to protect those who wear the uniform and who once wore the uniform, which is why we have overwhelming support for veterans and we will continue to serve them.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Overwhelming support for veterans, Mr. Speaker; let us look at that.

Can the Prime Minister of overwhelming support explain why the Conservative government wrote to the family of a veteran who took her own life on Christmas Day, demanding that it repay her benefits because she died before the end of the month? How could this happen?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition raises that question because of course it is unacceptable.

As soon as the minister heard about that, he immediately said it was unacceptable and ordered a change. That is the kind of work we get from this minister.

•(1425)

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is what we get from that minister after that minister has asked the family to repay the benefits. The first thing that comes to the mind of the Conservatives is to ask for the money back, not help the veterans.

### Oral Questions

On Friday they will close eight more veterans offices. One is in Charlottetown, P.E.I., where they have just doubled the ministerial staff.

Why is it more important for them to find budgets for their ministerial staff than to help Canadian veterans who risked their lives for our country?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the leader of the NDP will not accept is that sometimes government officials and bureaucrats make mistakes. When that happens, it is up to the elected government to make sure they do the right thing, which is what the minister has done in this particular case.

More generally, when we have a small number of duplicative veterans offices that have a very small case load, it makes a lot more sense—I know the unions do not like it—to have 600 points of service for veterans that will be closer to that—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Actually, Mr. Speaker, the veterans do not like it either.

[Translation]

Until now, veterans were able to go to individual appointments to get help.

As of Monday, those same veterans, some of them over 90 years old, will have to line up at a Service Canada office only to be sent to a computer. They even talked about that yesterday when they met with us.

Does the Prime Minister understand the difference between a human and a computer?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, veterans have access to in-person services not just in a few service centres, but at 600 points of service across Canada.

[English]

It is important that we state the facts and ensure veterans get these facts. This government is increasing points of service for veterans from a very few number of offices, the 600 points of service across the country. I know why the unions and the NDP oppose that, but this is in the best interests of veterans. They can play politics; we are going to keep delivering services to veterans.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those who have served their country and put themselves in harm's way for all of us deserve our respect, and they deserve our courtesy. The Canadian heroes who tried to meet with their minister yesterday received neither. Will the Prime Minister fire his Minister of Veterans Affairs?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, this government's record, not only of increasing services to veterans and funds for veterans, is unprecedented. So is our support for the men and women who actively wear the uniform of the Canadian Forces, and we will continue to serve them.

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**THE SENATE**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not need to wait for his government's reference to the Supreme Court. Liberals have taken action this morning to remove partisanship and patronage from the Senate.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. the hon. member for Papineau has the floor.

Order. The hon. member for Papineau.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, we believe that the only people who should be in our party caucus are those put there by the people of Canada. Will the Prime Minister finally take action and only allow members of Parliament in his Conservative caucus?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I gather the change announced by the leader today is that unelected Liberal senators will become unelected senators who happen to be Liberal.

In fact, his leader in the Senate said the following in response to his announcement: "I'm not a former Liberal. I'm a Liberal and I'm a Liberal senator". He also said, "I suspect that not a great deal will change". That has to be the understatement of the year.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is in a tough spot because the Liberals took action this morning.

We took action to remove partisanship and patronage from the Senate. We believe that the only people who should be in our party caucus are those elected by the people of Canada.

Will the Prime Minister finally take action on the Senate, and only allow elected members of Parliament in his caucus?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this announcement is just as odd in French as it is in English.

His leader in the Senate said the following in response: "I am not a former Liberal senator. I am a Liberal. I suspect that not a great deal will change".

[*English*]

What the Liberal Party does not seem to understand is that Canadians are not looking for a better unelected Senate. Canadians believe that for the Senate to be meaningful in the 21st century, it must be elected.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it would have been interesting were it not for the fact that

the Prime Minister has broken Brian Mulroney's record for naming unelected senators: 59 in total.

Three months ago, Liberals and Conservatives stood hand in hand in this House to defeat the NDP motion to end partisan activity in the Senate by removing senators from party caucuses and making them sit as independents. That's impossible, they said. Well, we are glad the Liberal leader has changed his mind. Hopefully he will see the light again and work with us to abolish the Senate.

Why will the Prime Minister not also support the NDP motion to abolish the Senate?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Government of Canada cannot abolish the Senate. That is ultimately a power that rests with the provinces, which is why we have suggested, in the absence of that, that we undertake some meaningful reforms.

Conservative senators are not trying to pretend they are anything other than senators who support the elected government of Canadians. Canadians are not fooled. The only problem the NDP has with the Senate is that it does not have any senators.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** And we are quite proud of that, Mr. Speaker, because you see, the NDP is a party of principle, something the Prime Minister used to believe in nine years ago when he was in opposition.

Speaking of the Senate, yesterday we learned about a \$10,000 payment from Canadian taxpayers to cover the legal bills for Mr. van Hemmen, Nigel Wright's former executive assistant. Since taxpayers are paying the legal fees of PMO staff now, would the Prime Minister not agree that this means that, indeed, his office is under investigation?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, it is a long-standing government policy, predating this government, to provide legal assistance to such individuals.

I cannot let the previous comment pass about the so-called party of principle over there. We put to the Supreme Court the question about abolishing the Senate, and what happened? NDP governments went to court to argue against it.

The NDP's problem is it has not had the chance to name any senators, and it is never going to get any chances.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals tried to name someone. Poor Madam Dyck, who is there now, thought she was going to be named an NDP senator, and we said no thanks. Now she finds out she is not even a Liberal senator.

What will the law firm of Carroll & Wallace in Ottawa be providing Conservative staffer van Hemmen that all the lawyers in the Canadian Department of Justice cannot? Why does the Prime Minister think that is worth an extra \$10,000 of taxpayers' money?



•(1435)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, as you know, the payment of legal assistance for crown service under certain circumstances is a long-standing policy that predates this government. Indeed, as we know well, the House of Commons, through the Board of Internal Ecology—Economy—has similar policies for members of Parliament.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** We do need a board of internal ecology to clean things up, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

On Monday, the Prime Minister told the House that Conservative Senator Irving Gerstein is not under investigation. He officially stated that here, in the House, more than once.

Since the RCMP does not comment on this kind of investigation, and especially not on this investigation, how was the Prime Minister able to make that statement? How is he able to tell us that Mr. Gerstein is not under investigation?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has been quite clear with respect to the matter under investigation. We will obviously offer our assistance to the RCMP in its investigation, which is its responsibility.

[English]

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was the Minister of the Environment who was caught out at another questionable Conservative fundraiser. The minister must have known that there was something not quite ethically right about this event when she snuck in via the back door, but perhaps she hoped that sneaking in through the back door would mean that no one noticed she was breaking the same ethical rule her colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, did just last week.

When is the Prime Minister finally going to put an end to this unethical behaviour, and what sanctions will this minister face?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank that member for the question so that I can correct that inaccurate news story and that inaccurate question.

There was an event for a local riding. It was never advertised as anything more and was fully consistent with the guidelines that are in place. The local riding association has taken great care, before and after the event, to follow those guidelines, and only appropriate donations were accepted.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment used the same playbook as the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who got tripped up for it. Just this month alone, we have the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Minister of the Environment, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, and Chuck Strahl, the Enbridge lobbyist. It is like they take their ethics lessons from the Conservative Senate.

When it comes to the bar of accountability, the Conservatives are over there every day doing the ethical limbo. How low will they go before the Prime Minister finally sets some rules for them?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker,

### Oral Questions

this Prime Minister and this government have always had the highest ethical standards. That has been the norm since this Prime Minister was elected the leader of our party.

When it comes to ethics, this is a gentleman who really has nerve getting up and asking those questions. When we look at the donations that he has accepted into his EDA, he seems to have gone after the very same people who are lobbying him with respect to his file.

That does not show the same type of standard the member is advocating here. At the same time, we know he has broken Elections Canada rules with respect to how his last campaign went. He also sends out press releases saying how great a job we are doing, but he votes against it.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let me recap.

The Minister of the Environment attended a fundraiser where guests included people who receive funding directly from her department. The Minister of Canadian Heritage did more or less the same thing last week. Yesterday, the Minister of Veterans Affairs had nothing better to do than insult and run roughshod over veterans.

How does the Prime Minister determine when a minister should be asked to resign? What is the ethical standard of the day?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has always demanded the highest ethical standards from his caucus and staffers.

[English]

That is the example, of course, that this Prime Minister has set since the first day he was elected the leader of our party. Contrast that to the opposition that accepted illegal contributions from their big boss union friends. Members opposite accept donations from individuals who are lobbying them to make changes on policy.

When it comes to accountability, we have taken action. We have shown leadership. That is what Canadians expect, and that is what we are delivering.

\* \* \*

•(1440)

[Translation]

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, dozens of veterans came here to argue for the maintenance of essential services that the Conservatives are going to eliminate this week.

*Oral Questions*

The Conservatives are cutting services for veterans so that the Minister of Finance can save a few dollars and balance his budget on the backs of veterans. The closure of these offices means that many veterans will simply no longer seek help, and we know what the consequences of that are.

When will the Prime Minister show some compassion and respect and finally admit that these budget cuts are having a devastating effect on veterans?

[*English*]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, at the beginning of February, there will be 650 locations across Canada where veterans can receive in-person service from the Government of Canada, which is 16 times higher than in 2006.

The NDP and the Liberals voted against increased investments for Canadian veterans. I bet they are going to do so again in the next few weeks.

Veterans have told us that they want less paperwork and fewer trips downtown, which begs the question: Who is the member actually working for? The record will show that they have consistently voted against our initiatives to increase benefits and services to veterans.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for 16 and half years, on my tenth minister, from two different parties, yesterday was the lowest of the low in my advocacy for veterans, RCMP members, and their families across this country.

I guess we should be thankful that the minister did not fall asleep in front of them, as the member for Calgary West did previously.

The Veterans Bill of Rights, which the Conservatives brag about, says our veterans deserve respect and dignity. Yesterday they received neither one. The only thing left to do is to ask the Prime Minister of Canada one very simple question: Will he ask for the Minister of Veterans Affairs' resignation? Yes or no.

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely regret yesterday's events. As I did last evening, I apologized directly to the veterans, and again, I apologize now.

I wanted to meet with them to hear their case and their stories and explain to them the changes we are making that will, in fact, look after their interests and their families in the long term. I reach out to veterans from yesterday to reiterate that apology.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our men and women in uniform stand up for Canada, but the government does not stand up for them. Veterans yesterday made that abundantly clear.

The Prime Minister wrongly asserts that support for injured forces members is there, and they should just ask for it. False. Insulting. In fact, the government's own staffing freeze blocked the hiring of dozens of desperately needed medical staff. This lack of support is resulting in tragedy.

I would like to ask, when will the Prime Minister stop blaming those who serve and apologize for this disgraceful Conservative negligence?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberals, we have made this a priority. No government has done more to reach out to ill and injured veterans and members of our armed forces than this Canadian government, and I am very proud of that.

What the hon. member did not mention is that we have increased the health care budget by over \$100 million. Now we have 400 full-time mental health professionals to assist veterans and to assist people in the armed forces. We are going to continue that hiring process, and they should get on-board with that.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday was a horrible day for the veterans who came to Ottawa wanting to meet with the Minister of Veterans Affairs to discuss the closing of the nine VACs. The way they were treated by the minister was despicable and demeaning.

In the words of one veteran, is the minister going to fall on his sword and do the honourable thing and hit the trail? Or when is the Prime Minister going to fire him and give him his walking papers?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it beats me how the leader of the Liberal Party can continue to ignore that member's disgraceful comments about veterans:

...that's like hanging a case of beer in front of a drunk.... [T]hey go and spend it, either trying to buy a house or buying a fast car or spending it on booze and addiction.

When will the leader of the Liberal Party either force that member to apologize or just fire him?

● (1445)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Canadian government asked them to march across Europe, they did. When the Canadian government asked them to march into Korea, Bosnia, and Afghanistan, they did. When they were asked to march into every hellhole on this earth, they did. They responded to the call.

Now, in their time of need, when they can march no more, what does the current government do? It shuts down nine veterans service centres and turns it back.

Will he reconsider this wrong-minded decision?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that we are increasing services to our veterans at more locations and that are more convenient to them. Our government has made record investments to support Canada's veterans, including an increase of almost \$5 billion in programs and services since 2006.

I might add, of course, that we on this side of the House are committed and are fulfilling our obligations. They should get on-board and vote with us to support veterans.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the Conservatives continue to govern with their blinders on.

We have recently learned that they hired an oil lobbyist to advise them on the transfer of the Experimental Lakes Area. These lakes are international scientific and environmental gems that do not exist anywhere else. The Conservatives do not care about the opinion of scientists. They think that the oil industry is much better suited to make decisions about scientific research.

Why did the Conservatives hire a friend of the oil industry to consult on the Experimental Lakes Area?

[English]

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has been active in assisting and facilitating the future ownership of the former Experimental Lakes Area. This decision was made by departmental officials due to Mr. Protti's experience and skills in many sectors, not just the oil and gas sector, which they felt could be relevant in creating a solid financial base for a potential new operator.

The department is very optimistic that a suitable arrangement for the operation of the Experimental Lakes Area will be in place very shortly.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government's attacks on the Experimental Lakes Area program have defied common sense. Its experiments were critical in helping us better understand things like acid rain, phosphates, and the environmental impacts of the oil sands development.

However, news that the Conservatives hired an oil lobbyist to advise them on the ELA begins to make things a lot more clear.

When will the government start listening to scientists on science rather than to oil lobbyists?

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the Province of Ontario concerning the Experimental Lakes Area. We are working toward a final agreement by March of this year.

The Government of Canada is close to being able to return the ELA site to Ontario in a safe and clean condition.

The decision to hire Mr. Protti was made by departmental officials because he had plenty of experience and skills in many areas, including oil and gas, and that, it was felt, would be of great benefit to a potential operator.

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**PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA**

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, time and again we have seen the government's lack of respect for public service employees. Now the Conservatives are turning to a fear campaign. The Conservative government is trying to clamp down on whistleblowers. Public service representatives are reporting intimidation and monitoring. This is simply unacceptable.

Will the minister condemn these practices, rein in his managers and protect the right of free speech of our public service employees?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, certainly this is not the policy of this government to have that campaign that the member refers to. Our managers are professionals; they have to act professionally in all cases. But I would say to the hon. member that it is our duty as the government to be fair and reasonable in our negotiations with the public service, which we will continue to be and, of course, at the same time, represent the taxpayer, which the NDP knows nothing about.

● (1450)

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a witch hunt is not fairness.

[Translation]

The reality is that intimidation is going on within federal departments. This intimidation needs to stop right away, and the President of the Treasury Board needs to rein in his managers.

Shop stewards in the federal public service are being subjected to a fear campaign. We know about the Conservatives's anti-union stance, so we can imagine where the directive came from. These intimidation tactics do not belong in the workplace.

Will the President of the Treasury Board issue a directive to his managers and protect the right of free speech of our public servants?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not the policy of our government or our managers.

Our goal, our challenge, is to be reasonable and fair to public servants, of course, but also to taxpayers, who are footing the bill.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a former small business owner, I remember the stress of complying with burdensome and ineffective government regulations. We know the NDP's position on red tape is that more is better, and the only rules the leader of the third party wants to get rid of are those ones that protect our children from dangerous drugs.

Would the President of the Treasury Board please update the House, Canadians and small business owners on what the government is going to do to reduce the regulatory burden on Canadian businesses?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is one of the top concerns of Canadian businesses, particularly Canadian small businesses, that all levels of government continue to tackle red tape.

*Oral Questions*

I am looking forward to introducing in this chamber a red tape reduction act, which as an informal policy has already saved small businesses \$20 million and 98,000 hours of time filling out government forms. Now the leader of the Liberal Party has called this a gimmick. This is the gimmicker in chief over there calling this a gimmick, but we are going to continue to stand on behalf of the taxpayers and small businesses.

\* \* \*

**CANADA POST**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Conservatives voted to end a service that so many Canadians depend on. Did none of the Conservatives think of Canada's seniors? At this time of year, temperatures are freezing and sidewalks are slippery. Services like home mail delivery make it possible for seniors to live out their retirement in dignity in their own homes.

How can the minister possibly justify pulling the rug out from under our seniors?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, there are one billion fewer pieces of mail being put in the system than there were in 2006, and as a result Canada Post is facing an issue with respect to its business model. It has chosen to put together a five-point action plan and has the support of the government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, by voting in support of the assault on Canada Post that was launched by their \$10 million buddies, the Conservatives proved just how out of sync they really are.

Montreal's mayor is very angry, and rightly so. Urban centres simply do not have space for community mailboxes. In addition, there has been a total disregard for people with reduced mobility and the thousands of jobs that could vanish in the blink of an eye.

Why are the Conservatives stubbornly supporting such a flawed plan instead of doing what other countries are doing and considering other options to secure the future of a public service that is valued by Quebeckers and Canadians?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is an arm's-length crown corporation and makes its own decisions on a day-to-day basis. One of the decisions that it has taken is to address its issues with respect to its business model by putting this five-point action plan together.

However, the reality of the situation is that currently two thirds of Canadian households already receive their mail in these community mailboxes. The other one third will be converted to do the same over the next five years.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives have shown that they are completely out of touch with Canadians.

There are other ways to maintain current levels of service. For example, Canada Post could start offering banking services. The

postal service is dealing with some challenges, but it is worth pointing out that the past 16 years have been profitable even though top executives are getting paid \$10 million. Why are the Conservatives supporting this move to dismantle Canada Post services instead of looking for solutions?

● (1455)

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the way the business model worked at Canada Post in the pre-digital era was very different from the way it does now when people are utilizing email.

With respect to incorporating banking in postal service outlets, it is very clear that Canada Post considered the model and rejected it for the very reason it is having a problem now. Maybe the member should wake up to this, too. People are actually using banking online, just as they are sending correspondence online. The opposition members are trying to solve a problem by creating another problem. No amount of money can get them or tax them out of this situation.

[Translation]

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the measures that Canada Post decision-makers are proposing, with the support of the Conservatives, will make life even harder for people in wheelchairs and with disabilities. Many will have to wait for paratransit so they can go get their mail.

Will the minister make money available to improve access to paratransit, or will she drive these people to their mailboxes herself?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in its five-point action plan, Canada Post has outlined a number of things that it will be doing. Of course, these are Canada Post's business decisions.

One of the things it indicated is that it will accommodate the situations it may be facing with respect to people with disabilities, or seniors. It does that already for the two thirds of family households that already receive mail through this method, and it will move the other one third, eventually, over the next five years, to have the same amount of service.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Act is clear. The ministerial handbook is crystal clear: ministers cannot fundraise using people who get money from the department. However, the Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency sent out an email inviting stakeholders to a fundraiser featuring Nellie Cournoyea, head of a group the minister gives hundreds of thousands of dollars to in grants. The minister's office only started handing out free tickets yesterday afternoon when the media started sniffing around.

Why will the Prime Minister not enforce his own ethical rules and stop this illegal fundraising?

*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, I would like to thank the member again for raising this question so that I can correct the inaccurate news story. This was an event for a local riding. It was never advertised as anything more, and was fully consistent with the guidelines that are in place.

The local riding association took great care both before and after the event to follow those guidelines, and only appropriate donations were accepted.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the centrepiece of last year's budget, the non-existent Canada job grant, is an appalling boondoggle. How could the government have thought for one second that it would work? Therein lies the mystery. How could the Conservatives have thought that the provinces would agree to a program concocted by the federal government alone and financed by \$300 million in cuts to the provinces, forcing them to reduce their own training programs?

Why did the government inflict such a predictable fiasco on Canadian workers?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was indeed our government that created this transfer to the provinces to help with job training.

Still, we can do even more, because the goal is for workers to find a good job at the end of training. It is not training just for the sake of training. It is training to create jobs, to increase private sector and corporate investments in job training.

It is a good idea, which is why the vast majority of organizations and businesses supported it.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I asked the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food what he was planning to do about the pig virus epidemic, he said, "...this is a provincial issue".

Does the minister really believe that viruses do not cross provincial boundaries?

Where is the minister's plan to prevent this epidemic from becoming a national crisis? If he actually has a plan, will he share it with his agricultural counterparts in Ontario and Quebec when he speaks with them tomorrow, or is he just simply waiting for the pork industry to have another crisis and eventually collapse?

• (1500)

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We stood with the pork industry through the highs and lows they have

endured over the last few years and we will continue to do that. Of course, this is a provincial issue. Reporting of PED is a provincial issue.

Having said that, CFIA stands ready to work with the province of record in monitoring, assessing, doing testing, and all of those good things. We as a government have continued to work with the pork sector to build its biosecurity, to make traceability barn to barn workable and usable, and make sure that they have the tools within their tool kit to protect their own barns.

[Translation]

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I do not really think that the minister has a plan.

Yesterday, the minister tried to shift all the responsibility for porcine epidemic diarrhea to the provinces. Farmers and pork producers across Canada expect the federal government to present a plan of action to contain the virus. The minister has dropped the ball again. Tomorrow he is meeting with Quebec and Ontario's agriculture ministers.

What is he bringing to the table tomorrow?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that porcine epidemic diarrhea poses no threat to human health. Let us be clear on that.

However, it does pose a risk to pork producers and we are fully aware of that. We are working closely with the Government of Quebec and the people in the pork industry to ensure that they are putting effective biosecurity measures in place.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Hon. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity, and developing our natural resources sector is absolutely critical in accomplishing that goal.

Recently there has been misinformation in the United States in a TV ad on our energy sector and the Keystone XL pipeline. We have seen propaganda before, but it is usually from the NDP. When those members go to the United States, they go there to hurt Canada's interests. When we go down there, we go down there to promote Canada's interests.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources stand and take this opportunity to set the record straight?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Yellowhead for the relevant question.

This is an over-the-top xenophobic attack ad by an American billionaire who made money trading in oil stocks. It attempts to mislead Americans about the overwhelming advantages of Keystone for both our countries.

### Oral Questions

In fact, Canadians own over 50% of oil sands reserves, while China's share is about 6%. Furthermore, no oil is designated for export from the United States.

Is the NDP really comfortable in supporting this attack on Canada by a—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Labrador.

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### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in May 2013, the government signed an internal agreement to increase services and staff at CFB Goose Bay, yet it is cutting jobs, eroding services, and providing no explanation. The Conservatives' commitment was to increase support services for training for northern regions, yet nothing has been implemented.

I ask the minister to make good on his commitment to 5 Wing Goose Bay, stop misleading working people, stop misleading and playing political games, and stop cutting first-line military staff in the country.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. After the decade of darkness that was implemented by the Liberal Party, we have made the support of our men and women in uniform and our armed forces a priority, and we will continue to do so.

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### HEALTH

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, RU-486 could help women access safe abortions in Canada, especially in remote areas, but it is not yet available. Despite its being available in over 50 countries and being on the World Health Organization's essential medicines list, we know that the Minister of Health and many of her colleagues have a strong anti-choice record.

Can the minister assure this House that an ideological agenda is not behind the delay in approval of RU-486?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, drug approval decisions are made by Health Canada scientists, not by ministers or politicians.

In terms of any delay or timing when it comes to a review of drug submissions, they vary depending on the information that is provided by the manufacturers themselves.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, recently the member for Timmins—James Bay celebrated our Conservative government's investments in northern Ontario. He stated:

Timmins—James Bay is a centre for economic development in Ontario. It is good to see that we are getting strong federal investment in the region.

While we agree with the member opposite, it is shameful that the member and his shrinking NDP northern Ontario caucus—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I have not heard anything that has touched on the administration of government in that.

The hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it has been more than nine months since the Canadian Coast Guard confirmed the source of oil washing up on the shores of Newfoundland's northeast coast, the sunken paper carrier *Manolis L*. She went down in 1985 with 500 tonnes of oil aboard. The Coast Guard has made attempts to plug the leaks, but the government must move to stop this environmental disaster once and for all. Everyone agrees that plugging the leaks is a Band-Aid solution.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans tell the people of my province when this oil will be removed?

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are committed to protecting our oceans from oil spills. We have made this clear through our efforts to establish a world-class tanker safety system. That work includes the Coast Guard completing installations of new seals on the *Manolis L*, which took place on January 18, along with new monitoring equipment. A complete survey of the hull was conducted, and no further leakage was detected.

The Coast Guard will continue to monitor the situation very closely and take the necessary steps to protect our environment. This member should be listening to people like Fogo Island resident Barry Brinson, who said of the Coast Guard, "I think they've done an awesome job".

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for almost a year now, the federal government has been doing everything in its power to force Quebec to implement a new job training program that was rejected by all of the province's economic players.

However, over the holidays, the Minister of Employment and Social Development recognized that:

...Quebec has been doing a better job than the rest of Canada of getting businesses, private sector employers, unions and educators involved in a more integrated training system.

Since the minister recognizes that Quebec's approach is working, what is he waiting for? When will he scrap his unacceptable project and renew the job training agreements as they stand?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member just said, we recognize that, over the last number of years, there have been good working relationships between entrepreneurs, employers, unions and the government in Quebec. We have taken note of this.

We are holding discussions and negotiations with the provinces in order to find a solution that will improve the implementation of these job training programs and thereby increase the number of workers who get jobs at the end of their training.

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent for the following:

That this House condemn the Prime Minister's tactic of equating any legitimate criticism of the State of Israel with anti-Semitism and deplore his refusal to condemn the establishment of new Israeli settlements in occupied territory in violation of UN resolutions; that this House urge the government to return to a just, fair and balanced position that is respectful of international law and human rights; that this House reaffirm the fundamental importance of a total and permanent end to confrontations that prevent dialogue between the two parties and that it condemn any act of violence toward Israelis and Palestinians; and finally that this House reaffirm its support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is based both on Israelis' right to live in peace within their secure and recognized borders and on Palestinians' right to self-determination.

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member had a very lengthy motion. There does not seem to be consent for him to be able to move it.

The hon. member for Avalon is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Scott Andrews:** Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent. The minister welcomed my question in question period today. I would like to table the email that was forwarded to many people regarding the fundraiser. If she has nothing to hide, I would like to table this email.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[English]

### RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-21, An Act to control the administrative burden that regulations impose on businesses.

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

[Translation]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the meetings of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, Norway, from June 3 to 6, 2013, and in Murmansk, Russia, from September 18 to 20, 2013.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of the delegation of the Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie concerning its participation at the Bureau meeting and XXXVIIIth Session of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, held in Brussels, Belgium, from July 8 to 12, 2012, as well as bilateral meetings and the XXVI Session of the Europe Regional Assembly of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, held in Paris, France, and Chisinau, Moldova, from November 13 to 21, 2013.

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[English]

### GOVERNOR GENERAL APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL PROCEDURE ACT

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-569, An Act respecting the procedure for the appointment and removal of the Governor General.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this legislation attempts to establish rules governing the manner in which a Governor General is appointed and might be dismissed.

Constitutionally these powers belong to the Queen, but in practice and by convention they are exercised on the advice of the Prime Minister. This places a vital power in a position to be exercised far too casually.

This problem was addressed by the creation of an advisory committee to make recommendations as to candidates for the position of Governor General. In its first ever recommendation, the advisory council's advice resulted in the Prime Minister advising Her Majesty to appoint the Right Hon. David Johnston to this post.

The bill attempts to entrench this very successful mechanism in law, requiring the participation of opposition leaders, or alternatively of the House itself, prior to the submission of advice to Her Majesty as to the appointment of a Governor General and, as well, with regard to advice to Her Majesty as to the dismissal of a Governor General.

*Routine Proceedings*

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

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-570, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (mandatory minimum sentences for rape).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code, mandatory minimum sentences for rape.

This enactment would amend sections 271, 272 and 273 of the Criminal Code to establish mandatory minimum sentences for sexual assault to fall within the definition of rape as defined for the purpose of those sections.

It would also establish that sentences for such offences must be served consecutively to any other punishment arising out of the same event or series of events.

It is my hope that this piece of legislation will keep offenders behind bars longer and help keep Canadians and their families safe.

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

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**MEAT INSPECTION ACT**

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-571, An Act to amend the Meat Inspection Act and the Safe Food for Canadians Act (slaughter of equines for human consumption).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill I am proposing would prohibit the sending or conveying from one province to another, or the importing or exporting of horses or other equines for slaughter for human consumption, or the production of meat products for human consumption.

However, it also provides for an exception to that prohibition. That exception is that if the horses or other equines are raised primarily for human consumption and if the horse is accompanied by a medical record that contains its standardized description and a complete lifetime record in chronological order of medical treatment then this meat would then be acceptable.

We do not have a system that has stringent regulations right now, and in the name of food safety, the bill fits in with the new Safe Food for Canadians Act. It is an expansion of Bill C-322. It conforms with trade regulations and it tightens up the whole aspect of food safety.

I would urge all members of the House to support the bill, especially all of those hundreds of thousands of people who supported Bill C-322.

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

•(1515)

**PETITIONS**

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today of tabling two petitions.

The first petition is from Albertans who are concerned that without consultation Canada Post is making cuts to postal service, increasing postal costs, job cuts and impacting seniors and disabled.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to reverse the cuts and to pursue innovations.

## INCOME TAX ACT

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from a broad array of Alberta communities, from Edmonton, Spruce Grove, Grand Cache, Camrose, Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Devon, Calmar, and Turner Valley.

The petitioners support Bill C-201, introduced by the member for Hamilton Mountain, to allow tradespeople and indentured apprentices to deduct travel and accommodation expenses from taxable income to support workers who are required to secure employment outside their region.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition from my constituents for the creation of a legislative ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining.

[*Translation*]

## LABOUR-SPONSORED FUNDS

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions, but I will read just one of the many signed by thousands of Montrealers and Quebecers.

The people are asking the following of the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister:

## WHEREAS

1. Labour funds are often the primary source of savings for retirement;
2. Labour funds are a savings tool for the middle class;
3. Labour funds invest in SMEs, creating jobs and driving economic growth;
4. The Government of Canada announced in its 2013 Budget Speech that it intends to eliminate the 15% labour fund credit—

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind the hon. member that according to the rules, members must be very brief when presenting petitions. That is a reminder for all members presenting petitions today.

The hon. member for Montcalm.



## THE SENATE

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Montcalm believe that there is no room for a Senate made up of unelected officials, and that the \$92.5 million it costs to run this institution could be better spent. They also believe that appointed senators, in particular those who abuse their privileges, do not truly represent the interests of Canadians. I am therefore pleased to present this petition on behalf of the people of Montcalm.

[English]

## INCOME TAX ACT

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, my private member's bill, Bill C-201, is going to be coming to a vote in the House next Wednesday, and I have more petitions in support of the bill from Cornwall, Prescott, Ottawa, Napanee, Kanata and Oshawa. All of the petitioners want the government to support Bill C-201 so that trades people and indentured apprentices would be able to deduct travel and accommodation expenses from their taxable income so they can secure and maintain employment at a construction site that is more than 80 kilometres from their home.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to table a number of petitions from constituents in my great riding of Sudbury. The petitioners are asking the Minister of Employment and Social Development to reconsider the decision to end funding for the targeted initiative of older workers. According to the petitioners, the program has been vital for aging unemployed workers seeking employment opportunities. The program has a real and lasting impact on their lives and the termination of the program will have an adverse impact on job seekers.

• (1520)

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today. The first is predominantly from residents of London, Ontario, but there are a number from Vancouver. They are calling on the government to act to protect the pollinating bee population in Canada by eliminating dangerous nicotine-based pesticides.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in relation to the Canada-China investment treaty. It is from residents of Hornby Island, as well as my own riding, and Vernon and the Interior. Petitioners are calling on the Governor in Council to refuse to ratify a treaty that would so profoundly undermine Canadian sovereignty.

[Translation]

## INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR TRADESPEOPLE

**Mr. Alexandre Bouleric (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of Bill C-201, introduced by my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, which would allow tradespeople and their apprentices to deduct accommodation and travel expenses. These are people from Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick who support my NDP colleague's bill.

## Routine Proceedings

[English]

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have over a thousand names of people from Ontario, B.C., and Alberta, who are in support of my Bill C-322 to end horse slaughter in Canada. Petitioners point out that horses are commonly administered drugs that are strictly prohibited from being used at any time to food producing animals destined for human supply. Petitioners would like to see the bill enacted.

[Translation]

## AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, aircraft noise is a real problem in my riding. Since 2006 I have taken several steps in the House, such as presenting a brief to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and introducing a bill on the placement of airports. My constituents have filed a number of complaints with the ADM, but the government has not done anything.

I am therefore very pleased to present this petition today, which is signed by more than 700 people. They add their names to those who signed the petition I presented on November 20, 2013. These people are calling for better representation of the public on the ADM board of directors and on the Airport Soundscape Consultative Committee. They are also calling for a real curfew, as well as a review of the flight paths and flight levels of commercial aircraft.

[English]

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many Manitobans who are asking that we stand with the people of Ukraine during this difficult time and continue to forcefully oppose all efforts to repress their rights and freedoms. They call for us to impose personal sanctions against those individuals, family members and associates who are responsible for human rights violations, criminal activity or corrupt business practices in Ukraine.

## COPYRIGHT LAW

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of citizens of London who wish to draw the attention of the Government of Canada to our current copyright laws because they believe they no longer help the growth of the Canadian economy but rather hinder it.

They are asking the Parliament of Canada to put in two simple changes. The first is that the government should create a charter of digital rights for Canadian citizens to prevent unwarranted and unwanted censorship and viewing of citizens' Internet browsing accounts, histories or emails. They also want a limitation to the amount of time that something is protected under copyright, to 50 years since creation, rather than 50 years after the death of the creator.

*Government Orders***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 Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADA-HONDURAS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT**

**Hon. Steven Blaney (for the Minister of International Trade)** moved that Bill C-20, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Honduras and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

• (1525)

**Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this House for my first speech of 2014, and welcome all my colleagues back, to speak about the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement.

This agreement represents yet another important step in the diversification of our trade relationships around the world and our efforts to find new markets and to grow markets for Canadian goods and services.

The priority of our government has been focused on opportunity and prosperity for Canadian families. This begins and ends with ensuring that our producers and firms have new markets to trade their wares. Trade leads to employment and prosperity for Canadian families. Whether in the towns of Bowmanville, Port Perry or Uxbridge in my riding or indeed in the cities and towns across the country, families are made stronger by the simple fact that mom or dad can find meaningful employment if they want to be engaged in the workplace.

Canadian exports already account for an astonishing one in five Canadian jobs. More than 40,000 Canadian companies are global exporters. Canadian companies and their innovative products are leaders in sectors ranging from aerospace, transportation and agriculture to information and communications technology.

With trade being critical to Canada's prosperity, Canada has long been a key architect of international trade rules at the World Trade Organization, through the free trade agreement with the United States and ultimately with NAFTA. Our country relies upon strong international agreements and treaties to counter protectionism and keep global markets open for our employers.

We remain very engaged and positive about our most important trade relationship with the United States. Trade with the United States has been a defining part of the Canadian story. From north-south mercantile trade before Confederation to the national policy of Sir John A. to the free trade agreement signed by the Conservative government in 1988, trade with our American friends has brought prosperity to generations of Canadian families.

The need to diversify Canadian trade relationships has been raised for decades because of a growing dependence on trade with the U.S., and this need to diversify came into sharp focus with the global recession in 2008.

In 2008, Canadian exports to the United States totalled \$368 billion. The following year, amid the global economic crisis, these exports dropped to \$270 billion. While there has been a recovery in the U.S. economy and exports have been rebounding, statistics from 2012 show that our exports to the U.S. still remain 10% below 2008 levels.

The strong economic leadership of our Prime Minister and this government has helped Canada weather the global turmoil better than most developed countries, but we cannot rest on our laurels when it comes to trade. We also must come up with a dual strategy that builds and strengthens our critical trade relationships now while also building new and growing markets to sell our goods and services.

The global economy is changing rapidly, and new markets are exploding around the world. Trade is helping lift millions out of poverty while also promoting peace and security through stronger international engagement.

Canada needs to pursue these new markets that are growing with gusto. We need not only to keep up with our global competitors but to leverage our natural advantages to penetrate new markets faster and deeper than our competitors. Standing still will not create jobs for Canadian families. Over time, inaction could erode our position in the world and our quality of life.

This is why our government has responded with an ambitious international trade agenda. Opening new markets for Canadian companies, large and small, is cornerstone to this plan, as we continue to grow the Canadian economy and the jobs in our economy created as a result of trade.

We have made significant progress on opening new markets for Canadian goods and services. Last October, the Prime Minister announced an agreement in principle on the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, the most ambitious trade agreement Canada has ever negotiated.

*Government Orders*

• (1530)

Our agreement with the European Union would give Canadian companies preferential access to an economy of more than 500 million consumers and a \$17 trillion GDP. That is tremendous opportunity.

A joint study by Canada and the EU, as part of our negotiations, concluded that our agreement with the European Union could boost Canada's GDP by \$12 billion annually and increase bilateral trade by 20%. Most importantly, the deal could result in the creation of 80,000 net new jobs once the benefits of the Canada-EU trade agreement are realized.

While the Canada-EU trade agreement represents the culmination of many years of work with a group of nations, with our provincial stakeholders, with industries and with municipalities who are eager to access the 500 million consumers of Europe, our government has also been tirelessly pursuing trade opportunities in markets of all sizes.

Since 2007, our government has concluded free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Jordan and Morocco. New agreements and relationships are being struck while existing ones are being expanded. We have also concluded or brought into force 22 new or updated foreign investment promotion and protection agreements to provide better access to growing global markets for Canadian exporters, while also providing more certainty in these markets through the secure framework that a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement offers. It gives me great pleasure to advise the House that Honduras will soon be yet another market that we have opened for Canadian employers through this Canada-Honduras free trade agreement.

While our EU deal represents Canadian opportunities across the pond for exporters, there are also tremendous opportunities here in the Americas. Total merchandise trade between Canada and the countries in the Americas stood at \$56.2 billion in 2012. This has increased by 32% in the last six years alone. Canadian direct investment in the Americas totalled \$168 billion in 2012 and has increased by 59% over the same period.

We are already engaged in South America and Central America, and our government knows that we need to do more in our own backyard. Canada's trade agenda is not just about the planes, trains and automobiles we manufacture in Canada—and great ones, to boot—nor does it only represent natural resources and agricultural products. We are increasingly pursuing markets for our intellectual property, academic excellence and delivery of professional services around the world.

Canada is very much engaged in negotiations surrounding the trade in services agreement, which would provide a secure legal framework and new market access for Canadian service suppliers in many of the world's most important and growing service markets. We also remain an active participant in multilateral negotiations at the World Trade Organization, where just a few weeks ago Canada helped conclude a trade facilitation agreement that will boost trade by cutting red tape for Canadian companies.

However, we are not just stopping there. Canada is also committed to advancing our ongoing free trade negotiations with

other partners in the Caribbean, in Morocco and here in the Americas. We are also looking for new opportunities to grow Canada's international trade and are undertaking exploratory discussions with Thailand and Turkey to determine what benefits Canadians and Canadian employers could see from trade agreements with these partners in the future.

In addition, we continue to update our existing free trade agreements to ensure that Canada remains a global leader in trade and commerce. We recently announced the modernization of the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement. This expansion and modernization builds on an agreement that dates back to 1997 and a trade relationship that is now worth over \$2.5 billion. The updated agreement with Chile includes the addition of a new financial services chapter, which will help world-class Canadian financial institutions develop new markets in the areas of banking, insurance and asset management in Chile. It also includes new roles on government procurement, customs procedures and dispute settlement.

• (1535)

As members are aware, the Prime Minister announced last week that we would also modernize our existing free trade agreement with Israel.

The Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement really has been a cornerstone of a growing and important relationship for our country. While our countries enjoy a sophisticated trade relationship, an updated free trade agreement with Israel would enhance bilateral commercial flows by reducing technical barriers, enhancing co-operation, increasing transparency in regulatory matters and reducing transaction costs for exporters.

It would also create greater visibility for Canadian companies in the Israeli and Middle Eastern market and support closer ties with this dynamic economy and important democracy in the Middle East.

It is clear that the government is working hard to ensure that Canadians reap the economic benefits of global trade, which as I said at the outset, accounts for one in five jobs in Canada.

The Canada-Honduras free trade agreement is part of our efforts to liberalize trade with our partners here in the Americas. It is also a realization of our global markets action plan, which will grow existing and important trade relationships while forging new ones around the world.

The Americas offer great potential. Trade has been growing dramatically in the last six years, as I said. We also need to promote increased mutual economic sharing of ideas and increase engagement.

Canada's strategy for engagement in the Americas focuses on intensifying trade promotion and relationship-building efforts, to ensure that the Canadian private sector can take full advantage of the trade and economic agreements, as well as helping to build the capacity of our trading partners to capitalize on the benefits of free trade with Canada and the benefits that come along with a growing and emerging middle class in many of these countries.

### *Government Orders*

Canada is committed to a strong economic partnership with Honduras that would contribute to enhanced prosperity and sustainable economic growth for both our countries in the long term.

This Canada-Honduras free trade agreement is a key component in advancing the goals of Canada's strategy for engagement in the Americas and would support our growing commercial and social relationship with that country.

Canada's two-way merchandise trade with Honduras grew by 46% in the last six years. Canadian companies are active in Honduras in the areas of apparel production and mining. However, there are other sectors of huge potential opportunity, such as green building, clean technologies and information and communities technologies, to name just a few.

Once implemented, the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement would eliminate tariffs on 98% of the tariff lines going both ways. We would gain better access to a growing market in our hemisphere, with grain and oilseeds, beef, pork, potatoes and processed foods being some of the early and big winners and the potential for more industries and, particularly, service areas, as the relationship with Honduras develops over time.

Canada's Trade Commissioner Service already works with Canadian companies that are interested in doing business in Honduras. These are recognizable and important employers across Canada, such as Gildan Activewear, Aura Minerals and Canadian Bank Note, to name just a few.

Once the trade agreement is ratified, our trade commissioners would ensure that companies, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, are aware of how they could benefit from this free trade agreement so that they could take full advantage of the greater transparency, stability and protection the agreement would provide in the Honduran market.

In addition to opening doors for Canadian companies and building our trade relationship, Canada is also committed to supporting Honduras in other ways.

Canada and Honduras first established diplomatic relations in 1961 and have a broad and diverse relationship, driven by a wide range of links and collaboration, from political dialogue and commercial exchange to people-to-people ties, as well as long-standing and substantial Canadian development co-operation.

We maintain an open dialogue with the Government of Honduras, as we believe that engagement is the best way for us to help Honduras meet its challenges, grow its economy and promote stability.

Engagement on all levels will grow prosperity and security for Hondurans.

● (1540)

As one of the 20 countries of focus for Canada's development assistance, Honduras is Canada's largest bilateral program in Central America and the fourth largest in the hemisphere. In 2011-2012, Canada provided over \$39 million to the country through all development channels. This makes it the largest bilateral donor in all of Honduras and the sixth largest overall donor in the hemisphere.

Canada's development program will support and promote economic opportunities in Honduras in a way that will allow its trade with Honduras to grow steadily over time.

It is our view that prosperity, security, and democratic governance, including full respect for human rights, are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Increased prosperity through trade can contribute to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion by increasing economic opportunity for all Hondurans. Once ratified, this free trade agreement would be a cornerstone of our bilateral relationship with Honduras and would benefit both our countries.

This is a comprehensive trade deal that would give Canadian businesses a secure and predictable framework in a growing Honduran marketplace. The United States and the European Union already enjoy free trade with Honduras, so it is especially important that we ratify this agreement and put Canadian companies on a level playing field with our main competitors.

Let me turn to some specific examples of the benefits of the Canada-Honduras trade agreement. First and foremost, it would help make Canadian products more attractive in the Honduran market by eliminating tariffs. Today Canadian exports to Honduras face average tariffs in the 11% range for agriculture and the 5% range for non-agricultural goods. Once the agreement is in place, Honduras would immediately eliminate tariffs on almost 70% of its tariff lines in respect of goods imported from Canada.

This agreement represents an important component of our government's global markets action plan. This plan would coordinate the funding and expertise inherent in our foreign policy, trade, and development arms, and focus them in countries where we can make a difference, recognizing that benefiting the social and human rights of a country will also help benefit its local economy. Jobs for Hondurans will help promote stability in the country.

This government is on an unparalleled track for promoting the trade of our goods and services across the world. The Canada-E.U. trade agreement represents a huge leap in terms of global trade agreements in that it will provide opportunities for Canadian exporters in a market of 500 million people while it also allows penetration right down to services and mutual recognition of professions. It really is taking trade agreements into this new millennium.

In my riding of Durham, one in five jobs relates to trade. The communities of Uxbridge, Scugog, and Clarington need these new markets for their goods, particularly at a time when the American market is slowly rebounding from the 2008 world economic crisis.

Our government is firmly committed to building new markets for our goods and services to maintain the job creation that trade promotes. These deals are not just with mammoth markets of 500 million people, like the Canada-E.U. trade deal. They are also in other important areas of the world, such as Georgia and Morocco and now Honduras. There our trade, our prioritization of our services, and our engagement through our global markets action plan could not only promote trade in that country but could also promote stability and engagement in a range of labour, environmental, and other areas.

*Government Orders*

This is a pivotal part of our government's global markets action plan. It is a pivotal part of keeping Canadian families employed and engaged. I am truly hoping all members of the House will support this important agreement.

• (1545)

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, extending preferential trade terms to other countries is a major economic privilege, and countries that are democratic and that respect environmental, human rights, and labour standards are deserving of this extension.

The government of Honduras was essentially installed in a military coup in 2009. It has conducted two flawed elections since then that have been roundly condemned as corrupt. It violates its citizens' human rights; suppresses freedom of speech and association; tolerates killings, kidnappings, and the arbitrary detention of thousands of its citizens; has the highest murder rate in the world; is the planet's most dangerous place for journalists; represses the media, opposition, and citizens who peacefully express their political views; is a major drug trafficking centre, with 80% of cocaine shipments from South America; has an average of 10 massacres per month; and allows paramilitary squads to operate with impunity.

Canadians would not support a free trade agreement with the government of Ukraine, North Korea, or Iran. Why does the government believe it should support an agreement with Honduras that has an equally bad record of violating the democratic and human rights standards not only of Honduras but of Canada and the world?

**Mr. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, what troubles me about the position of the New Democratic Party on trade is that its members are continuing their decades-long, almost generations-long, opposition to trade of any kind. In fact, the hon. member, in an interview with *The Huffington Post*, when talking about countries like Honduras, Peru, and Chile, which are important countries and allies of ours in the Americas, said that these countries should not be considered. He actually said that they have no strategic value for Canada.

That is not diplomacy at its finest. We are about promoting economic opportunity and jobs in massive markets, like the 500 million the Canada-European Union trade agreement will lead to, but also in smaller markets, where our input and our engagement will actually benefit Hondurans and will promote stability in that region.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one has to ask: Where will the government not go just to add another number and say that we now have  $x$  number of trade agreements? That is what it is all about.

I listened to the words of the parliamentary secretary. He went to great lengths to use all the right words in all the right places, but the facts on trade do not bear out his words. This is the first government that has had a trade deficit in 30 years. He talked about the CETA agreement at great length, not Honduras, and he said it could create  $x$  number of jobs. Could? We have not even seen the text yet. It has not even been presented in the Parliament of Canada.

What he did say, though, was that there are new rules on dispute settlements. I have a question on that. In 32 of the last 44 months, they have had a trade deficit. In the dispute settlement in our agreement with the United States, Canada's beef industry is suffering

badly because of the aged cattle restriction the Americans have and because of the COOL agreement.

Instead of negotiating with Honduras, which has a terrible human rights record, what are Conservatives doing to settle the trade dispute with the United States, which really matters to Canadian farmers?

**Mr. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, in the member's question or statement, he asked what lengths we would go to. I think it is clear that this government will go and sell Canadian goods and services abroad as much as possible if it will lead to jobs here at home.

I would remind the hon. member that in the 13 years of the Liberal government, it signed three trade agreements. In fact, during the Prime Minister's recent trip to Israel, we are expanding on the less than ambitious trade deal the Liberals signed with that country.

We are clearly about promoting trade for our country. As I said, I used the European deal as an example. In big markets and in small markets, if there is a win for Canadians and our world-class goods, services, and products, we will be there for Canadians.

• (1550)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I was enormously grateful to the member for Vancouver Kingsway for so clearly reciting the reasons the bill before us is odious, as is the trade agreement.

This trade deal is with a country that has just had a populist democratic leader knocked out by a coup. It has a military regime that suppresses human rights, indigenous rights, and labour rights, but we would rush to an agreement that would only benefit certain parts of Canada.

I love my country, but an agreement like this would support Canadian mining companies' taking advantage of indigenous rights in other countries. It would give a Canadian mining company the kind of rights that I do not want the Chinese state-owned enterprises to have, which is to bring arbitration cases against us if we toughen our laws. This agreement would work against the interests of equity, democracy, civil society, and human rights in Honduras.

I would beg my hon. friend, the parliamentary secretary, who is an honourable friend, to have nothing to do with promoting this agreement.

**Mr. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands and welcome her back to a new year of jousting in this place.

*Government Orders*

I think there is a philosophical disagreement with our government and the opposition, including the Green Party, which really wants to isolate Canadians and isolate our opportunity to create jobs. While our largest trading partner is having slow growth, we are out selling our markets and our goods and services, but we are also engaging.

I think the hon. member should look and see that this agreement has a corporate social responsibility component, it has a labour component, and it has an environmental component.

I believe firmly that engagement, and elevating struggling countries into the global community, where these things are taken very seriously, would not only enhance those countries but also deal with those root issues. Our global markets action plan not only targets the economic opportunities that trade promotes, but it also strengthens our diplomatic work by targeting some of our aid and targeting our diplomacy, and growing jobs at the same time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the parliamentary secretary's comments, and I want to say that he was right about our parties having different philosophies on the importance of free trade.

That is not what matters in this case though. What matters is knowing who we are signing this treaty with.

The Conservatives cannot guarantee that the current Honduran government will not use this free trade agreement to facilitate illegal shipments of cocaine. That is what it comes down to.

Crime rates in Honduras are 50 times higher than in Canada. There is no doubt that the political authorities in that country are crime bosses.

How can the Conservatives ask us to sign an agreement with people so mired in crime? How can they themselves be willing to sign it? That is the question.

[*English*]

**Mr. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to note that we are trading with Honduras now. It is a key destination for our aid now. It is trading and has free trade agreements with the United States and with the European Union, now, putting Canadian job creators at a disadvantage.

My position has been clear. I would ask the member to challenge his colleagues, in a party that has been isolationist and anti-trade for 50 years, by saying that this is a way we can engage with countries, to actually help lift their economy out of much more difficult circumstances while also promoting job creation here in our country. Our changes to DFATD would make sure that we not only target economic opportunity but that it be alongside aid, engagement, and institution building. This would actually help the people of Honduras. The isolation of the opposition would do no good.

• (1555)

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats believe that Canadians recognize the importance of trade to our economy and want an effective, strategic trade policy that expands trade opportunities and supports Canadian exporters.

We believe that Canadians want a trade policy that produces good jobs in our communities and encourages the development of value-added production to our many resources here in Canada.

We believe that Canadians want a trade policy that strengthens our economic relationships with growing significant economies that add strategic value to the Canadian economy.

We believe that Canadians want trade agreements that preserve our ability to legislate in the public interest, protect our social programs, and promote local economic development.

We believe that Canadians want their government to pursue a balanced trade policy that builds trade and at the same time fosters positive democratic development, human rights, and environmental standards, both in Canada and in the nations with whom we trade.

New Democrats also know that Canadians care about the process by which we implement trade policy. Canadians want an open, transparent, and accountable process in all aspects of the development of trade policy and agreements.

Canadians want and deserve to be consulted about their priorities and kept advised about the progress of trade negotiations. After all, they know that trade agreements are not negotiated on behalf of political parties or special interests but are negotiated on behalf of all Canadians and all sectors of our economy. This is particularly the case as trade agreements have become more comprehensive and increasingly deal with areas of policy that have historically been considered to be of purely domestic concern.

Since the Conservatives took office in 2006, by all objective measurements Canada's trade performance has been deplorable.

In 2006, the Conservatives inherited a current account surplus of some \$18 billion. Today, after eight years in power, Canada has a current account deficit of \$62 billion. That is a negative swing of some \$80 billion, an average decline of \$10 billion for every year the Conservatives have been in power.

Over the last two years, even as we have pulled slowly out of the global recession, Canada has experienced 23 consecutive months of merchandise trade deficits.

We have also seen an alarming shift in the quality of our exports. Under the Conservatives, there has been an increase in the percentage of our exports that are raw or barely processed, reversing a decades-long trend toward an increase in our value-added products. Nor can this poor performance be explained away by the recession that Canada experienced between 2008 and 2011.

A comparison by the Library of Parliament of Canada's trade performance to 17 other countries around the world between 2006 and 2012, countries that experienced the exact same global recession, collapse in commodity prices, and currency fluctuations, found that Canada came dead last in current account performance.

*Government Orders*

This poor trade record is consistent with the Conservatives' poor performance economically, across the board. A look at major economic metrics provides comprehensive evidence of the government's economic failure since it took office in 2006.

I hear laughing on that side, but we will see if those members still laugh after hearing these statistics.

The national unemployment rate in 2006 was 6.6%; today it is 7.2%. The youth unemployment rate in 2006 was 12.2%; today it is 14%. Among the 34 OECD nations in employment creation since 2006, Canada ranks 20th. The number of governments since 1935, in the last 80 years, that presided over a slower rate of real economic growth per capita is zero. The per cent of our federal debt accumulated since 2006 is one fifth. The percentage increase in our real average manufacturing wage from 2006 to now is zero. The percentage drop in productivity since the Conservatives came to power is a negative 1.9%.

The conclusion is obvious. The Conservatives have had eight years to implement their trade and economic policies, and the unacceptable results are there for all to see.

The Bank of Canada has explicitly stated that a major contributing factor to Canada's stalled economic performance is due to our under-performance on the trade file.

Canada is a trading nation. Our economy is historically, and continues to be, substantially dependent on our export sector and increasingly, with global supply chains and integrated production, on our import experience as well.

• (1600)

It is therefore vital that Canada implement a smart, effective trade policy and pursue well-negotiated beneficial trade agreements with strategically important growing and significant economies that will help Canadian businesses and create good jobs for Canadians.

That brings us to the matter before the House: Bill C-20.

With all the issues and deeply entrenched problems facing Canada's trade sector, what do the Conservatives bring to this Parliament today? They bring Canadians a free trade agreement with Honduras. Now, this is not surprising. Although the Conservatives like to brag about the trade agreements they have concluded in the last eight years, the facts, again, tell a different story. In truth, they have concluded a total of six trade agreements with the following countries: Jordan; Panama; Peru; Colombia; a goods-only agreement with four small European countries including Liechtenstein and Iceland; and now Honduras.

As is obvious, these are agreements with small economies of limited strategic interest to Canada. Trade agreements with major developed and developing economies like Japan, India, South Korea, Brazil, China, and South Africa—agreements that would have a material and positive benefit for the Canadian economy, if negotiated well—the Conservatives have been unable to conclude.

New Democrats believe that we should apply three important criteria to assess trade agreements.

First, is the proposed partner a democracy that respects human rights, adheres to acceptable environmental standards and Canadian

values, and if there are challenges regarding these, can it fairly be said that they are on a positive trajectory toward these goals?

Second, is the proposed partner's economy of significant and strategic value to Canada?

Third, are the terms of the proposed agreement acceptable?

The proposed free trade agreement with Honduras fails this test. Again, let us look at the facts, and take a closer look at the country to which the current Conservative government wants Canadians to extend preferential trade benefits and closer economic relations.

Honduras is a country with a seriously flawed human rights record; weak institutions; corrupt police and army; and a history, both entrenched and recent, of repressive, undemocratic politics. The last democratically elected government, that of President Manuel Zelaya, was toppled by a military coup in June 2009. This coup was staged by the Honduran army under the pretext of a constitutional crisis that had developed between the supreme court and the president. Following the coup, the government suspended key civil liberties, including freedom of the press and assembly. In the ensuing days, security forces responded to peaceful demonstrations with excessive force and shut down opposition media outlets, causing deaths, scores of injuries, and thousands of arbitrary detentions. The coup was widely condemned around the world, including by all Latin American nations, the European Union, the United States, and the UN General Assembly.

In January 2010, Porfirio Lobo Sosa assumed the presidency through what has overwhelmingly been deemed undemocratic and illegitimate means. Of course, holding an election mere months after the violent military overthrow of the elected administration is hardly an acceptable context for a free and fair election. Indeed, most foreign governments and election-monitoring agencies refused even to send observers, and many countries rejected the results of the election. The recent election held in November 2013 has similarly been condemned by independent observers.

Since 2009, NGOs of all types have documented serious human rights abuses. Extra-judicial killings; kidnappings of political figures; intimidation of citizens; severe restrictions on public demonstrations, protest, and freedom of expression; and interference in the independence of the judiciary are well established in Honduras.

Here are some basic facts from independent sources about the situation in Honduras.

Honduras ranks 85th out of 167 on the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2012 democracy index. That is a slide from being 74th; in other words, it is getting worse.

Honduras is now classified as a "hybrid regime", rather than its previous designation as a "flawed democracy".

### *Government Orders*

Transparency International ranks Honduras as the “most corrupt country in Central America”, which is no small feat. It is a major drug-smuggling centre, and it has the worst income equality in the region. The U.S. state department estimates that 79% of all cocaine shipments originating in South America land in Honduras. Drugs move from South America through countries like Honduras and other Central American states into Mexico and the United States and Canada.

• (1605)

Independent observers have noted the increasing levels of violence, as well as organized criminal and gang activity associated with the trade in illegal narcotics. According to *The Economist*, “the countries in 'the northern triangle' of the Central American isthmus”—and that includes Honduras—“form what is now the most violent region on earth”.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports that in 2011 there were 92 murders per 100,000 people per year in Honduras, making it the most violent country in Latin America. In 2012, Honduras became the murder capital of the world, reaching a record high of 7,172 homicides in 2012, or 81 per 100,000 people.

In 2013, on average there have been 10 massacres per month, according to the investigative website InSight Crime, which defines “massacre” as an instance where three or more people are murdered at one time. In the previous four years, fewer than 20% of homicide cases have been investigated, let alone prosecuted.

As pointed out by the Americas Policy Group, this high level of impunity serves to mask political violence.

Since 2010, there have been more than 200 politically motivated killings and Honduras is now regarded as the world's most dangerous place for journalists. According to a 2013 Human Rights Watch report, Honduras has the region's highest rate of journalists killed per capita, with some 23 having been assassinated in the last three years alone. According to the Honduran national human rights commission, 36 journalists were killed between 2003 and mid-2013, and 29 have been killed since President Lobo took office.

Today, journalists in Honduras continue to suffer threats, attacks and killings, and authorities consistently fail to investigate these crimes effectively. Peasant activists and LGBT individuals are particularly vulnerable to attacks, yet the government routinely fails to prosecute those responsible.

In June 2013, 24 U.S. senators signed a letter expressing concern about the human rights situation in Honduras. Ninety-four members of Congress have called on the U.S. State Department to halt all military aid to Honduras in light of its violent repression of political activity.

At least 16 activists and candidates from the main opposition party, LIBRE, were assassinated since June of 2012, and 15 more have been attacked. On August 25, 2013, just months ago, three leaders of the indigenous Tolupan were shot and killed. There are extensively documented cases of police corruption, with 149 extrajudicial killings by police recorded between January 2011 and November 2012 alone.

In January 2013, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers called the dismissal of four Supreme Court justices by the Honduran government a violation of international norms and a grave threat to democracy.

This is what Mr. Neil Reeder, the director general of the Latin America and Caribbean bureau in DFAIT testified before committee:

...institutions...are...weak. Impunity is pervasive and corruption is a challenge.

Corruption within the Honduran police force is a particular problem, which the Government of Honduras...recognizes. Largely because Central America is situated between the drug-producing countries of South America and the drug-consuming countries to the north, Honduras...[has] been particularly affected by the growth of transnational drug trafficking, human trafficking, and the impact of organized crime.

Another element of the violence affecting Honduras is the presence of street gangs, known as maras, which rely on extortion and other forms of crime as...income. Honduras has more of these gangs than all other Central American countries combined, and their activities contribute to crime and insecurity in the country. Honduras now has...the highest homicide rates in the world, at 81 per 100,000, as compared with 1.8 per 100,000 in Canada.

This is the profile of the country that the Conservative government wants Canada to extend preferential trade access and closer economic relations to.

In terms of significance to the Canadian economy, the facts reveal the following.

Honduras ranks 120th out of 186 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. The World Bank categorizes Honduras as a lower-middle income country, and Honduras suffers from extremely unequal income distribution, extreme social inequality, high unemployment, poor health and education. This is the country that the government wants Canadian businesses to compete with.

Honduras is currently Canada's 104th export market in terms of export value. In 2012 merchandise exports totalled a meagre \$38 million and imports \$218 million, marking a significant trade deficit. Internal DFAIT analyses confirm that only marginal benefits for the Canadian economy are expected from this deal.

• (1610)

Although Canada's extractive sector has interests in Honduras, Canadian mining companies have been ensnared in controversial local struggles with citizens and indigenous groups and face allegations of environmental contamination.



*Government Orders*

In terms of the process used by the Conservatives to arrive at this deal, there has been a complete lack of transparency in the negotiation process of this trade agreement. Despite repeated demands by civil society in Canada, the Government of Canada failed to make public the text of the agreement during the negotiation process, and further, the government's token environmental impact assessment of the free trade agreement, released in October, omitted any assessment of the impact of Canadian investments in Honduras because these figures are considered "confidential".

Also, as is usually the case with the Conservatives, they have allowed no opportunity for either this Parliament or Canadians themselves to comment upon or influence the agreement before it is signed. We are left with a choice of only voting yes or no. The labour and environmental side agreements are inadequate, given that they are not accompanied by any real enforcement mechanism to ensure they are adhered to. Through the investment chapter of the Canada-Honduras trade agreement, corporations can sue the Canadian government in international tribunals, hindering Canada's ability to make decisions aimed at protecting the public good.

Considering that Honduras is an undemocratic country with weak institutions and low standards, and is of insignificant strategic interest and has a record of serious human rights abuses, New Democrats believe that the majority of Canadians would not agree that preferential trade terms be accorded such a nation.

What the New Democrat opposition wants is a strategic trade policy where we restart multinational negotiations, where we sign trade deals with developed countries that have high standards and developing countries that are on positive trajectories. These are countries like Japan, India, Brazil and South Africa. These are the countries we should be signing trade agreements with, not undemocratic countries like Honduras that are drug trafficking centres, human rights violators and have low standards that will hurt Canadian business.

I could do no better than to adopt the words spoken by two Canadians, Mr. Garry Neil and Ms. Stacey Gomez, who said:

...we really do not believe that it is good public policy for the government to be pursuing trade and investment agreements that are economically basically meaningless with volatile and undemocratic nations like Honduras...

We have long maintained that under the right conditions, trade can generate growth and support the realization of human rights. These conditions simply do not exist in Honduras. Canada should refrain from signing the FTA with Honduras until there is a verifiable improvement in the country's democratic governance and human rights situation. Until these things are achieved, the Canada-Honduras FTA will do more harm than good.

I believe these are wise words. New Democrats will vote against the agreement accordingly, and I urge all members who want trade to be a positive force in the world economically, politically, socially and environmentally to join us in doing so as well.

**Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and friend from the trade committee for his speech. He clearly has a future in diplomacy.

My question for him really relates to a multi-generational issue. I am not talking about the last few decades, but the multi-generational isolationist policy of the New Democratic Party, opposing every

trade deal, and even the auto pact that brought prosperity to Canadian families.

My friend listed off a range of countries, but in my experience the NDP has opposed free trade with the U.S., NAFTA, and it does double-speak on CETA, the European trade deal. The NDP has never supported trade with any other country but has followed a multi-generational isolationism.

What would the member's strategic plan be for growing those one in five jobs attributable to trade in Canada?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for that question, but again, decision-based fact-making seems to typify his government.

The auto pact was actually opposed by the Conservatives, and the New Democrats pointed out problems, but it passed in this very chamber on division. In fact, there was no one who opposed the auto pact. The auto pact has actually come to serve as a model of the kind of sectoral trade agreement that actually benefits our country. It was actually under this government that the auto pact was eliminated.

It is also the case that the New Democrats supported the last trade agreement with Jordan, which serves as a good contrast with the present agreement. Jordan is a developing country, but is on a positive trajectory. It is raising its employment standards. It raised its minimum wage three times in the past four years and has signed on to ILO labour rights standards. Also, it does not have a history of murdering its citizens, throwing them in jail and killing journalists. However, that is what is happening in Honduras. That is the issue before us today.

I set out quite clearly what the New Democrats' position on trade would be. It would be to sign well-structured, good trade agreements that advance the Canadian economy with developed countries who adhere to good standards and developing countries who adhere to normative international standards. We would not advocate signing a trade agreement today with Iran or North Korea.

Why does the government not bring forward a trade agreement with those countries? If it really believes that signing trade agreements is the way to elevate human rights, it should sign a trade agreement with Iran. It will not do that because Iran does not conform to acceptable international standards. Those are exactly the same criteria we are applying to the agreement here today.

• (1615)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the member and want to look at trade in a broader sense of international trade more generally, whether with or without agreements.

The member talked about many of the concerns with regard to Honduras. Today we have trade with Honduras. We have a considerable amount of trade with many countries with which there are concerns regarding to issues like human rights, environmental law and so forth.

*Government Orders*

Given the member's comments, I am led to believe that the Government of Canada should look at ways of minimizing trade with countries about which we have concerns regarding human rights and issues such as he has pointed out. Is that ultimately what the NDP would like to see happen?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, of course the issue before this House is Bill C-20, which is a trade agreement that purports to extend special trade preferences to a particular country.

Trade occurs every day in this world, and the hon. member is quite correct about that; but when we sign a trade agreement, we are singling out a specific jurisdiction for special treatment. I view that, and I think Canadians view that, as a privilege that ought to be earned by that country, and we should be selective about which countries we accord such a preference. Those countries should be selected based on how much they will improve the economy of Canada and whether they conform to acceptable standards of conduct.

Ultimately, there are some cases in the world, such as Iran today, where, if their conduct becomes so egregious, then Canada and other countries will actually implement trade restrictions on the country. They will freeze assets and restrict trade, and that is ultimately a tool available.

That is not what we are advocating, but that Canada pursue a better trade policy with responsible nations and not extend preferences to countries that are so atrocious in their behaviour domestically.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my NDP colleague for his excellent speech. I learned a lot from it.

I was very curious. My colleague mentioned human rights for members of the LGBT community in Honduras. I did an Internet search, and I found out that in 2013, 22 LGBT people in Honduras were killed. Those murders were motivated by discrimination and hatred toward minorities. The LGBT community in Honduras is angry at its own government. Very few of these hate crimes and murders end up in the courts; there is little justice for the families and loved ones of those who were brutally murdered. In many cases, there are connections to the country's law enforcement officials. It is a very incestuous scenario.

Basically, I would like to hear what my colleague thinks: do we really want to do business and facilitate free trade with countries where the human rights of LGBT people and others are so brutally trampled on?

• (1620)

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, let us put this in context. Honduras is a country of about eight million and Canada of 35 million, so Canada is about four times the size.

Imagine if the current Canadian government removed four members of the Supreme Court of Canada because it did not like the decision they made.

Let us say 23 journalists in Honduras are equivalent to almost 100 Canadian journalists here. Imagine if 100 journalists in Canada had been murdered in the last five years.

Imagine if members of the opposition parties were picked up on the street and assassinated, and imagine if there were dozens of LGBT people in this country who were murdered by paramilitary death squads roaming through the Canadian countryside and the authorities refused to even investigate, never mind prosecute them.

This is the real situation in Honduras. How would we feel about those conditions here in this country? How would we feel about another country internationally extending a reward to us in the form of increased economic support? Would we not want those countries of the world to be putting pressure on us to raise our standards to acceptable 2013 international democratic and human rights standards?

The New Democrats say we should, and I am absolutely flabbergasted that the Conservatives bring forth an agreement like this in 2013 and expect Canadians to accept it.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I chair the Commons subcommittee on international human rights. We have done some hearings on Honduras. We have also done some hearings on other countries, including Iran.

Frankly, I was astonished to hear the hon. member suggest that there is any resemblance at all between these two countries. It is beyond outrageous. It is kind of like comparing them to the Martians and the Neptunians.

In Iran, there is suppression, not merely of political dissidents, but murder of the entire leadership of the Baha'i faith, which originated in Iran, and gays are forced to choose between being executed and going through forced sex change operations. The Iranian regime favours a second genocide to wipe out the Jews of the world by using nuclear weapons against Israel, and it is attempting to develop a nuclear policy to follow through on that.

I would say that there are some differences between Iran and Honduras. Notwithstanding his suggestion that we should be looking at a free trade agreement with Iran, I suggest that the parallels are imprecise.

The member mentions that there is a record of human rights abuses in Honduras. He is right. There is also a human rights abuse record in the United States, which had slavery; in Britain, which conquered many countries, and so on. The fact is that there is a congress elected today, through elections last year, that is not responsible for any of these things.

The member mentioned a very high crime rate. He is right; it is one of the highest in the world, along with the rest of Latin America. That is a problem of civil justice. It is a matter that is not under the direct control of the government. It is not a human rights issue, although it is a tragedy.

Finally, with regard to the suggestion that it is undemocratic, that statement was true, but it is no longer true. I cannot imagine what, other than a drive to prevent us from ever having free trade with any country anywhere ever is motivating this member.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I raised the issues of countries like Iran, North Korea and Ukraine to illustrate examples of countries to which we would not consider extending preferential terms.

Each country is unique; sometimes they are unique in degrees. However, when there is a country like Honduras, which the United Nations has stated engages in widespread human rights violations, including killings, disappearances, forced evictions and sexual violence, I fail to see how that is less upsetting to the hon. member than what is happening in Iran.

Both countries are doing the same thing. They repress their citizens' rights. They kill their own citizens. They are not democratic. They do not respect political rights. They murder journalists. They do not have free and fair elections. That is the comparison. That is the analogy we are making here.

The hon. member is on the human rights committee, and if he does not get that comparison, then I am not sure he is well placed to be on that committee.

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Liberals support Bill C-20. The Liberal Party is strongly in support of the principle of free trade as an essential part of Canada's economic growth in the 21st century.

I would like to talk a bit about our broader vision of what we need to do with trade and how that fits into our overall economic vision, and then I would like to talk about this specific agreement and how we need to work hard in implementing it to live up to the principles of Canadian democracy and how Canada wants to conduct itself in the world.

On trade, 19.2% of Canadians work in jobs that are directly in the export sector, and up to 80% of the Canadian economy, depending on how one counts it, is dependent on exports. We are a small country in a vast globalized world economy, and without being open to that world economy, without being an active energetic participant, we have no chance of thriving and, crucially, no chance of creating middle-class jobs, which we need and which we are failing to create in sufficient number and quality right now.

However, what we need is not just a number of piecemeal agreements with small countries like Honduras. What Canada needs to be successful is an economic and trade vision that is much more ambitious, wider reaching, and which fully and ambitiously integrates Canada into the global economy. Therefore, while Liberals support this trade deal with Honduras, we believe our country needs to be more energetically engaged with other emerging market economies that are growing strongly and where we see the rest of the world competing now for a position.

In particular, I would like to draw everyone's attention to what is happening right now in Africa. A lot of us are accustomed to seeing Africa as a development story, a poverty story. The reality of the new Africa today is that it is one of the world's hottest emerging markets. Some of the leading countries in Africa have had, for more than five years, 5% economic growth year on year. This is real; this is huge. We are seeing investors pouring in, and we are seeing a competition between the big and ambitious countries in the world, notably China and the U.S., for a strategic position in Africa. Where is Canada? Africa is a continent to which we urgently need to turn our attention

when it comes to trade deals, and what a great way for us to have a positive impact on the world.

The other part of an ambitious global economic agenda and global trade agenda for Canada is thinking about where we want to position our country in the world economy. Right now we are living in a winner-take-all global economy. That applies to countries, and it applies to individuals and companies. Frankly, we are not seeing from today's government a sufficiently ambitious and forward-looking economic agenda for our country.

One of my favourite books at the moment is a book by economist Tyler Cowen called *Average is Over*. His central contention is that we are living in a moment when if a company is the best in a space, the top talent in a space, the top city or top country, it will succeed. However, if one is in the middle and just average, there is no future. That is a lesson that Canada desperately needs to learn and that the Canadian government needs to make as the centre of its policies.

We need to be building an overall trade agenda, an overall economic vision in which we are creating in Canada a platform for being fully engaged in the world economy, but also a platform for which we have companies headquartered in Canada doing business around the world, rather than the old branch plant economy. That is not going to work. It is not going to create enough great jobs for the 21st century. This reality of an ambitious trade agenda, an economic agenda fit for the 21st century, we believe, is going to become ever more apparent in 2014.

● (1625)

Already this week, the first week of our new session, we have heard a lot of assertions from the Conservative benches about Canada's economic excellence, how we are better than anyone else in the G7 and so on. That is going to be less true in 2014, as the other G7 economies, which suffered so greatly from the financial crisis and from which Canada was spared thanks to the wise bank regulation policies of the Liberal government in the 1990s, have now healed. We are going to see that in 2014. We are already seeing a very strong comeback in the U.S. and the U.K., but our relative performance is looking much worse already, and we are not even through the first month of 2014.

That says that we have coasted. We have coasted on the fact that we did not have a financial crisis and we have not put in place a powerful, forward-looking economic agenda that is going to build prosperity for the middle class in the 21st century, and that includes trade. Piecemeal agreements with small countries are a good start. However, we need to be a lot more ambitious and have a much broader vision.

When it comes to the Honduras deal in particular, my hon. colleagues in the NDP have raised the important point that this is a trade deal with a country that has a very troubled record and very troubled reality on many political labour and environmental issues. We in the Liberal Party believe that it is important for us to do this deal. Not every country in the world is perfect, and we have to trade in the global economy. We believe that having a strong trading relationship can and must be a way to be a positive force in those economies. However, it will only work if it is more than words.

*Government Orders*

In implementing this trade deal, we have to be very aware of what is going on in Honduras and to the possibility that by having a trade deal with this country and having our companies engaged with it we could be complicit in political, environmental and labour violations. We do not just sign a deal and walk away; we have to watch closely and be absolutely certain that we and Canada are behaving well.

I would like to point to the fact that rather than having a binding mechanism for labour and environmental standards in the side agreements, article 816 of the free trade agreement states:

Each Party should encourage enterprises operating within its territory or subject to its jurisdiction to voluntarily incorporate internationally recognized standards of corporate social responsibility in their internal policies....

That puts a great onus on us to be aware, to watch and to be absolutely careful that those political, environmental and labour standards are watched and observed.

As the MP for Toronto Centre, I would like to draw particular attention to the tremendous abuse and repression that the LGBT community faces in Honduras. Even as we broaden and deepen our economic relationship with Honduras, this is something that we have to be absolutely aware of and watchful about. We have to take great care that the Canadian companies that will be working and trading there, and will have a relationship with Honduras, are not party to that and are in fact acting against it through their example.

Regarding the environmental standards, we have to be watchful about this. If, as the Labour Party believes, we are to use our trade agreements with troubled countries to be a force for moving those countries in a positive direction, we have to take incredible care. We have to take incredible care about the labour and environmental standards as well. This is how we ensure that free trade is a great deal for the Canadian middle class. Without watching those labour and environmental standards, trade with a country which is poorer than Canada, like Honduras, can be dangerous for the middle class.

Again, we cannot simply sign a piece of paper and walk away. This trade deal has potential. That is why we support it, but we have to be extremely vigilant. We must also move toward a broader vision, something much more than one single deal.

• (1635)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we get to questions and comments, I have a little item here that I forgot to do before the hon. member for Toronto Centre began.

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 Malpeque, National Defence; the hon. member for Québec, Air Transportation; and the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, the Quebec Bridge.

Now we will go to questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to my colleague's speech from across the way. There are some very mixed messages criticizing the

agreement but saying that she will support it and that her party will support it.

There is a certain history of the Liberal Party not really supporting trade deals. We all remember Jean Chrétien promising to rip up the free trade agreement in 1993, and then getting elected and doing nothing of the sort. Now they have that religion around free trade.

With respect to free trade in Latin America, we have free trade deals with Costa Rica, Colombia, and Panama. I was in Guatemala City recently and met with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. I met with somebody who is actually operating in Costa Rica and Colombia, where we do have free trade agreements, and we talked about how they have kitchen showcases. There is a rising middle class in Latin America, and what do middle class families want? They want new kitchens. They are importing entire kitchens from plants in Winnipeg and Montreal. This is just an example of the tremendous opportunities for exports to countries like this.

When we criticize a deal because it is too small, we have to recognize that collectively Canada is really becoming a player in these markets in Latin America.

Would she explain further why she thinks trade with a small country, which on the one hand she is supporting, is not ambitious enough? One country at a time, we are building a trade arrangement in Latin America and making Canada a major player.

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, our central point and our central argument about economic policy for Canada is going to be that what we need is a big global vision, a vision fit for the 21st century. That is why we are supporting the agreement but saying that it is not enough and that we need to be working on bigger deals that fit in with a broader agenda.

I do, though, have to respond to the earlier comment criticizing us for supporting the member's policy. What I would say there is that the Liberal Party is moving past the rancorous major attack politics that, sadly, we have seen dominate this House for far too long. When we think a policy is a good one, we are absolutely willing to support it. That is case, absolutely, with free trade.

Since I hope you are pleased with our support for the free trade deal, I would encourage you to support our very bold and incredibly popular move on the Senate. You gentlemen could do the same thing today. You could show how broad-spirited you are and show that you too can be bipartisan.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I would just remind all hon. members to direct their comments through the Chair and not directly to other hon. members.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to welcome the hon. member to the chamber and congratulate her on being appointed her party's international trade critic.

*Government Orders*

Again, the issue here is not that Honduras is a small country and that it is poor; the issue is that Honduras is an undemocratic country with one of the worst human rights records in the world. I have already gone over the fact it has the highest murder rate of journalists, it is a major cocaine trafficking centre, it tolerates environmentally destructive policies, and New Democrats believe that Canadians want Canada to stand up for democracy and human rights on the world stage.

I heard the hon. member give a passionate speech the other night on the situation in Ukraine, another government that is repressing its citizens and acting undemocratically. My question for the hon. member is this: is it the position of the Liberal Party that Canada should be signing a free trade agreement today with the current Government of Ukraine as a way of engaging with it so that we can elevate human rights, or would she be opposed to Canada signing such an agreement with the current regime in Ukraine, which is every bit as bad as the current regime in Honduras? What is the difference?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, first, I am sorry for not addressing you. I promise to learn the rules better as the days go on.

With regard to the Ukraine parallel, obviously I have been thinking about that a lot. It is very relevant to the current situation.

I would draw the attention of my hon. colleague to the fact that the current battle in Ukraine was actually precipitated by the willingness of the European Union to sign an association agreement, which included some trade provisions, with the current Government of Ukraine, led by President Yanukovich. That current government, even before all of this, was not an angelic regime. In fact Yulia Tymoshenko, of whom we have been speaking, was imprisoned. It was a difficult, finely-balanced decision for the European Union. It was prepared at that point to sign an agreement Ukraine, and indeed was very enthusiastic about it, because the EU felt that agreement would help Ukraine, which was tentatively building a democracy, to become fully democratic.

The same applies to Honduras now. It is absolutely not perfect. That is why I raised, and we as a party raised, some significant points, and we think this agreement has to be closely monitored. This is not something that we sign and walk away from.

At this moment, we think that this deal is good for Canada and good for Honduras.

• (1640)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the hon. member for Toronto Centre for joining us in this place and on her role as international trade critic.

I wish that her party had a better position on trade in general and on this agreement in particular. I do not see how one can turn a blind eye to the fact that we are talking about a country that has a repressive regime, four years following a military coup, with a very questionable election. It was just this past Monday that the new president was inaugurated, and all indications are that he will continue the trends of increasing gaps between the wealthy and the poor and of infringements on indigenous lands—and sadly, right now, infringements on indigenous lands by Canadian tourism

interests, which under this agreement would be able to further penalize Honduras should it decide to change its tune and want to protect indigenous rights.

Does the hon. member have no qualms about this agreement with Honduras?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for those points. I would just like to repeat that Honduras is absolutely far from being an angelic and perfect country, and we are fully aware of that. It is our judgment that at this moment a trading relationship would help us to help the positive forces in Honduras and would help Honduras move in the right direction,

Again, this is not something we sign and walk away from. It behooves the Government of Canada and all of us here to watch it very carefully, and if we feel there is a retrograde movement in Honduras, we will need to act.

On the point about Canadian companies and their behaviour in Honduras, that falls under encouraging corporate social responsibility, which I have already cited. This is a very strong point, and we need to take great care as representatives of the Canadian people to encourage Canadian companies to behave abroad as we would demand they behave at home.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too welcome the member for Toronto Centre.

My question relates to what the government needs to do to ensure that benefits from trade agreements accrue back to Canadians.

The fact of the matter is that while the Conservative government is absolutely great on rhetoric, it is terrible on results when it comes to trade agreements, other than signing them. It is one thing to sign them, but we need a positive balance at the end of the day for the sale of Canadian goods and services.

Here are the facts with respect to the Conservative government. Since November 2008, the government has managed 48 months of trade deficits. From January 2011 until November 2013, there were consistent trade deficits every month. The present Conservative government is the first government in 30 years that has had an annual trade deficit, so although the government signs agreements and provides great rhetoric about what it is doing, the results are not accruing back to create middle-class jobs.

My question is this: what more needs to be done to stop the government's failure in terms of trade results?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's excellent point underscores my point and our general argument that while we are strongly in favour of free trade, it needs to be embedded in a much more ambitious, much more effective agenda for Canadian economic competitiveness in the 21st century.

The hon. member's point about the trade deficit is particularly telling and particularly unforgivable, given that this has come at a time when commodity prices are at all-time highs. As we all know, we are a commodity-exporting nation, so it is really startling that this has been happening.

*Government Orders*

What do we need to do better? As my hon. colleague said, we need to ensure that when we talk about the free trade agenda, when we talk about embedding Canada in the global economy, we are not just signing pieces of paper, getting the sound bite, and walking away. We need to be absolutely sure that the structure of those deals supports middle-class jobs back home in Canada, and, more broadly, that these deals support the creation of world-beating companies based in Canada but selling into the global marketplace.

• (1645)

**Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the comments made by a few of my colleagues welcoming the hon. member for Toronto Centre. I listened intently to her maiden speech, and as the parliamentary secretary, I hope she joins the trade committee soon to participate in our discussion.

She also mentioned a book that I am going to put on my reading list, and I would put one on her reading list. On the day she was elected, November 27 of last year, our government introduced the global markets action plan. In her speech she asked with regard to Africa, "Where is Canada?" That global markets action plan not only discusses South Africa but also discusses emerging markets like Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali, and Zambia. That document is the culmination of many years of strategic thought she seems desperate for. Which are her top countries in our global markets action plan that she will work with us on to create jobs for Canadians?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member very much for the welcome, but the action plan unfortunately was not published on my election day, which was November 25, not November 27, obviously a more important date personally for me than for other members of the House. Maybe only three other members find it as significant.

I look forward to working with the hon. member on the trade committee and I promise to carefully study that report and let him know what our priority countries are. I would say, however, that it is not only about priority countries; it is about a broader vision.

**Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Prince Albert.

I would first like to add my voice to the chorus of introduction and welcome to the hon. member for Toronto Centre to the international trade file. I look forward to working with her and all of our colleagues to foster job opportunities, growth and prosperity for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House to speak in regard to our Conservative government's commitment to protecting and strengthening the long-term financial security of hard-working Canadians. That is why on November 5, 2013, my hon. colleague, the Minister of International Trade, signed the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement.

Trade has long been a powerful engine for Canada's economy, as we have heard from previous speakers. It is even more so in what remain challenging times for the global economy. With this agreement, we can celebrate yet another milestone in the achievement of our government's vision for engagement in the Americas.

The Canada-Honduras free trade agreement is an important part of Canada's commitment to the Americas. For Canada to remain competitive, our government is pursuing new strategic partnerships with emerging economies, especially those in the Americas.

Honduras has its own active program of bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements. Specifically, it is a signatory to active free trade agreements with eight partners, including the United States and the European Union.

Our government is helping Canadian exporters and investors compete on a level playing field. As we know, the United States, our biggest trading partner, has a trade agreement and so has a trade advantage, and the signing of this free trade agreement and its coming into effect would help level the playing field.

Economically, Canada and Honduras have a bilateral trade and investment relationship that has potential for long-term growth, as we heard earlier from our colleague across the way from Winnipeg North. We already have a healthy and growing commercial relationship with Honduras.

According to Statistics Canada, two-way merchandise trade between Canada and Honduras has been steadily growing, which is very encouraging, reaching nearly \$257.2 million in 2012, an increase of almost 9.3% compared to 2011. In 2012, Canadian exports to Honduras totalled \$38.6 million and Canadian imports from Honduras totalled \$218.6 million, up 17.4% from 2011.

How will that growth happen and what does this free trade agreement with Honduras entail specifically for Canada? For Canadian firms and communities that depend on continued and growing business activities for their livelihood, it is an excellent question. I know from my constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country that one in five jobs are based on trade.

I want to expand a little more over the next few minutes on some of the concrete benefits of this free trade agreement with Honduras. We have signed this FTA, which includes provisions for market access for goods and cross-border trade in services, investment and government procurement.

On goods market access, once the free trade agreement is in place, Honduras would immediately eliminate tariffs on almost 70% of its tariff lines in respect to goods from Canada. Most of the remaining tariffs would be phased out over periods of five to fifteen years. The range of products that would benefit from enhanced market access opportunities is wide and includes agriculture and agrifood products, forestry products, plastics, chemical products, vehicles and auto parts, and industrial machinery, just to name a few.

For Canada and Honduras, a free trade agreement would play an integral part in strengthening and growing our economic relations and lead to growing economic opportunities and prosperity in both countries.

*Government Orders*

One example is in our agriculture and agrifood sector. My colleague from Prince Albert, who will be following me, is no stranger to the agricultural file in Saskatchewan and will expand on the benefits for agriculture. However, one of the big aspects is restored access for beef and pork, which is estimated by industry experts to have a combined market value of approximately \$5 million to \$7 million annually with the majority of exports expected to be pork. We know that pork producers need all the help they can get. It is a difficult industry and in expanding I know they would welcome this new market as well.

This access would open up new opportunities for Canadian farmers, especially those producing pork and beef products, and thus contribute to the continued maintenance of Canada's agriculture sector as a strong driver of the Canadian economy and Canadian exports.

• (1650)

Under this free trade agreement, Canadian companies in diverse sectors would benefit, not only from the elimination of tariffs and from better and more secure access to service markets but also from the greater certainty provided by the investment rules contained within it. As we all know, certainty, stability and predictability are characteristics that our Canadian businesses are always requesting, especially that these trade agreements provide that stability and predictability.

Some Canadian companies have already demonstrated an interest in Honduras as an investment destination. Clothing and textile manufacturer Gildan Activewear of Montreal, for example, is the largest private-sector employer in Honduras with over 20,000 employees. That is amazing: 20,000 employees employed by a Montreal-based company, and that being the largest private-sector employer in Honduras. The Ottawa-based Canadian Bank Note Company, one of the world's foremost security printing companies, has met success in selling its electronic lottery system to Honduras. Aura Minerals of Toronto, a mid-tier gold and copper mining company, operates a gold mine in Honduras.

These companies, in order to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of their investments abroad, are making real contributions to the communities in which they operate, thus fostering more diversified and sustainable economic co-operation and development in Honduras. That is CSR, as we heard before, corporate social responsibility in working together for Canadians and Hondurans.

Moreover, there is our government's commitment to ensuring that the responsible business practices of our firms operating abroad, particularly in the extractive sector, go beyond words. In the specific case of Honduras, for example, our government, through its development co-operation program, has provided assistance to that country under the democratic development initiative, to improve governance in the Honduran mining sector. An important part of this initiative includes the provision of technical assistance and thus local training in capacity building in their sector. We heard before that a rising tide lifts all boats. We are using Canadian technology and training to increase their capacity building so they can help grow their economy as well.

As a country of focus for Canada's development assistance, Honduras benefits from initiatives that promote sustainable econom-

ic growth, food security and access to social services. These initiatives are designed to create a sound, predictable and safe environment for its citizens and for businesses. Indeed, in its commitment to helping Canadians compete and succeed in the global economy, this government has adopted a comprehensive approach to free trade agreements that often includes provisions for investment, trade in services, intellectual property, government procurement, technical barriers to trade, and temporary entry. They are also accompanied by parallel agreements setting out obligations on the environment and labour, which are very important because our Conservative government firmly believes that trade liberalization goes hand in hand with workers' rights and sound environmental practices.

Now more than ever, Honduras, a small and growing market for Canada, can be a valuable trade and investment partner for Canada. Going forward, the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement is a firm commitment from both sides to grow and expand this important strategic relationship. It is also emblematic of our government's confidence in and support of continued democratic, social and economic development in Honduras. As we have heard from previous speakers, this is consistent with Canada's objective of building dynamic economies and promoting responsible investment and open markets to create new opportunities in jobs in the Americas. The twin engines of growth, investment and trade, are the keys to sustainable prosperity; so investment and trade are the two pillars and foundation we need to help grow our economy.

As part of our Conservative government's ambitious pro-trade plan for jobs and growth, we have been proactive in fostering increased integration of Canadian firms and global value chains, and engaging with a greater number and wider variety of international trade and investment partners. We have been doing so to foster Canada's competitiveness in the global market and to ensure that our firms are on a level playing field in as many arenas as possible, so that they and the communities from which they stem, which we all represent, can stay competitive, innovative and prosperous.

In closing, I therefore urge all hon. members of the House to support this free trade agreement as part of our collective efforts to help Canada thrive in the world economy.

• (1655)

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's presentation, and he seemed to think, in using the phrase "a rising tide lifts all boats", that if there is prosperity in Honduras, this is going to make a difference to the lives of everybody in Honduras. We know the regime is unequal and repressive and subject to human rights abuses.

*Government Orders*

One of the witnesses before the Standing Committee on International Trade, representing the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, expressed the concern that Canada has validated the existing regime by adopting a business-as-usual approach in signing a free trade agreement with Honduras in spite of its human rights record. We know there are no mechanisms in this legislation, that we are aware of, that would have any effect on enforcing or doing any of the things that the member suggests would result from this agreement.

Why should Canadians be involved in a situation of actually validating a regime that is guilty of such egregious action against its own citizens and the whole human rights standards of the world?

**Hon. Ron Cannan:** Mr. Speaker, the member for St. John's East would obviously know about rising boats, being from the coast, and would appreciate sharing the analogy.

It is an analogy that means we need to look at helping others who need a hand up. I believe in providing hope for others. The analogy we use in that respect is believing in engagement rather than isolation. If one looks around and sees other people wanting to better themselves and their country, I believe it is our responsibility as Canadians, as humans, to help others.

I have had the opportunity to meet with the Honduran ambassador to Canada on several occasions. I know there has been positive movement. Our colleague, the Minister of State, Foreign Affairs and Consular was there last week, working with the Hondurans and trying to help initiate positive movement.

I would just like to close with the fact that in 2008 when I was on the trade committee we went to Colombia and it was a similar situation. We met with people in the shanty town there. They were basically destitute. Connie Watson, who was a reporter for CBC, asked at the time if a free trade deal would help the situation. The answer was yes. They said that investment would be welcome, especially on roads, schools and jobs and for these displaced people, 40% of whom cannot find work in their city. There is a similar situation in Honduras. That is why we are supportive.

• (1700)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do think it is worth repeating that Canada and Honduras currently do have a merchandise trade. It is getting to well over \$200 million on an annual basis. We see entering into a freer trade type of agreement with other nations as a positive thing for Canada as a whole.

I want to pick up on something that I think many Canadians are growing more and more concerned with, and that is the overall trade, the bigger picture here in Canada and the impact it is actually having on the middle class.

The member would no doubt be aware that, when the Conservatives took office, there was a fairly significant overall trade surplus. That trade surplus has been lost. We have now had a significant trade deficit for a number of years.

I am wondering if the member might want to provide comment in terms of how he feels these trade agreements are going to help. Should the government be focusing additional attention on the matter in which they have really not been successful, and that is increasing overall trade so that Canada would have a trade surplus,

which would generate literally thousands of additional jobs here at home in Canada?

**Hon. Ron Cannan:** Mr. Speaker, trade has expanded, as the member mentioned. It has steadily grown, reaching nearly \$257 million in 2012, an increase of almost 9.3%. It is great in that respect.

Our exports to Honduras continue to grow, up by 17.4%. Positive numbers include agriculture, machinery, wood and a variety of products that we are exporting; that provides jobs for Canadians.

There are almost 40 trade agreements that we have signed since 2006. I have been on the trade committee for almost eight years now. I believe middle-class Canadians are in the best position, as we have had more than 160 different tax cuts and the GST went from 7% to 6% to 5%, saving the average family of four approximately \$3,400.

The fact is that with the increase in growth, we can have a growing economy, which allows the opportunity to lower taxes and provide more jobs, growth and prosperity for Canadians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we go to resuming debate, I see there is an awful lot of interest in questions and comments. I would just reiterate to hon. members that during such times we try to get members to limit their question time, and similarly the response time by the hon. member who had been speaking, so that we get more people participating.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Prince Albert.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement.

As we know, our Conservative government is committed to protecting and strengthening the long-term financial security of hard-working Canadians. The creation of jobs and economic growth for the benefit of Canadian businesses, workers, and their families continues to be our focus. That is why we will continue to deliver pro-export leadership.

In 2012, Canada exported almost \$39 million worth of merchandise to Honduras. Trade with Honduras creates jobs and economic growth for Canadians. This is a high-quality, comprehensive agreement that would increase trade and investment between our two countries. Canadian exporters have an excellent opportunity to expand as Honduras markets grow, with GDP growth reaching almost 4% in 2012. The government is steadfastly committed to promote free trade in order to support economic growth and to create jobs for Canadians. To this end, our government has embarked on one of the most ambitious pro-trade plans in Canadian history, and this agreement is an important part of that plan.



*Government Orders*

Today I would like to spend a few minutes talking about the new export opportunities this trade agreement would provide to Canadian producers, processors, and manufacturers. Once implemented, the agreement would improve market access for Canadian goods into Honduran markets by lowering trade barriers, such as tariffs, which would increase Canadian exports to Honduras. Soon Canadian businesses will enjoy the same access to Honduran markets as those in the United States and the EU, which already have trade agreements with Honduras in force.

This agreement would help level the playing field and maintain the competitiveness of Canadian companies doing business in Honduras. Today Canadian exports to Honduras face an average tariff of 10.5% for agricultural products and 4.5% for non-agricultural products. Once the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement is in place, Honduras would immediately eliminate tariffs on almost 70% of its tariff lines covering goods imported from Canada, with most of the remaining tariffs to be phased out over a period of five to 15 years. The elimination of the vast majority of Honduran tariffs would benefit numerous sectors of the Canadian economy across many regions of the country.

Let us look at the impact of the agreement in detail. One sector that would see the benefits is the agriculture and agri-food sector. In 2012, Canada exported close to \$3.3 million worth of agricultural products to Honduras. Canada's agriculture and agribusiness sector is innovative and competitive and is becoming increasingly focused on international markets. Trade agreements like this one help create new opportunities for Canadian producers and processors to export their high-quality products around the world.

The elimination of Honduran tariffs on agricultural products under this agreement would help Canadian exporters gain new market access in Honduras. This would mean more jobs and economic opportunities for Canadians. Since the range of products produced throughout Canada that would benefit from this agreement is so wide, allow me to mention just a few examples.

This agreement would eliminate the Honduran tariffs of up to 15% on pork. This is outstanding news for our hard-working farmers in Ontario and Quebec. Likewise, the removal of tariffs of 15% on beef would benefit producers in Alberta and Saskatchewan, while the elimination of tariffs of up to 15% on processed potato products, including french fries, would bring positive impacts to growers and processors in Manitoba, New Brunswick, and even Prince Edward Island. Saskatchewan producers also stand to gain from this agreement with the elimination of the 5% tariff on linseed oil.

Companies producing plastics and chemical products are employing Canadians throughout our country. Companies located in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan are already exporting Canadian products to Honduras. In 2012, Canada exported \$9.1 million worth of chemical products and almost \$937,000 of plastics to Honduras. With tariffs of up to 15%, it is not hard to imagine how the complete elimination of Honduran tariffs in these two sectors could allow Canadian companies to enjoy enhanced market opportunities to export a diverse range of products.

Canada is a renowned worldwide manufacturer of high-quality wood and pulp and paper products. Our country is blessed with vast

and abundant forest land, and our companies and workers possess the expertise to transform the natural resource into value-added products. In 2012, Canada exported \$1.2 million worth of forestry products to Honduras. Again, considering that Honduras maintains a tariff as high as 15% for these products, Canada's past exports in this sector are only the tip of the iceberg of what could possibly be exported in the future. The elimination of all tariffs by Honduras in this sector would unleash important gains for Canadian forestry products.

Other products that would benefit from this agreement are vehicles and auto parts. Manufacturers in Ontario, for instance, could seize new export opportunities that would be created by this agreement.

● (1705)

Canada has exported products such as specialty vehicles, including tractors, buses, and construction vehicles, and automotive parts to Honduras. While some automotive parts and certain types of vehicles already enjoy duty-free access to Honduras, there are tariffs ranging from 5% to 15% that are applicable. With this agreement, they would be completely eliminated.

Canada has one of the world's most valuable commercial fishing industries. While Canada's exports of fish and seafood to Honduras have historically been low, Honduras' high tariffs of up to 15% for these products are certainly a factor that has contributed to this situation. The complete elimination of Honduran tariffs under the agreement would allow Canadian fishers and fish and seafood processors from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, for instance, to fully capture the export opportunities the Honduran market has to offer.

This agreement is about creating future opportunities for our exporters and producers to grow and diversify their markets. Our government is creating the right conditions for this to happen. Knowing the ingenuity of our companies and how innovative and hard working Canadians are, we know that removing trade barriers, including tariffs, stimulates job creation and achieves economic prosperity for all Canadians.

Allow me to touch briefly on the various sectors that comprise our advanced manufacturing industry. I am talking here of sectors as varied as aerospace, industrial machinery, and information and communication technology. Again, Honduras applies a high 15% tariff on imports of products in these sectors, which can certainly hinder Canadian competitiveness in that market.

The agreement would completely eliminate all Honduran tariffs on these products, which would allow Canadian companies to take advantage of these new possibilities. Manufacturers in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec can expect to enjoy these positive benefits.

*Government Orders*

There are many more examples I could cite, but the fundamental point is that comprehensive tariff elimination under the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement would create the potential for increased Canadian exports to Honduras. This would mean more jobs for Canadian families and more prosperity for our economy, and it would benefit every part of our country.

Throughout the negotiations for this agreement, government officials consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, and the message was clear: Canadian companies and exporters look forward to the implementation of this agreement and the benefits it will create.

Canadians value the real and tangible benefits that free trade brings to our country, and that is why Canadian companies support our government's initiative to forge new trade opportunities around the world. Our businesses deserve the right to compete on a level playing field with their U.S. and E.U. counterparts as they market around the world.

I had the opportunity to be in Honduras. I went to see a manufacturing company called Gildan, which manufactures clothing in Honduras. It is a Canadian company that has done very well there. As we toured the plant and facilities there, we could see that it was a first-class, very well-run facility that Canadians could be proud of. It was something we might see in downtown Montreal, downtown Toronto, or any other place in Canada, because the company was allowed to use the codes and the regulations used in Canada.

The workers from Honduras would travel for miles to apply for work there, because it provided economic benefits for them and their families. We talked to some of the employees. They really understood the importance of trade and what it meant to them personally and to their families. It allowed them to provide a good quality of life and a good income for their families. Those are some of the benefits we will see in Honduras as we do more trade with that country.

I also have beef producers in my riding who bring in workers from Honduras. They are some of the best workers they have.

As we look at the connections between Canada and Honduras and Canada and other Central American countries, they are getting closer all the time, and we are learning from each other. They are learning from us what is acceptable and what is not acceptable as far as human rights and things like that, and we are learning about their needs and requirements and how we could help them become better individuals. Not only that, but their country could become one of the more outstanding countries. Somewhere down the road, they can look back at their history and say that they were there, and look where they are today. Canada can help them get there.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time to speak on this agreement, and I look forward to the questions.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not share that vision. I find it amusing that two of my colleagues opposite mentioned Gildan.

Gildan does not export pork or potatoes. It exports jobs. Gildan was one of the only profitable textile factories in Montreal that was still successful. Now, it is going to become a mere distribution centre with everything being made in countries such as Honduras.

I doubt that the astronomical salaries those companies pay in Honduras are more than a couple of dollars a day because that is the international standard.

I have a feeling that there is still a chance that we will lose and export jobs. International aid, now disguised as something else, will serve to repair the damage caused by mining companies.

In any case, I am wondering if the member thinks it is profitable to export jobs to Honduras.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised the NDP would not agree with this side of the House. It has never supported any trade deals we have put forward in the past, whether it was the Conservative government or even the one or two deals the Liberal government entertained. That does not surprise me. New Democrats always do the Chicken Little thing. They say we are going to lose jobs. We are going to lose capacity in our economy. People are going to lose their jobs, and we are all going to sit at home and have nothing to do.

When we look at FTAs we have done in the past, NAFTA for example, and the benefits that have come to this country because of agreements such as that, it is amazing. For the NDP members not to recognize those benefits is actually really crazy, because it is foolish to not accept those facts. Those facts are clear. They are black and white. Every Canadian family benefits from agreements such as this.

The member talks about Gildan and about exporting jobs. Canadian companies need to have opportunities to take advantage of situations around the world and look at them in a comprehensive manner. If they find a situation where they cannot manufacture here, they may have to make a change. I would rather see that change go to countries in Central and South America, where they have the same values we have here in Canada, than go to other regions of the world where they actually have different values.

The situation in Central and South America is a part of the world where we can really help. They can become better people, and we can help them to do that.

• (1715)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my province of Manitoba has industries, such as the aerospace industry and the potato industry. Members made reference to those two industries. No doubt there will be opportunities for some provinces more than there will be for other provinces.

To what degree does the government have discussions with other provinces prior to signing onto an agreement? For example, would the Province of Manitoba be endorsing this trade agreement? Does the government have any sense of what sort of provincial support it has for this agreement?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, if we look at the Canada-Europe free trade agreement, there is a very comprehensive consulting process that we used. The provinces are consulted. Stakeholders are consulted. A variety of different inputs go into the development of agreements such as this. We have been very extensively involved in consulting with all players in regard to this agreement.

**Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome my hon. colleague from Prince Albert to the trade committee.

I appreciate the fact that we have a rules-based, stable, predictable agreement. One of the keys to helping a community and a country grow is development.

I know that tourism is a big economic pillar and driver for Honduras. I have a constituent who has been going there for the last few years. In July he is going back there to get married, because he loves it so much.

Would my hon. colleague share with the House what Canada is doing as far as investment and security and the development of capacity-building? My rotary president just left this week to volunteer in an orphanage. Maybe the member could expand a little bit as far as some of those partnerships that Canada and Honduras are working on.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to learning as I go at the international trade committee, and I look at working at that committee wholeheartedly. It is very important to Canada, and I am glad to be a part of it.

The member raises some good points. We need to highlight the fact that Canada has been actively working in Honduras in helping people achieve improvements in human rights, for example. There are numerous examples of exactly what Canada has been doing in that country that he could refer to.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I recognize the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques to resume debate, I must inform him that I will have to interrupt him at 5:30 p.m., at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be splitting my time with the next sitting at which we discuss this bill.

We are in the House to discuss a bill concerning another free trade agreement, this time with Honduras.

Regardless of the rhetoric that is flying back and forth between both sides of the House regarding trade agreements, I have many friends on the other side of the House—which is not that surprising—who are very familiar with my point of view as an economist. I support free trade agreements in general as well as the principle of trade agreements between countries. However, there must be conditions in place.

We in the official opposition examine every trade agreement and free trade agreement based on three considerations, and I should even say that we examine them under three lenses, to determine whether we can support them or not.

The first lens allows us to determine whether the trade partner that Canada is seeking under such an agreement respects fundamental principles such as human rights, democracy, environmental rights and workers' rights. If that is not the case, we must determine whether the partner in question wants to achieve those objectives. The second lens helps us determine whether the potential partner's economy has any strategic value for Canada. The third lens allows us to examine the terms and conditions of the agreement itself.

When we examined the trade agreement with Europe, for example, it was quite clear that the first two conditions are being met. First of all, Europe is a very strategic partner. Furthermore, there is no doubt that Europe recognizes democratic rights and has very high standards in terms of the environment and workers' rights. The reason we are withholding judgment is that we need to determine whether the terms of the agreement itself are satisfactory. That is why we want to see the text of the agreement.

In the case of the agreement with Honduras that we are discussing right now, it is quite clear that this trade agreement does not measure up to the lenses we use when examining agreements, particularly concerning the issue of democratic rights and human rights.

We can have a discussion to determine whether Honduras is a key strategic partner. As my colleague mentioned, Honduras is currently Canada's 104th largest trade partner. There is indeed economic potential that can be developed. However, compared to other trade partners we might pursue, this is on the whole a minor agreement.

The member for Vancouver Kingsway, our international trade critic, raised some interesting points in committee. On December 10, I attended the meeting of the Standing Committee on International Trade. That meeting was extremely important for determining the future of agreements with countries with questionable track records on democratic rights and human rights. The government seems to be completely disregarding that aspect.

What is more, to hear the speech by the hon. Liberal member for Toronto Centre—whom I wish to welcome to the House of Commons—I think that the Liberals also do not fully understand the extent to which we can leverage trade negotiations to make progress on the issue of human rights, environmental rights, and respecting labour rights. The hon. member mentioned, in a sentence or a paragraph, that it was very important to ensure that this is not just an agreement on paper and that we must do a follow-up to see if indeed it has contributed to advancing democratic rights. She already supports the agreement.

*Government Orders*

The committee meeting on December 10, 2013, was very enlightening, because not too long ago, we signed an agreement with another country with a very similar track record: Colombia. Annual reports were produced so we could see the progress achieved by Colombia, in particular with respect to environmental rights, but also with respect to human rights and the protection of workers' rights. On a number of occasions, we raised the issue that unionists and people who advocate for better working conditions were regularly threatened or even killed.

The reports are produced, but they cannot be studied in committee, because when we point out that we need to study reports that appear to be incomplete and often raise questions, the government refuses. We print the reports, but we never get a chance to look at the real effects that trade agreements with countries such as Colombia have had on human rights and workers' rights.

• (1720)

That is why I am surprised to see the Liberal Party rushing to support the free trade agreement with Honduras. It is saying that this could help advance human rights. However, there are no mechanisms there that would allow us to see how these agreements affect progress.

We think that is a reason to strongly oppose such an agreement. We have not opposed the agreement with Europe; we have reserved judgment. However, it is clear that the government did not use its power during the negotiations on an agreement like this one.

Honduras obviously wants Canada to be its trade partner, since Canada is an ideal trade partner. However, we are missing a golden opportunity if we do not use the negotiations as leverage to help the country move in the right direction. At the end of the day, the government is considering only the economic aspect, without taking into account the other aspects that directly affect the people of Honduras.

If we are talking about human rights, we need to talk about the overall situation in Honduras. The World Bank makes regular reports on the economy, among other things. These reports indicate that the Honduran economy is growing significantly. In 2010, the economy grew by 3.7% and the projection for 2013 was 3.5%. The economy is therefore experiencing significant growth. Nevertheless, there are many other problems that continue to plague primarily the local population, as well as investors.

I would like to quote what the World Bank had to say on this issue:

• (1725)

[*English*]

High levels of crime and violence are the preeminent development challenge for Honduras, as it is the country with the highest homicide rate in the world. Between 2005 and 2011, the homicide rate in Honduras more than doubled from 37 to 91.6 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. Most violence is concentrated in urban areas [...] and most victims of homicides are males [...], particularly those between 15 and 34 years of age....

[*Translation*]

The security of the person is therefore a thorny issue in Honduras. While we are on the subject, we must also consider the environment in which Canadian companies considering doing business in

Honduras and businesses associated with Canadian businesses in that country will operate.

The costs are enormous. According to the World Bank, the annual economic costs of violent crime are estimated to be about 10% of Honduras' GDP, which is equivalent to nearly \$900 million U.S. per year. The economic argument may therefore be valid. However, we have some serious doubts about Canada's investment in and involvement with Honduras.

It is clear that human rights and the economy are related. Louise Arbour, president of the International Crisis Group, has said that not only is Honduras the world's murder capital, but its justice and law enforcement systems are so weak that most crimes are never prosecuted. Imagine what that would mean for the economic issues on which we may have differing positions.

My colleague spoke very eloquently about human rights. Unfortunately, I will not have time to give many examples. However, I would like to quote what he had to say about the relationship between economic rights, economic agreements and the possibility of moving forward with free trade.

I really liked the speech he gave before the Standing Committee on Finance, in which he quoted Nelson Mandela. In South Africa, a trade action known as an embargo played an important role in ending apartheid. My colleague referred to an interview held with Nelson Mandela when he came to Canada in the 1990s.

I would like to quote what my colleague said before the Standing Committee on Finance with regard to a question Mr. Mandela was asked about the relationship between globalization, free trade and human rights. My colleague said: “[Mr. Mandela] pointed out that human rights and labour rights are inseparable from commercial and trading rights.”

In my opinion, the Standing Committee on International Trade and Parliament felt the same way and therefore included reporting requirements in the free trade agreement with Colombia. The free trade agreement with Honduras could contain reporting requirements as well. If Parliament and the parties in power or in opposition refuse to follow through and consider the fundamental implications for human rights before signing agreements with countries such as Honduras or Colombia, we as parliamentarians are failing to do our part to promote democracy and human rights in the world.

We are calling on the government to account for the absence of this negotiation tool and are asking the same of the Liberal Party, which seems content to blindly support the government in any trade agreement it likes, regardless of the consequences. Those of us on this side of the House will shoulder our responsibilities and will push for answers from the government, since this will likely go to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this motion.

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 428 under private members' business in the name of the member for Burnaby—Douglas.

Call in the members.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**ELECTRONIC PETITIONS**

The House resumed from January 27 consideration of the motion.

• (1815)

[English]

*Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:*

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, I did not have my earpiece in. My colleagues are not sure that my name was called when I stood to vote, so I wonder if I could just confirm that I was indeed noted as having voted against the motion.

**The Speaker:** I will make note of that. Thank you.

The hon. Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification on a point of order.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, my colleagues also noted that there may have been some confusion around my name being called. I would also like to register my note as opposed.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister's name was recorded.

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

*(Division No. 43)*

**YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeland	Freeman

Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rajotte
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Seeback
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	St-Denis
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stoffer
Sitsabaiesan	Thibeault
Stewart	Tremblay
Sullivan	Trudeau
Toone	Valeriote
Trost	Williamson— 142
Turnel	
Vellacott	

**NAYS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Clement
Crockatt	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr

*Private Members' Business*

Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Caron	Cash
Lake	Lauzon	Charlton	Chicoine
Lebel	Leef	Choquette	Christopherson
Leitch	Lemieux	Cleary	Comartin
Leung	Lizon	Côté	Crowder
Lobb	Lukiwski	Cullen	Cuzner
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
MacKenzie	Maguire	Dewar	Dion
Mayes	McColeman	Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
McLeod	Menegakis	Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Merrifield	Miller	Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Moore (Fundy Royal)		Easter	Eyking
Nicholson	Norlock	Foote	Fortin
O'Connor	Oliver	Freeland	Freeman
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz	Fry	Garneau
O'Toole	Paradis	Garrison	Genest
Payne	Poilievre	Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Preston	Raït	Godin	Goodale
Reid	Rempel	Gravelle	Groguhé
Richards	Rickford	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Ritz	Saxton	Hsu	Hughes
Schellenberger	Shea	Hyer	Jacob
Shipley	Shory	Julian	Karygiannis
Smith	Sopuck	Kellway	Lamoureux
Sorenson	Stanton	Lapointe	Larose
Strahl	Sweet	Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Tilson	Toet	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Trottier	Truppe	Liu	MacAulay
Uppal	Valcourt	Mai	Marston
Van Kesteren	Van Loan	Martin	Masse
Wallace	Warkentin	Mathysen	May
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	McCallum	McGuinty
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Wong	Woodworth	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Yelich	Young (Oakville)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 140	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
		Mulcair	Murray
		Nantel	Nash
		Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
		Pacetti	Papillon
		Patry	Péclet
		Perreault	Pilon
		Plamondon	Quach
		Rafferty	Rankin
		Ravignat	Raynault
		Regan	Rousseau
		Saganash	Sandhu
		Scarpaleggia	Scott
		Sellah	Sgro
		Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
		Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
		Sitsabaiesan	Stoffer
		Stewart	Thibeault
		Sullivan	Tremblay
		Toone	Turnel
		Trudeau	
		Valeriote— 133	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

**PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS ACT**

The House resumed from December 5, 2013, consideration of the motion that Bill C-475, An Act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (order-making power), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-475.

The question is on the motion.

• (1820)

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

*(Division No. 44)*

## YEAS

## Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chong	Clement
Crockatt	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeschen

## NAYS

## Members

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 45)*

## YEAS

## Members

Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 150

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

\* \* \*

## RETIREMENT INCOME BILL OF RIGHTS

The House resumed from December 6, 2013, consideration of the motion that Bill C-513, An Act to promote and strengthen the Canadian retirement income system, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-513.

The question is on motion.

• (1830)

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

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeland	Freeman
Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathyssen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Pécllet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
Sitsabaiesan	Stoffer
Stewart	Thibeault
Sullivan	Tremblay
Toone	Turnel
Trudeau	
Valeriote — 133	

## NAYS

## Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose

*Private Members' Business*

Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chong	Clement
Crockatt	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Raït	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 150

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYEES' VOTING RIGHTS ACT**

The House resumed from January 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-525, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act (certification and revocation—bargaining agent), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

● (1840)

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

*(Division No. 46)***YEAS****Members**

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



*Private Members' Business*

Tilson  
Trost  
Truppe  
Valcourt  
Van Loan  
Wallace  
Watson  
Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Williamson  
Woodworth  
Young (Oakville)  
Zimmer — 149

Toet  
Trottier  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Vellacott  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Wilks  
Wong  
Yelich  
Young (Vancouver South)

Trudeau  
Valerioté — 133

Turnel

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

**The Speaker:** It being 6:43 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

\* \* \*

**ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The House resumed from October 21, 2013, consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills has six minutes left to conclude his remarks.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, continuing with the debate on Motion No. 431 moved by the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, it is important to note that this Parliament was created by the Constitution Act, 1867, when it united the three provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. It is important to point that out, because our Parliament derives from the Parliament of the United Kingdom. In fact, the Constitution Act, 1867, states that Canada is to have “a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom.”

The reason it is an important point to make is that it is useful to compare how our committees function here in the Canadian Parliament and how committees function in the Parliament in the United Kingdom. Here committee chairs are elected by committee members, but the three whips of the recognized parties in the House of Commons control committee membership. Of the 24 committees of the House, the committee chairs are restricted by the Standing Orders to government members for 20 committees. For the four other committees they are restricted to members of the opposition, and the election of these committee chairs is done not by secret ballot but rather by open vote. Therefore, in fact, the votes are whipped. The whips control the committee chairs as well.

In the U.K. Parliament, a majority of committee chairs are elected by secret ballot. Committee members are appointed by the whips, as they are here. It is important to note that the chairs have been elected by secret ballot only recently in the U.K. Parliament. Before June 2010, they were appointed as committee chairs, as we presently do in the Canadian Parliament. It is important to note that the U.K. Parliament has changed the rules and in the last three and a half years has elected committee chairs by secret ballot vote. If it can change the way its committee chairs are elected, if it can change the way its legislative committees are structured and function, so too can we. That is an important point to make on this whole issue.

**NAYS****Members**

Allen (Welland)  
Angus  
Atamanenko  
Ayala  
Bellavance  
Benskin  
Blanchette  
Boivin  
Boulерice  
Brosseau  
Caron  
Charlton  
Choquette  
Cleary  
Côté  
Cullen  
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
Dewar  
Dionne Labelle  
Doré Lefebvre  
Dubourg  
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
Easter  
Foote  
Freeland  
Fry  
Garrison  
Genest-Jourdain  
Godin  
Gravelle  
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)  
Hsu  
Hyer  
Julian  
Kellway  
Lapointe  
Laverdière  
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
Liu  
Mai  
Martin  
Mathysen  
McCallum  
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)  
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)  
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)  
Mulcair  
Nantel  
Nicholls  
Pacetti  
Patry  
Perreault  
Plamondon  
Rafferty  
Ravignat  
Regan  
Saganash  
Scarpaleggia  
Sellah  
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)  
Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
Sitsabaiesan  
Stewart  
Sullivan  
Toone

Andrews  
Ashton  
Aubin  
Bélanger  
Bennett  
Bevington  
Blanchette-Lamothe  
Borg  
Brisson  
Byrne  
Cash  
Chicoine  
Christopherson  
Comartin  
Crowder  
Cuzner  
Day  
Dion  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Dusseault  
Eyking  
Fortin  
Freeman  
Gameau  
Genest  
Giguère  
Goodale  
Grogulé  
Harris (St. John's East)  
Hughes  
Jacob  
Karygiannis  
Lamoureux  
Larose  
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)  
Leslie  
MacAulay  
Marston  
Masse  
May  
McGuinty  
Michaud  
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)  
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)  
Mourani  
Murray  
Nash  
Nunez-Melo  
Papillon  
Péclet  
Pilon  
Quach  
Rankin  
Raynault  
Rousseau  
Sandhu  
Scott  
Sgro  
St-Denis  
Stoffer  
Thebault  
Tremblay

*Private Members' Business*

I also note that the report of the U.K. Parliament further recommended not only that committee chairs be elected and continue to be elected by secret ballot vote but that members also be selected by secret ballot vote. In other words, not just committee chairs but committee members would be selected by secret ballot vote. That too is something worth consideration, because at the end of the day, legislative committees of this Parliament and this House are separate and independent from the executive branch of government. It is really important that legislative committees have the autonomy to hold the executive branch of government to account in terms of reviewing legislation, governor-in-council appointments, the estimates, and other matters that come under their responsibilities. Committees would be more autonomous and strengthened in that oversight function if the chairs and caucus members were selected for committee by secret ballot vote.

That is an important point we should think about and look at. That is why I support this motion. It would allow us to examine the current system we have. I am personally of the view that parliamentary secretaries should not sit on legislative committees. I have spoken over the years to many members of the House, some of whom are members of the Liberal caucus, who have told me that they too share the view that parliamentary secretaries really should not sit on committees. That would give committees more autonomy and independence in ensuring oversight of the executive branch of government.

I am going to close by making a broad comment about the various proposals for reform. We recently had the adoption of the motion to study e-petitions in the House of Commons and to look at the way it is currently done in the U.K. I note that the White House has an e-petition function on its website as well. We have a motion in front of us right now, Motion No. 431, to look at secret ballot election of committee chairs. I recently introduced the reform act in the House of Commons.

• (1845)

The general point I want to make is this. We live in a rapidly changing era of social media, content communities like YouTube, collaborative projects like Wikipedia, blogs and microblogs like Twitter and Facebook, and increasingly younger people are attuned to and work through these social media.

As parliamentarians, if we do not provide new ways for Canadians to come together in communities, to voice their expression online through functions like e-petitions, to reform Parliament in the way its committees function and to reform it more generally, we risk having reform forced upon us.

I encourage members in the House to seize and support this motion and to adopt the reforms that are necessary to keep this place relevant in the 21st century.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to debate Motion No. 431, which was moved by the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

I would like to provide some background. This motion proposes that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

consider the election of committee chairs by means of a preferential ballot system by all the members of the House of Commons.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), committee chairs are currently, and according to tradition, chosen by the committee members.

However, we know that in practice, members do not necessarily have much say in that choice and committee chairs are chosen by the party, the Prime Minister's Office and the whip's office. We need to ensure that the chairs can act impartially and with sound judgment because those are the qualities they must have.

This system has been in place since 2002 and has drawn little criticism. We therefore have never really talked about how electing chairs works.

That is why we are in favour of this motion to consider the system used to elect parliamentary committee chairs.

We support this motion because we think it is a good idea to study new ways to make Parliament's processes more democratic and transparent.

The NDP is strongly in favour of any initiative that would improve transparency. That is supremely important.

As an aside, I would like to say that successive governments, both Liberal and Conservative, have failed dismally when it comes to upholding transparent and democratic practices.

Later on, I will explain what kind of reform Parliament needs to increase transparency and improve our democracy.

My constituents in La Pointe-de-l'Île expect parliamentarians here in the House to have the highest standards when it comes to transparency and accountability. They expect us to employ the best possible practices when it comes to democracy.

I think this is an issue of vital importance, which is why we support such a study.

However, we have to be careful, because as we know, the devil is often in the details. Some aspects must absolutely be studied. Yes, a general study is being done, but we also need to consider respect for gender equality among committee chairs, as well as the list of committees whose chair positions are reserved for the opposition.

The existing appointment process generally tends to promote the principle of gender equality, which is extremely important. During the study, it will be important to ensure that by removing the influence of the whips and the PMO, the election of committee chairs by all members of the House will not put women at a disadvantage.

I think we all can agree that gender equality within this Parliament is an extremely important issue, and that as parliamentarians, we must ensure that men and women are represented equally on committees and in chair positions.

• (1855)

However, we must also ensure that the opposition retains the major role it plays, under the Standing Orders, in chairing committees.

*Private Members' Business*

These two extremely important aspects are part of a fair representation of women, the opposition and the diversity of this Parliament in the chairmanship of committees. This study should cover that.

The study should also consider the voting system, among other things. It should address the methods used for voting. For example, would the vote be by secret ballot? For now, preferential voting is being proposed, but is that the best voting system for our Canadian parliamentary situation, composition, the way we operate, and our traditions?

My colleague already mentioned the study conducted by the British Parliament, following an expenses scandal in 2009 involving British MPs. A committee on House of Commons reform was struck to determine the approach to rebuilding and especially how to restore public confidence. I would like to share with the House the findings of that committee, including those on committee chairs.

The committee recommended that the chairs of government committees and select committees be elected directly by secret ballot by all members by using preferential voting. It suggested that the distribution for each individual chair be established by the parties ahead of time based on a proportional division submitted by the Speaker of the House and presented for leave by the House. It said that committee chair candidates must obtain a minimum of support within their party, just as they must be free to give their support to any candidate.

That is what the committee on reform in Britain's House of Commons concluded. Our Parliament is not the only one that has asked this question. It is important to do so, but we must respect Canadian traditions, gender equality and, most of all, the representation of diversity within this Parliament. We are talking about the opposition, the government, and so on.

The NDP supports this motion. However, as an aside, I want to point out that some other parliamentary reforms could have been examined, in the interests of everyone here, of democracy, of transparency and, therefore, of all Canadians.

For example, we could have considered a more effective question period, with stricter accountability rules for ministers when they answer questions, to ensure that the government cannot simply respond with repetitive talking points.

I have attended question periods in many other parliaments around the world, so I can say that the answers given by our ministers during question period would be considered unparliamentary in many other parliaments. There is work to be done.

We could also limit the overuse of in camera committee meetings to increase transparency, democracy and public access to the work of Parliament. I could also mention the members, especially government members, who use their members' statements to make personal attacks. That is not what is set out in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. Furthermore, the use of time allocation motions could also be reviewed.

All of these things could be examined in order to increase transparency, accountability and democracy in the House.

● (1900)

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with great interest I have been listening to the last couple of speeches which talked about some of the pros and cons of what we are about to vote on, and certainly what we are debating.

I want to sincerely thank the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt who brought this forward with a great deal of sincerity and compassion. His argument is quite good as to how this works.

I have been here for almost 10 years, and I have seen committees come and go. I have seen the makeup of committees change, but the game always remains the same. The chairs are always appointed by the executive within the House, as was pointed out by our colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills.

Something that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills said which caught my attention was that “you reform this place or reform will be forced upon us.” This is a very good quote. It is pertinent to this debate because that is exactly where we find ourselves, at a crossroads for all sorts of reform in the House.

This is one element that brings democracy and legitimacy to the House of Commons. On many occasions we take some of the basic functions of the House and farm them out to the executive and they have more control than we desire. We have a choice. We have the power to change that ourselves through a vote in the House of Commons, or we could just let it go on.

I want to thank the hon. member for bringing this motion forward. It states:

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be instructed to consider the election of committee chairs by means of a preferential ballot system by all the Members of the House of Commons, at the beginning of each session....

I am a fan of the preferential balloting system. We have to achieve over half in order to get the position. What basically happens is that if 50% or more is not achieved by the person in the lead, then the last person is dropped and so on, until we get to that chair.

However, is it not refreshing that all 308 members in the House have the chance to put themselves in a place where they are chair of a committee based on their skill of being a member of Parliament and a decent chair? It is not based on what kind of favours are owed to them in a party structure or a reward given for good behaviour. Quite frankly, that is essentially how it works.

This takes that control away from the executive and brings it back to the House of Commons. After being here for 10 years, I can honestly say that it is stuff like this that reassures my faith in the power of the House of Commons. It brings it back to the individual member of Parliament. It is not whether they are a minister or parliamentary secretary, a critic or a party whip, but it is based on the position of being a member of Parliament. It is a measure of equality that brings us here to vote for this.

*Private Members' Business*

I would encourage all members to vote for this motion. Then the study would take place and we would be able to debate the issue in a very mature manner. By doing that we are saying we are going to restore power—I hope that is the conclusion the committee comes to—to the individual member of Parliament. The motion also states:

study the practices of other Westminster-style Parliaments in relation to the election of Committee Chairs; propose any necessary modifications to the Standing Orders and practices of the House; and report its findings to the House no later than six months....

My colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills brought up the matter of parliamentary secretaries sitting in the House of Commons. When I first came here I was on the heritage committee, in the fall of 2004. I remember the opposition of the day were perturbed that there were parliamentary secretaries from our party sitting at the committee table. I thought they had a pretty valid point. There is a function within the executive of the House. There are ministers, but there are also parliamentary secretaries as well, and in many cases they function as the minister, whether the minister might be missing for the day or whether it is answering late show questions and so on.

● (1905)

That is perfectly legitimate, given the fact that the minister cannot be here all the time. The parliamentary secretary can fill in, but that parliamentary secretary carries a title and a function that is of the executive. If parliamentary committees are to provide study of legislation that makes it way through the House, then that skews the matter somewhat, because people sitting on the committee could naturally take direction from the parliamentary secretary.

I say this from experience, because when I first came here, I was with the party that was in government, so I was sitting on the side of committee where the parliamentary secretary was next to us. Many times we would go to the parliamentary secretary for direction about how we would vote or how we would debate. It happens.

The thing is, it is still happening, which is the point my hon. colleague is trying to get at. The nub of the issue is that we need to break this pattern by having a vote and empowering the individual member of Parliament to allow that person to become a committee chair. That is part and parcel of the system. Whether a parliamentary secretary sits on the committee or not is an executive decision.

What I like about this motion is that the spirit of it is to ensure that the power of the committee rests right here within this chamber. If we keep farming out the functions of the House to the executive time and time again, it is that much harder to bring them back. There is enough blame to go around, for anyone who has been in government, as to how, in a piecemeal process, the power of the House has been farmed out to the executive. It is so subtle that we do not even notice it sometimes, yet year after year, slowly, some of the power gets drained from this place, to the point where we function simply as voting machines.

We should be engaged in what I consider to be a wholesome debate on every issue that comes to the House, but let us remember that a fundamental extension of the House is the committee and the work it does. We could debate within the confines of the House. I know I only have 10 minutes like everyone else. I certainly would like more, but at least at the committee level I could be engaged in that as well.

The committee chair takes on a function that is given to that individual by the House of Commons. My hon. colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île also brought up issues of gender parity and other issues of committee chairs being representative of the diversity of the House of Commons. I agree with her, but we have two elements at play here: we have that diversity being reflected in committee chairs, but for the committee to be answerable to the House, it has to be elected by the House. I know, by function, we play this scenario whereby people are elected to a particular committee. We play it out, but we know full well who that will be. We all know who we are going to nominate going in and we all know who will get it coming out.

This is why I commend my colleague for doing this. What it will do with the balloting system is allow a fair vote. It also makes it accessible. It is universal to every member of Parliament in the House, whatever one's party. One could be an independent, or with the largest party, or with the smallest party. Members still have the chance to put themselves in front of the House of Commons as an effective, and now legitimate, chair of a standing committee, which is an essential and proper function of the House of Commons of our country.

Therefore, I urge all my colleagues in the House to say yes. Let us send this to committee, have a reasoned debate within the committee, and make a solid recommendation as to how we can restore power to this institution that we respect so much.

● (1910)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the debate of Motion No. 431 on the process for electing the chairs of committees of the House.

I know that my colleague, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, has brought forward this motion in the hopes of improving how we function and operate in this place.

As we know, Motion No. 431 would require the procedure and House affairs committee to consider the election of chairs by means of a preferential ballot system by all members of the House. It then goes on to require the committee to study the practice of committee chair elections in other Westminster-style parliaments.

As members of the House know, it is Standing Order 106 that sets out the current rules for electing committee chairs. I am afraid that if Canadians were to read this motion, they might come away with a skewed vision of how our current system actually works. For one, they might think we do not currently elect committee chairs.

It is worth highlighting for the public that our current process already involves the election of committee chairs by members of each committee, and there is nothing stopping them from nominating and electing the candidate of their choice.

While the current system may not be perfect, I think it is fair to say that the current rules have served us well. I was not aware of any egregious flaws in the way we currently elect committee chairs, but I support the intent of my colleague's motion.

*Private Members' Business*

I do want to focus my remarks today on what I see as some potential concerns and issues that must be addressed with respect to the system that my colleague is proposing through his motion and, in so doing, provide some additional context for the committee once this motion is adopted and sent to the procedure and House affairs committee for thoughtful consideration.

During the debate on this motion in the last session of Parliament, members from all sides identified a number of concerns and raised a number of questions with the proposed approach of electing committee chairs by means of a preferential ballot system by all members of the House.

As I alluded to just moments ago, I think it is worth asking a very basic question: Is there a need for changing the current system? What is currently not working? The entire premise on which this motion is based implies that our current system is somehow flawed and needs urgent fixing. I believe members on all sides are open to having the procedure and House affairs committee study the matter with this level of diligence.

Currently, as members know, a number of committee chairs are set aside for members of the official opposition. My guess is that the official opposition might take issue with having all members of the House voting for which of their members would become chair of one of those committees. I think it is fair to say that the official opposition, to its credit, has been judicious in who they have put forward to be elected as chairs of such committees as the public accounts committee and the government operations and estimates committee.

Often the chair is a seasoned parliamentarian who has extensive committee experience. I cannot imagine that they would want to lose control and have it thrown open to all members of the House to elect these chairs. However, let me not speak for the opposition. They have been doing so over the course of the debate on the motion, and if the motion is adopted, the procedure and House affairs committee must be mindful of the implications of the proposal.

Just as a government would take issue in a minority setting with having the majority of members of the House vote for all government chairs, so too would the opposition have similar concerns about the implications for a majority government electing government members as chairs of all committees.

Within the context of this issue, and a few others that I will highlight in a moment, I am curious as to why the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt would choose to go into such detail in the motion around the voting protocol that would be employed as part of this new system and stay silent on a myriad of other issues and concerns.

It would seem to me that the motion could have either been very general regarding the question of examining a new system or, alternatively, been as complete and comprehensive as possible.

Despite these reservations, I am prepared to support the motion and, if a majority of members agree, let the procedure and House affairs committee study the matter in greater detail.

There is another aspect of the proposed system that I hope the member can address. There are numerous circumstances that I think

would lead a chair to vacate the position. To be consistent, are we then talking about an election by all members of the House every time there is a vacancy?

On a related note, what would be the mechanism for removing a chair, if elected by all members? Would a chair not have to be removed on the basis of a vote by all members as well? The resources and time that would potentially have to be expended under such a system causes concern.

• (1915)

I am aware of a situation occurring with the British Parliament currently. For the first time since a similar system was adopted in Britain, the Commons defence select committee has signalled there will be a first byelection with the impending departure of its chair. That race is being closely watched and may be of interest when considering this motion.

What about the issue of joint committees with the other chamber, where there is a House co-chair? What would the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt propose we do for the chairs of special or legislative committees? Is he suggesting that the Speaker should no longer play a role in the selection of special or legislative committee chairs?

Let us study the models and the facts, and let the committee do its work without constraint.

In looking past these immediate concerns, I do believe we could support our colleague's motion to investigate the merits of his proposal. While I see some flaws in the proposal, there is always merit in due consideration. In a meagre two hours of debate, it is difficult to flesh out an issue that may very well have unforeseen consequences. As a result, I am prepared, and I urge my colleagues, to support the motion so that the procedure and House affairs committee can hear from expert witnesses on the proposal. Before making the changes the motion is proposing, there should be a careful and thorough review of the current rules for committee chairs and serious consideration should be given to any and all potential scenarios and consequences.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise here this evening. I will not take up too much of the House's time because I have already addressed this motion.

I first want to say that I support the motion as put forward and I have jointly seconded it to signify that.

I would also like to say that there is a bit of a spirit of reform in this place. I think all parliamentarians would agree that we have a great democracy in Canada. It is a gem that the world looks to. I know that official delegations from all over the world come to look at Canada to determine how they can construct or make their countries better.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

What is happening in the House with the motion by the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt and the bill by the member from Halton Hills is that we are looking at ways of improving what can be done in the House in a reasonable way. Having this motion go to committee is a good idea. It is an appropriate place for these kinds of ideas to be examined and discussed so that we can bring experts in to make sure that we get this right.

There is a general feeling in Canada that this place could work better. That is what a lot of us in the House are trying to do. Therefore, I stand here this evening in support of this motion. I will be working as hard as I can on this side of the House to make sure it, as well as the bill on democratic reform by the member from Halton Hills, passes.

I have already spoken to this motion, so I did not want to take up too much more time. However, I want to say that I very much agree with the spirit of this motion and others that are coming forward.

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for their constructive criticism. That is how I have taken the comments around here: constructive and criticism together.

As the hon. deputy whip for the government pointed out, there are technical questions that need to be addressed. These would be dealt with in committee. This is one of the fine balances we take when we make a motion. We do not want to be so prescriptive and so detailed as to push people away because of the issues of the details, the mechanics. At the same time, we must direct and guide where we want to go for reform.

That is what this is about. It is not solely about committee chairs. It is, as some of the hon. members have stated, pushing forward and helping to advance the spirit of reform and the spirit of co-operation among all members.

Some people have said our current system works well. I would say I commend the committee chairs I have worked with. They have been excellent people, opposition and government, over the years. That says something to the quality of our parliamentarians.

There is a saying I once heard. “Good, better, best. Never let it rest. ‘Til your good is better and your better is best.”

I think that is what I am looking for and why I support various aspects of reform to our democratic system, because what Canada has in all its institutions is very good. There is nothing in the Canadian system that I would say is not good.

However, I am not content with merely a good Canada. I want a better Canada. I want the best Canada. I am not merely content with a good House of Commons. I want a better House of Commons. I want the best it can be.

If measures such as the one I am proposing in my motion help to make the country better, I think we need to support them, because one of the things we need to understand in our democratic system is that everything we do is an interweaving, an interlinking of rights and responsibilities.

As elected members, we ultimately have responsibilities, and we have rights. We need to link those together. Our responsibilities are

to represent our people. Our rights are to speak freely here, to vote, to be involved, to change legislation. The closer and the more directly we can link with our people, link with the issues, link together what we have as our rights as members with our responsibilities to our constituents, the better off this place will be.

I thank all members of this House. Again, I am perfectly happy to accept criticism for this. However, the indications I have are that, if this motion is not accepted unanimously, it will be fairly close to it.

So, I thank all members of this House for their contributions. I also implore all members, as this goes to committee, if they have a good idea to implement this, to improve this or to make this the best it can be, as I said, to contact both committee members and me and to forward their ideas.

• (1920)

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 5, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 28, I raised a question related to the activities of Communications Security Establishment Canada related to that agency's co-operation in providing services to gather intelligence during the G20 meeting held in Canada.

The specific question was: Would the Prime Minister come clean and tell Canadians why he provided access and facilitated this illegal action by CSEC?

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The minister responded by pointing out that CSEC is monitored by a commissioner and that CSEC, according to the minister, continues to act lawfully. However, that statement by the minister is not quite accurate.

In the commissioner's most recent annual report, the commissioner, at page 20, states that in a small number of instances there was the possibility that CSEC had directed its activities at Canadians, "contrary to law". These matters were not resolved to the commissioner's satisfaction at the time of his 2012–13 annual report.

What this minister and the government must begin to understand is that the information made public by Edward Snowden regarding the NSA in the United States has implicated Canada's intelligence gathering agencies. These revelations are very serious.

It just so happens that yesterday I attended an important symposium in Toronto organized by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. It was appropriately named, "Big Surveillance Demands Big Privacy". Ms. Cavoukian, the Information Commissioner of Ontario, stated in the forward to the meeting that "the focus of this year's symposium was born from the steady stream of revelations by Edward Snowden, who came forward to expose just how invasive and pervasive government surveillance has become in our lives".

She went on to say that "in what could be considered a direct blow to Canadians, it was revealed that our very own Communications Security Establishment Canada, CSEC, was working alongside the NSA hand-in-hand in what was beginning to look like a worldwide assault on privacy with no government accountability".

Those are pretty strong words.

I listened to many speakers at the convention and they all called for action. Mr. Ron Deibert spoke of his hope that these revelations would serve as a wake-up call to Canadians. Andrew Clement raised the concern that so much Canadian data passes through the United States and can fall under its surveillance systems.

My hope is that this secretive government will realize the need for parliamentary oversight in a proactive way. I proposed that parliamentary oversight in Bill C-551, but the government has not come forward with its own bill in that regard. It is needed.

An all-party committee, of which two ministers who are currently in the government sat on, unanimously called for that committee, as well as you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to get there. That committee is needed. I ask the government to consider it.

● (1925)

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the opportunity to once again assure this House and Canadians that the foreign intelligence activities of Communications Security Establishment Canada are lawful and serve to protect Canadians from foreign threats.

As a former solicitor general, the hon. member will understand that we do not comment on Canada's foreign intelligence activities or on those of our allies. To do so would be contrary to our laws on the

security of information and could unintentionally provide an advantage to foreign terrorists or other threat actors.

I can assure this House that CSEC respects and is bound by Canadian law. By law, CSEC cannot direct its foreign intelligence activities at Canadians anywhere in the world or at any individual here in Canada.

CSEC may assist federal law enforcement and security agencies under their legal authorities, such as applicable court warrants. In addition, CSEC is prohibited from requesting its allies to act in a way that circumvents Canadian law.

As the independent review body for CSEC, the Communication Security Establishment Commissioner, a highly qualified retired or supernumerary judge, reviews all of Communications Security Establishment Canada's activities. In order to review the agency's activities, the commissioner is supported by an expert staff and has full access to CSEC staff, records, and systems.

Despite what the member has said, the commissioner has never found CSEC to have acted unlawfully. In fact, he has specifically noted CSEC's culture of lawful compliance and genuine concern for protecting the privacy of Canadians.

Let me also take this opportunity to note that CSEC's foreign intelligence activities are critical to the ongoing protection of Canada. CSEC plays an essential role in protecting Canada and Canadians from numerous threats, such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human trafficking, foreign espionage, cyber threats, attacks on our embassies, and other serious criminal activities.

The work of this agency has revealed plots to attack Canadian and allied personnel overseas before these plans could be executed. CSEC has also uncovered foreign-led efforts to radicalize and train individuals to carry out attacks in Canada. In addition, CSEC's operations have been critical to supporting Canadian military operations, such as our mission in Afghanistan, where they assisted in the protection of our armed forces from insurgents.

On a daily basis, Communications Security Establishment Canada works to ensure Canada's continued prosperity, security, and stability. As the independent CSEC Commissioner has previously stated, "the protection of the privacy of Canadians is, in the eyes of CSEC and its employees, a genuine concern."

Protecting the privacy of Canadians will continue to be the agency's most important operational consideration.

● (1930)

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, no one is arguing against the security agency. We are arguing for proper review and proactive review by members of this place and the other House, in a proactive way, as all the other Five Eyes countries do, to review what the security intelligence agencies do before it in fact happens.

Even the parliamentary secretary's former colleague, who was chair of SIRC, Mr. Chuck Strahl, raised some concerns about CSEC when he was before committee. He said that changes had to be made.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

That is what we need to look at. The government has to get its head out of the sand and ensure that proper, proactive action is taken with CSEC and the other intelligence agencies. That is accepting our responsibilities.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, I should remind the hon. member that in actuality, Parliament has the power, through its committees, to call agencies before the committee that is responsible for them. The Standing Committee on National Defence has the authority and the power to call the commissioner of the Communications Security Establishment as well as Communications Security Establishment Canada before committee. It also has the opportunity, if it so desires, to meet with CSEC staff on its premises. They have a new building that members could easily tour around.

Those opportunities already exist. Parliamentary oversight is already in place. We do not need to be reinventing the wheel.

Let me state just once again that while we do not comment on the foreign intelligence activities of Canada or our allies, I can assure the House that the foreign intelligence activities of CSEC are conducted in full, lawful compliance with Canadian law.

The ongoing work of the independent CSE Commissioner and his staff will continue to provide robust review of CSEC activities. By providing valuable foreign intelligence, CSEC contributes significantly to our security and to that of our allies.

[*Translation*]

## AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the airline passenger bill of rights being proposed by the NDP would implement new regulations that will better protect the rights of air passengers when they are treated unfairly by airlines.

The new regulations would require air carriers to compensate passengers if their flight has been overbooked or delayed for a long time or if their luggage is lost. This bill is based on European legislation that greatly reduces delays and problems with overbooking. This is a 21st century bill. It is important to recognize that many airlines already offer passengers good compensation. There is no doubt about that.

The purpose of this bill is not to attack the airlines, but rather to improve services provided by air carriers and penalize only those companies that try to fleece customers in order to increase their profits. Companies that follow the rules will not have to pay. However, those that make a profit at the expense of passengers will have to compensate travellers for their mismanagement. It is as simple as that.

Why should customers not expect better service? Why should passengers not be informed of flight changes, delays and cancellations under penalty to the airlines?

Why not post new regulations at the airline counter informing passengers of their rights and the compensation claims procedure?

Air passengers deserve clear rules for compensation and reimbursement when their travel plans are changed without notice.

In December, I asked the Minister of Transport whether her government would agree to legislation on air passengers' rights.

Unfortunately, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport never answered my question.

I will try again and hope for an answer this time. I have heard rumours, and I would like to know whether the Conservatives are interested in joining the 21st century, in creating an air passengers' bill of rights and in doing what is done in Europe, where consumers have rights. During the latest Speech from the Throne, the Conservatives said that consumers would be a priority. They also mentioned the possibility of coming up with such a bill of rights.

I would like to know whether they plan to satisfy the expectations of Canadian consumers. If they do not, why are the Conservatives refusing to adopt an air passengers' bill of rights, as suggested by the NDP? It is not that hard. We do not want to hear the same old lines; we want an answer. Why are the Conservatives opposed to a bill that would bring us into the 21st century and give consumers rights?

● (1935)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, air transport is essential to the lives of many Canadians. This government is keenly attentive to the situations that Canadians face when they travel by air.

Canada has a system in place to protect air passengers under the Canada Transportation Act, and this government has undertaken a number of actions to both improve and reinforce it. Our main objective is to provide consumer protection to passengers without unduly increasing costs for users or carriers.

All carriers operating in Canada must have terms and conditions of carriage that they respect and make easily available to passengers. The air transport regulations outline the issues that must be addressed in these terms and conditions, including cancelled and late flights, lost and damaged baggage, and denied boarding due to overbooking. The Canadian Transportation Agency is mandated to assess passengers' complaints by considering whether carriers have acted in accordance with their terms and conditions of carriage as well as whether these terms and conditions are reasonable.

A number of recent agency decisions have resulted in improved passenger protection. For example, in June 2012, the agency issued five different decisions in favour of passengers that addressed the reasonableness of the terms and conditions of carriage for Air Transat, WestJet, and Air Canada regarding the overbooking, cancellation, delay, and rerouting of flights. Other decisions in June and August of this year further reinforced carriers' obligations with regard to denied boarding due to overbooking.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

In addition, in December 2012, our government brought into force new measures to ensure that airfare advertising reveals the full price of an air ticket, inclusive of taxes and charges for flights within or originating in Canada.

Canadian families work hard to make ends meet, and every dollar counts. When Canadians make decisions about how to spend their money, they must be assured of a voice, a choice, and fair treatment. While our government provides that voice, the NDP wants to implement a \$20-billion job-killing carbon tax, which would ruin the airline industry. The NDP's \$20-billion carbon tax would raise the price of airline tickets and would be an additional burden on hard-working Canadians.

In conclusion, our government closely follows air traveller consumer protection issues, and we will take whatever measures are required to ensure that consumers are treated fairly. We will continue to monitor this situation closely. However, we will not undertake initiatives such as those put forward by the NDP, which would result in higher costs for travellers.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Speaker, listening to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, it is quite clear to me that we do not live on the same planet. When we talk about protecting consumers, what we mean is giving them rights and the means to assert those rights.

What Canadian has never had their luggage lost without being informed, or had their flight delayed or cancelled, or found themselves without any recourse against an airline that refused to listen to them or compensate them for certain delays, and has then had to live with the consequences of such a situation?

All we are asking for is legislation. My colleague is really showing bad faith by saying that the NDP wants to tax Canadians. The NDP wants to give consumers rights. My colleague across the way should see that there is a big difference there. The NDP believes that when voluntary measures do not go far enough, legislation is absolutely needed. The government needs to show the necessary leadership and take responsibility. As we know, when it comes to consumer protection, people will not vote for the Conservatives, because they do not agree with them on that.

To protect consumers, the NDP is proposing all kinds of things. We have our "Making life more affordable" campaign. I invite everyone to check it out, because we are proposing various measures, including not only the air passengers' bill of rights, but other measures to give Canadian consumers a break, because they often have to deal with very difficult situations and need more assistance.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, Canadian families work hard to make ends meet, and every dollar counts. When Canadians make decisions about how to spend their money, they must be assured of a voice, a choice and fair treatment.

We have already taken action to protect airline passengers, most recently by enacting all-inclusive advertising laws so that consumers can clearly see the real cost of an airline ticket without the hidden

fees. We continue to monitor the situation and will take whatever measures are required to ensure consumers are treated fairly.

While we are working hard for Canadian consumers, the NDP's \$20 billion job-killing carbon tax would ruin the airline industry.

[*Translation*]

While we are working hard for Canadian consumers, the NDP wants to impose a \$20 billion carbon tax that would destroy the airline industry.

## QUEBEC BRIDGE

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of my riding and the people in the greater Quebec City area and the south shore who use the Quebec Bridge regularly in their travels, I would like to take this time to come back to an important question I asked in the House a few weeks ago.

Following a recent article about the accelerated deterioration of the Quebec Bridge, I asked a rather simple question in the House with a view to reassuring the people of Quebec City who use this route on regular basis.

I asked the government what it was doing to ensure that CN was assuming its share of responsibility and that the bridge was being maintained as it should be to ensure the safety of its users. In response to that question, the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière simply reminded me that the bridge did not belong to the federal government and failed to provide any explanation.

I would like to use my remaining time to go over some of the federal government's obligations with the member opposite. It is worth noting that just because the bridge is now the private property of a former crown corporation that has since been privatized, this does not mean that the federal government is no longer responsible for ensuring the safety of the people who use the bridge.

The Quebec Bridge is subject to the federal regulatory framework on railway safety by virtue of the fact that it is crossed by train tracks. I am referring to the Railway Safety Act, which authorizes railway companies to formulate rules on safety operations. Those rules must be approved by the Minister of Transport.

What is more, a major federal regulation also requires railway companies to be equipped with safety management systems. These are official plans for promoting a culture of safety within an organization by requiring all levels of responsibility to report on safety. It is Transport Canada's responsibility to periodically verify the effectiveness of the railways' safety management systems.

If the bridge deteriorates and the rail line that goes underneath it becomes a danger, it is up to the federal government to ensure that the companies that own it—such as CN—take the necessary action to ensure that passengers and goods are transported safely.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I should also point out that the Quebec Bridge is an economic asset to the region. Luc Paradis, the former president of the Quebec City Chamber of Commerce, recently said that the economy of the region—and even the province—relies on the Quebec Bridge, which is why it is so important to keep it in good condition.

Mr. Paradis said that the old bridge, originally built for trains, is the only rail link across the St. Lawrence east of the Victoria Bridge in Montreal. It is used to transport goods and people from one shore to the other. He also said, “If I had to shut down the bridge, even temporarily, Quebec City would suffer, but the province would as well”.

Because of the strategic importance of this bridge to regional economic development, the federal government must ensure that the bridge owners safeguard its long-term viability and ensure adequate long-term maintenance. That is what the two parties agreed to when the bridge was privatized in 1995.

I would also like to remind my colleague that the bridge was designated as a national historic site of Canada in 1995. It is the longest clear-span cantilever bridge in the world and also the first to use the K truss system and significant quantities of nickel steel. It is no less than a masterpiece of civil engineering.

Although the bridge's status as a national historic site grants it no legal protection, the federal government has a moral duty to preserve this structure, not least because it is functional and key to economic activities on both shores.

I will ask again: what is the government doing to ensure that CN fulfills its responsibilities?

• (1945)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I hope to bring some clarity on this issue.

Our government recognizes that the Quebec Bridge is a vital crossing for automobiles, freight trains and VIA Rail. The Quebec Bridge is a key enabler of the local and national economy, and a vital link in the social fabric of the community. As the longest cantilever bridge in the world with an impressive span across the St. Lawrence River, the Quebec Bridge is a prominent landmark in the community. Indeed, our government recognizes the importance of the bridge within the community as a national historic site of Canada, and therefore recognizes the importance of completing the restoration of the bridge and ensuring its long-term viability.

I would like to underscore our government's significant investment since 2006 in public infrastructure. Under the \$33-billion building Canada plan, our government has supported over 12,000 infrastructure projects across Canada. As part of economic action plan 2009, our government contributed funds to another 30,000 infrastructure projects, and as announced in economic action plan 2013, beginning in 2014-15 the new building Canada plan provides \$53 billion in new and existing funding for provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure over 10 years.

Our government has also identified two priority bridge investments that underline our long-term commitment to infrastructure

investment: the replacement of the Champlain Bridge in Montreal, and the new Detroit River international crossing between Windsor and Detroit. Clearly, our government recognizes the key role that transportation infrastructure plays in supporting Canada's economic growth and prosperity.

However, and let me be clear on this point, CN is the owner of the Quebec Bridge. As such, CN is responsible for the operation, maintenance and safety of the bridge. In 1993, the federal government and CN entered into an agreement for the transfer of all Canadian government railway lands, including the Quebec Bridge, to CN for \$1. In exchange, CN committed to a restoration of the bridge and ensuring the long-term viability of that bridge.

Two years after completing the transfer of the bridge to CN, the federal government and the province of Quebec signed a tripartite agreement with CN to fund a \$60-million restoration program over a 10-year period. The Government of Canada committed \$6 million.

Despite expending the entire budget for the restoration program in 2005, CN had not painted approximately 60% of the bridge surface. To protect taxpayers and support the good condition of the bridge, the government launched court proceedings in 2007 that seek to compel CN to fulfill its obligation to completely restore the bridge and ensure its long-term viability. The trial is scheduled for May 2014.

Let me conclude by reiterating that, as owner of the bridge, CN is responsible for the bridge's operation, maintenance and safety. CN has confirmed that the bridge is safe, and the railway undertakes regular annual maintenance. In August of 2013, Transport Canada inspected the rail section of the bridge that falls under federal jurisdiction and did not identify any problems with the rail section of the bridge. The road section of the bridge is under provincial jurisdiction.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the member that during the 2006 election campaign, the Conservatives promised to fix the bridge and make it safe.

In the wake of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy several months ago, I cannot help but point out the government's failure to understand the importance of railway safety.

The insignificant response I got to a completely legitimate question I asked a few weeks ago is proof of that.

The people of the greater Quebec City area are concerned and have every right to an answer. They need to know that the bridge is not a danger to them and that it is safe for them to use in the coming years, especially given that the volume of traffic is increasing.

Rust is clearly visible, and if CN does not do something to ensure that the bridge is viable, the federal government cannot sit idly by.

I hope that the government understands the urgency and that it will move beyond its long-standing disputes with CN.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, the bridge was among lands transferred by the government to CN in the early 1990s. CN is the owner of the bridge, and this means CN is responsible for the operation, maintenance and safety of the bridge. The federal government provided \$6 million to support CN in fulfilling its commitment to complete a major restoration of the bridge. CN has confirmed that the bridge is safe and continues to carry out regular annual maintenance.

The government has initiated court proceedings to protect taxpayers and ensure that CN, as the owner of the bridge, fulfills its obligations to complete the restoration of the bridge and ensure its

long-term viability. Again, in August 2013, Transport Canada inspected the rail section of the bridge that falls under jurisdiction and did not identify any problems with the rail section of the bridge. The road section is under provincial jurisdiction.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:54 p.m.)

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