



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 086 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, May 14, 2014**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

The House met at 2 p.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

• (1405)

[English]

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

[Members sang the national anthem.]

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, Cons. Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend, the Trent-Severn Waterway will open for the season across its 386 kilometre span. As a national historic site, the Trent-Severn Waterway is recognized as one of our nation's truly incredible accomplishments, and its value to our country cannot be overstated.

After years of neglect, this government has committed record funding to repair and restore the Trent-Severn Waterway, and work completed to date is really beginning to show.

It is with sincerity that I ask the Prime Minister to find a way to restore the 2012 operating hours to the entire system. While I have presented many different alternatives and proposals to achieve this outcome, I would happily support any solution that would extend the operating hours, which support jobs and economic growth in my region.

As a person privileged to have had the opportunity to grow up along the banks of the TSW and who now gazes at it from my living room, I encourage the government and the Prime Minister to do what is necessary to restore the operating hours of the entire Trent-Severn Waterway.

\* \* \*

### JAN KARSKI

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Jan Karski, an operative in Poland's Home Army during the Second World War, witnessed unspeakable horrors. Karski was dispatched to

inform the Polish government in exile and western Allies of the Nazi terror in occupied Poland. He infiltrated Warsaw's Jewish ghetto and witnessed Nazi soldiers hunting Jewish children for sport and Jews being herded onto boxcars and sent to their deaths.

Karski urgently described what he witnessed and appealed directly to Franklin D. Roosevelt for the world to acknowledge and to stop the Holocaust. Astonishingly, he was not believed. Karski continued to speak out and documented what he saw in a book.

His determination to tell the world about the Holocaust and other atrocities reminds us to never stay silent. Jan Karski stood courageously and defiantly in the face of the greatest evil this world has ever known, and we are inspired by his example.

I invite all members to attend a reception hosted by His Excellency Marcin Bosacki, Poland's Ambassador, honouring Jan Karski tomorrow evening and to learn more about his extraordinary life.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### FOREURS DE VAL-D'OR JUNIOR HOCKEY TEAM

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Foreurs de Val-d'Or capped off their 21st season by winning the final match in a best-of-seven series against the Baie-Comeau Drakkar. Last night, they brought home their third President's Cup. Congratulations.

The players' courage and determination was a source of inspiration for the entire region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the people of Val-d'Or in particular.

I have a very special message for Samuel Henley, the team's captain, and Maxime Presseault: you have made your hometown proud.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the work accomplished by the new owners of the Foreurs. These businessmen have done a wonderful job getting this team back on track in just two seasons.

Again, congratulations to the Foreurs. Thank you for the wonderful memories you have given us, and good luck in the games ahead. We are the Foreurs. We want the Memorial Cup, and it will be ours.

*Statements by Members**[English]***WIN4SKIN HOCKEY TOURNAMENT**

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to an event taking place in my riding on May 30-31, the Win4Skin hockey tournament. This fundraiser was started in 2009 following the unfortunate passing of Owen Schlosser, a young and vibrant University of Alberta athlete. The first ever Win4Skin three-on-three street hockey tournament was held in 2010 at the Brookside Community Hall. Teams registered for what was supposed to be a three-on-three ice hockey tournament, but changed course shortly before the event due to weather conditions. From then on, it was a street hockey tournament.

This year's event features some great hockey games as well as an incredible silent auction, delicious barbecue, and other activities. The money raised is shared between the Edmonton Community Foundation and the Alberta Cancer Foundation in support of the Owen Schlosser Endowment Fund for Underprivileged Athletes and the Mary Johnston Chair in Melanoma Research. For this year's fundraiser, organizers and Owen's family are hoping to continue with their success and are working to reach their goal of raising \$500,000 for this worthwhile cause.

I would like to thank Owen's family and friends for their outstanding efforts. I wish them best wishes for this year's event.

\* \* \*

**TED NORTHE**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** I rise to pay tribute to a man who, with Prime Minister Trudeau, was responsible for the passage of the historic Bill C-150, 45 years ago today, decriminalizing homosexuality. Ted Northe began his activism in 1958 when he stood on the steps of the Vancouver courthouse in full drag demanding rights for gays, and so began a lifetime devoted to human rights and charitable works.

In 1971, he founded the Dogwood Monarchist Society, an organization that raised money for HIV-AIDS and for the vulnerable LGBT community. His work on LGBT rights with Harvey Milk in the U.S. earned him the keys to the cities of San Francisco and Portland. Over his lifetime he helped raise over \$50 million for charities and was honoured with the Canadian Red Cross Humanitarian and Distinguished Citizenship Award and the Governor General's Special Service Medal for Distinguished Citizen and Humanitarian.

Ted Northe passed away on March 30. His legacy proves that one person with dedication can change the world.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to rise today to tell Canadians about the winners of the Brooks Citizen of the Year awards in my riding. The award winners are picked annually by Grassland Family and Community Support Services to recognize folks who give countless hours of their time every year to organizations that need it.

Vivian Wiebe, a long-time community activist and volunteer, won Citizen of the Year award for 2014, and I can think of no person more suited to receiving this wonderful award. Vivian's volunteerism in our region goes all the way back to 1967, and she is still working tirelessly today for various local groups.

I would also like to congratulate Gideon Mentie, winner of the 2014 Junior Citizen of the Year award. Gideon is a highly motivated young man from Brooks Composite High School. He volunteers in several organizations, including his church. He also commits some of his time to international aid organizations.

Once again, congratulations to Vivian and Gideon.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***MINING INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian mining companies are doing business in more and more developing countries. In many cases, the host countries where these companies do business do not have the political will or the ability to enforce adequate environmental and human rights protection measures.

The list of cases of Canadian companies committing abuses is far too long. This is an especially important responsibility for Canada, which is a world leader in the mining sector because 75% of the world's mining companies are registered here in Canada.

To correct the situation, I introduced Bill C-584, which would create an ombudsman for extractive sector responsibility. I introduced this bill because for a long time now, individuals and a number of organizations have been asking for it, and companies themselves signed on in 2006 in the report by the National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility.

Today, Development and Peace is on Parliament Hill to ask the government to pass this bill and take action on this issue. I applaud the work of Development and Peace, which, since 2006, has been giving a voice to those who, in too many cases, have none.

\* \* \*

*[English]***ROSY RHUBARB FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every year the village of Shedden, in my riding, comes together for the Rosy Rhubarb Festival, which celebrates the plant that put the village on the map.

Twenty-two years ago, a small group of people gathered together with an idea to promote Shedden and to also raise some money for a new community complex. From that small group of people, the great traditional Rosy Rhubarb Festival was born. As a result of that first festival and the hard work of many other groups working together, the Southwold Keystone Complex is now up and running.

*Statements by Members*

Rosy Rhubarb won an award for rural excellence in the category of outstanding volunteerism, and to date, the Rosy Rhubarb fund has raised over \$322,000 for the community.

Right now gardens are lush with ripe rhubarb. On June 6, 7, and 8, I encourage all to stop by and take part in the fun. Browse the yard sales, participate in the rhubarb pie auction, and indulge in local baked goods and the famous ice cream with rhubarb sauce.

\* \* \*

**BULLYING AWARENESS**

**Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, beginning in April 2014, in St. John's, Newfoundland, Ralph Morrison of Kelowna, British Columbia, began a cross-Canada road trip to raise awareness of the effects of bullying. It is my pleasure to welcome him to Parliament Hill today.

At the age of 52, through his book, *The Fear Inside*, Ralph found the courage to tell his story about bullying and how he overcame his fear to speak out. As he journeys across the country, Ralph is reaching out to communities, boys and girls clubs, and especially troubled teens in the hope that his experience will help those who suffer in silence to find the courage to speak out and begin to heal.

On behalf of the constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country, I want to wish Ralph Morrison safe travels as he continues his journey to his destination of Victoria, British Columbia. We thank Ralph for his courage, for reaching out to young people to encourage them to stand up and to speak out against bullying, and for sharing the message that the fear inside can be healed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ZAMUDIO FAMILY**

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Zamudio family fled Mexico after receiving death threats from a drug cartel. Luz Maria Zamudio and her husband and two children are now facing the possibility of being deported from Canada.

The Federal Court denied them refugee status, claiming that the family could live safely in another state where the cartel does not have a presence. The family has already been threatened and chased out of three different areas of Mexico where it was taking refuge before coming to Canada. The Zamudios will never be safe in Mexico because all the cartels are part of a larger network and are in collusion with the police.

The community of Saint-Jérôme says that it wants the family to stay. The Zamudios are a model family. They are productive and remarkably well integrated. What is more, they learned French in no time and they enjoy the unequivocal support of the community.

The Zamudio family must be allowed to stay in Canada on humanitarian grounds, for the good of everyone.

● (1415)

[English]

**CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the opening of the 67th annual Cannes International Film Festival. An impressive number of Canadian films have been selected to compete this year. In fact, this is a historic milestone for the Canadian film industry.

Out of 18 submissions vying for the Palme d'Or, three are Canadian: David Cronenberg for *Maps to the Stars*, Xavier Dolan for *Mommy*, and Atom Egoyan for *Captives (The Captive)*.

[Translation]

Three other films are nominated in other categories: *Tu dors Nicole*, *Jutra*, and *Petit frère*.

[English]

Our government is proud to support Canada's film industry. Every year, we invest more than \$600 million in this sector, through Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Canada Media Fund, and tax credits. This important industry supports more than 127,000 jobs across the country.

Our government wishes all the Canadian nominees the best of luck for the 67th Cannes International Film Festival.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NDP WOMEN'S CAUCUS**

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that, following the 2011 election, 40% of my party's caucus is composed of women, which is the largest women's caucus in Parliament.

As the re-elected chair of the NDP's women's caucus, I would like to remind members of the importance of working on fostering a supportive and positive environment for women in politics.

[English]

As women feminist politicians, we are proud to stand for issues that matter to and that empower Canadian women. New Democrats are committed to gender-inclusive politics and believe that we can make meaningful, progressive change to break down barriers, empowering all women to thrive in a Canadian society that values and respects our rights.

[Translation]

The NDP is the party that best represents women because of the diversity in our caucus and the party's strong positions on women's rights.

Together, we continue to work for an inclusive Parliament that works for all Canadian men and women.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**IRAN ACCOUNTABILITY WEEK**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as part of Iran Accountability Week, parliamentarians are highlighting the efforts of the global Iranian political prisoner advocacy project. Canadian parliamentarians are paired with Iranian political prisoners, on whose behalf they advocate.

Last year I sponsored Hamid Ghassemi-Shall, who was released. This year I am paired with Ms. Reyhaneh Jabbari. Ms. Jabbari continues to be at risk of imminent execution for defending herself and killing her attacker, who was attempting to rape her. She is only 26 years old and has been in Tehran's Evin prison since 2007.

On the day of her attack, she was abducted under the guise of a professional meeting, was poured a drink and told that she had no way of escaping. Ms. Jabbari tried to defend herself and, during the struggle, stabbed her attacker and fled. Her attacker later died. Lab analysis showed that the drinks contained sedatives. Ms. Jabbari was arrested and thrown in Evin prison. She was tortured until she confessed to the murder and was given the death penalty.

This is just another travesty of justice in Iran, and a flagrant abuse of human rights. I call on President Rouhani to exercise clemency, stay her execution, and suspend her sentence.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a certain degree of disappointment that I must rise in the House today and challenge members of the government caucus for passing the unfair elections act at third reading. It is an act widely panned as an attack on our democracy. It is a bill whose process was flawed, and there is more. It is a bill whose objectives has more to do with ensuring a Conservative advantage in 2015.

Sheila Fraser put it best when she described the law as “clearly an infringement on the independence of the chief electoral officer”.

The flaws in the reduced vouching system, the reduced independence of the officer, and the inability of the elections commissioner to compel witness testimony mean that the bill should be sent back to the drawing board, not sent to the Senate.

However, seeing as the bill is now in the Senate, I call upon our senators to show that they are indeed the house of sober second thought and take the time to carefully dissect and fix the significant flaws of this democracy-changing bill.

The Conservatives have placed the health of our democracy in the hands of the Senate. Good luck.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago Alberta's oil and gas industry was born, changing Alberta's economic future forever. In fact, the Turner Valley Oilfield in my

home province became the largest producer of oil and gas in the British Empire.

Today the oil and gas industry continues to play an integral role in the Canadian economy. Over 300,000 people are directly employed by the energy sector, which contributes over 10% of Canada's GDP. Government revenues from the energy sector support important programs, including health care and education, and our government will continue to take action to ensure the success of this important job-creating industry.

While the NDP thinks the oil sector is a disease and opposes its development, Canadians can be confident that our government will continue to focus on jobs, economic growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 2011 Quebeckers and Canadians gave the NDP the keys to the office of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. It was not so that the NDP could do the same thing as the old parties.

When Jack Layton told Canadians that we were going to work together, that did not mean speaking to the same lobbyists and engaging in the same shenanigans as the old parties have been for 150 years. When people put their trust in us, they expected us to talk to them in person and to do things differently.

In Montreal, we hired employees that do an excellent job of going out and meeting with groups that the Conservatives refuse to listen to. We organized press conferences on rail safety in Lac-Mégantic, on cycling safety in Montreal, and on the marine rescue sub-centre in Quebec City.

The Conservatives do not want to consult and the Liberals are more concerned about lobbyists than Canadians. That is their choice. We are being innovative. We will leave it up to the establishment to provide more of the same.

The NDP does things differently, and we are going to bring real change to Ottawa.

Our staff in Montreal and I have one thing to say to everyone: go Habs, go!

\* \* \*

[English]

**NATIONAL DAY OF HONOUR**

**Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the National Day of Honour gave Canadians across our great nation the opportunity to recognize over 40,000 brave men and women who served in Afghanistan.

I was honoured to participate in a ceremony held at the cenotaph in Ken Whillans Square at Brampton City Hall. I was joined by many veterans and Bramptonians to honour the sacrifices of the wounded, and the special burden borne by families and, most importantly, to paid tribute to the 158 members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the 40 Americans under Canadian command, and the civilians who paid the ultimate sacrifice to better the lives of Afghan people.

This was truly an occasion for all Canadians to look back on our contributions and achievements in Afghanistan with pride and appreciation.

Lest we forget.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### HEALTH

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization announced today that the threat of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome has significantly increased.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House and Canadians what the government is doing to combat this deadly virus?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada and its agencies continue to work with the World Health Organization on such issues. I can assure the House that the government will do the same in this case.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, who in the Prime Minister's Office asked Marc Nadon to resign and rejoin the Barreau du Québec before being appointed to the Supreme Court?

Could we have a clear answer for once? What is the Prime Minister afraid of?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our position is clear. I received legal and constitutional advice indicating that it is long-standing practice to appoint judges directly from the Federal Court to the Supreme Court. That is what I did in this case.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 650 eminent lawyers and law professors from all across Canada are now asking the Prime Minister to apologize and to retract his personal attacks on the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Will the Prime Minister finally do the right thing and apologize to the Chief Justice of our Supreme Court?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I reject the premise of the question.

### Oral Questions

The fact is this. A matter came before me that I thought was likely to come before the Supreme Court of Canada based on information that I had. For that reason, we completed our consultations with outside legal experts and later referred the matter to the court.

\* \* \*

### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** The Prime Minister can reject what he wants, Mr. Speaker, but he cannot reject the facts.

Six hundred and fifty eminent lawyers and law professors are asking him to apologize.

[Translation]

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said that in the case of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, the rules were not followed. There is still no financial penalty for companies that do not abide by the rules. The government should not wait until someone is killed before taking action. In 2012, two years ago, Parliament gave the government the power to impose substantial financial penalties on railroad companies that endanger public safety.

When will the Prime Minister finally do something about railway safety?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we need to look at the facts. In this situation, it is not a question of rail regulations. The truth is that the police determined that it was a case of criminal negligence. It is before the courts.

As for regulatory reform, the NDP leader is correct. The government is developing regulations and something will appear in the *Canada Gazette* shortly.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Parliament gave this power to the government in 2012. Nothing has been done. Lac-Mégantic will be one year at the beginning of July. Nothing has been done.

Why has it taken the government so long to act when it asked for the power to impose substantial financial penalties on railroad companies that were breaking the law and endangering public safety? Why has the government done nothing?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** That is untrue, Mr. Speaker. The government has brought in significant improvements and investments in railway safety.

The fact is that this, as the police have determined, is not a matter of regulation; this is a matter of criminal negligence causing death. It is a very serious criminal matter that will now be before the courts, as well it should be.

In terms of specific developments, in terms of regulations and fines, a process is under way and additional steps will be taken in the *Canada Gazette* in the near future.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are told new fixes to the broken temporary foreign worker program are coming, but we have heard that before: failed changes in April 2011 were supposed to ensure “the integrity of the program”; last August, false assurances more employers would “hire Canadians”; last December, “Canadians are always first in line”.

Could the Prime Minister please tell us what will be different this time?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in English, the leader of the Liberal Party asked us to restrict the number of foreign workers, and then, in French, he asked us to increase the number of foreign workers.

The reality is this: the government has been progressively tightening the program to ensure that it is not used as a business model and that Canadians always have first crack at jobs. We will continue to do that while obviously ensuring that temporary foreign workers are available in those cases where they are genuinely needed.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's years of neglecting Quebec have led to poorer French comprehension skills.

Our plan starts with a reduction in temporary foreign worker intake and a boosting of pathways to citizenship. It demands real transparency and accountability, a requirement that job vacancies are made available to Canadians first, and tightens the labour market opinion process.

Will the government adopt our reasonable plan to fix its mess?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has demanded a tightening of the program in some instances, and on other occasions, of course, it voted against a tightening of the program. It has also been regularly lobbying the government to increase the number of temporary foreign workers in various ridings.

The last time I checked, these contradictions had been delivered in both English and French.

•(1430)

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is checking anything, I would like him to check the program that he has so mismanaged over the past years.

[*Translation*]

The temporary foreign worker program has been badly managed and is creating conflict across the country.

I have been asking this question in the House for days now, and I am asking it again today.

Will the Prime Minister finally agree to the reasonable ideas in our plan and put an end to the mismanagement of this program?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, thanks to changes made by this government, we have reduced the number of applications for some streams of the temporary foreign worker program by 30%. However, the Liberal Party voted against our changes and asked for fewer temporary

workers, then it asked the minister for more temporary workers for its ridings. Those contradictions were delivered in French and English.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that veterans affairs department found \$100,000 to waste on tweets.

This is a government that closes veterans offices and lays off over 1,500 people in the Department of Veterans Affairs. The \$100,000 could bury 10 veterans and give them a dignified funeral. It could give 20 veterans a service dog. It could give 40 veterans the VIP service.

Where does the government get off spending \$100,000 on tweets, when that money could go to really help veterans? Does the government honestly believe that tweeting away \$100,000 is a wise expenditure of taxpayers' dollars?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Honestly, Mr. Speaker, as more and more Canadians turn to social media, it is important they too learn about the great accomplishments of Canadian veterans overseas and here at home.

However, the veterans I know would expect that if the NDP broke the rules, they take responsibility and repay taxpayers immediately.

If these reports are accurate, the NDP has misused House of Commons resources for partisan purposes, and that is the truth.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cut services for veterans, then managed to find \$100,000 to promote their tweets on Twitter. That is just indecent.

The tweets, mostly ministerial self-promotion, tend to be kind of ridiculous, barely relevant and written in dubious French. For example, in a tweet in which he meant to say how honoured and touched he was to pay tribute to the fallen at a Canadian war cemetery, the minister wrote, “Je suis honoré & touché pour rendre mes hommages au Cimetière de guerre canadien”. He actually wrote that he was paying tribute to the cemetery itself.

When will the minister realize that veterans are more important than retweets, hashtags and whatnot?

[*English*]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government spends a fraction of 1% on commemoration activities while allocating billions each year toward the services and benefits available for Canadian veterans. However, if the NDP broke the rules, it should take responsibility and repay taxpayers immediately.



*Oral Questions*

Moreover, people who operate out of tax-paid, bogus partisan offices should not be casting self-serving partisan stones.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives seem to want to spend money on everything they can, except actual services for veterans. While the minister is tweeting away money, veterans are coming to Ottawa to plead with the government about the devastating impact that clawing back benefits is having on their lives.

Does the minister really think veterans appreciate poorly formulated tweets asking for selfies instead of the respect and actual investments that they deserve?

• (1435)

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite ironic, really, that the party that has consistently voted against every measure that we have undertaken to upload and improve the quality of life for our veterans and their families today can stand up and be critical. It is about bogus partisan offices using taxpayers' money, House of Commons funds, that they should be accountable for, not this nonsense.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Social Development claimed that postings on the job bank expire after six months. That would be nice were it true. Many of the postings are a year old, or even older. The labour market information system should be a valuable resource, but it is broken. Pages and pages of old and useless postings are not helping Canadians get any closer to a job.

Why is the minister refusing to fix the problem so we can start helping Canadians get back to work?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** We are helping Canadians get back to work, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, since the global downturn, 1.1 million net new jobs have been created, overwhelmingly full-time in the private sector, good-paying jobs. The job bank is an important part of connecting employers with the unemployed. I understand that we have a lot of different partners in that job bank. One of them is Workopolis and I gather 2% of the postings that it made actually were there for longer than six months. We are working with it to fix that technical glitch.

However, the important thing is that we will be further improving that site as a really dynamic platform to connect the unemployed with the many available jobs in the Canadian economy.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives use the job bank to assess labour market opinions, but their data are even less reliable than the numbers they got from Kijiji.

The minister thought there were labour shortages because some job postings were left up for a year or more. The problem is that those jobs had already been filled.

Why has the minister still not authorized an independent review to remedy the situation and make this system work for Canadians?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over a million new jobs have been created in Canada since the global downturn. Most of those jobs are full-time in the private sector.

Unfortunately, too many Canadians are still unemployed, and that is why the job bank exists. One of our partners is Workopolis, and it seems that 2% of the postings it made on the job bank were there for longer than six months. We are working on fixing that technical glitch.

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cannot fly by the seat of their pants on this issue. It has a huge impact on jobs and the Canadian economy. They have done everything they can to have the most unreliable labour market information possible, and that has serious consequences.

Canadians are being replaced by temporary foreign workers—who are paid less—in fields where that should not be happening, and it is happening with the government's approval.

Will the minister finally commit to conducting an independent review and getting this broken system back on track?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the government is conducting a fundamental review of the program. It began over a year ago. Second, Service Canada employees conduct independent audits. Third, the NDP's position is completely inconsistent. Two weeks ago, the New Democratic Party of British Columbia asked that the moratorium on the restaurant industry be lifted. Here, the NDP is saying that it wants to extend the moratorium. The NDP's position is inconsistent.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives are posting bogus job ads, employment remains a serious concern. Job growth has remained stagnant over the past year and is about half that of the United States. Over 30,000 full-time jobs were lost last month. The total number of hours worked is dropping, and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has said that 95% of the jobs created in 2013 were part-time.

What is the minister doing about this situation and why does he not restore the hiring credit for small businesses?

*Oral Questions*

● (1440)

*[English]*

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, monthly job numbers can be volatile and we sympathize with those who lost their jobs in April. We have said this before, Canada is not immune to the fragile state of the global economy. However, our jobs growth record has been strong. Since the depths of the recession, our economy has created over one million net new jobs, nearly 85% in the private sector and nearly 90% full-time jobs.

However, as long as there are Canadians still looking for work, there is more work to be done. That is why we encourage the opposition to get on board and support economic action plan 2014.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are entitled to their own opinion about the economy, but not their own facts. The facts are that the Bank of Canada has thrown cold water on their over-rosy pictures about how we are doing. The long-term unemployment rate is twice what it was before the recession; 95% of all jobs created last year went to part-time workers.

Millions spent on ads, and we just saw another one, will not help the Canadian economy. When are the Conservatives actually going to deal with the facts of our economy and start helping out Canadians who are looking for work?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. Our government is focused on what matters to Canadians: jobs and economic growth. Even though the global economy remains fragile, especially in the U.S. and in Europe, our economic policies have helped protect Canada.

Over one million net new jobs were created since July 2009, among the best job creation records in the G7. Both the IMF and the OECD forecast Canada to be among the fastest-growing G7 economies in the years ahead. With a fragile global economy, we must stay the course with our low-tax plan for jobs and growth.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives talk about all these jobs. They do not mention that one-third of them went to temporary foreign workers and these guys are celebrating. How about a Canada jobs plan that actually worked for Canada for a change? Nearly 1,000 jobs were lost last month. Almost the same number of Canadians stopped looking for work at all, having lost hope to find work in this weakened economy.

The Bank of Canada and every major economist from every major bank have expressed concern over the trend in the Canadian economy. When are Conservatives going to drop their Kijiji economics and start to help out Canadian families for a change?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is rich for the NDP to be criticizing our government's record on job creation. New Democrats voted against every job creation measure our government has put forward including: freezing EI rates; providing certainty and flexibility to workers and employers; tax cuts for manufacturers to purchase new equipment and expand their operations; \$70 billion in stable and predictable job-creating infrastructure over the next 10 years; and more. The NDP would introduce crippling new taxes

Canadian businesses simply cannot afford that would kill thousands of jobs.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, two years ago, the minister's own officials warned him that admissions of young temporary foreign workers had soared while youth unemployment remained at 14%. That same year, the minister went to Ireland to seek out more such workers to come to Canada. It is not just a few Aussies working in Whistler, we are talking 60,000 LMO-free young foreign workers.

Why did the minister ignore his own department's concerns about high youth unemployment? Why did he go to Ireland to recruit the Irish?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Immigration, I went to over two dozen countries to promote Canada as a wonderful place to live and we welcome the talented people from all around the world. I do not know what the member's obsession is with Ireland. I guess for the Liberals the Irish need not apply yet again.

What else happened two years ago? The Liberal leader wrote us a letter asking us to overturn a decision not to allow a foreign worker into one of his favourite restaurants. Last week, the Liberals voted to expand the moratorium on all low-skilled workers, but yesterday, the leader of the Liberal Party asked us to lift the moratorium for Quebec. The Liberal leader is just not ready for prime time.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Windward Co-op on Little Norway Crescent in Trinity—Spadina is home to more than 100 families. Despite this, the Conservatives are sitting back as operating agreements expire, leaving capital repairs and upgrades unfunded and units crumbling. When these agreements expire, the federal help that ensures low-income families can afford their rent comes to a crashing halt.

Will the Conservatives reverse the course and commit to helping families like those in Windward, or are they intent on evicting low-income families in the GTA?

*Oral Questions*

●(1445)

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member should know, because it was the Liberals who ended agreements on social housing. These agreements are coming to an end over the next 30 years. Mortgages are paid off, and Canadians know that when the mortgage is paid off they do not keep paying the bank.

I was before the housing committee for an hour with the president of CMHC. There was not one question on housing; so they do not care about affordable housing.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the chair of the procedure and House affairs committee. Tomorrow's agenda deals with the NDP's inappropriate use of parliamentary resources. In order to prepare for tomorrow's agenda, the committee requested that the NDP provide the lease agreement for the Montreal satellite office. To date, I have not received this important document. Can the committee chair tell me if tomorrow's committee agenda will include a review of this lease agreement?

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, well, that is two days in a row; my life is complete.

The agenda for the committee tomorrow is set from 11:00 until 1:00. We will be having the Leader of the Opposition before procedure and House affairs to explain the use of House funds for partisan purposes. Certain documents have been asked for from the House administration and from the NDP for this study. Some of the documents from the NDP are quite thin. The leader has suggested that he follows the rules. Let us hope that by 11:00 tomorrow morning, the New Democrats have followed the rules on the submission of the full lease.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, fighting poverty begins with ensuring everyone has a roof over his or her head. Unfortunately, Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, cut funding to affordable housing and ended social housing programs. Over the last four years, 26,000 more social housing units saw their funding cut when long-term social housing agreements expired. By 2016, this number could soar to 100,000. When will the federal government agree to renew long-term investments in affordable housing?

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if that member had cared to ask me a question when I was before her committee for an hour, I would have told her about our renewal of investment in affordable housing. It seems as if this is a bit of a diversion, because the New Democrats have been trying to get affordable offices possibly. I am trying to suggest—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Hochelaga.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the numbers, but let us not forget that there are real people behind those numbers.

The end of the rent supplements is causing upheaval in the lives of many tenants in housing co-operatives and low-income housing. One such tenant is Carole Parent, who lives in the Odyssee co-operative in Hochelaga. Soon she will have to pay an extra \$200 a month for her apartment. Some 44% of her budget will go to her rent. That does not leave a lot of room for paying bills or buying groceries.

When will the government realize that access to housing is a right and renew the funding provided for in the social housing agreements?

[English]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to be in British Columbia recently where we renewed our investment in affordable housing, where they are using it for rent subsidies.

Let us talk about subsidies for rent at the expense of the taxpayer to subsidize offices. With our investments, we have been clear on this side of the House about the money we are spending to help Canadians on housing. They need to be clear on what they are doing in trying to subsidize their offices.

●(1450)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, across Canada, municipalities are struggling to meet demand for affordable housing. Canadians are still suffering from—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. This is getting quite tiresome. The hon. member for York South—Weston has the floor. I have asked members to come to order. The Chair would like to hear the question.

The hon. member for York South—Weston.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan:** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are still suffering from the Liberals' devastating cuts to federal housing supports in the 1990s, and people are tired of paying for government inaction.

Just yesterday, the president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities endorsed my motion to renew social housing funding.

Will the minister do the same, support my motion, and do what the Liberals failed to do: finally put an end to this housing crisis?

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been acting since we came into office. In fact, our investments have helped almost a million families and individuals with their needs for social housing.

*Oral Questions*

The opposition voted against every one of our initiatives, including being against our Housing First initiative, which helps those who are most vulnerable and homeless.

Again, this would appear to be a bit of a red herring when we are talking about affordability, whether it is regarding offices or houses.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are turning their backs on hundreds of thousands of Canadians who cannot afford the homes they live in. In Toronto, while the affordable housing wait list sits at over 90,000 households, and growing, only 650 units are under construction. That is the legacy of the Liberals. They killed the national housing program, and the Conservatives have been burying it deeper and deeper ever since.

Why will the minister not finally listen to Canadians, support our motion, and commit to a national housing strategy?

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to talk for an hour about what we have been doing on housing, but unfortunately, I was asked no questions. Neither was the president of CMHC.

I have a question for that member. Was he part of the scheme? Did he contribute money to the scheme to have offices paid for at the taxpayers' expense? Was he part of that scheme?

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of Mohamed Harkat and upheld our Conservative government's security certificate system.

This individual is linked to al Qaeda and allegedly assisted the terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people in the horrific attacks on September 11.

The court also ruled that the security certificate against this individual was reasonable.

Would the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness update this House on our government's position on this decision?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is pleased with the decision of the Supreme Court since it recognized that Mr. Harkat benefited from a fair process and that the security certificates are constitutional.

[Translation]

Our government is pleased with the Supreme Court's decision. It ruled that the process in Mr. Harkat's case was fair and that the security certificates are constitutional. We will continue to defend and protect Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Justice stood here and told this House that the root cause of violence against women is violence against women, as if that settles it, as if that means we do not need a national inquiry.

What we do not need is pathetic answers from Conservative ministers.

What we do need is what victims need, what families need, and what shattered communities need: answers and justice.

There are 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women. Is the minister telling us that nothing more can be done?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we do not need is haughty, condescending questions from the opposition. What we need is more actual, concrete, substantive, practical action, which is exactly what this government has been doing: 30 justice and public safety initiatives.

We do not need more of the 40 inquiries. What we need is more criminal justice legislation, more programs designed specifically to help women in crisis on and off reserve. We need more efforts to work collaboratively, to continue to work directly with first nations to address these problems. That is exactly what this government is doing.

• (1455)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the minister gives us meaningless answers to the effect that the root cause of crimes against aboriginal women is criminals, thousands of aboriginal women are still missing or murdered and the victims' families are left without answers.

The Minister of Justice keeps talking about studies. Can he tell us what those studies indicate are the main socio-economic causes of the disappearances and murders and what specific measures his government has put in place to address those causes?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he is the one talking about studies, he and members of the NDP. We are talking about the \$25 million injected into the aboriginal justice strategy. We are talking about the creation of a National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains. There are law enforcement enhancements, the victims fund, and support for aboriginal community-based awareness initiatives and safety plans.

The time for talk is over. The time is now to continue these important action initiatives, not just talk about them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, the list of victims is getting longer.

Inuit and first nations communities have been faced with a housing crisis for too long. There is not enough housing, people live in overcrowded conditions and the housing needs major renovations. We need concrete action to resolve this crisis.

Does the minister recognize that this is an urgent situation and will he vote in favour of our motion, implement our solutions and put an end to the chronic underfunding of housing?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we have created important programs especially for first nations, to build new housing as well as renovate thousands of housing units across the country. It is definitely a challenge that we must address together with the first nations. We are continuing our efforts in this area.

[English]

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, nowhere is the crisis in housing more apparent than in first nations, Inuit, and Metis communities. The Conservative-Liberal approach of trickling dollars out simply has not worked. We can do better.

In 2005, Jack Layton forced the government to invest \$1.6 billion in new affordable housing—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Members of the parties in the chamber still have some opportunities to ask questions, but right now the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan has the floor, so I will ask them to wait until it is their turn.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, in 2005, Jack Layton forced the government to invest \$1.6 billion in new affordable housing, with money set aside just for aboriginal housing providers. That is the NDP record: working with people, getting results.

Why will the Conservatives not drop their miserly approach and support the NDP motion?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes indeed that housing is fundamental to a good quality of life. That is why we have taken concrete steps to support first nations in providing safe and warm shelter. Since 2006, our government supported, through my department, the construction of 11,000 new homes and the renovation of 21,000 existing homes in first nation communities. While we continue to work in collaboration to improve the first nation quality of life, the NDP continues voting against every measure.

\* \* \*

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment seemed keen for us to know that she comes from the community of Gjoa Haven, but according to NASA and *National Geographic*, if polar ice melts continue as predicted, her community and vast stretches of the Arctic Ocean will be under water.

Since she seems to be indifferent to the fate of the rest of us, has she at least convened a community meeting in her own community to discuss adaptation and mitigation measures before this dramatic rise in sea level?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and**

#### Oral Questions

**Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC:** Mr. Speaker, our government is taking a leadership role in international climate change efforts. We have been clear that any international agreements must be fair and effective. That includes all commitments by all major emitters.

Meanwhile, we have taken real actions domestically, and we are seeing progress. Thanks to our actions, carbon emissions will go down by close to 130 megatonnes from what they would have been under the Liberals, and we have done that without introducing a carbon tax.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

#### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Well, Mr. Speaker, we have more Conservative waste on self-promotion.

Yesterday we learned that the Department of Veterans Affairs spent over \$100,000 on promoted tweets, including \$88,000 alone for Remembrance Day tweets, over the same month it was closing nine Veterans Affairs offices. There are few veterans—or Canadians, for that matter—who need \$88,000 in tweeted reminders for when Remembrance Day is.

Can the minister answer why he is spending necessary funds looking good instead of spending money doing good for our veterans?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is working to deliver the support our veterans deserve. They stood up for our country and we are standing up for them.

We are in fact communicating clearly and in plain language so that veterans and their families can quickly and easily access information that is important to them and their quality of life.

\* \* \*

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are deeply concerned about the kidnapping of hundreds of schoolgirls in Nigeria. We all want to make sure these girls are returned safely to their families. Canadians also want detailed information about the assistance our government is offering to the government of Nigeria.

The U.S. has laid out its help in great detail. Will the minister please do the same and let Canadians know precisely what help our government is providing to rescue these young girls?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is very much concerned, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, about this kidnapping.

As the Prime Minister said yesterday, Canadians are already on the ground in Nigeria working with our U.K. and U.S. allies. Canadian personnel on the ground are there solely in a liaison and advisory capacity.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, French president François Hollande is holding a summit on Boko Haram on Saturday. Nigeria, neighbouring countries, the European Union, Great Britain and the United States will be participating. As a co-chair of the Sahel Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and a contributor to the current effort, Canada should take advantage of every opportunity to become involved.

Was Canada invited to the meeting?

[English]

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that Canada will attend and our representation will be determined very shortly.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories was intended to protect the habitat of mountain caribou, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, and mountain goats.

The Minister of the Environment previously committed to creating a new park that would protect 86% of the entire south Nahanni watershed from development.

I know many northerners have been concerned about when the minister would follow through on her commitment to take action. I wonder if the minister can update the House on where the government stands on this initiative.

**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 my colleague from Yukon for that great question.

I am very pleased to say that the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve act was just tabled in the Senate. The creation of this park has been years in the making, involving consultations with communities, aboriginal groups, industry, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Our government signed an agreement with the Sahtu Dene as well as the Northwest Territories Metis to ensure that northerners will benefit from the lasting economic, cultural, and social benefits while protecting the habitat.

Tulita will be the gateway to the park, creating jobs, skills, and training for people in the community. I encourage everyone in the House—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the small community of Parent, in the Mauricie region, is in limbo, as there are persistent rumours that the local sawmill it is hugely dependent on will shut down. Every week, the forestry industry is weakened by the government's mismanagement. Since this shutdown would have an effect on his riding and mine, does the minister responsible foresee that the federal government will get involved in consolidating the forestry industry?

• (1505)

[English]

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, from Muskoka to the Manitoba border, our government will continue to focus on community economic development, business growth, competitiveness, and innovation that creates jobs and long-term prosperity.

We will continue to ensure that communities and businesses in northern Ontario have the tools they need to have a strong, diversified economy, working with all levels of government, including first nations and other stakeholders, to ensure we maximize the economic opportunities and long-term sustainability of northern Ontario and Quebec.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE**

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Infrastructure is maintaining his code of silence on the Champlain Bridge.

Yesterday, at the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, his senior officials were unable to tell us whether Ottawa was in possession of any kind of study on how a Conservative toll would affect traffic in the greater Montreal area.

We are tired of hearing the same old story from the minister. Can he tell us whether such a study exists? If so, when will he table it and make it public?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we announced on October 5, 2011, we are moving ahead with our plan to build the new bridge over the St. Lawrence, and we will keep up maintenance on the existing bridge. I want to point out that this member and his party voted against a \$380-million investment in maintaining the existing bridge.

The request for qualification period finished on May 7. We are committed to moving forward with the requests for proposals. We are going to build a bridge while they try to play politics.

[English]

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, trade is a vital part of our economy. In Canada, one in five jobs are related to export. In fact, trade is very important in my riding, where food producers will benefit from Korean and European free trade.

[Translation]

Could the Minister of International Trade tell the House how our government is helping to create jobs through international trade, not only in my riding, but also across Canada?

[English]

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I announced that we are placing 25 of Canada's best trade commissioners on the front lines to help increase exports by small and medium-sized businesses.

We are embedding our trade commissioners within a variety of industry associations. This will help us better understand the specific export needs of those sectors of our economy.

However, we are not stopping there. Next week I will lead my fifth trade mission to China and in June another trade mission to Africa.

These are just some of the examples of how our Conservative government is promoting Canada's economic interests all around the world.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to a report from *Global News*, public servants are being forced to decide in a matter of minutes whether someone getting on a plane is a security risk even though they are already on the no-fly list.

Incredibly, if someone on the no-fly list shows up at an airport, the airline then has to contact Transport Canada, and a government official then makes a last-minute decision on whether or not to let that person board the plane.

This is not a good way to keep Canadians safe. Can the minister tell us when the no-fly list became the maybe-fly list?

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It is very important for us to make sure that everything is safe before a passenger boards a plane headed to Canada. That is why we put measures in place. We want to continue putting measures in place and hope the opposition will support us.

[English]

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, in February the RCMP made the unilateral decision to reclassify the Swiss Arms Classic Green carbine as a prohibited firearm.

### Routine Proceedings

The Minister of Public Safety continues to blame this arbitrary decision on unelected bureaucrats; however, we now know that the RCMP had flagged issues to the minister's office regarding this firearm on numerous occasions, yet the minister failed to act and feigned outrage, insisting he had not been briefed.

If the decision of the unelected bureaucrats is so unacceptable, why not draft legislation to limit their discretionary powers? When will the minister stand up for law-abiding gun owners by tabling firearm legislation with clearer definitions?

• (1510)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to sit with a party that has committed to correct the Liberal mistakes of the past and make sure that law-abiding citizens are being respected.

That is what this government is committed to and it is what I am committed to, and that is why I have brought forward amnesty for those people who have been affected by this classification issue. That is why we are moving forward to make sure that law-abiding citizens who are gun owners are respected in this country.

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions.

\* \* \*

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2014–15

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

\* \* \*

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, respecting their participation at the 58th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York, New York, United States of America, March 11, 2014.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages in relation to the study of the main estimates, 2014-15.

\* \* \*

**HOLIDAYS ACT**

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-597, An Act to amend the Holidays Act (Remembrance Day).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with pride and purpose that I rise today to introduce my private member's bill, an act to make Remembrance Day a national statutory holiday.

Similar versions of this bill have been introduced by the NDP member for Hamilton Mountain and by former Conservative MP Inky Mark. Petitions supporting this position have also been submitted by the member for Samia—Lambton.

[*Translation*]

Others were presented in 2010 and 2011 by the hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

It is time to reaffirm our commitment to our veterans.

[*English*]

At a time when the number of veterans of past wars dwindle, we are faced with the changing face of veterans, and 40,000 brave young women and men who have earned our gratitude and thanks.

It is time, on the 100th anniversary of the start of the war to end all wars, to rededicate ourselves to all those who have faithfully answered their country's call and come to help those in need.

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

\* \* \*

• (1515)

**PETITIONS**

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting a petition today dealing with Bill C-18.

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition in regard to Canada Post, signed by many residents of Winnipeg North.

The essence of the petition is best said in the card that I received, explaining the petition:

I want to let you know I am upset the...government approved Canada Post's plan to end door-to-door mail delivery and drastically increase stamp prices. This decision will have a serious impact on me, my family, friends and community. It will also hurt people with disabilities and seniors.

This is a petition that I take great pleasure in tabling today. I would ask the Prime Minister and the government look at what Canada Post is doing, and reverse the decision.

## DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition from constituents in my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to undertake public consultations to consider alternative voting systems and, in particular, to consider a form of proportional representation.

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a petition, once again, regarding Canada Post.

Outrage has been displayed in many of the small communities in my riding regarding the downgrading of postal services. This one comes from the communities around Indian Bay. There are several signatures to show that they are highly dismayed with the reduced hours and diminished services of Canada Post in their community.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting two petitions today.

The first is from a group of Canadians calling on Parliament to refrain from making any changes to the Seeds Act or to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act through Bill C-18.

## ABORTION

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** In the second petition, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that chemical abortions represent the unjust killing of innocent pre-born children. They call upon the federal Minister of Health to immediately intervene with Health Canada to ensure that the RU-486 application is definitively rejected.

## DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, we know at this point that Bill C-23 has gone through the House, but I continue to receive petitions from people across Canada asking for the bill to be more substantially reworked in order to meet the purpose of a fair elections act.

I table these petitions today from the residents of Nepean.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 406, 410, 412, 419, 422 and 424.



*Routine Proceedings*

[Text]

**Question No. 406—Ms. Lise St-Denis:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, given the large amount of information available solely in language of origin, it is not feasible for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority to produce the documents requested in the time period required.

**Question No. 410—Mr. David McGuinty:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Transport Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, given the large amount of information available solely in language of origin, it is not feasible for Transport Canada to produce the documents requested in the time period required.

**Question No. 412—Mr. David McGuinty:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the National Capital Commission since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the information regarding contracts under \$10,000 granted by the National Capital Commission since January 1, 2013, was kept by the NCC only in the language in which the contract was issued.

Given that the information must be provided to Parliament in both official languages, and given the size of the information, it is still in the process of being translated. A supplementary response containing the information in both official languages will be tabled in Parliament by May 30, 2014.

**Question No. 419—Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Correctional Services Canada for Southern Ontario since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, within the timeframe provided, it would not be possible to manually verify the value of each of the contracts under \$10,000 granted by CSC since January 1, 2013, given the volume of data. As a result, CSC is unable to provide a complete and accurate response to this written question.

**Question No. 422—Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the International Arms Trade Treaty, what are the details, including date and location, of any meetings held between any official of a provincial or territorial government, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, any of the Minister's staff members, or any officials of the department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development or its predecessor departments and agencies, since March 1, 2010?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last year the Minister of Foreign Affairs asked officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, or DFATD, to consult with all provinces and territories on the Arms Trade Treaty, after already having consulted with non-governmental organizations, including such diverse groups as Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Quebec, Project Ploughshares, Amnesty International, and the Canadian Shooting Sports Association. Consultations between DFATD officials and provincial and territorial governments took place by telephone and/or email between December 9, 2013, and the end of January 2014.

As members of the House already know, Canada has some of the strongest export controls in the world, including through the Export and Import Permits Act and the Automatic Firearms Country Control List. In addition, Canada rigorously assesses all exports of military goods and technology on a case-by-case basis. In fact, Canada's controls exceed those of the proposed ATT.

It is important that any treaty should neither affect lawful and responsible firearms owners nor discourage the transfer of firearms for recreational uses such as sport shooting and hunting. The government will ensure that any treaty it signs on to will be good for Canada and good for Canadians.

**Question No. 424—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:**

With regard to the sale-leaseback of seven federal office properties announced by the government on October 31, 2007: for fiscal years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013, what are the benefits and costs, expressed in dollar values, of the sale-leaseback transaction and the resulting accommodation arrangement for the government?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the sale-leaseback transaction is a 25-year initiative. While the benefits and costs cannot be analyzed on an annual basis, PWGSC's 2007 analysis has concluded that the sale-leaseback of the seven buildings represents the lowest cost and best value to Canada over the term of the investment.

In addition to providing accommodations to meet government program needs, this transaction transferred ownership risks to the private sector, and the proceeds from the sale of the buildings were used to fund other government programs and priorities.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if a supplementary response to Question No. 319, originally tabled on April 28, as well as Questions Nos. 393, 395, 397 to 399, 402 to 405, 407, 409, 413 to 416, 420, 421, 423, 425, 426, 428 and 435 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Text]

**Question No. 319—Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to government procurement of garments and textiles since fiscal year 2010-2011: (a) what percentage of these garments and textiles were manufactured, in whole or in part, outside of Canada; (b) of the procured textiles and garments manufactured, in whole or in part, outside of Canada (i) in what countries are these goods manufactured, (ii) what is the total value of these goods, broken down by country of manufacture, (iii) is the name and address of each factory where these goods are made documented; (c) what is the exact nature or purpose of any garments or textiles that are procured by the government and its agencies which are manufactured, in whole or in part, in Bangladesh; (d) what is the name and address of each factory in Bangladesh that produces garments or textiles, in whole or in part, that are procured by the government; (e) what portion of all garments and textiles manufactured in whole or in part in Bangladesh and procured by the government is contracted or sub-contracted by companies that are signatories to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh; and (f) what portion of all garments and textiles manufactured in whole or in part in Bangladesh and procured by the government is contracted or sub-contracted by companies that are signatories to the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 393—Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:**

With regard to Citizenship and Immigration Canada: (a) what was the budget for processing visa applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre, (iii) international student visas, (iv) work permits, broken down in turn by temporary workers, live-in caregivers, business people, and students, (v) temporary visas (broken down in turn by tourist, business, Super Visas, and transit visas); (b) what was the budget for processing immigration applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre, (iii) immigration class and sub-category; (c) what was the number of full-time equivalent staff allocated to each processing centre between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre, (iii) immigration class and sub-category, (iv) type of visa; (d) what was the average wait time for processing of visa applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre, (iii) international student visas, (iv) work permits (broken down in turn by temporary workers, live-in caregivers, business people, and students), (v) temporary visas (broken down in turn by tourist, business, Super Visas, and transit visas); (e) what was the average wait time for processing of immigration applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre, (iii) immigration class and sub-category; (f) what was the budget for processing private sponsorship of refugee applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre; (g) how many full-time equivalent staff were allocated to the processing of private sponsorship of refugee applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre; (h) what was the average wait time for processing of private sponsorship of refugee applications between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) processing centre; and (i) what was the budget for advertising between 2005 and 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) program, (iii) subject?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 395—Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With regard to the use of the government-owned fleet of Challenger jets since April 1, 2011: for each use of the aircraft, (a) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (b) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (c) who requested access to the fleet; and (d) who authorized the flight?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 397—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to the tax revenues that the government receives from the oil and gas industry ("the industry"), from 2006 to the most recent figures available: (a) broken down by fiscal year, what is the total amount of the government's corporate income tax revenue received from the industry; and (b) what is the total amount of the government's royalty tax revenues from the industry?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 398—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to government studies of Canada's oil and gas sector and renewable energy: for each study from 2006 to the present, what is (i) the title, (ii) the date of release, (iii) the cost, (iv) name of outside firms hired, (v) names of consultants hired?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 399—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for Southern Ontario since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 402—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Health Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 403—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 404—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 405—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Privy Council Office since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 407—Ms. Lise St-Denis:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Canadian Heritage since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 409—Ms. Lise St-Denis:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canadian Coast Guard since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply***Question No. 413—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canada Economic Development Agency for Quebec Regions since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 414—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canada Revenue Agency since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 415—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canadian Space Agency since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 416—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Ministry of Finance since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 420—Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the government's Road to 2017 commemoration project and military commemoration program: (a) how much has been spent on these programs and projects since 2013, broken down by (i) department, (ii) amount, (iii) specific pillar or event, (iv) year; (b) how much does the government estimate will be spent on these programs and projects in total between 2013 and 2021, broken down by (i) department, (ii) amount, (iii) specific pillar or event, (iv) year; and (c) with regard to (a) and (b), what program activity and sub-program activity will this funding be allocated from, broken down by (i) department, (ii) amount, (iii) specific pillar or event, (iv) year?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 421—Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the ceremony and subsequent announcement on March 18, 2014 regarding the welcoming home of members of the Canadian Forces returning from the mission in Afghanistan: (a) what were the costs to the government for holding this ceremony, broken down by (i) department, (ii) program activity, (iii) sub-program activity; and (b) if not captured in (a), what was the cost associated with the CF-18s that participated in this event?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 423—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:**

With regard to the use of the government-owned aircraft operated by the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces, excluding the Challenger jet fleet since April 1, 2011: for each use of the aircraft by a Minister of the Crown, including the Prime Minister, or their exempt staff, (a) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (b) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (c) who requested access to the fleet; and (d) who authorized the flight?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 425—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:**

With regard to full-time equivalent (FTE) federal civil service and Crown corporation positions eliminated since January 1, 2012: what is the number of positions eliminated, broken down by the location of the former position, namely (i) the National Capital Region, (ii) each province or territory, including figures for Quebec and Ontario outside of the National Capital Region, (iii) outside of Canada?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 426—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's "24 Seven" video initiative: (a) have any reports, notes, memoranda, or other documents been prepared concerning any of the videos individually, or the initiative generally; and (b) if so, what are their (i) titles, (ii) dates, (iii) file numbers?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 428—Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Library and Archives Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 435—Hon. Wayne Easter:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Public Safety Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining 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**

• (1520)

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP)** moved:

### *Business of Supply*

That the House recognize that Canadians are faced with a housing crunch of rising costs and growing waiting lists due to chronic underfunding of affordable housing from 1993 to the present, and call on the government to work with the provinces, territories, municipalities, and with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, to immediately renew long-term social housing funding and reinvest in the development of affordable housing units.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Hochelaga.

Canada's affordable housing crunch has been growing, and it has been growing for at least 21 years, since the Liberal government broke its promise and shunned federal responsibility for housing. Canada is the only G8 country in the world without a national housing strategy, thanks to the Liberals, who downloaded the responsibility for housing to the provinces.

Today, three million Canadians live in housing insecurity due to irresponsible housing policies from successive Liberal and Conservative governments. With a growing number of homeless people and long delays in obtaining access to safe and affordable housing, the government must stop ignoring the problem. The Conservatives' blatant disregard for social housing is creating a critical situation where the need for social housing is increasing at the same time as the quantity of affordable housing is declining.

In 1993, the federal Liberals took the position that they would not act on the task force that they had so gallantly put forward in 1990. In fact, it is a classic example of the Liberals indicating that they are going to go in one direction and actually going in the exact opposite direction. They took that task force, co-chaired by the esteemed Joe Fontana, and made the suggestion that the Conservatives, who were in power at the time, were cutting social housing and it should be stopped. In fact, they said that more money should have been spent on social housing and affordable housing. However, their first budget cut was \$128 million from CMHC's budget, most of which was allocated to affordable housing programs. That was in 1995. In 1996, the Liberals downloaded the responsibility for social housing to the provinces and territories, effectively ending Canada's national affordable housing program.

Canada is the only major industrialized country to not have a national housing strategy.

The Liberals also slashed transfers to the provinces and territories at the same time that they expected them to take on responsibility for this all important program for social and affordable housing. In 1999, the Liberals announced a bit of money for homelessness programs, but as Michael Shapcott of the Wellesly Institute said, "The federal homelessness funding will make homeless more comfortable, but it won't make them any less homeless".

Some more money was added in 2002 and 2004, but those agreements and that money did not have any accountability programs. Therefore, the accountability issue regarding the housing money that was being spent meant that although Ontario claimed to have created 46,000 units, after research of the audit was done, only 63 homes had actually been built. There was no accountability for whatever was being spent by the federal government.

In 2005, when the Liberals proposed giving huge tax breaks to corporations, Jack Layton and his NDP colleagues helped to rewrite that budget and divert \$4.6 billion in corporate giveaways to

important priorities, like affordable housing, training and public transit. It included \$1.6 billion for affordable housing construction, including aboriginal housing. This was the first time any real commitment to affordable housing had been made in well over a decade.

Then the Liberals were defeated due to corruption before the funding was fully implemented, but the Conservatives implemented most of that funding. Although the Conservatives voted against it at one point, we still have some of that funding in our supply.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives, for their part, have now announced they will not be renewing the long-term social housing operating agreements or continuing to invest that funding in affordable housing. Essentially, they see this as a budget line item that they can strike out of the budget, and take \$1.7 billion out of affordable housing in our country. That \$1.7 billion is currently earmarked for assistance to individuals to meet their rent obligations. When that money disappears, those individuals will effectively become homeless. The Conservatives do not seem to care that those individuals will become homeless as a result of their actions.

About 620,000 households were supported by that \$1.7 billion, and as many as 200,000 housing units will be lost due to the loss of operating funds or insufficient capital for much-needed renovations.

• (1525)

Despite what the minister said earlier, these are not all mortgage subsidies. Some of these buildings are leased from other organizations, and when the subsidies end, so ends the rental accommodation support that has been going to seniors and other individuals who really need the support.

An example of this lack of strategy is no more evident than in my home city of Toronto, and in particular in my riding of York South—Weston, where as a result of the lack of investment in social housing over more than two decades, and as a result of the fact that when the federal government downloaded the social housing units to the City of Toronto, they inherited a three-quarters of a billion-dollar fix-it bill for those units. That fix-it bill is now being paid for by the City of Toronto by selling social housing units. They do not have the capital to fix these units, and the government is not forthcoming with money, so it is having to get rid of social housing units to be able to meet the demands for the repairs that are necessary in these units. It is like eating our own seed potatoes, as is said in the Maritimes.

*Business of Supply*

The city of Toronto is a great example of what the lack of funding for social housing construction really means. There has been virtually no new social housing constructed in the city of Toronto in the past 20 years. As more and more people find it impossible to afford the ever-growing rents and the ever-growing cost of buying a home in Toronto, they are faced with the prospect of seeking social assistance and seeking to be in Toronto community housing buildings. The wait-list has over 90,000 applications on it. That is 170,000 people who are looking for accommodation and support. There are only 90,000 units in the first place, so there are as many people on the wait-list as there are units. The wait-lists in some circumstances are 10 and 12 years long.

Individuals have to survive somehow, and they survive by moving into overcrowded units, by moving into units that are poorly maintained, and by moving into units they cannot afford. There are individuals in my riding who are paying 70% and 80% of their income for shelter, because the minimum wage in Ontario is so low. It is \$10.25. If people who make minimum wage on a full-time basis have to pay rent at today's market rates in Toronto for a two-bedroom apartment, it is 70% of their earnings, and for a three-bedroom apartment, it is 90%. The 90% figure is completely unaffordable. People could not eat or possibly raise a family spending 90% of their income on housing, yet that is what people face when they are on a waiting list for supported housing that cannot possibly be met. It will be 10 or more years before they ever reach the top of that waiting list.

There was a recent study by the University of Toronto, partly in my riding, that determined that 90% of the individuals who currently live in apartment blocks in Toronto that were built between the fifties and the eighties face homelessness in some measure. One-third of those people, which is thousands upon thousands of people, have a critical risk of homelessness. Those individuals could be homeless almost immediately.

What does "homeless" mean to people like that? It means finding a shelter, but there are no shelters. It means finding a friend, relative, or neighbour they can bunk with for as long as it takes to find another place to live, but that means they are now in overcrowded housing. That means they are now in housing that is not designed to support as many people as are expected to live in it.

That is another example of why this is a crisis. It is a national crisis. It is not limited to Toronto. All over Canada we have a growing need for affordable housing that we are just unable to meet.

Today the Federation of Canadian Municipalities said it supports the motion and our continued focus on fixing Canada's housing crunch. The president, Claude Dauphin, said he supports my motion and supports our moving forward to ease the burden by immediately renewing long-term social housing funding, reinvesting in the development of affordable housing units, and reinforcing the role of municipalities as key stakeholders in the process.

• (1530)

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with my hon. colleague on a number of things he asserted, one of them being about the work we have been doing to help the homeless, such as our homelessness partnering strategy with the focus on Housing First, and the major

investments we have made, which I will expand on when I speak shortly.

Here is what I am really wondering. I was before the committee that deals with housing. Mr. Evan Siddall, the president of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, was with me. We were there for a full hour. I did not receive one question from any opposition members on housing. There were no questions about affordable housing, social housing, aboriginal housing, or the FCM's position. I was there for an hour. They could have asked me questions, as well as Mr. Siddall.

Could the member please explain to me why the opposition members absolutely ignored the issue of affordable housing?

**Mr. Mike Sullivan:** Mr. Speaker, I was not at that committee, so I cannot speak to what happened. I do know that to the many questions we have asked the government, we get glib answers. The government tells us that it is helping a bunch of people.

The problem is that we are not helping enough people. The problem is growing. It is getting worse every year. There were 60,000 people on the waiting list in Toronto when the Conservatives took office. There are now 90,000 people on the waiting list in Toronto. The Conservatives seem to ignore that. They seem to think it is not their problem.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt that we have to deal with a housing strategy across Canada.

For decades, the Liberals put in millions of dollars and developed thousands of non-profit housing units, including subsidized housing, infill housing, housing co-ops, and lease-to-own programs. The Liberal Party did an immense amount of work building our housing stock from coast to coast to coast. We had a housing strategy in place. The Kelowna accord was even in place. New Democrats defeated that.

How can the member say that he wants to see a housing strategy, yet when the NDP had the opportunity to support a housing strategy, that party defeated the Paul Martin government, thereby defeating the strategy?

**Mr. Mike Sullivan:** We did not defeat the strategy, Mr. Speaker. We just defeated a corrupt government.

The Liberal government of 2005 agreed with Jack Layton that more money should be spent on housing, but it was the first time that had been done by the Liberal government, which was in a majority position for 13 years. All it did was cut social housing. The Liberals downloaded the entire responsibility onto the provinces, territories, and municipalities.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is becoming quite obvious that there is a housing crisis in Canada. My colleague spoke at length about certain aspects of that crisis. There is one aspect in particular that he did not mention, and he and I spoke about it. It is related to the economic boom that certain regions are experiencing.

*Business of Supply*

I would like him to talk about our discussion, to show the other members of the House that there is another side to Canada's housing crisis.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Sullivan:** Mr. Speaker, when I was in Fort McMurray some years ago, when the boom was on, and it is still on, housing was a huge problem. Representatives of the United Way met with me and told me just how difficult it was for individuals who were living on less than the enormous wages that were being paid in the oil patch to have a place to live. They told me about an individual who was making \$18 an hour working at Tim Hortons, but all he could afford was to rent someone's couch for eight hours a day. He did not even have a place to hang his clothes. He rented a couch for \$600 a month and could only have access to it between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. each day, because he worked the night shift at Tim Hortons.

That is the kind of housing crunch that exists even in boom places. The price of a home in Fort McMurray is upwards of \$900,000. That is unaffordable. The rental crisis has gone crazy with it. The government has made no effort to address these issues.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition housing critic, I am extremely honoured to support this motion and speak today about a topic that is very important to me. The people in my riding of Hochelaga often talk to me about this issue, and it should concern every single elected official in the country.

I often say this, but I will say it again: the NDP believes that housing is a right. However, if we are having to debate this motion today, it means that our opinion is not shared by the Conservatives or the Liberals, no matter what they say.

This motion acknowledges the poor decisions made one after the other by previous governments, since 1993 in particular. Of course, I am talking about the Liberals and the Conservatives. These poor decisions resulted in a major housing crisis in Canada, one that is unprecedented.

This motion also proposes a possible solution by calling on the various levels of government to come together and agree on how to renew long-term social housing funding and reinvest in new housing projects as soon as possible.

This is a balanced, pragmatic approach that does not require any new money. It would use existing funding. In the medium and long terms, it would save Canadian taxpayers a lot of money in health care, public safety and emergency services for homeless people.

Regardless of what the Conservatives and the Liberals think, housing in Canada should not be considered an expense that can be eliminated in order to balance a budget. Housing is an investment. Unfortunately, that is not how the two old parties see it. Their actions now and in the past prove it.

At least we know what to expect from the Conservatives. When we asked them to support the Canadian housing strategy bill introduced by my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, they

were faithful to their ideology and all voted against it. That was so predictable.

With the Liberals, we never know which way the wind will blow. Their position depends on the poll of the week, and, as my leader would say, they tend to signal left and turn right.

When the Liberals came to power in 1993, they cut off federal investment in new social housing projects. In 1996, the Liberal government announced the end of the national affordable housing program.

From then on, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's only purpose was to manage the federal government's real estate holdings. Eventually, it became just another government cash cow, effectively turning its back on years of investment in social and affordable housing.

In the late 1990s, when the budget was balanced and people were busy comparing themselves favourably to other countries, they somehow forgot to mention that they balanced the budget by creating a major housing shortage, a decision that would have serious long-term repercussions on people, repercussions that we are feeling to this day.

The irony is that the person who would become the finance minister under Jean Chrétien and would succeed him in 2003, Paul Martin, had previously co-chaired the Liberal Task Force on Housing. The task force produced a report that was published on May 14, 1990, entitled, "Finding Room: Housing Solutions for the Future". The report accused Mulroney's Conservative government of abandoning its responsibilities for dealing with the housing problems and the crisis at the time. The report included statistics on the housing situation and homelessness in Canada. It denounced the then federal government for its inaction and for abandoning its responsibilities for housing. It argued that the federal government should be a leader on housing in Canada. It listed no less than 25 recommendations.

Honestly, after going through this document, I agreed with most of the recommendations in the report. The problem is that we cannot trust the Liberals. When they are in opposition they will say just about anything to win votes. However, when they are in power, they drop all the plans they presented to the public. That is called electioneering.

• (1540)

[*English*]

The Liberals can talk the talk pretty well when they are in the opposition, but when they come to power, they never walk the walk.

[*Translation*]

That is exactly what my leader means when he says that the Liberals signal left and turn right.

Canada is still having problems and more than three million Canadians are still looking for affordable housing that will not cost more than 30% of their income for a roof over their heads because the Conservatives, who replaced the Liberals in 2006, are not any better when it comes to housing.

*Business of Supply*

Unfortunately, as political tradition would have it in Canada, the Conservatives also say one thing and do another.

I would say that the Conservatives do not signal at all and simply turn right.

In a press release dated January 12, 2006, just 11 days before the election that brought them to power, the Conservatives criticized the Liberals for precisely what I was just talking about:

[*English*]

The irony is that before becoming Minister of Finance, Paul Martin had called for an increased federal role in supporting affordable housing. He co-authored *Finding Room: Housing Solutions for the Future* (1990), the report of the National Liberal Task Force on Housing. The Martin report argued that the housing crisis was growing at an alarming rate while the government sat and did nothing, that the federal government should be a partner working with other levels of government, and private and public housing groups, and that leadership must come from one source and required national direction.

[*Translation*]

How ironic, indeed. When you are in unfamiliar territory, it may be better to say nothing than to preach.

The Conservatives also broke their promises. Everything that was thrown in place was just smoke and mirrors. Today, one out of four Canadian households spends more than 30% of its income on housing, which is the definition for affordable housing. That is more than 3 million families.

Even worse, 37% of households that live in subsidized rental housing, the poorest families in Canada, live in housing that is not affordable. That figure increases to 40% for market rental housing.

What is the response from the other side of the House? It cuts and cuts some more. The long-term agreements signed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation with suppliers of social housing between 1970 and 1993 have begun to expire. Thus, \$1.7 billion of 85% of the CMHC annual budget is slowly being eroded.

The Conservatives say that they are not cutting the budget, but their refusal to renew funding upon the expiry of these agreements translates into reductions. They can play with words, but the people affected, those who could see their rent increase by \$200 to \$500 a month or more because they have lost their rent subsidy, know exactly what is going to happen and are desperately pleading with the government, which continues to turn a deaf ear.

The figures are clear. They are in previous budgets. A total of \$65.2 million was cut in just the past three years: \$20.2 million in 2011-12, \$21.7 million in 2012-13, and \$23.3 million in 2013-14. Furthermore, 18,400 households lost their rent subsidy, and the worst is yet to come.

By 2040, there will be nothing left of the \$1.7 billion a year formerly invested in social housing. Nothing. Zero. In Canada, one household in three lives in rental housing. Over the past 15 years, rental housing has accounted for only 10% of new housing stock.

The Conservatives' lack of action on social housing has created this crisis situation. While the demand for social housing is increasing—as demonstrated by long waiting lists—the supply of affordable housing is diminishing. We are still waiting for the

government to come up with a plan to deal with this increasingly serious situation.

The NDP proposed a plan, a real national housing strategy. Canada is the only G8 country that does not have a such a strategy. The Conservatives collectively rejected this strategy. They are doing nothing and the situation is growing worse.

Given the increasing number of homeless people and the longer and longer wait times for safe, adequate, affordable housing, the federal government needs to stop hiding its head in the sand and ignoring the problem. We have seen that we cannot count on the Liberals or the Conservatives to do anything about housing.

Housing is a priority for the NDP. Social housing is not just an expense; it is an investment. A roof is a right. I urge everyone who is watching today to visit my “A Roof, A Right” campaign website and sign the petition.

• (1545)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was at the human resources committee just two weeks ago when the minister of state and the president of CMHC both appeared to speak on the main estimates. I think all members of the House know what main estimates are. They are the spending projections for the next year. I noticed that neither opposition party asked the minister or the president of CMHC one single question about housing, not a single one. What is even worse, both opposition parties voted against the most recent budget that renewed the affordable housing initiative for another five years and renewed the homelessness partnering strategy for another five years at the same levels of money as had been invested previously.

Why did the NDP vote against the five-year renewal of those two extremely important housing initiatives?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer my colleague's question.

The member for Mississauga—Streetsville was also a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities a year ago when the former human resources minister was there. He will certainly remember that I asked a number of questions about the renewal of housing agreements.

However, I did not get any answers about a committee that is supposed to exist and that is supposed to be looking at the situation to determine which projects are feasible and which are not. We still have not seen a report on this. We do not know anything about it.

With regard to affordable housing, the current minister spends her time saying that this budget should be used to subsidize social housing. That is not what this budget is for. There should be two separate budgets, one for social housing and one for affordable housing, because there is also a lack of affordable housing.

That is why we vote against mammoth budget bills that deal with many different issues and cannot be divided. That is my answer.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member needs to realize that on the one hand she is saying that Jack Layton should take the credit for creating additional monies, \$480 million, in the Paul Martin government. On the other hand, shortly after former prime minister Paul Martin put in that \$480 million, what did the NDP do? It voted against it, in favour of an election that killed not only the \$480 million, but the Kelowna accord. Does she not see some hypocrisy or conflict in some of the statements she is making?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the money would never have been in Paul Martin's budget if Jack Layton had not had the courage to do what he did.

Second of all, it was not the NDP that destroyed the Liberals. Canadians decided that the Liberals were too crooked and that they had had enough. After the sponsorship scandal, Canadians decided to show them the door.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is familiar with the first nations housing situation.

The government is not taking action. That is obvious. On Monday, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples confirmed that no changes had been made to address the housing gap between aboriginal Canadians and non-aboriginal Canadians since the last UN report. In 10 years, no progress has been made on this issue under both Conservative and Liberal governments.

Does the member agree that this is a shameful situation and that the NDP will work with the first nations to fix the housing problem?

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP is already working with the first nations, and I am as well. We consult them to find out what they truly need. We saw that the situation in Attawapiskat was atrocious. We see this on reserves but also in cities.

For example, in Sudbury, two families lost their social housing at the end of October 2013 because their housing subsidy came to an end. Their rent went from under \$400 to over \$900 a month. The families did not have the means to pay that. It was impossible. As a result, the families had to live elsewhere, and those two housing units must now be rented to someone else at market price. They may have to be sold, which means that we will lose two social housing units. We are losing social housing, and on top of that, people such as aboriginal Canadians are poorly housed.

• (1550)

[English]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to address the House on the motion that has been presented by the member for York South—Weston.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Brant and I just want to commend the member for Brant for the great leadership role that he has taken on the housing file and talking about innovative ideas on how we can address affordable housing issues and the good

things that our government is already doing. I want to congratulate him on that.

I want to state right from the outset that the premise of this motion is wrong. I so appreciate the opportunity to address some of the misunderstanding, perhaps, on behalf of the opposition, in terms of what we are doing for affordable housing.

As I have already stated, quite clearly, I did appear before the committee. I was looking forward to some really thoughtful questions. I was looking forward to talking about our investment in affordable housing and how provinces can use it in the ways they deem appropriate and meet their priorities. I know Mr. Siddall was looking forward to that.

However, we never had the opportunity because, again, the opposition did not ask us any questions. I think that is very telling, I will say, especially given today and the pressure and the scrutiny that the opposition is under with its inappropriate office expenditures. I think, it is a bit telling that it is, all of a sudden, out of the blue, talking about affordable housing.

Again, I am really happy that I can talk about what we are doing, in terms of helping those who are most vulnerable and those who need assistance with housing.

Since 2006, we have invested more than \$16.5 billion in housing. This year alone, we will spend about \$2 billion, through a range of programs, to help Canadians in housing need.

These federal investments have helped—and this is staggering—almost one million Canadian families and individuals over the past eight years, just since we took government.

Our goal is to ensure that hard-working taxpayer dollars are used wisely. That means ensuring that accessibility and sustainability of housing, including social housing, is there for those most in need. I am very pleased to have been able to do my part, even in the most recent months.

In fact, just two weeks ago, I was in Alberta to meet with my counterpart and sign the renewal of our investment in affordable housing. That was \$202 million from the province and the federal government. Before that, I was in Prince Edward Island, where we announced our signing agreement of \$15 million and, prior to that, in British Columbia, \$300 million to do the same. We have also renewed our agreement with New Brunswick for \$78 million.

We are looking forward to finishing those agreements over the next few months and signing them. Provinces are very pleased with what they have been receiving and they are matching those funds. Through our investment in affordable housing, provinces and territories match our federal investments and design and deliver programs to meet their local needs. This has been working well.

I want to talk a bit about how each province uses these funds differently, and my hon. colleague talked about rent subsidies.

As I said, I was recently in British Columbia. Minister Coleman, the housing minister of B.C. said:



*Business of Supply*

The extension of this agreement will help us to create more housing options for British Columbians. Over the next five years, this funding will help build new affordable housing, enhance our rental assistance—

Some provinces choose to use it for rental assistance.

—programs and support partnerships that will contribute to stronger, more sustainable communities.

Minister Dube from New Brunswick, said:

This initiative demonstrates the importance of partnerships—

The opposition talks about partnerships.

—between all levels of government, communities and the private sector when increasing the supply of affordable housing available to the people of our province.

From Alberta, Minister Weadick said:

We welcome this continued partnership to create even more opportunities to develop housing that best meets our provincial priorities and local needs.

From Minister Docherty, in P.E.I.:

We will have the flexibility to design and deliver a range of affordable housing programs to address the housing needs and priorities in our province.

Let me pause there because these are important points. Note the language that is being used by these ministers of housing in a variety of provinces across the country, “needs and priorities of our province”, “flexibility”, “partnerships between all levels of government, communities and the private sector”.

This not just a coincidence. This is a specific design of the investments that we are making because we respect provincial jurisdiction. Ultimately, it is the provinces that hold the responsibility for delivering housing according to their local needs and priorities.

• (1555)

We provide substantial funds, and we renewed our investment for affordable housing of \$1.25 billion. On top of that, in previous budgets, we invested \$2 billion for new housing and to renovate existing social housing.

To get back to the investment in affordable housing, we allow the provinces to make decisions on how they want to spend that money. We do not dictate where the money goes.

On this whole idea of a national housing strategy, would that not just be great to have more people sitting around desks in Ottawa telling the provinces, municipalities, and towns how to address their housing needs? I can tell members that in Winkler, Manitoba, we do not want Ottawa telling us how to spend housing dollars. The Liberals and NDP can talk national strategy on everything. We actually get to work. We actually work with the provinces to deliver results.

There are parameters within this program, and the provinces must operate within them. However, it is actually a very broad program because we want the provinces to have the ability they need.

For example, when social housing agreements come to an end, these mortgages are paid off. If the provinces decide that some of these housing programs need additional funding, they can use the funding from the investment in affordable housing program to continue subsidies or provide other subsidies.

In fact, when I did the signing in British Columbia, I toured a social housing project that was doing very well and had great management. However, when its agreement came to an end, the management said that some of the subsidies would end. At that point, they were not aware of British Columbia's program to provide rent subsidies, and so they were very pleased to hear that we had just signed the renewal for the agreement.

British Columbia has a rent subsidy program. When this particular social housing unit's agreement comes to end, which is very soon, it can go to the province and use some of that funding. I think there were about six units that would need assistance.

This is the way we are working, and it is working very well. Social housing units are becoming more and more aware of the programs that are available.

Alberta is choosing to use the funding we are providing to renovate, retrofit, and build new seniors housing. That is something they believe is a priority. Again, we respect that.

In P.E.I., the intention is to make homes safer and more energy efficient.

My point is that every province is different. We recognize that, so we have provided substantial funding and historic investments, but we are giving the provinces the ability to do what is within their jurisdiction.

Again, it is disappointing that the NDP does not seem to really want to hear that or acknowledge the investment. I do not understand why those members vote against it. It is one thing to ask for more, but why would one vote against something that is presented, whether it is investment in affordable housing or our homelessness partnering strategy that we renewed with a focus on Housing First? The NDP members could stand up and say that is fine and they want even more, but why would they basically throw out something that is so positive just to make a political point? It is disappointing.

While I am on the topic of the homelessness partnering strategy, I am particularly happy with what we have done with the Mental Health Commission of Canada. It did a very extensive study, pilot project, the largest in the world, on Housing First; what it does and what it can accomplish. We renewed our agreements, our homelessness partnering strategy, with a focus on Housing First.

Housing First puts those who are chronically and episodically homeless into a house, first and foremost, so they have a safe, stable home to live in. They can then receive help, whether it is for drug addiction or mental illness. We know that so many people who are homeless struggle with those issues, and Housing First is an evidence-based method for helping those people. The evidence shows that, after two, three, or five years, 73% of them are still housed.

Therefore, it is very disappointing that when we have something that is non-partisan, a method that works and we renewed the funding, again the opposition votes against it.

*Business of Supply*

We are not going to get distracted. We remain focused on housing, while the opposition is kind of all over the board in terms of what the issue of the day is. We do not have issues of the day. We remain committed to helping the provinces provide affordable housing for the people in their jurisdiction.

●(1600)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the Minister of State for Social Development.

I have two things to say. One, on the issue that we did not ask her questions at committee, we would welcome her return to the committee so we can do that. It is not a problem for us to schedule committee meetings so she can come back. I understand that the questions centred on temporary foreign workers. When we only have 12 minutes to ask questions and the temporary foreign worker program is such an enormous and timely problem, it is difficult to ask all the questions we would love to ask the minister. If she came back it would be wonderful.

The second point is on the \$1.7 billion or the \$2 billion they are spending currently on housing in some manner, some of which is inherited money from the existing programs or existing mortgage subsidies, as she calls them, although that is not what they really are. When Bill C-400 was presented, the Conservatives suggested that the size of the problem was \$6.2 billion. If they are spending \$2 billion and the size of the problem is in addition to that, so that the total problem is \$8 billion, where would that \$6.2 billion come from? Where is the Conservative strategy? Why are the Conservatives suggesting that this little drop in the bucket is enough?

**Hon. Candice Bergen:** Mr. Speaker, respectfully, I will just let my colleague know that again, if housing were the priority, he and his colleagues would have been at that committee meeting. It does not really work that way, that a committee invites a minister, does not ask any questions, and then tries to get her back later. It will not work that way.

We have looked at the issue of affordable housing and we want to address it, working together with our partners in a multi-pronged way. When it comes to the social housing agreements that have been coming to an end, these are agreements that actually started in the thirties and forties and it was the Liberals who made the decision to end the agreements in the mid-nineties.

It is nothing new. I met with the big city mayors. We talked about this. We talked about the number that is out there. There could be about 200,000 units that are possibly at risk. I have asked them, and a couple have responded, to look in their cities and see which ones are at risk and then work together with the provinces to address those risk needs.

That is why, as I said in my speech, we have provided money to the provinces with the ability to use it for social housing agreements that are coming to an end.

Again, between the \$2 billion in previous budgets and more investments, we are helping a lot of people and getting good results for taxpayers' dollars. The federal government and the taxpayers are doing their part to help with affordable housing.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to pick up on the whole issue of housing co-ops, for which I am a very strong advocate. This is an area in which ultimately we collectively, working with the provinces and non-profits, can do a lot more to expand the role of housing co-ops into the future.

My question for the minister is this. Can she provide us with some sense of the programs she would say we have today or into the future that would help build upon the number of housing co-op units we have today in Canada?

**Hon. Candice Bergen:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that there are some really good things coming out of housing co-ops. In fact, I met with some organizations recently that represent co-ops.

There are 600,000 housing units that we talked about, and co-ops are a part of that number. They are doing some great work. We announced recently that they are allowed to keep the surplus. With the subsidies, many of them have been accumulating surpluses that they previously had to give back. We told them they could keep them, and that has been very beneficial to them.

We really look forward to continuing to work with them. We have a strong and very positive relationship. We do see the good work they are doing, and I appreciate my colleague's support on that.

●(1605)

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the motion brought forward by the hon. member for York South—Weston.

I would like to echo the sentiments shared earlier by the Minister of State for Social Development. Our government has, indeed, made unprecedented investments in affordable housing for all Canadians. We understand that some households will face financial constraints that will impede their participation in the housing market. This is why we are continuing to work with the provinces, territories, and industry stakeholders to ensure the accessibility of housing for those who are most in need.

I want to join my colleagues in urging the members opposite to acknowledge the important work that has been done by this government to improve access to affordable housing across Canada. Since 2006, our government has invested more than \$16.5 billion in housing. I will repeat that. It has invested more than \$16.5 billion. These investments have made a difference in the lives of close to 915,000 Canadian individuals and families: everyone from low-income households and seniors to persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, aboriginal people, and victims of domestic violence. In my role as chair of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, I know perfectly well that our approach is working in a balanced and sound way.

*Business of Supply*

I would reflect on some of the comments made through questions and in debate in the House here today that sometimes the solution is simply looked upon, and the idea being put before the House that this is a crisis is somewhat misleading. There are a lot of individuals in this industry, both in the private and social sectors, providing good quality housing for Canadians in need. They need to be looked upon as being champions and advocates for new models that will give the best bang for the buck in terms of what governments do spend.

I would like to take the time to outline a few of the initiatives that form our government's approach. For housing groups that need assistance, our government is providing significant funding under the investment in affordable housing. Funding is provided through provinces and territories that have the flexibility to use federal funding to design and deliver programs that meet local needs and priorities, including rent supplement programs that can be made available to housing providers once their existing operating agreements mature. This is the flexibility that industry advocates have asked for, advocates such as co-ops, social housing, and municipalities.

Our government's initial commitment under the IAH was \$716 million over three years, funding that assisted more than 183,000 households. As the member knows, because New Democrats voted against it, economic action plan 2013 renewed the IAH agreements with \$1.25 billion in funding over five years. The funding is being implemented through amendments to existing agreements with provinces and territories. Four such agreements have been signed to date, with Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. As the minister mentioned, we expect agreements with the remaining provinces and territories to be concluded shortly.

Investment in affordable housing is a great example of how our government is working with provinces and territories to fund innovative housing solutions that meet local needs and priorities. We have been told over and over by the groups we have met with that there is no one size that fits all. This has to be determined at the grassroots, on the ground, at the level where we build projects and where projects are needed.

We believe that provinces and territories are in the best position to design and deliver programs that address specific housing needs, meet the priorities in their jurisdictions, and give them the flexibility to do so. It is also important to note that federal funding provided through investment in affordable housing is cost matched by the provinces and territories, so that the total investments by governments will remain significant. I still cannot understand why the NDP would vote against long-term stable funding for affordable housing, especially because we know that investment would go a long way toward improving access to affordable housing in communities across Canada.

• (1610)

We have also introduced another important change to specifically support social housing providers in 2013.

Social housing providers whose operating agreements allow for the establishment of a subsidy surplus fund can now retain any money they have in this fund to use after their operating agreements mature. Many of these funds have been established because of interest rates going down, so they have had excess funds. They have

been good, prudent managers of their social housing stock and they have used and managed that money correctly.

On the flip side, for some groups we have met with, it is the opposite. Some have not, so in some cases the mortgage money that we set out in original agreements has not gone for its intended purposes.

These funds can be used to continue to lower the cost of housing for low-income households living in existing social housing. This represents a common sense approach that will give some social housing projects greater flexibility when operating agreements mature.

This change was warmly welcomed by housing providers, including the 900 members of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. CHF Canada's executive director, Nicholas Gazzard, said at the time:

This additional flexibility allows co-ops to use federal funds to provide rent-gear-to-income assistance for vulnerable low-income households, even after their funding agreements have expired.

This is why I am particularly proud of our action plan 2013, through which the government renewed our investment in affordable housing agreements and our homeless partnering strategy with a focus on Housing First. In fact, the NDP voted against \$600 million in funding over five years to renew the program. This funding will go a long way to help combat homelessness in our country, and the new focus on Housing First has been lauded from all sectors.

The Housing First focus builds on the outcomes of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home/Chez Soi research demonstration project, which was funded by the federal government at \$110 million over five years and established in five cities: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Moncton.

The project, the largest of its kind, ended in March 2013 and demonstrates that the Housing First approach can be effectively implemented in Canadian cities to rapidly reduce homelessness while alleviating pressure on shelters and health and judicial services. The Housing First approach aims to move homeless people from the streets and short-term shelters into immediate and permanent housing while offering support for people with addictions and mental illness.

The project has demonstrated that the Housing First approach can result in significant savings through decreased use of costly resources such as paramedics and police services, particularly for those with high needs.

Over the course of the study, an average of 73% of participants in the Housing First group remained in stable housing, compared to 32% for the group receiving usual care.

*Business of Supply*

This study also showed that Housing First is a sound financial investment that can lead to significant cost savings. For those participants who were the highest users of emergency and social services, every \$10 invested led to an average savings to government of \$21.72. Overall, participants in the project were less likely to get in trouble with the law, and those who received both housing and supportive services showed more signs of recovery than those who did not. Housing First is an approach that works really well, and it is innovative.

Our government wants to equip and empower people so that hopefully they can find healing and recovery, and then skills and employment as they become fully participating members of society. Our goal is to ensure that hard-working taxpayers' dollars are used to produce sustainable results for affordable housing and for those who are homeless.

I urge all members to carefully consider our government's record when this House votes on this motion.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find it really interesting that the Conservatives are talking about how they are saving all this money and investing it in the proper way. If they are doing that, why are a few thousand aboriginal people still out of their homes in Winnipeg three years after a flood? It is costing \$1.5 million per month to provide food and shelter in hotel rooms for these people. Can members imagine having to be in a hotel room for three years?

The Minister of Health said that first nations communities are "...a priority for our Government, including timely, effective and efficient support in times of emergency". Here is an emergency: three years later they still do not have a home to live in. How is that possible? These are third world country conditions. Some of these people are living in fourth world country conditions. What are the Conservatives doing about it? Obviously their initiatives are not working.

• (1615)

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Mr. Speaker, the member's question relates to emergency situations and to our government providing the necessary shelter for people in emergency situations. It is a debate that is meant for another day on another issue. Frankly, when the NDP brings to this chamber a motion such as today's, we have to look at the models for provision of social housing across all spectrums, including for the long term and for individuals who are partially displaced.

We have provided resources for them to eventually get back to where we need them to be. In some first nations cases, we are looking at alternative solutions that would move them to new locations.

These are not simple fixes that we want to put in place for expediency, just because disasters happen and we have put temporary services in place.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to recognize that for many years all regions of Canada have had a very serious affordable housing issue.

People are looking for leadership on this file. A natural place to look is here in Ottawa, in expectation that Ottawa would work with the many different stakeholders to ensure that as much as possible is

being done, so that whether people live in Toronto or in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, or in Halifax on the Atlantic Coast, there would be programs that would enable people to have a place to live. A place to live includes everything from renovation programs to home-building programs to initiatives such as co-ops, which I referred to.

The question I have for the member is this: to what degree does the member believe that Ottawa is responsible for demonstrating leadership from coast to coast to coast on a housing strategy?

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Mr. Speaker, we have shown leadership, as my speech articulated, particularly in the area of Housing First.

Let me answer the question in this fashion. I have had the great privilege of conducting many meetings of the Conservative construction and housing caucus. We have brought co-op housing provider organizations, social housing provider organizations, and private housing providers from across the country together in a forum to express their views. The leadership champions are in each of these industries. When we speak with them, we learn very quickly that many of them have new and innovative ways to deliver social housing at lower costs to the government.

We need to empower and learn from these people, and we need to be able to take their ideas. They are on the ground. We should not be sitting behind a desk in Ottawa saying what the solution is for them. They have very creative solutions that they bring to the table. Many of them understand that we pay—not in all cases, but in many—far too much per door for social housing in this country.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Fisheries and Oceans.

[English]

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak on an important issue that matters to all of us in the House. I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Markham—Unionville, as well.

Now that the weather is nice and all of us are getting out, I have to tell members that this past weekend, when I was out in my riding, I had the opportunity to pass through the area around Saint Augustine's church, an important part of the riding. I also passed 35 Shoreham Drive, 711 Arleta Avenue, and 415 Driftwood Avenue, all places that exhibit a tremendous sense of community and neighbourhood pride.

*Business of Supply*

These places are similar for more than just their community spirit. They are buildings owned and managed by Toronto Community Housing, and they are places in which residents are worried. The residents of these buildings are hard-working families who are struggling just to make ends meet. In fact, even with a portion of the rent subsidized, many of these residents are spending as much as 85% of their income on rent alone, leaving just pennies for food, clothing, transportation, medicine, and other essentials.

For many of the tenants living at 2350 Finch Avenue West or 2765 Islington Avenue, the dream of home ownership has crumbled at their feet under the weight of inescapable daily struggles just to survive a vicious and punishing cycle of poverty.

In the past, the concept of personal home ownership was a near guarantee. All that one needed to do was work hard for a decent wage, and the rest was possible. Sadly, for many low-income families in my riding and across Canada, including working families, that promise is now a faint remembrance of a distant dream.

In 1980, the average cost of a detached home was roughly \$100,000. The average Canadian made about \$41,000 a year, which meant that there was room for a mortgage, transportation, groceries, and the other essentials that come out of a paycheque. Today, the average detached home costs more than double what it did just 30 years ago. In Toronto, the average home price now hovers around \$1 million. Despite the spike in costs, the average Canadian still makes about \$41,000 a year.

I would also like to point out that many working families in my riding make than far less than \$41,000, which only intensifies the problems that they face when it comes to housing. Some are forced, as I said, to pay 85% of their income in rent. Clearly this is not a tenable position, and the fact that the Conservative government is intentionally allowing more and more housing co-operatives' operating agreements to expire is only making issues worse. The government's decision to scale back funding to social housing is reckless and it is, in effect, leaving low-income families out on the street.

Families living in these units know that there is a housing crisis, and they need to understand why. Of course, we know that the housing crisis has hit because the NDP clearly torpedoed both the Liberals' national housing strategy and the current premier's provincial housing program. Worse yet, Tim Hudak is mimicking the inaction of his federal cousins with his pink slip promise. That really unnerves an awful lot of people in my riding.

Put another way, the Conservatives have done nothing to lower or manage housing costs, and they are doing less than nothing to help fix the income situations that our middle-class families face. For example, rather than work to create jobs, Tim Hudak has promised to fire 100,000 Ontario workers. I call it his pink slip promise, and it pulls back the veil on the Conservative ideology when it comes to social programming of all sorts.

The NDP, despite tough-sounding talk, torpedoed both the Liberals' national housing strategy and Kathleen Wynne's housing program in the most recent Ontario budget. Of course, the NDP also voted against a new pension plan for low-income workers as well. It seems that three million working Ontarians who do not have an

employer-sponsored pension just had the rug pulled out from under them by an NDP lusting for power.

It is interesting to note that this is the same group that was punished when the NDP smashed the federal daycare and early learning strategy. It seems that there is a trend developing there.

When Andrea, Tim, and their federal counterparts fiddle, middle-class Canadian families feel the burn.

• (1620)

Canadians need a means to ensure their own future, and it is our duty to help give them that means. This does not mean handouts, but it does mean ensuring that the systems and structures necessary are in place to again help make the dream, pride and freedom of home ownership a reality.

The government needs to ensure that hard-working Canadians will be building their own futures and not that of the person who is holding the purse strings.

For my part, yesterday I met with representatives of the Canadian and Toronto real estate boards, as many members in the House have done. We talked about the fact that given more Canadians are now renting properties, the disproportionate costs of housing has created a trap, forcing Canadians into a cycle of working hard for weeks just to scrape by.

We talked about programs such as the home buyers plan, how it was positive but limited to those who had the resources to put into vehicles such as RRSPs. We also talked about the need for innovative programs such as rent to own and government-regulated reverse mortgages that might allow people to both secure and remain in adequate housing.

There was a clear consensus that many working families became trapped in a cycle of high rent payments and were unable to set aside the funds needed for a down payment on a home of their own. This limits their options and prevents them from building equity in their home, from leveraging assets for debt reduction, and from experiencing the pride of ownership.

All in all, without some kind of a national housing strategy, or better yet a national housing action plan, my constituents living in the San Romanoway community or in the Yorkwoods Village will not have the opportunities they truly deserve and desire.

Knowing all of this, it seems almost inconceivable that the government will sit idle and allow billions of dollars of funding for social housing to simply dry up.

I am glad to see that the NDP have come back to the table that it once abandoned in favour of the Liberals' stand in support of social housing and opportunities for personal home ownership, but I would like to see the government do more. I would like to see the Prime Minister launch a national housing strategy for the low income seniors, students and families who worry about having a roof over their head.

Allow me to recap and sum up before my time is done.

*Business of Supply*

First, as of last year, rent in Toronto for all types of housing was the highest of anywhere in Ontario.

Second, home prices in all regions continue to rise faster than income has over the past 30 years.

Third, while the city of Toronto is the largest landlord in North America, it cannot act alone to improve housing conditions because it cannot put the leverage of the equity of its housing units toward repairs.

Fourth, the biggest problem for many Canadians is the down payment for their home.

What does all this mean? It means that many hard-working constituents in my riding and in ridings all across Canada, in every part of it, have come to accept that home ownership is becoming nothing more than a dream.

As parliamentarians living and working in one of our planet's wealthiest nations, we need to redouble our efforts to overcome the problems associated with social housing.

Is the government prepared to commit to renewing the rent-g geared-to-income housing model so that we provide real security and avoid making the housing crisis worse? Is the government prepared to renew the partnership with the Co-operative Housing Federation?

We must remember that we are not on the brink of a housing crisis, rather we are in a housing crisis.

We must also remember that social housing solutions may lead to solutions to other problems on the national agenda. We need student housing to reduce student debt. Supportive housing will reduce health care costs. New and adequate housing for rural, aboriginal and first nation communities is a way to honour our existing commitments.

Public housing is more than just a place to live. Public housing programs should provide opportunities to residents and their families.

As a Liberal, I am pleased to support this motion today. I hope it will provide the impetus needed to put affordable housing solutions back on track for a national action plan.

• (1625)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find it rich that the member is coming to us about what is going on in Ontario when \$1.2 billion was spent to cancel a gas plant to solve a problem the Liberals had regaining three seats. That \$1.2 billion would have gone a long way to help the impoverished folks in York West have access to adequate affordable housing. That money is just gone. It is gone to some construction company.

Ontario, under Liberal rule, has the single largest debt of any sub-national government in the world. It is the worst of any place in the world.

My question really is twofold. First, how can we stand here and listen to the Liberals proclaim that they are in favour of housing when they killed the housing program in the nineties? Second, will the member support my motion?

• (1630)

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the Liberals will support the motion because we recognize the issue of housing and how important it is.

However, I would like to remind my colleague, because this happened prior and is part of the reason he is in the House today, we had a national housing strategy. I was in cabinet at the time. We put a lot of time and effort into developing a national housing strategy and getting the provinces to sign it. We also had a national child care strategy that was signed by our provinces.

All we needed was three more months in order for that to be enacted with the budget. Why do we not have a national child care strategy or national housing strategy? It was because Jack Layton was impatient, connected with the Conservatives and defeated our budget, which had both things in it. That is why we do not have it.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if I can stop laughing long enough to get my question in, the Liberals needed three more months to implement a lot of things, including the Kyoto accord, under which their greenhouse gas emissions rose by 30% when they were actually trying to get them down.

All through her speech, my colleague referred to things like “drying up”, as if our government has not funded housing. She is totally ignoring the \$1.7 billion annually that we give through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; the \$1 billion in 2012 to CMHC's direct lending initiative; the \$1.9 billion for housing homeless, including the investment in affordable housing; and \$303 million annually to support first nations housing on reserves. Then, this year in our budget, we renewed the homeless partnering strategy.

My colleague will be aware that over the last number of years I have tried to address issues surrounding mental health. The homeless partnering strategy, with the Housing First initiative, is critical to helping people facing mental health challenges. Would my colleague explain to the House why she and her party would vote against an initiative that would give people with mental health challenges the tools to get out of their cycle of despair and get on with their lives? Why would she and her party vote against an initiative like that?

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, many initiatives like that were started as a result of the Liberals. I support the government continuing on with those programs.

One of the issues we clearly know when we deal with the mental health issues is, yes, there needs to be a roof over people's heads. Every Canadian should have a roof over his or her head. However, when we are dealing in particular with mental health issues, yes, I support the program. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have put one good program in with about 20 other things that are the poison pill. Therefore, to support one, we have to support the whole package, which is impossible to support.

*Business of Supply*

There are a lot of innovative programs out there with options for homes, like Humanity First, and a lot of good ideas that need to be supported by the government, the next Liberal government and back and forth, so we ensure we meet the needs of housing requirements for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the NDP's motion.

[*English*]

It brings to my mind the two individuals who I have met who are the most committed to social, affordable housing. Those people are Claudette Bradshaw and Adam Vaughan. For reasons I will explain, the two are linked.

Claudette Bradshaw was the driving force for affordable housing in two Liberal governments. She had her SCPI program. She pushed and pushed to make it happen. It did happen. It had results until the NDP brought it down in 2005.

Now we have the new Claudette Bradshaw on the horizon, and I speak of Adam Vaughan, the Liberal candidate for Trinity—Spadina. Adam Vaughan is such an enthusiast for housing that he called me before he was even a candidate and lectured me, or educated me on the importance of housing. Last night I spoke to him, so I am able to impart to the House the wisdom of Adam Vaughan on the subject of housing.

I believe Adam Vaughan will be the new Claudette Bradshaw because I have every confidence that in the not too distant future, he will be pushing a new Liberal government, as an elected member, to do for housing what Claudette Bradshaw pushed an old Liberal government to do. With the force, the character and the argumentative skills of Adam Vaughan, I am convinced the Liberal Party and the Liberal government will carry this through.

I will quote what Adam Vaughan told me last night, "The NDP is more interested in building its party in the House than in building houses for people in need. That's their record". That is a powerful statement. The NDP would prefer to build people in the House and its party than build houses for people in need. Adam Vaughan does not just say that out of the air; he has two very strong pieces of evidence.

The first piece of evidence is, as we all know, in 2005 when the Liberal government of Paul Martin produced a budget which had \$480 million extra for housing, the NDP brought it down. Instead of getting \$480 million for housing and so many billion dollars for affordable child care, we have had almost 10 years of the current Prime Minister, thanks to the NDP.

This is Adam Vaughan's second point, and it shows he has his finger on the pulse of Ontario that he would bring this to our attention.

More recently, the NDP members did it again. They brought down the Wynne government, including that budget. What was part of that budget? Money for housing, \$80 million. They brought down the Martin government at a cost of \$480 million for housing and they brought down the Wynne government at a cost of \$80 million for housing. They bequeathed to Canada almost 10 years of the current

Prime Minister, and I hope this will not be the case, but the consequence of their action could be that they bequeathed to Ontario some years of Mr. Hudak. I thank the NDP.

I would go so far as to say that the NDP record on housing is even worse than the Conservative record on housing. The Conservatives do not like affordable housing; they hate it. Just read their 2006 fiscal imbalance document. At least they put a few dollars into housing.

The NDP members have put nothing into housing because they have never been a government. They have produced a silly private member's bill and because it is a private member's bill, it spends no money either. On the positive side of the ledger for the NDP on housing it is zero. On the negative side of the ledger, it is minus \$480 million at the federal level and \$80 million more at the provincial level. Therefore, on the plus side they have zero and on the minus side they have a minus \$560 million contribution to housing.

● (1635)

The Conservative record is pathetic but I would rather go for a few Conservative dollars than the NDP's minus \$560 million for affordable housing.

Let me continue with a bit more on the wisdom of Adam Vaughan because he is truly passionate on this subject. I am convinced that the citizens of Trinity—Spadina would prefer a Liberal candidate who is passionate on housing rather than turn to the NDP, whose record is minus \$560 million on housing.

He says that the "NDP is more interested in building its party in the House than in building houses for people in need. That's their record". I repeat his comment because it is so wise. He also said that smart investments in housing reap major benefits in other areas. It is not just about helping the homeless as the NDP seems to believe, there are other benefits. He then gives three examples. This is straight out of the mouth of Adam Vaughan during my conversation last night.

First, he said that housing constructed near hospitals for nurses is a positive thing because it saves on traffic gridlock, which costs a lot of money and frustration, and it also strengthens the health care system. There are spillover benefits and Adam Vaughan has drawn them to the attention of the NDP and to all members of the House.

The second thing he said is that housing constructed for people with mental health problems and other substance abuse problems will be good for those people, but in addition it will save the government money that it would otherwise have to spend on health care and even social assistance, because if you put a roof over somebody's head you equip that person much better to deal with the future, even if that person has some mental challenges.

The third example he gives is that housing built for students on or near university campuses results in lower student debt, a healthier graduating student population but in addition it leaves a legacy of houses for future generations of students. It's not just a one-time thing. The houses don't get built one year and then disappear the next. They are there for many years to come to support future generations of students, to strengthen the middle class, and to strengthen equality of opportunity in building up our post-secondary education system.

*Business of Supply*

I would recommend to the NDP, and more particularly I would recommend to the citizens of Trinity—Spadina, these wise words from our candidate Adam Vaughan, who not only sees through the negativity of the NDP historically on this record since 2005, but also has strong, sensible, vigorous ideas of his own. We can be sure that once he is a member of the Liberal caucus, housing will be even more on our agenda going forward than it is today.

Adam Vaughan would agree with us and even with the NDP that this business where the government lets these long-term mortgages run out and does nothing to support renters in need or support the co-op industry, is really a recipe for disaster, a recipe for many people becoming homeless. The Conservatives are totally responsible for that. We would urge them to change that misguided policy. It is for that reason that, perhaps principally, we in the Liberal Party will support today's motion by the New Democrats.

●(1640)

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** I am lost for words, Mr. Speaker. One thousand comedians out of work and we have to listen to that. I cannot believe it.

The member talked about negatives and positives. The NDP did a positive thing, which became a negative for the Liberals. We gave them Bob Rae. Good Lord, what a gift. The gift that keeps on giving.

The member talked about Adam whoever, but he failed to mention that Joe Cressy is a long-time advocate for housing in Trinity—Spadina. He is going to represent the NDP in the House, not Adam whoever.

I do not know what to ask the member. That was the funniest speech I have ever heard. Actually, it was the second funniest because the one previous was funny too.

Could the member tell us what role the federal government should play in housing? I do not want him to tell me the Liberal role that his party played in the past, because that was a disaster. She admitted herself that the Liberals needed three more months to do something right. That was because in 12 years they were never able to do anything right.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comment and the fact that he said it was such a funny speech I will take as a compliment. I thought I was quite amusing myself.

I know math has never been the New Democrats' strong suit and understanding the economy is not their strong suit. He seems to have trouble with the pluses and minuses, so I will have to explain it to him again. It is zero on the positive side federally because New Democrats have never been the government and private members' bills cannot spend money. It is minus \$560 million on the negative side because they brought down the Martin government and the Wynne government at a cost of \$560 million for housing.

On the Liberal side in Trinity—Spadina, the voters can choose between Adam Vaughan, a passionate advocate for housing who can help a future Liberal government really deliver in the future, or some NDP candidate who will campaign on minus \$560 million from his party for the housing sector. I think voters will be able to make up their minds.

●(1645)

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with my colleague from the NDP that there was a lot of humour in the speech by the member for Markham—Unionville.

Prior to being elected to this place, I spent at least a dozen years working in the Toronto area on housing-related issues and I think I know the file pretty well. I remember back in 2005, with the previous Liberal government, when the minister of housing at the time, who is now the mayor of the city of London, brought in an affordable housing agreement that was so restrictive, had so many clauses and other caveats in it, that the provinces and the City of Toronto of the day could not actually get access to the federal money to implement the program. The program was written so restrictively that nobody could use the money.

What did our government do? Our government said we should have maximum flexibility in our funding agreements with provinces and municipalities, make sure local needs are respected, and that way all of the money would flow through the provincial affordable housing agreements.

Can the member for Markham—Unionville tell the House why the last Liberal government really did not fund affordable housing in the city of Toronto?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that question is we did not fund affordable housing in the city of Toronto because the NDP defeated our budget and, therefore, deprived the city of Toronto of its share of the \$480 million.

However, in years prior to that, Liberals did fund it. I recall conversations with stakeholders, perhaps unlike the member's counterparts, who were very pleased with the program and were very pleased that it had made an impact through the efforts of Claudette Bradshaw on both housing and homelessness. Liberals were certainly on a roll until the NDP stopped us in our tracks by bringing down that budget.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can return this debate to some serious footing. It has been punctuated by a Liberal stand-up routine and gratuitous political advertising this afternoon.

However, it is a very important issue and I am happy to rise today in support of the motion before us, calling upon us, as it does, to recognize a housing crunch of rising costs and growing waiting lists across this country owing to chronic underfunding of affordable housing.

I want to thank my colleagues, the member of Parliament for York South—Weston and the member for Hochelaga, for their work on this file and for bringing forward this motion for debate in the House today.



*Business of Supply*

I do not know of any better way to establish the importance of housing than with reference to its almost universal, and I would except the Liberals and Conservatives from this, of course, recognition of housing as a human right.

I do not know of any better way to stir our collective desire to address our shortcomings on this issue than with reference to a history in which we proved ourselves, as Canadians, capable of doing so much more than the current government and its predecessor Liberal government are and were prepared to do.

Canada had, up until a couple of decades ago, a very proud story to tell about housing. One way to start into this story is with reference to John Humphrey, something of a Canadian hero. John Humphrey was responsible for the first draft of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. In that declaration, one can find, at article 25, reference to housing. It reads, in part:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

That reference to housing finds its way three decades later into the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Article 11 recognizes:

...the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions...

and so on.

However, if we fast forward to 2009, we have a UN special rapporteur lamenting our more recent history. He says this about Canada:

There has been a significant erosion of housing rights over the past two decades. Canada's successful social housing programme, which created more than half a million homes starting in 1973, has been discontinued.

Here is the more recent and inglorious history that he is referring to in this quote. The last budget of the Mulroney Conservatives eliminated all federal funding for new social housing and froze spending on existing social housing. It was a move that cut housing investment by \$660 million over four years.

The Liberal Party campaigned on a promise to reverse those cuts. Of course, it never did. In fact, only two years later, it slashed a further \$128 million from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's budget, most of which was, at the time, allocated to affordable housing programs.

A year after that, in its 1996 budget, the Liberals walked away entirely from housing, downloading responsibility to provinces and territories. At the same, it is worth noting, they slashed transfers to those very same provinces and territories.

This is how Canada ends up with an ignominious distinction of being the only major industrialized country to not have a national housing strategy.

Just last year, the current Conservative government announced that it would not be renewing the long-term operating agreements that began in the 1970s that the UN rapporteur hailed in his 2009

report. Those agreements provide about \$1.7 billion worth of housing subsidies to over 600,000 households in Canada. As that \$1.7 billion dries up, mainly, over the next few years, it is anticipated that as many as 200,000 housing units will be lost due to the loss of operating funds or insufficient capital for much-needed renovations.

• (1650)

Now this may be considered a radical notion to both Liberals and Conservatives in this chamber, but there are simply circumstances in which markets do not work, when they simply do not emerge to meet demand, and so it is in housing.

According to the national household survey, about one-third of households in Toronto spend more than 30% of their income on housing. That is, by the standard definition of affordability, they cannot afford to live in their own homes. Taking into consideration just renters, that number rises dramatically. About 45% of renters in Toronto cannot afford their own homes.

While this definition of affordability is a very useful standard to use, it is important to note that nothing magic happens at that threshold. As pointed out in a very recent study, in March 2014, by Paradis, Wilson, and Logan at the Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, there is a continuum of inadequate housing, risk of homelessness, and visible homelessness among families living in Toronto's high-rise buildings. Housing is precarious for low-income families in Toronto's high-rises, and it is easy enough to slide up, but mainly down, that continuum. According to the study:

...inadequate housing and the risk of homelessness are almost universal among families with children living in high-rise rental apartments.... Almost 90% are facing major housing problems that may place them at risk of homelessness.... One family in three is facing severe or critical risk of homelessness.

Part of the problem is that there has been virtually no growth in new purpose-built rental housing in Toronto since 2006, according to "Toronto's Vital Signs Report 2013", with just 1,800 units across the entire GTA and only 810 in the city of Toronto itself, this in a city that welcomes 100,000 new residents every year.

This is how we end up in Toronto with about 90,000 households on the waiting list for affordable housing. That unto itself is equivalent to the population of a large Canadian city, about the same size as Saskatoon or Regina. With fewer than 4,000 households from that list being housed every year, that list has grown. With only 650 new units of affordable housing presently under construction in Toronto, we have today what is quite rightly called in the motion a housing crisis.

*Business of Supply*

I frame this issue, with reference to Canadian John Humphrey and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as a matter of human rights. Health, happiness, security, and the opportunity for everyone to realize their potential through education all turn on housing—safe, healthy, affordable housing. This is a truth we have turned away from as a country through successive federal governments over two decades, but it is a truth that exists nonetheless.

I will take the last couple of minutes of my time to talk about the economics of housing.

This motion stands on more than just an ethical footing; it is good economics, too. To understand that, we need look no further than the Conservatives' own budget documentation, and I refer specifically to the data produced by the Department of Finance in support of the government's own economic action plan.

That data points to the very efficient stimulus or multiplier effect of housing investment, showing that for every dollar invested in housing measures, \$1.50 of economic activity is created. Interestingly, that compares very favourably to the stimulus measures the current Conservative government prefers. Personal income tax measures have a multiplier of just a dollar over the same timeframe, while business tax measures work very poorly, adding just 30¢ to the economy for every public dollar expended or foregone.

I will finish with a salute to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the work it has been doing to bring this housing crisis into the public realm and to the attention of all Canadians. In its press release yesterday, it stated:

FCM supports the NDP's continued focus on fixing Canada's Housing Crunch.... The lack of adequate and affordable housing is one of the biggest issues facing Canadians across the country and is a threat to the social and economic growth of Canadian municipalities.

There is no finer an endorsement, and so I will close there.

● (1655)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset, it is going to be obvious that I do not agree with much of what the member said. As opposed to going down that vein, I just want to ask for his comments and thoughts on what we heard from the Liberal Party on this.

The Liberal Party mentioned their candidate in Trinity—Spadina, someone who was extraordinarily critical, when he was a reporter, of the billions of dollars in health and social transfer cuts the Liberals unilaterally made. He was very critical of that. The Liberal candidate in Trinity—Spadina was also very critical of the Liberal government in Ontario, which cut gas plants and wasted billions of dollars on gas plants and all kinds of other things, to the detriment of all kinds of other social programs.

Moreover I want to touch on something the Liberal member talked about. The Liberals had three majority governments and one minority government. They were in power for 13 years and admit that they did absolutely nothing on this file.

Does the hon. member, despite the fact that we disagree, think Canadians can in any way trust the Liberals to actually live up to any commitments they make in this House? Does he believe, like I do,

that what they are saying, the words they say in this House, never match what they do?

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, I am not particularly interested in engaging in a discussion about what the Liberals want to do in this House today with our time, and that is to put up political advertising for their candidate in Trinity—Spadina.

I am more interested in why the member does not agree with anything I have said. I have laid out the economics. The economics are supported by the government's own budget documentation. There are some irrefutable facts before the House. Over the next decade, the need for purpose-built rental accommodation is going to exceed 50,000 units per year, and we have been averaging 15,000 to 20,000 units per year.

This is a crisis. I do not know exactly how the government can turn a blind eye to it.

The member is quite right to point out that the Liberal government killed the national housing program in the 1990s, but I think it is also true, and this member needs to face up to it, that they have been nailing closed the coffin on that housing program for the last eight years they have been in government as well.

● (1700)

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my question with a quote from *The Globe and Mail*, in the summer of 2001. The quote is:

"I'm quite encouraged", said FCM president Jack Layton. "Tomorrow's meeting is the most important meeting in the history of housing policy in Canada since the creation of the CMHC. And what we're seeing here is a welcoming of federal funding back into housing."

If Jack Layton was "quite encouraged" by these Liberal plans back in 2001, why does the hon. member say that these plans did not even exist?

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, as much respect as I have for Jack Layton, and I have enormous respect for Jack Layton, we all get fooled more than once in our lives.

He may have been encouraged, but I know Jack Layton, and Jack Layton was extremely disappointed in what the Liberals ended up doing in housing. In fact, it was Jack Layton who had to put an end, or tried to put an end, to Paul Martin's corporate tax giveaways, which I have already talked about having a very low economic stimulus, but that did not matter to the great austerity economist, Mr. Paul Martin, and extract money to put back into housing.

Part of Jack Layton's legacy in this country was \$1.6 billion going into affordable housing in this country, when the Liberals wanted to give all of that away to big corporations in Canada.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the issue of affordable housing, which is such a priority for the people of Toronto and my community of Parkdale—High Park. I want to thank my colleague from York South—Weston for putting forward this opposition day motion today on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

To remind people, for those who are watching, this motion states:

*Business of Supply*

That the House recognize that Canadians are faced with a housing crunch of rising costs and growing waiting lists due to chronic underfunding of affordable housing from 1993 to the present, and [therefore this House] call[s] on the government to work with the provinces, territories, municipalities, and with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, to immediately renew long-term social housing funding and reinvest in the development of affordable housing units.

We face a tremendous housing crunch in this country. I see it on the streets of Toronto every day. I see people whose wages do not allow them to pay the rents in the city of Toronto and people who have other challenges, such as disabilities and mental health challenges. The thing they need most is a roof over their heads. They need housing stability, and that is what is lacking in the city of Toronto and across this country.

A country as large and as cold as Canada ought to have a national policy on this so that we can ensure that everyone is housed and has a warm, safe place to stay. However, in fact, Canada is the only OECD country, the only major developed country, without a national housing strategy. In fact, it has been without a housing strategy since the early 1990s. Why? We used to have one. It was the Liberal government of the time that tabled a constitutional proposal calling for an end to its financial involvement in a number of areas of provincial jurisdiction, including housing.

It is pretty sad for a country as wealthy as Canada to abandon people that way. The Liberals also ended co-operative housing funding, a program that over its lifetime built nearly 60,000 homes for low- and moderate-income Canadians.

Let us look at the picture today. One in four Canadians spend more than 30% of their income on shelter; 380,000 Canadians live in severe housing need, spending more than 50% of their income on shelter. We are also in a situation where Canadians have record-high personal debt levels, where they owe \$1.64 for every dollar of disposable income, and where housing prices are skyrocketing, especially in our urban areas.

In the city of Toronto, when houses are for sale, we have multiple bids. Many families are driven out of the housing purchase market because they cannot afford these skyrocketing prices, but there are so few affordable housing options. In addition to that, we have about 200,000 social housing units that will be at risk of closing when the long-term federal funding for social housing expires. That will be a calamity for far too many Canadians.

More and more young people are living at home with their parents. It used to be, back in 1981, that about a quarter of young people between the ages of 20 and 29 lived with their parents. Today that number is up to 42% of young people between 20 and 29 living with their parents. I hear that from young people. I also hear that from their parents, who are so concerned about the next generation and what is going to happen to them.

It is an absolute disgrace that we do not have a national housing strategy and that we are not investing the money we have as a country into building the kind of housing we need.

I want to tell members a bit about my community in Toronto. In Toronto, we have over 167,000 people on the affordable housing wait-list, more than 90,000 households. There are more households on the waiting list for affordable housing than actually live in Toronto's community housing. That is how severe the problem is.

We have more people on housing wait-lists than live in some cities across Canada. We have whole cities of people looking for housing.

• (1705)

Let me tell the House about a family I met with who had come here as refugees from a war-torn country. They came here; they finally got accepted. They were living in a bachelor apartment. They were a family of four living in a bachelor apartment in Toronto housing. When I knocked on their door and talked with them, they were so thankful to be here in a safe country like Canada. However, the man I spoke to said that they really needed a better place to live, because they were four people in a bachelor apartment. Their kids were school-aged kids, and they did not have any privacy or a place to study. Surely, we can do better.

I spoke to a family a couple of weeks ago. They were in an apartment, paying \$800 a month. They were hoping to move to a two-bedroom apartment. They were in a one-bedroom apartment, but they were a family of five. The two-bedroom apartment was going for \$1,100. A month before they were given the new apartment, the ownership of the building changed, and guess what? The rent went from \$1,100 to \$2,000. It almost doubled. They are going to have to leave because they cannot stay in a one-bedroom apartment and they cannot afford \$2,000 a month.

These are the kinds of severe situations that people, certainly in my community of Toronto, are facing. The Liberals cancelled the national housing strategy, but frankly, the Conservatives have made it even worse by not investing in affordable housing and abandoning Canadian families. It is simply unacceptable.

Because no money is being spent on upgrading housing, we are seeing housing that could be available for people but is going vacant. There is a Toronto community house in my riding, on Maria Street, a three-bedroom house that has sat vacant for a year because there was not the money to do the repairs on the house. When we have 70,000 families on the waiting list, and we have places sitting vacant because there is not the money to make these houses inhabitable, that is also a disgrace.

There is so much we ought to be doing. For those who are concerned about costs, the cost of investing in housing, it is more cost effective to give people a roof over their heads and keep them healthy and well than it is to lock people up in jail. That is what happens when people cannot keep body and soul together and have a decent place to live in.

What we are calling for, as New Democrats, is a co-operative approach from the federal government to work with provinces, territories, municipalities, and first nations to address housing needs together, instead of abandoning everyone to their own resources. We are also calling for the federal government to abandon this take it or leave it attitude that it has had for so long. We need a commitment to work with the social housing sector. We need to renew these operating agreements and to provide one-time capital injections for renovations and to reinvest the savings from expired agreements that do not need to be renewed into developing new affordable housing units.

*Business of Supply*

We need to immediately invest in the development of new housing. This could be in the form of new investment from the federal government, low-cost loans from the CMHC, or tax credits for developers of affordable housing, such as those proposed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Many Canadian organizations support this, including the Chamber of Commerce, as I said, the FCM, the C.D. Howe Institute, and many mayors across the country. Everyone seems to agree with it except the Conservatives, and we hope we can change their minds with this debate.

People of Toronto rely on it. Canadians rely on it. Let us just do our jobs, do a better job for Canadians, and let us keep a roof over everybody's head.

• (1710)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is kind of unfortunate that we are here in this debate talking about housing, especially for vulnerable people.

In 2014, our Conservative government renewed the homeless partnering strategy, which primarily gave funds to the Housing First initiative. I would like to ask my colleague why she and her party voted against that initiative.

In 2013, there were some great initiatives on affordable housing. Budget 2013 committed \$1.25 billion to affordable housing. Budget 2013 also committed \$600 million in long-term funding to our homeless partnering strategy. However, my colleague and her party voted against all of these initiatives.

In addition to that, if she has time, and I am sure she will because her first answer will not take long, I wonder if she could outline to the House why her party would divert subsidy funds to subsidizing offices for partisan purposes, rather than committing to funding housing for people who are vulnerable?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, first, let me say I appreciate the insecurity of the party members opposite, but surely they do not want to waste time in such an important debate by exposing their partisan insecurities.

Let me get right to the issue at hand here. According to CMHC, the supply of affordable housing will decline in Canada by 21% between 2007 and 2017. That is unless we get elected in 2015 and we start fixing the problem. However, the current amount of federal funding today, in 2014, is lower than it was in 2007. Therefore, in spite of what we have just heard from the member opposite, clearly the facts speak of something different. Average Canadians are struggling to make ends meet, young families are squeezed, young people do not have a decent place to live, and we have far too many Canadians who face tremendous housing insecurity. I do not believe those Canadians think highly of the brush-off that the government is giving the serious issue of affordable housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Call in the members.

• (1755)

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

*(Division No. 140)*

## YEAS

## Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Charlton
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Grogulé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	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	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Plamondon	Quach
Rankin	Ravignat

Raynault  
Rousseau  
Sandhu  
Scott  
Sgro  
sor)  
Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
St-Denis  
Stoffer  
Thibeault  
Tremblay  
Turmel

Regan  
Saganash  
Scarpaleggia  
Sellah  
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor)  
Sitsabaiesan  
Stewart  
Sullivan  
Toone  
Trudeau  
Valeriote— 122

Vellacott  
Warawa  
Watson  
Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Williamson  
Woodworth  
Young (Oakville)  
Zimmer— 147

Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Wilks  
Wong  
Yelich  
Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### PROMOTION OF LOCAL FOODS ACT

The House resumed from May 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-539, An Act to promote local foods, 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-539.

● (1800)

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

(Division No. 141)

### YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)  
Angus  
Atamanenko  
Bélangier  
Benskin  
Blanchette  
Boivin  
Brahmi  
Brosseau  
Casey  
Chicoine  
Christopherson  
Comartin  
Cotler  
Cullen  
Davies (Vancouver East)  
Dion  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Dusseau  
Eyking  
Freeman  
Galipeau  
Genest  
Giguère  
Goodale  
Grogulé  
Harris (St. John's East)  
Hughes  
Jacob  
Julian  
Lamoureux  
Larose  
Laverdière  
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
Liu  
Mai  
Masse

Andrews  
Ashton  
Aubin  
Bennett  
Bevington  
Blanchette-Lamothe  
Boutin-Sweet  
Brisson  
Caron  
Charlton  
Choquette  
Cleary  
Côté  
Crowder  
Cuzner  
Dewar  
Dionne Labelle  
Doté Lefebvre  
Dubourg  
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
Easter  
Fortin  
Fry  
Garrison  
Genest-Jourdain  
Godin  
Gravelle  
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)  
Hsu  
Hyer  
Jones  
Kellway  
Lapointe  
Latendresse  
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)  
Leslie  
MacAulay  
Marston  
Mathysen

### NAYS

Members

Ablonczy  
Aglukkaq  
Albrecht  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambler  
Anders  
Armstrong  
Bateman  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Block  
Braid  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Cannan  
Carrie  
Chong  
Clement  
Daniel  
Dechert  
Dreeschen  
Dykstra  
Fantino  
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)  
Galipeau  
Gill  
Goguen  
Gosal  
Grewal  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hayes  
Hillyer  
Holder  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Komarnicki  
Lauzon  
Leef  
Lemieux  
Lizon  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Nicholson  
Norlock  
O'Connor  
O'Neill Gordon  
O'Toole  
Payne  
Preston  
Rathgeber  
Rempel  
Ritz  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Shory  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Strahl  
Toet  
Trottier  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren

Adler  
Albas  
Alexander  
Allison  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Aspin  
Benoit  
Bernier  
Blaney  
Boughen  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Brown (Barrie)  
Butt  
Calkins  
Carmichael  
Chisu  
Clarke  
Crockatt  
Davidson  
Devolin  
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
Falk  
Fast  
Fletcher  
Gallant  
Glover  
Goodyear  
Gourde  
Harper  
Hawn  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
James  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kerr  
Krampp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lebel  
Leitch  
Leung  
Lukiwski  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Maguire  
McColeman  
Menegakis  
Miller  
Obhrai  
Oliver  
Opitz  
Paradis  
Poilievre  
Rajotte  
Reid  
Richards  
Saxton  
Seeback  
Shipley  
Smith  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Sweet  
Trost  
Truppe  
Valcourt  
Van Loan

*Private Members' Business*

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
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Plamondon
Quach	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriotte — 123	

**NAYS**

## Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Fletcher
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
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)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz

Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Spuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Trost	Trotter
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
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 — 146

**PAIRED**

Nil

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

\* \* \*

● (1805)

[Translation]

**MEAT INSPECTION ACT**

The House resumed from May 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-571, An Act to amend the Meat Inspection Act and the Safe Food for Canadians Act (slaughter of equines for human consumption), 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-571 under private members' business.

● (1810)

[English]

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

(Division No. 142)

**YEAS**

## Members

Andrews	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Brahmi	Brisson
Charlton	Caron
Christopherson	Chicoine
Comartin	Cleary
Cotler	Côté
Cullen	Crowder
Davies (Vancouver East)	Cuzner
Dion	Dewar
Donnelly	Dionne Labelle
Dubé	Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dubourg
Dusseau	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Eyking	Easter
Garrison	Fry
Giguère	Genest-Jourdain
Goodale	Godin
Grogulé	Gravelle
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hughes	Hsu
Jacob	Hyer
Kellway	Jones
	Lamoureux

*Private Members' Business*

Larose  
Laverdière  
Leslie  
Mai  
Mathysen  
McCallum  
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)  
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)  
Mourani  
Nicholls  
Pacetti  
Péclet  
Rankin  
Ravignat  
Regan  
Saganash  
Scarpaleggia  
Seeback  
Sgro  
Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
St-Denis  
Stoffer  
Valeriote  
Sky Country)— 102

Latendresse  
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)  
MacAulay  
Masse  
May  
McGuinty  
Michaud  
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)  
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)  
Nash  
Nunez-Melo  
Papillon  
Quach  
Rathgeber  
Raynault  
Rousseau  
Sandhu  
Scott  
Sellah  
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor)  
Sitsabaesan  
Stewart  
Trudeau  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to

Obhrai  
Oliver  
Opitz  
Paradis  
Payne  
Poilievre  
Rajotte  
Rempel  
Ritz  
Schellenberger  
Shiple  
Smith  
Sorenson  
Strahl  
Toet  
Trottier  
Turmel  
Valcourt  
Van Loan  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (Saint John)  
Williamson  
Woodworth  
Young (Oakville)  
Zimmer— 155

O'Connor  
O'Neill Gordon  
O'Toole  
Patry  
Plamondon  
Preston  
Reid  
Richards  
Saxton  
Shea  
Shory  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Sweet  
Trost  
Truppe  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Vellacott  
Warawa  
Watson  
Wilks  
Wong  
Yelich  
Young (Vancouver South)

**NAYS**

Members

Ablonczy  
Aglukkaq  
Albrecht  
Allen (Welland)  
Allison  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Armstrong  
Bateman  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Block  
Boughen  
Braid  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Brown (Barrie)  
Butt  
Calkins  
Carmichael  
Chisu  
Clarke  
Crockett  
Davidson  
Devolin  
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
Fantino  
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)  
Fortin  
Galipeau  
Gill  
Goguen  
Gosal  
Grewal  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hayes  
Hillyer  
Holder  
Julian  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kerr  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lebel  
Leitch  
Leung  
Lizon  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
Marston  
McLeod  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Mulcair  
Nicholson

Adler  
Albas  
Alexander  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambler  
Anders  
Angus  
Aspin  
Benoit  
Bernier  
Blaney  
Boivin  
Boutin-Sweet  
Brosseau  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Cannan  
Carrie  
Chong  
Clement  
Daniel  
Dechert  
Dreeshen  
Falk  
Fast  
Fletcher  
Freeman  
Gallant  
Glover  
Goodyear  
Gourde  
Harper  
Hawn  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
James  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Komarnicki  
Lauzon  
Leef  
Lemieux  
Liu  
Lukiwski  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Maguire  
McColeman  
Menegakis  
Miller  
Norlock

**PAIRED**

Nil

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

\* \* \*

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to correct the *Hansard* record at the earliest opportunity. It has been brought to my attention that I made a reference in answering a question yesterday from the member for Toronto—Danforth when I was posing a question for him. The record reflects that I made a comment that in the last election the incumbent from the Yukon spent \$20,000 more than he had in the election before and that he had lost by 1,500 votes.

Mr. Speaker, I want the record to reflect that he did not lose by 1,500 votes. He lost 1,500 votes between the 2008 election and this election. I would like the record to accurately reflect that, and that there was no effort to mislead.

● (1815)

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the clarification on that.

\* \* \*

**PAN-CANADIAN PALLIATIVE AND END-OF-LIFE CARE STRATEGY**

The House resumed from April 1 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to speak today in favour of this important motion brought forward by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay to establish a very necessary pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy.

The motion speaks to a real and growing issue that will impact more and more of us as our population ages and as we approach a period when not only are Canadians living longer lives, but as baby boomers reach retirement age, more Canadians than ever will be in that top tier of older age.

*Private Members' Business*

No one wants to think about end-of-life considerations. We all want long, happy, and healthy lives for ourselves and for our loved ones. However, mothers and fathers and sons and daughters fall ill, often unexpectedly. The onslaught of a debilitating or even terminal illness will turn lives around, regardless of age, and bring about incredibly tough questions. It is emotional. There is no doubt about that.

There are a great number of us who have had this experience. We all have stories to share.

Mine is my father Mico, a vital and active man, a long-distance runner in his youth, an established businessman and leader, and one of the longest-serving aldermen in Guelph. It shook the foundation of my entire family when he developed Alzheimer's disease. The disease and the toll it took on him fundamentally changed not only his quality of life but also altered how my brothers, sisters, mother, and I related to him.

It is impossible to live through an ordeal like that and not consider any number of options. However, I can say that as terrible as the disease was, the whole experience drew us that much closer to him and our family that much closer together. I learned through experiencing it so intensely that the process of dying and everything associated with it can most often be a process as much for the benefit of the living as it is suffering for those dying.

In that time of need is found a time to serve those dying and a time to possibly attend to unresolved issues. It is a time that would otherwise be lost if we do not care compassionately for our elderly and ailing loved ones.

This might not be the same experience for everyone. We are a diverse country with an incredibly diverse populace. This is why I believe that not only must we work with the provinces to create an integrated and flexible framework but that such a collaborative model is the one way we can fully account for the geographic differences between provinces, between cities, and even between urban and rural divides, as well as our many cultures and communities, from Canada's first nations, Metis, and Inuit, to those most recently arrived, so that good palliative care does not depend on one's area code.

The Canadian Medical Association defines palliative care as:

...an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with a life-threatening illness. It involves the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, assessment and treatment of pain and other physical, psychosocial and spiritual symptoms.

I believe now, as I believed when I first began working with the member for Kitchener—Waterloo and the member for Windsor—Tecumseh as co-chairs of the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, that if people are given a reason to live, feel their lives are relevant and significant, truly do not feel that they are a burden on society or especially on their families, and are enabled to live pain-free, they just might be less inclined to turn to more desperate measures as a relief from the emotional, mental, or physical pain from which they suffer.

I call to mind a beautiful and comprehensive quote from esteemed Canadian Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, which accomplishes better than I might the importance of giving people who may be

suffering from a serious or terminal illness a reason to carry on. He says:

Each of us is fragile, with deep needs for both love and a sense of belonging. We begin and end our lives vulnerable and dependent, requiring others to care for us. ... In our states of dependence, our need cries out for attention and care. If this need is well received, it calls forth the powers of love in others, and creates unity around us, the gifts of the vulnerable to our world. If our cry and our need are unmet, we remain alone and in anguish. ... The danger in our culture of productivity and achievement is that we easily dismiss and ignore as unproductive the gifts and the beauty of our most vulnerable members, and we do so at our own peril, dehumanizing ourselves.

• (1820)

To accomplish this, to elevate those suffering from their solitude and anguish, we must create a framework whereby this can be addressed while also incorporating the possible cultural and regional differences that might be present.

Over the course of our study and in the creation of our non-partisan report, we travelled across Canada, and hundreds of informed Canadians travelled to Ottawa, where we heard from witnesses from coast to coast to coast who shared their stories and experiences with palliative care, elder abuse, and mental health to assist in drafting our report, appropriately entitled "Not to be Forgotten".

Among our conclusions after hearing from these diverse witnesses was precisely what this motion seeks to accomplish by creating a national palliative and end-of-life care strategy. It would be flexible and integrated for maximum impact on those living through end-of-life events and on the 80% of care provided by families who take up that important yet difficult responsibility.

Through collaboration, the various levels of government and health and well-being stakeholders can develop and implement a nationally recognized framework with standards of care that would improve the quality of life for patients reaching end of life, providing the necessary tools to manage pain and providing more dignity. These tools may come in the form of meaningful tax relief or employment insurance payments for those who leave work to care for their infirm loved ones or in the form of better home care provided by personal support workers, whose jobs are quickly becoming the jobs of the future, or in the form of a national standard for hospice care uniformly applied across Canada.

As the member for Timmins—James Bay highlighted in his speech on this motion, "...what we are seeing across the country is a real patchwork of services". This was one of many conclusions reached in our report. He went on to highlight the inconsistency of strategies or even provision of services in cities across Canada. This exemplifies why the strategy must be a national one and why we must start the ball rolling here. We can start here to coordinate with the other levels of government to facilitate collaboration in research and information and to dismantle the series of silos that normally operate in isolation across the country.



*Private Members' Business*

For instance, one such strategy is pain management. There has yet to be a comprehensive pain management treatment strategy upon which people can rely. It is currently a hit-or-miss experience with family doctors who are yet to be completely trained in the area of pain management.

We have a responsibility as a national leader and the chief communicator in raising awareness of the issues surrounding end-of-life and palliative care, particularly given the complexities brought forward by the mix of health, emotional, financial, and social pressures. These complexities and failing to deal with them properly, whether by offering help to caregivers or hope for the dying, lead to devastating consequences of their own, consequences I examined quite specifically throughout the committee's report. It became obvious that these pressures in today's society intersect and could lead to family breakdown and even elder abuse.

Beyond this primary leadership role, it is the federal government that sets the standards for universal high-quality care. The provinces are certainly responsible for delivery, but it is delivered best in conjunction with national benchmarks. This is an issue that does or will impact every Canadian at some point, so it is the Government of Canada that needs to step into the role.

My colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver Centre, pointed out in her remarks on this topic that tens of thousands of seniors die each year in Canada, and not all of them are able to get the kind of care they need as they approach end-of-life issues.

I applaud my colleague from Timmins—James Bay for bringing this motion to the floor of the House and for helping to continue the great work done by parliamentarians from all parties on palliative care.

This motion is not the end of the conversation. I think this is just the beginning. I hope that all of us here in the House can get behind that conversation and then bring it home to our ridings and genuinely create the framework necessary to put a national palliative care strategy together.

• (1825)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great honour to stand in this House, having been given the honour to represent the people of Timmins—James Bay who put their trust in me.

I want to thank my colleague from Guelph for his support for our motion, my motion, Motion No. 456, but also thank the New Democratic Party for its push to establish a national palliative care strategy.

This is an issue that transcends partisanship because it touches each one of us, and it touches us in our most personal and sacred space, which is the moment between life and death and the moment when a family deals with the loss of a loved one.

I would be remiss if I did not thank for their excellent work all the parliamentarians of all political parties in this House who have worked on the issue of palliative care.

Certainly, the language of the motion comes from the work of the all-party committee, with my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga,

my colleague from Guelph, and my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh.

My colleague from Guelph talks about the need for a conversation. I think this is what a motion is. A motion is a statement of principle and a statement of intent by the Parliament of Canada. It can be a very profound moment when parliamentarians are asked to say what it is that we need in order to move forward as a country. Certainly, we recognize, in this federal House, that the delivery of health services in this country is better served at the provincial level. We understand the jurisdictional divisions in the country, and they make sense because, as we move health care closer to the ground level, we can certainly see more proactive and better results.

However, in terms of palliative care, we are faced with a problem because there is a patchwork response right now. All too often, on the issue of palliative care, we see it is considered some form of charity or it is volunteer work, as opposed to an essential, fundamental principle, in terms of where we need that health care in the 21st century. Particularly as we deal with an aging population, as my colleague from Vancouver East has pointed out again and again, the future of health care will be moving more and more out of the hospitals and into the need to have an understanding of ongoing care to ensure that all Canadians have the quality of life they need, particularly when they are faced with a traumatic illness.

Therefore, the mission statement that we are asking for, as all parliamentarians here, is to say that in this House, this federal House, we have a role to play in talking about what palliative care should look like. It is not to dictate how it will be delivered, but we can play an essential role, a powerful role, as a federal government in saying there are models that work.

We see in various parts of the country that the delivery of palliative services is done in an integrated fashion, and where the services are integrated, families are able to receive the care and the support they want and need. However, where the services are not integrated, this money is still being spent. In fact, I would argue, and medical doctors would agree, that we are spending more money, yet people are still falling through the cracks.

The palliative solution is the common-sense solution staring politicians in the face. They just need to say at this time that we need a political will to talk about end-of-life care.

I would like to say that when we mention “palliative” to Canadians, they suddenly think, “Oh, God. Why are you talking about death?” It will do us good, I think, to look at some of the fundamental definitions, for example, used by the Canadian Medical Association.

When it talks about palliative care, the word “death” is not there. It is about life. It is:

...an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, assessment and treatment of pain and other symptoms, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

I would also point out the definition of “dying with dignity”, which has been a term that we see often in the media. The Canadian Medical Association says:

*Private Members' Business*

"Dying with dignity" indicates a death that occurs within the broad parameters set forth by the patient with respect to how they wish to be cared for.... It is NOT synonymous with euthanasia or physician assisted death.

• (1830)

This is a very powerful statement that the Canadian Medical Association has brought forward for us.

I would like to speak a little bit about the amendment that was brought forward by my colleague from Vancouver East, who has been so committed to the issue of ongoing care and has done much more work on the issue of palliative care than I have over the years. In her amending language to this, she would clarify:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should establish a Pan-Canadian Palliative and End-of-life Care Strategy by working with provinces and territories on a flexible, integrated model of palliative care that: (a) takes into account the geographic, regional, and cultural diversity of urban and rural Canada as well as Canada's First Nation, Inuit and Métis people; (b) respects the cultural, spiritual and familial needs of all Canadians; and (c) has the goal of (i) ensuring all Canadians have access to high quality home-based and hospice palliative end-of-life care, (ii) providing more support for caregivers, (iii) improving the quality and consistency of home and hospice palliative end-of-life care in Canada, (iv) encouraging Canadians to discuss and plan for end-of-life care.

Tonight, I would just like to focus for a second on the importance that we recognize in the House the cultural, spiritual, and familial needs of families. This is not just about the individual. The death of a loved one and the passage through to that other place is one of the defining moments in the life of a family. When there is palliative care and support, it can be a very transformative moment. When the support is not there, it can be a moment of crisis that families sometimes never recover from.

I would like to say that this motion, as I said at the beginning, is not about the partisanship in the House. This has been a very bitter and toxic Parliament, but we all need to say that we are going to put some of our own political agenda aside.

I know that some of my colleagues in the Conservative Party are made nervous by the word "strategy". The strategy is the language that came from the all-party committee, and I certainly believe that the notion of strategy is important. Some of our Conservative colleagues would prefer to use the word "framework". It does not matter to me if it is a strategy and/or framework. What matters is that we stand in this House and say that we will support this.

I would like to try to find a way that, tonight, we can make an agreement. I would like for us to find the language that makes everyone comfortable so that we will all stand in the House. No matter what happens with this motion, we have to show Canadians that we understand this.

The simplest way to do this is to ask for unanimous consent for the following motion: that, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the amendment to Motion No. 456 standing in the name of Ms. Davies of Vancouver East be deemed adopted, and that the main motion as amended be further amended by adding after the word "Strategy" the words "and/or Framework".

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The normal practice once the motion is moved, whether it is accepted or not, is that it ends the member's standing on the floor. We will now resume debate.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to be able to speak this evening to this very important topic and this motion put forward by the good member for Timmins—James Bay. This motion we have before us calls on the federal government to develop a nationwide palliative and end-of-life care framework or strategy, "framework" being what we Conservatives prefer. Either way, we do need to get this under way in our country, based on some very good recommendations from a committee of this House.

As mentioned before, in 2010 several members of Parliament formed that all-party Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, and in 2011 they published their report, "Not to be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians". Several of their excellent recommendations are embodied in this motion before us. As was mentioned, the Conservative member of Parliament for Kitchener—Conestoga co-chaired that committee, and Motion No. 456 benefits from the excellent work done by a number of other members from all parties in the House. Other Conservative members, as I note, included my colleague from Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar and the MP for Newmarket—Aurora.

I do want to thank the member opposite, the NDP MP for Timmins—James Bay, for bringing this motion forward. It is time for this discussion to be had in the country. In fact, it is just on the very front edge, thankfully we think, but not any too soon.

The committee's comprehensive report came out with 14 recommendations, including:

Developing and implementing a National Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy;

...the development of a flexible integrated model of palliative health care delivery, able to take into account the geographic, regional and cultural diversity of Canada;

...strengthen the home care delivery program for First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, developing home delivered palliative care resources, sensitive to community, cultural, familial and spiritual needs.

...expand the provisions of the E.I. based compassionate care benefit...

...set up a Canada Pension credit for family caregivers...

That is a pretty big package of things, actually. However, we are focused today on a framework, from a Conservative point of view, whereby we have the provinces and we have these various people co-operating, working together, and sharing what is already out there such that the public is better informed and better understands those resources.

We see various priorities reflected in Motion No. 456, calling for:

...working with the provinces and territories on a flexible, integrated model of palliative care that: (a) takes into account the geographic, regional, and cultural diversity of urban and rural Canada; (b) respects the cultural, spiritual and familial needs...

It has:

...the goal of (i) ensuring all Canadians have access to a high quality home-based and hospice palliative end-of-life care, (ii) providing more support for caregivers, (iii) improving the quality and consistency of home and hospice palliative end-of-life care in Canada; (iv) encouraging Canadians to discuss and plan for end-of-life care.

I had the privilege, in a younger era of my life, of working in seniors care homes as a health care worker, as an orderly in a hospital and also in a seniors care setting. In those early days when I thought the whole of my life stretched before me, I was a young guy with all these possibilities and was also interacting with, serving, working with, and ministering to those who were in their sunset years of life. As I had those interactions and got good advice from people and enjoyed the conversations and the wisdom of their years, I also began to more and more realize that I was vulnerable, that I was not invincible, and that I would not live forever. My parents, thankfully, and others had informed me of that same thing already, but it kind of affected me a little more as I looked into the wrinkled faces and frail eyes of the individuals who were in those home care situations.

There is all the more need today, as we have the aging baby boomers moving to retirement years. More pressure is being placed on society and on governments to discuss the needs and the concerns, including end-of-life care. The issue of euthanasia keeps coming up, and assisted suicide. Elder abuse and quality of life are things we should be talking about, and we should be standing in the way of abuse of our dear senior people as they live out their final golden years.

An aging population means that doctors and nurses will be increasingly facing the population and the public with end-of-life issues. I believe that at the core and heart of it is support for human dignity, as we are all individuals made, in my view, in the image of God, from a Judeo-Christian point of view and that of some of the other world religions as well, so there needs to be that respect and support for human dignity and quality of life, with investments in pain management and other palliative care tools. That is where the Canadian conversation definitely needs to go.

• (1835)

We do not want to go down the dangerous and failed route of assisted suicide or euthanasia tried by other countries. We need better, consistent, end-of-life and palliative care in Canada. Palliative care and emotional support are necessary and appropriate responses to those who suffer from terminal illnesses and are near death.

Effective palliative care will also reduce the pressure to legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia. The Canadian Association of Palliative Care distinguishes four main reasons that patients request death: pain and physical suffering; loss of control over their illness, their lives, their bodies; the desire not to be a burden; and depression and psychological distress linked to their illness.

Palliative care is the most prominent alternative to the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia. As opposed to therapeutic obstinacy, aggressive treatment that might prolong a patient's life to the detriment of his or her quality of living, palliative care instead aims to provide "better medical care for pain and symptom control and to attend more appropriately to the personal, emotional and spiritual issues at the end of life".

### *Private Members' Business*

Advance care directives are also important to talk about in this conversation. I am sure members in the House are familiar with that, so that should take place well before the time comes for any of us. I do not have an advance care directive, but I am certainly reminded in the midst of these days and this topic that every one of us should be having those discussions with a spouse, our children, and with loved ones, about the kinds of measures that can be taken and the kinds that are beyond what we would want or require, the heroics, so to speak, that sometimes do not end in proper end-of-life care.

As an end-of-life treatment, it addresses the psychological and existential factors that influence requests for assisted suicide and euthanasia. We need to have instead these other topics of discussion: advance care treatment, advance care directives and also the kind of palliative care and pain relief that we would desire. Palliative care targets the sources of a patient's anxiety, therefore renewing his or her will to live, the overall quality of his or her life and ultimately, the quality of his or her death.

I would like to share a couple of brief anecdotes that look at life on the ground in Canada as Canadians serve those who need special care at the end of their lives. These accounts come from the March/April issue of the magazine *Faith Today*.

In the small eastern Ontario town of Perth, the O'Dacre family provides care at the end of life. They operate a funeral home, and they are supporting an initiative to bring a hospice to their community. Janey O'Dacre and her husband John both worked as nurses who provided palliative care prior to entering their present field... "Our focus is supporting families with end-of-life decisions", she explains. "But we're not just there for families when there is a death. We know exactly what it's like to be caregivers to the dying too, how emotionally, spiritually and physically exhausting it can be in that role". They look forward to the day when local families who can't tend to dying loved ones at home can select hospice care, rather than hospitals or long-term care facilities.

The author of the article about palliative care also shared her own story, concluding this way. She said:

I'll forever be grateful for the privilege of helping to care for my father during his last days. As his life ebbed, he continued to communicate love for his family, and to receive the love we offered through our care. That exchange of love was a final, precious and intimate gift. And when he died, we found solace knowing that we would see him again, and that we had eased his final journey.

The world of palliative care continues to grow as the need expands and technology advances, but much more is needed. In recent years, each time the budget period rolls around, I have been urging the finance minister to commit more funds to palliative care. The passage of this motion would be a clear indication of Parliament's support for such a move.

Much more could be said in the way of dignity therapy, and members can google this. I would have mentioned in my speech, had I had more time, the work of Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov of the University of Manitoba, a very novel therapeutic intervention for suffering and distress at the end of life. Much can be said about pain relief at the end of life and there is a lot that can be done that is not much understood by the Canadian public, a crucial part of palliative care and what we need to be doing to provide the end-of-life relief for people as they fade from this life to the next.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1840)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been said that the true measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable. We all surely agree that this notion is very much at the heart of the Canadian ethic, an ethic of caring that guides us collectively whenever we, as a nation, develop public policy or adapt it to new and evolving realities.

I would like to take this idea a step further to say that the measure of a society, of its moral maturity and of the point it occupies on the scale of civilization is found in whether and how it provides physical and spiritual comfort to those in their final days of life. This is why I agreed to be a founding member of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care that in 2011 issued its report entitled “Not to be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians”. This report is the basis of the motion we are debating today, calling for a national palliative care strategy in Canada.

It is important to understand what palliative care is not. Palliative care is not euthanasia. Some describe euthanasia as “the final stage of good palliative care”, confusing palliative sedation, an infrequent use of powerful sedatives to induce artificial sleep or coma, with terminal sedation, in which a patient is sedated with the primary intention of precipitating death.

The committee's report makes a point of saying that we must deal with end-of-life issues with uncompromising clarity. Democratic choice requires clear and informed debate to be said to be truly democratic. To quote again from the report:

We recommend building a national consensus on clear, unchanging terminology pertaining to end-of-life-care. Confusion as to the meaning of terms and even deliberate obfuscation of end-of-life terminology for political reasons causes much unnecessary tension in end-of-life discussions.

Nor is palliative care simply pain control. Incidentally, the committee, in its hearings, heard that chronic pain affects a surprisingly large number of Canadians. Dr. Ray Hasel, an anesthesiologist at the Lakeshore General Hospital in Montreal's West Island, who appeared as a witness before the committee, is a strong advocate for expanding public health care services to include routine treatment of chronic pain.

Governments, however, are reticent to foray wholesale into this area. This is because the problem is so pervasive that governments fear a major drain on the public treasury should they do so. To quote from the committee's report:

Chronic pain costs more than Cancer, heart disease and HIV combined.

This fear of opening the financial floodgates is no doubt one reason why governments exclude fees for physiotherapy and osteopathic treatment from the definition of tax-deductible medical expenses under federal and provincial income tax acts.

In terms of end-of-life care, there are anecdotal reports of pain relief being withheld from dying patients for fear by medical practitioners that giving powerful pain drugs could hasten death, something for which the practitioner could then be held liable. These reports are consistent with the fact that, as a rule, only 30% of ordered medication is actually given.

A relief from pain is a human right. The Declaration of Montreal, adopted on September 3, 2010 at the 13th World Congress on Pain,

affirms, among other things, “the right of all people with pain to have access to appropriate assessment and treatment of the pain by adequately trained professionals”.

The declaration also affirms the obligation of health care professionals in a treatment relationship with the patient within the scope of the legal limits of their professional practice and taking into account the treatment resources reasonably available “to offer to a patient in pain the management that would be offered by a reasonably careful and competent health care professional” in that field.

What may be needed therefore is legislation to implement this human right to appropriate pain management, as well as to clarify the limits of liability medical practitioners would face when administering drugs for the purpose of relieving a patient's pain, but without intent to hasten death.

Exploring such a legislative framework could be among the goals of a national palliative care strategy, as would be developing an ethics guide and medical protocols for administering pain relief at end of life, but again, palliative care is more than pain control.

• (1845)

Teresa Dellar, founder and executive director of the West Island Palliative Care Residence, and Rose De Angelis, nursing director at the residence, define palliative care as follows:

Palliative care affirms life, while helping to ease the physical, emotional and social distress of the patient and his or her family...

[Terminally-ill patients look to] focus on creating life-affirming moments that bring great satisfaction, closure and even joy. ...palliative care professionals and volunteers, walk beside them and support them through...the process of dying.

Like pain relief, palliative care is increasingly becoming considered a basic human right. Dan Cere of McGill University, who testified before the committee, stated:

Palliative care is part of a movement toward fundamental justice and basic human rights for citizens facing the last fragile stage of life....

It challenges narrow, impoverished and dehumanizing ways of dealing with dying.

In the same vein, in 2003, the European Committee of Ministers, in Declaration 24, affirmed that “palliative care is... an inalienable element of a citizen's right to health care”.

This notion of a right to palliative care was also captured in the 2000 Canadian Senate report entitled “Quality End-of-life Care: The Right of Every Canadian”. We are not doing enough in Canada to implement this right through making quality palliative care accessible to all Canadians. This is because, to quote the committee's report:

Public policy...tends to be insensible to human fragility.... Public policy decisions reflect a compromise amongst a cross section of groups, none of whom are particularly vulnerable, and none of whose economic and political interests naturally coincide with those who are. The most vulnerable in society are not part of the day to day experience of policy planners.

Consequently, palliative care remains relatively unknown and little understood. Despite the good progress that is being made by those working hard to raise its profile as an emerging health care issue, palliative care has yet to reach a threshold in public awareness that would prompt governments to accord it the attention and funding it merits. The result is that only 30% of Canadians who will die this year will have access to palliative care. Moreover, palliative care is unevenly available across the country, with access, in essence, a function of a person's postal code.

Finally, only 16% of Canadians will have access to end-of-life care in a hospice. In this regard, we are fortunate in Montreal's West Island to harbour the West Island Palliative Care Residence, the largest in Canada in terms of available palliative care beds. Supporting Teresa Dellar and Rose De Angelis in their compassionate mission to provide the community with the highest possible standards of palliative care and, at the same time, serve as a model to the country of what palliative care could and should be is a profoundly dedicated staff and corps of volunteers, not to mention an army of loyal and generous individual and corporate sponsors.

In addition to a national palliative care strategy, we need a national palliative care secretariat in Canada to put the kind of independent focus on this specialized type of health care that will not truly be possible if responsibility for palliative care policy remains within Health Canada's departmental structure. As a bonus, an independent palliative care secretariat could also be the locus for creating and implementing a national pain strategy to help Canadians living with chronic pain outside of palliative end-of-life circumstances.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the motion by my colleague from Timmins—James Bay is extremely important to me and the people in my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

Motion No. 456 calls on the government to establish a pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy by working with provinces and territories on a flexible, integrated model of palliative care.

First of all, it is important to clearly define palliative care, since the debate could easily get off track and begin focusing on medical procedures that do not constitute palliative care.

According to the Réseau de soins palliatifs du Québec, palliative care is:

...any intervention required to improve the quality of life of people with life-threatening illnesses and their loved ones, in all areas of their lives.

According to the World Health Organization, palliative care is:

...the active total care of patients whose disease is not responsive to curative treatment. Control of pain, of other symptoms and of psychological, social and spiritual problems is paramount. The goal of palliative care is the achievement of the best possible quality of life for patients and their families.

In both of these definitions, palliative care is focused on the person's quality of life. Palliative care reduces families' emotional and financial stress. It focuses on the patient and the patient's family and reduces the cost of care by 50% or more, while mitigating the

### *Private Members' Business*

emotional stress of those who are trying to deal with the loss of a loved one.

I would like to take the time to talk about the difficulty of obtaining palliative care in many areas of Canada, Papineau being one of them. Papineau is a large, rural regional county municipality. It does not have much in the way of palliative care, since the only facilities offering this type of care are in Gatineau. That is far away, which makes it very difficult for families to be close to their dying loved ones. In the Outaouais region, the number of available spaces and beds does not meet the demand.

The community has rallied around a project to build a palliative care hospice, called Le Monarque, in Plaisance. The community is eagerly awaiting the construction of a palliative care hospice for the area covered by the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de Papineau, which includes Buckingham, Vallée de la Lièvre and Vallée de la Petite-Nation in the Outaouais. There are many working groups made up of numerous volunteers and stakeholders from throughout the Outaouais and the community who are working towards that goal.

So far, through the volunteers' hard work, a piece of land that is suitable for a palliative care hospice has been purchased, a business plan has been created and various funding, promotion and construction options for the hospice have been developed. The land is in Plaisance.

I would like to point out how great a challenge this project is. The goal is to offer palliative care, free of charge, to every resident of the area covered by the CSSS de Papineau. The demand is so great that the organization has even found a temporary solution for providing care until the hospice is built. Six beds are going to be set up in an old convent.

Manon Cardinal, the chair of Le Monarque's board of directors, is working tirelessly on this project. She is going to great lengths to make it happen. I commend her and the entire board of directors on their work. They are committed to this project and are working hard to make it reality. They entire community has come together.

We are participating in a number of fundraising events to help fund the project. One of those events had former Canadiens player Guy Lafleur as honorary chairman. He is a proud native of the area.

For six years, people have been collecting money through fundraising events. However, Le Monarque is struggling to come up with the money to construct the building in Plaisance, a project estimated to cost \$1.8 million.

Ms. Cardinal is now trying to find less expensive contractors, which could help lower the cost of construction.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1855)

For example, they found someone who will dig a foundation for free and an electrician who will provide them with free labour. It is not just social and political community players who are involved in this project. This project is truly important to and driven by the community of the RCM of Papineau. This community spirit is very representative of the wonderful Petite-Nation region, where people really like to help each other out.

These dedicated volunteers have to go the extra mile because of this government's utter lack of a planning strategy. They have to perform miracles with very little in the way of resources. I commend them for their work. The federal government should show some leadership on this because the situation could be much better.

Despite the extraordinary work being done by various groups in Canada, we have an unacceptable patchwork of services, and the end-of-life care that is provided is not subject to any standards really. Only a small number of provinces consider this type of care an essential service.

That means that only 16% to 30% of Canadians have access to palliative and end-of-life care services, depending on where they live in Canada. However, there is consensus in Canadian civil society: 96% of Canadians support palliative care.

The time has come for the federal government to show leadership on this. Unfortunately, in 2007, the government cut funding from the Secretariat on Palliative and End-of-Life Care. However, in June 2011, the all-party Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care recommended that the federal government restore the Secretariat on Palliative and End-of-Life Care in order to develop and implement a national palliative care and end-of-life care strategy. This committee did excellent work and truly enjoyed the co-operation of the House. You know that, Mr. Speaker. You were part of it.

I was a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women when it studied the issue of elder abuse. We consulted this report and understood how important end-of-life care is. I greatly appreciate the work that was done by this all-party committee. It proves that we must show some real co-operative leadership. That is what Canadians deserve and want.

The NDP believes that quality palliative and end-of-life care should go hand in hand with huge changes in our public health care system, including the expansion of quality home-based long-term care services, affordable medications and better access to primary care. We also believe that we have to take into account the geographic, regional and cultural diversity of urban and rural Canada and respect the cultural, spiritual and familial needs of first nation, Inuit and Metis people.

We must also aim at ensuring that all Canadians have access to high-quality home-based and hospice palliative end-of-life care, providing more support for caregivers and improving the quality and consistency of home and hospice palliative end-of-life care. Finally, Canadians must be encouraged to discuss and plan for end-of-life care.

I will close with the hope that this issue that is so important to my riding, and to all regions of Quebec and Canada, will be overwhelmingly supported by all members of all parties in the House. A pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy is necessary. We must implement it, of course, together with the provinces, the territories and first nations for the benefit of all Canadians.

• (1900)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga. I would advise the member that because the member for Timmins—James Bay has a five-minute right of reply, the member for Kitchener—Conestoga will have about seven to seven and a half minutes.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and join the debate on Motion No. 456, on palliative care.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, over the past five years a number of parliamentarians from all parties joined together to produce the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care report. I joined as a co-chair with the member for Guelph and also the member for Windsor—Tecumseh, whom I believe you know very well. It was a real honour for me to join with that group and many other colleagues from all parties to produce the report on palliative and compassionate care.

I want to read a bit of the introduction of that report to give Canadians an idea as to how this came about and the actual work that was done. It states:

The Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care (PCPCC) is an ad hoc, all party group of MPs, dedicated to improving care for elderly, dying and vulnerable Canadians. It is unique in the history of the Canadian Parliament as it was formed by the MPs on their personal initiative and funded out of their member office budgets.

The committee is an example of what is possible when MPs work closely across party lines on issues of profound concern to everyone. The spirit of non partisan collaboration exhibited by the members of the committee is a great example of what parliament is at its best.

Receiving testimony from hundreds of people at twenty four hearings, and local round tables, MPs were profoundly impressed by the dedication and depth of concern expressed by Canadians for issues surrounding the way palliative and compassionate care is practised in our country.

Also, over the course of this study, I had the opportunity to visit different palliative care places and hospices across the country. One that sticks out in my mind was when I visited a hospice in the riding of Sarnia—Lambton. My colleague there hosted us for one of the round tables and then we visited the hospice. I was deeply moved by the compassion and empathy that the medical personnel, especially the doctors, showed for their patients, as well as the nurses and other support personnel as well.

These kinds of examples are multiplied across the country. Our task is to see that these are replicated in many more communities, especially in our rural communities, across Canada. This is at the heart of what the motion, and the recommendation of the committee, is all about.

Our government recognizes the growing need of Canadians for compassionate end-of-life care. There is no doubt that care should be there when people really need it, but it should also be the best care possible and made available at a reasonable cost to Canadians.

Despite the fact that most people say they would prefer to die in the comfort of their own home, the truth of the matter is that about 60% of Canadians spend their last days in a hospital setting. This is clearly not the preferred place to be, for a variety of reasons. Care at the end of life in hospitals can take a toll on patients, their families and other caregivers and is particularly taxing on the health care system. Additionally, it has implications on hospital wait times for emergency services and may limit the availability of hospital beds.

One of the solutions to address this issue and its unintended consequences is palliative care services. Palliative care focuses on relieving suffering and improving the quality of living and dying. It benefits people of all ages dealing with life threatening conditions, such as AIDS, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Palliative care treats the physical, psychological, social, spiritual and practical needs of the person who is dying. It also recognizes the needs of that person's family and other loved ones.

While many people associate palliative care with hospices and hospitals, it can be delivered in a variety of settings, including long-term care facilities, or even in one's own home. Again, I would just like to refer to a quote from the report, which states:

The palliative care philosophy is person-centred, family-focused and community-based. The philosophy moves us from disease or condition specific care to person-centred care. No longer will we refer to "the cancer patient in bed 4A" or "the heart patient going down to pre-op" or "the broken arm in 6B getting a cast".

One doctor, Dr. John Meenan, from Kitchener, Ontario stated, "Doctors need to move beyond the model of glorified mechanics—

• (1905)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I have been advised that the member for Timmins—James Bay will not be using his five minutes of right of reply, so the member for Kitchener—Conestoga will have his full 10 minutes. That means he has about six more minutes.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** I appreciate your compassionate care, Mr. Speaker.

Science and technique are important, but people are more important, and it is people who get sick. Sickness almost always goes beyond the purely physical and purely mechanical. The mind, the heart, the will, and the human need to be put back at the centre of the doctor's vocation. I think that captures very well what palliative care is.

Palliative care has been in Canada for several decades, yet it is estimated that about 70% of Canadians do not have access to it. Access is particularly limited in rural and remote areas.

Historically, palliative care in Canada has focused on care delivered in hospitals by specialists. Thus far, the main recipients of palliative care have been cancer patients who are battling for their lives against this potentially fatal disease.

Today there is increasing demand to make palliative care services available to all people with life-threatening conditions and to have options as to where Canadians will spend the last days of their lives.

### *Private Members' Business*

A recent survey commissioned by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association showed that the topic of end-of-life care is an important one for Canadians. This survey also highlighted that Canadians have a general understanding of palliative care and overwhelmingly support it. However, the survey also revealed that people need more information about how to access the care available where they live.

Like other healthcare services, delivery of palliative care is mainly the responsibility of provinces and territories.

As members have heard from my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, some time ago, this government is already supporting initiatives aimed at enhancing greater capacity in our healthcare system to provide palliative care. While there is still work to do to improve end-of-life care, I am happy to be able to illustrate to members that progress has been made.

All provinces now offer palliative care services to some extent, and there are some promising practices that I would like to highlight. For example, Fraser Health in British Columbia and Niagara West in Ontario have adopted models that seek to integrate palliative care across all care settings and for all types of diseases.

In my own home region of Waterloo, I am aware of a number of services that are available. HopeSpring Cancer Support Centre is providing support for those who are newly diagnosed with cancer. Lisaard House is a hospice. I have heard many positive stories and have had personal contact in terms of patients who have been served by Lisaard House in the Waterloo Region, and I am very grateful for that. Also, Hospice Waterloo Region, Qualicare, Sunnyside Home, and the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre provide hospice care.

These health authorities are also building capacity by partnering family doctors with palliative care specialists. Knowing that they can draw on this expertise gives family doctors the support they need to continue to provide high-quality, personalized care to their patients.

As a routine part of care, physicians are also encouraged to have discussions with patients about their end-of-life care preferences before an illness occurs so that they can better understand their patients' wishes.

Resources that were once spent in hospitals are now being used to support the delivery of services in the community. This has resulted in an overall improvement in the quality-of-life care provided to patients as well as an increase in the number of people accessing end-of-life care services.

In Winnipeg, the palliative care program offers round-the-clock coverage for people who wish to spend their last living days at home. To enable this process, a palliative care doctor issues a medicine kit for use in the patient's home equipped with all the medications an individual might require to control symptoms for a period of 24 hours. If necessary, a palliative care nurse can perform a home visit and use this kit on the patient. If a symptom crisis occurs, it can be handled right in the patient's home rather than having them rushed to the emergency department that may be either just around the corner or far away from the patient's home.

*Private Members' Business*

In Montreal, the palliative care program at the Jewish General Hospital follows 500 patients in their homes. That is 500 people who are not in hospital beds. However, they will fast-track admission to the palliative care unit for patients who need it, and when they need it.

Nova Scotia and Manitoba have expanded access to palliative care drugs in home settings. All other provinces have similar programs. This means that at the end of life, people will not have to enter a hospital to get access to required medication or to simply have the cost of these prescription drugs covered.

As well, in our budget 2014, we invested \$3 million in a community-based model for palliative care to help the Pallium Foundation in its work.

Changes such as those I have just described mark improvements in the options available to Canadians as they plan for end-of-life care.

● (1910)

Each province and territory recognizes the value of palliative care and has made significant advances in this area, often tailored to the unique character and composition of its population. A federal framework, and I would urge that we use “framework” for palliative care, would respect jurisdictional boundaries, complement these provincial and territorial initiatives, and provide additional information about federal activities and research.

I call on all members to support Motion No. 456 in the interest of caring for some of Canada's most vulnerable citizens.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There has been a bit of a misunderstanding. The member for Timmins—James Bay has now opted to take his right of reply. However, he will only have three minutes in his right of reply.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your excellent work tonight. I would like to thank my colleagues who spoke, from the other parties, for their support for this motion.

Once again, this is a moment in the House when we need to move beyond partisan games and say that we recognize the importance of this common sense solution. We need to get a national discussion on palliative care. I again reference the excellent work the committee did before me.

It has been amazing on this journey that it is not an issue that seems to exist within the Ottawa media bubble. It is not something that is perceived as perhaps hot enough or interesting enough. However, when we have gone out into communities and talked with the faith groups and the people who are dealing with it in their communities in rural and urban Canada, we have seen the same conversations in downtown Toronto as we have seen in rural areas. They are about the importance of supporting families and having the measures in place that help families, not just individuals, deal with pain and the heavy psychological and medical issues in facing life-threatening illnesses. They are about the need to support families in those moments so that they can have that period when their loved one can be taken through and the family can be taken through in a manner that allows them come out whole on the other side.

This is bigger than any of us individually. It is bigger than any of our individual parties. It is a moment when we have to try to work together. I would like to think that we will stand in the House and do that.

I would like to thank my colleagues who have done the work. We have gone back and forth on language and what the language means. Certainly, as someone who considers himself a wordsmith, I understand the importance of language. I also understand that there is a moment when the motion has to be put, when people have to stand and say that in the Parliament of Canada in 2014, we recognize this important, fundamental fact.

Simply making a palliative care strategy and/or framework motion will not be the solution. The solution will come from all the civil society groups that will look to Parliament and say that we made that commitment to the Canadian people, and now it is time to follow through. They are the same groups that will go to the provinces and regional health bodies and say that the Parliament of Canada spoke on the vision of comprehensive, supportive, palliative care that respects the familial, spiritual, and cultural needs of Canadians. It will be those people who then will put the pressure back on us so that we deliver on this promise.

Today is the first part of that commitment to Canadians to say that we get it. We understand that we need to start pushing out and speaking about the importance of the common sense solution. It maybe is not seen as a hot button issue or a sexy issue, but it is an issue that touches all of us. Civil society, faith communities, and rural and urban people will then come back to us and say, “this is what it looks like”.

Within our role in the federal government, we do not deliver the health services on the ground, nor should we, but we have a role to play to say that these models and options work. By working together with the provinces and territories and respecting their jurisdictions, we can actually establish frameworks that will help ensure that all Canadians are able to really and truly, when they need it, die with dignity, and families will be able to move forward in healing.

I am asking my hon. colleagues for their support on Motion No. 456.

● (1915)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 7:18 p.m., the time provided for this debate has expired.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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



**Some hon. members:** Nay.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 28, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1920)

[*English*]

### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to follow up on a question I asked some time ago regarding the fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador. There are two issues at play in my riding and for the northern coastline, even in southern Labrador through to the Northern Peninsula and the rest of Newfoundland. Basically, we are looking at fishing areas 2J, 3K, and 3L.

The first issue is with respect to the shrimp fishery. It suffered a big cut in the inshore fishery of 30%, whereas the offshore fleet was left out of it by only 2%.

The other major issue is ice compensation, which I asked about in the House last week. I spoke to a fish harvester in my riding, Ron Coles, who lives not too far from me. Ron updated me on just how bad it is with the ice forming now in all the major harbours. I am talking about White Bay, Green Bay, Notre Dame Bay, and even around the cape toward Bonavista Bay. The ice is hampering the crab fishery, no doubt, as well as the other fisheries involved. A lot of people cannot get out. As a result, it is a devastating situation.

Many people who rely on fishing EI benefits have not received a cheque since the middle of April, and now it is a month since that time. They have had no income for about a month. This is affecting the harvesters, the crews on their boats, and hundreds of plant workers.

My question, once again, is for the parliamentary secretary. When can we get an answer on what should be an ice compensation package to get some income for these people who have been devastated by the ice?

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question again. We have had this dialogue more than once, but I appreciate his persistence on this matter and I know he represents his constituents well.

I can assure the member and the Speaker that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans shares the member's concern that ice conditions have delayed the opening of some fisheries, thereby affecting their ability to earn a living.

Let me stress, however, that ice packs are a common phenomenon of the environmental conditions in Newfoundland and Labrador. I

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

know my colleague knows this. It is not unheard of for the start of the fishing season to be delayed by heavy ice, but conditions can change and do change significantly, depending on a number of factors, including wind conditions and currents.

In fact, such was the case in 1997, 2000, 2003, and 2008. In those years, requests for compensation were made, but in those instances it was determined that the situation did not warrant special compensation, given that ice conditions seemed to be lasting for perhaps only four or five weeks.

It is true that in some years that extreme conditions have prompted income compensation for fish harvesters. Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided compensation in 1984, 1985, 1991, and 2007. The last compensation program, delivered in 2007, was in response to exceptional conditions, the ice packs having delayed some fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador and northeastern Quebec until the late spring and early summer.

Under the current employment insurance program, EI benefits for fishers are dealt with separately under the Employment Insurance Act. In fact, fishers are able to make claims and receive benefits twice each year for up to 26 weeks each time. This reflects the unique nature of the fishing industry, which has a summer and a winter finishing season.

As pointed out by the hon. member, major delays in fishery openings that are normally scheduled for early May or mid-May could have economic repercussions, and that is why Fisheries and Oceans is monitoring the situation very closely.

I have been told that current ice conditions on the northeast coast of Newfoundland indicate less ice now than at the same point in 2007. Latest forecasts of warm weather should also help break up the ice and facilitate the beginning of the fishery.

In closing, I will say again that DFO is continuing to monitor the ice conditions carefully. However, given that only a few fisheries have been affected by ice conditions so far and given marked improvements in ice conditions to date, ice conditions do not appear to be of sufficient scope or severity to warrant temporary assistance at this time.

• (1925)

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, in 2007, conditions were worse well into June. I can only assume that would be case here again, but I am not sure if I am reading this correctly. Is the door closed on this?

When I spoke to Ron Coles from Embree this morning, he mentioned this devastating situation, and it is not really warm weather that is needed. If we ask the fishermen, they will say they need a couple of storms, those strong winds to get the ice out into the ocean and away from the harbours. That is the key here.

I thank the parliamentary secretary for coming in to do this, but my question is, very pointedly, if this situation we have right now persists, is the possibility still open to provide ice compensation, as was provided in 2007 and 2009? Let us bear in mind that I now have close to 200 calls in my offices alone over ice compensation and how nobody can get out there on the water.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Mr. Speaker, I can say is that it is true that under exceptional circumstances DFO has provided financial assistance to offset the effect of severe ice conditions. It is too soon to know whether this is one of those years. Ice conditions can and do change dramatically over a short period of time. Given the unpredictability of ice conditions, we are monitoring this situation very closely.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), the motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been withdrawn and the House will now resolve itself into committee of the whole for the purpose of considering all votes under Finance in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015.

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

---

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1930)

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

FINANCE—MAIN ESTIMATES 2014-15

(House in committee of the whole for consideration of all votes under Finance in the Main Estimates, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)

**The Chair:** Tonight's debate is a general one on all of the votes related to Finance. Each member will be allocated 15 minutes. The first round will begin with the official opposition, followed by the government and then the Liberal Party. After that, we will follow the usual proportional rotation for the House.

As provided in the order adopted earlier today, parties may use each 15-minute slot for speeches or for questions and answers by one or more of their members. In the case of speeches, members of the party to which the period is allotted may speak one after the other. The Chair would appreciate it if the first member speaking in each slot would indicate how the time will be used, particularly if it is to be shared.

[Translation]

When the time is to be used for questions and answers, the Chair will expect that the minister's response will reflect approximately the time taken by the question. Members need not be in their own seats to be recognized.

I also wish to indicate that in committee of the whole, all remarks should be addressed through the Chair, and I ask for everyone's co-operation in upholding the standards of parliamentary language and behaviour.

[English]

Finally, I would remind hon. members that according to the order adopted earlier today, during this evening's debate no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

We may now begin tonight's session.

[English]

On debate, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I will start with this question for the minister. What was the amount of the elapsed funding for the Department of Finance for 2012-13?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Chair, first let me thank the hon. member opposite for inviting me. This is the second time in a row. Apparently I am more popular with the NDP caucus than I realized.

In the Finance budget, the main estimates are \$120 million; \$115 million are operating. About 5% of the budget was reduced.

• (1935)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, I thank the minister. Can you tell us what the elapsed funding will be for this year, having just completed it?

**The Chair:** I remind the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley to address comments and questions to the Chair, not directly to the minister.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, that information is not currently available.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, if the minister can tell us, taking the second quarter of 2008 as the baseline, what is the change in the number of the unemployed in Canada?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the unemployment rate in Canada now is 6.9%. It was 7% until fairly recently. The number of unemployed is 1.3 million as of April of this year.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the question was what the change is in the number of unemployed in Canada. I will ask it again.

What is the change in the number of unemployed in Canada from the second quarter of 2008 to the present day?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the increase in employment is over a million people from 2008 until the present time.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, I need to clarify the question for the minister again.

What is the change in the number of unemployed from the second quarter of 2008, prior to the recession, to the present day?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have that specific number, but we can get it for the hon. member.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, right now there are more than 200,000 more unemployed Canadians than there were in 2008, as of today.

Major economists believe that the change in the unemployment rate is a more accurate indicator of the economy's strength than net new jobs. What was the unemployment rate in the second quarter of 2008, before the global recession?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have that number. I will be able to get it. There are a variety of numbers. I know the current numbers.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, what was the employment rate at the end of 2013, a more current number?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, at the time it was 7%. It is now down to 6.9%.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, I am asking for the employment rate. I was asking both for 2009 and prior to the recession, but what is the employment rate now, as of 2013?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the total number of employed people in Canada as of April was 17.8 million people.

There were over a million jobs created in the economy: full time, 87%; high-wage industry, 64%; private sector, 83%.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, there seems to be confusion here, perhaps with our terminology.

What was the employment rate at the end of 2013?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, there are a variety of numbers, and we can get those numbers. I am not sure what the member opposite is driving at. He apparently has some numbers that he wants me to put on the record. He can put them on the record himself.

The point is that there are over one million net new jobs created in Canada since the depths of the recession. We have had one of the strongest growth rates in the G7.

The employment-to-population ratio is 72.3%. Perhaps that is the number that the member wants to put on the record.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, that is the one. The employment rate before the recession was 73.7%.

How does this current employment rate rank us in the G7?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as we have said repeatedly, we have one of the best records of employment creation since the depths of the recession, with well over one million net new jobs.

• (1940)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the employment rate in Canada was higher before the recession than it is right now. I am not sure if the minister is unaware or does not concern himself with that.

We are ranked fifth right now in the G7, so we are number five out of seven on employment rate. Does that concern the minister at all?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, this government is focused on a low-tax plan for jobs and growth. Employment is a critical issue, and that is why we are proud and why Canadians are proud that there have been more than a million new jobs created since the depths of the recession.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the minister seems to be having trouble with the statistic here.

The employment rate was actually better before the recession than it is in the present day. That is a statistic that should trouble any minister.

Let us talk about the temporary foreign worker program.

Can the minister tell us the expansion of the temporary foreign worker program? I will just put it on the record. It has tripled since 2006, when the current government took office. The parliamentary budget office has said that puts downward pressure on the number of jobs available to Canadians and has decreased them in number.

Has the finance department done any analysis of the effect of the temporary foreign worker program on the number of jobs available to Canadians?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, our message to employers is clear and unequivocal. Canadians must always be first in line for available jobs. That is the basis of our temporary foreign worker program.

We have made reforms to the program, ensuring Canadians are first in line for available jobs. Our reforms include: authority to conduct on-site inspections; the ability to ban non-compliant employers; to put their names on a blacklist; to require employers who legitimately rely on the program due to lack of qualified Canadian applications to have a plan to transition to a Canadian workforce over time; to require employers to pay temporary foreign workers at the prevailing wage by removing the existing wage flexibility; adding questions to the employer LMO applications; and introducing fees for employers—

**The Chair:** Order, please. The minister's answers have to be roughly corresponding to the length of the question that was received. I think in this case that you have exceeded that time limit.

We will go back to the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, again, has the Department of Finance done any analysis of the effect of the temporary foreign worker program on the Canadian economy?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, first, let me correct something that the hon. member said about employment in comparison with the G7. In fact, we have the second-highest employment rate in the G7. Therefore, his information is incorrect.

In respect of the temporary foreign worker program, the claim that one-third of all jobs gained recently went to foreign workers is based upon an incorrect report by the Canadian Labour Congress. In 2010 and 2011, the Canadian economy created nearly 500,000 jobs. Over that same period, the number of temporary foreign workers in Canada increased by about 19,000. This represents about 3.5% of the jobs created in Canada during 2010-11.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, we are missing something here. I asked if the Department of Finance had done any assessment of the effect of the temporary foreign worker program on the Canadian economy. A yes or a no would suffice.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I have given the hon. member the data he needs. Obviously, that data was generated from the Department of Finance.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the former governor of the Bank of Canada warned the government that temporary foreign workers would put downward pressure on wages and undermine productivity.

Has there been an estimated cost of the temporary foreign worker program to the Canadian economy by his department?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we believe the temporary foreign worker program, provided the companies are complying with the law, has benefited the Canadian economy.

I should note that both NDP and Liberal MPs contact the Minister of Employment on a regular basis to help companies in their ridings hire temporary foreign workers. They want to be on both sides of the issue. Privately, they want to increase the program; publicly, they criticize it.

● (1945)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, according to the Bank of Canada, what is the biggest domestic risk to the Canadian economy? Is the minister aware of that?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I will let the hon. member make his case and then I will respond to it.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, it is not my case. It is the Bank of Canada making the case. It said that it was household items. I am surprised the Minister of Finance is not aware that this is the greatest threat to the Canadian economy.

What is Canada's current level of household debt, in dollars?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the issue of consumer debt is, of course, an important one and that relates to our policies regarding the housing market because that is where the bulk of the debt is.

The total federal debt is almost \$620 billion. The total net debt is \$723 billion, more than that about 38.5% of our GDP and, in fact, half that of the average for the G7.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the total figure is about \$1.7 trillion, 166% of disposal income.

How much has household debt increased under the Conservatives?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, let me just point out for the hon. member that household debt is actually about \$1.8 trillion. Household assets have increased significantly and are now at \$9.5 trillion. Therefore, the ratio of household assets to debt is 5.3.

The median, after-tax, after-transfer income for a two-parent family with children in 2011 was \$83,600, an increase of \$10,000 since 2006.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, is the minister opposed to deficit spending?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the government responded to an extraordinary international financial crisis with a robust deficit spending program, but we have emerged from that recession. We emerged in stronger shape than the other G7 countries with considerably less debt.

Now is not the time to increase the deficit. Now is the time to build a surplus for the advantage of Canadians so we can reduce interest paid, reduce taxes and allocate funds that Canadians want and need.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, I asked if the minister was opposed to deficit spending.

Over the last 20 years, which prime minister oversaw the largest increase in government debt, and by how much did the debt increase?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the largest recession since the Great Depression occurred in 2008-09.

During that time, while our robust stimulus package was being developed and implemented, the party of the member opposite and the Liberal Party urged us, again and again, to increase the amount of our stimulus package.

Had we listened to them, we would be nowhere near approaching a surplus next year. For the member to talk about the size of the debt incurred when we have been in government, when he would have urged us to spend that much more, is really a bit rich.

● (1950)

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Chair, today I will be talking about our government's economic action plan, a low-tax plan to create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

First, let me remind the committee why Canada needs an economic action plan.

Not too long ago the world was hit by an economic downturn of such magnitude that scholars called it "the great recession", our worst economic threat since World War II. History judges us during moments of crisis, and history will smile on the way Canada tackled that threat.

[Translation]

We protected jobs and families. We made difficult decisions. We ran deficits to stimulate the economy. Now, we are working hard to return to balanced budgets.

[English]

The facts are clear; our plan is working. Canada, today, has never been stronger. There is bountiful evidence of our country's growing prosperity.

We have created more than one million new jobs since July 2009: over 85% full time; over 80% in the private sector. The IMF and the OECD expect Canada will be among the strongest-growing economies in the G7 over this year and next.

We continue to receive a AAA credit rating from all the major rating agencies. More than this, we are building the most prosperous middle class in the industrialized world.

A recent *New York Times* study found that after-tax middle-class incomes in Canada, which were substantially behind in the year 2000, now appear to be higher than in the United States.

*Business of Supply*

Today, Canada is stronger and more prosperous than ever before. Leadership made this possible, the leadership of the Prime Minister who set out the road map to prosperity and continues making the tough decisions needed in our uncertain world, and my predecessor, the late Hon. Jim Flaherty, a great Canadian, whom we all miss.

[Translation]

The global outlook remains uncertain. Our economy has been hampered by weak export markets and lower commodity prices. Global growth is still at risk. Many of our allies are deeply in debt. Industrialized countries continue to post deficits. While new economic giants are emerging, the list of our competitors is growing. That is why we cannot become complacent. We will have to continue on the path set out by the Conservative government if we want to ensure that Canada is prosperous.

[English]

This path, our economic action plan, depends on five key pillars.

Prosperity begins with our first pillar: low taxes. Low taxes create a climate for businesses to grow. Businesses create jobs and growing businesses create more jobs. That is why our government cut more than \$60 billion in taxes for job-creating businesses between 2008 and 2014. KPMG has concluded that Canada's total business tax costs are now the lowest in the G7, more than 40% lower than in the United States. Bloomberg now ranks us as the second most attractive destination for business in the entire world.

Besides businesses, we are putting more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians. Since 2006, we have cut taxes almost 180 times. We reject opposition demands for a job-killing carbon tax. We reduced the federal tax burden to its lowest level in over 50 years. For an average family of four, taxes have been cut by close to \$3,400.

However, this is not good enough. Like the Liberals and the NDP, we believe Canadians still do not keep enough of what they earn. With the Liberals and the NDP, Canadians can expect more spending and more taxes. The Conservative Party is the only party Canadians can trust to lower taxes. We have done it 180 times before and we will do it again when we achieve a balanced budget. Low taxes in business costs have helped create hundreds of thousands of jobs, but we are Conservatives. We always aim to do better.

• (1955)

[Translation]

Too many Canadians are still unemployed at a time when we are once again starting to see skills and labour shortages in some sectors and some regions. That is why the second pillar of our economic action plan supports the development of a skilled and productive workforce.

[English]

The centrepiece of this pillar is our Canada job grant. Through this program, federal funding will respond to the hiring needs of employers and will give them the opportunity to partner in skills training. While the opposition spends its time demanding temporary foreign workers for their favourite restaurants, we spend our time ensuring Canadians find jobs.

The third pillar of the economic action plan is expanding markets. I cannot overstate how central this is to Canada's prosperity. In 2013 alone, Canada exported more than \$559 billion in goods and services, and that is over \$16,000 for every Canadian. Since 2007, we have reached free trade and investment agreements with 30 countries, and we are negotiating many more. In 2012, Canada joined the ambitious Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. In March, we concluded negotiations for a free trade deal with the Republic of Korea, Canada's first in Asia.

However, the real game changer is our agreement in principle toward a comprehensive economic and trade agreement with the European Union. This is the most comprehensive free trade agreement in the history of our nation, more ambitious than NAFTA itself. The EU market, with 500 million affluent people and annual economic activity of over \$17 trillion, holds a continent of opportunities for Canadians.

The joint Canada-EU study suggests CETA would boost Canada's income by \$12 billion annually. Bilateral trade could increase by 20%, the equivalent of offering the average Canadian family a pay raise of \$1,000.

While the NDP wastes time debating whether it supports trade, our Conservative government is getting the job done.

[Translation]

It is essential that we create new opportunities for Canada's natural resources sector. Natural resource projects with a total value of \$650 billion will be under way or planned over the next 10 years.

The fourth pillar of the economic action plan aims to make Canada a 21st-century natural resources superpower. We are planning major new initiatives to improve safety and emergency planning, as well as to enshrine the polluter pay principle in legislation.

The fifth pillar of our plan would make Canada a global innovation leader. Since 2006, we have made new investments of over \$11 billion to support innovation in every way possible, from basic and applied research to infrastructure and commercialization.

In economic action plan 2014, we propose new support for research and innovation totalling \$1.6 billion over the next five years. This represents the largest annual increase in research support through the granting councils in over a decade.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

These five pillars form our economic action plan. It is our Conservative way forward for Canada's economy, the only way to keep taxes low and create jobs from coast to coast to coast.

I look forward to any questions.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Chair, in the last election, our government made an important promise to Canadians that we would eliminate the deficit and return to balanced budgets. We promised Canadians we would balance the budget while keeping taxes low.

Could the Minister of Finance inform the committee why balancing the budget matters and whether or not we are on track?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I thank the member for North Vancouver for his question and his excellent work on the House finance committee.

All of the measures I just described will help secure Canada's success. However, as critical as they are, they are only as effective as the overall financial health of our country. That is why a balanced budget is critical for Canada's future prosperity.

Canadians know that balancing budgets requires a plan and the discipline to follow through, although having a trust fund makes it easier.

Budgets do not balance themselves.

• (2000)

[Translation]

The Conservative government is making the tough decisions that have to be made to balance the budget, just as families do every day. We are doing what needs to be done and we are on track to table a balanced budget next year.

Taxpayer dollars that could serve other purposes are being used to pay interest on the debt. A surplus would enable us to keep interest rates low, prepare to take on long-term challenges, such as the aging population, and cope with unexpected global economic shocks. Balancing the budget and slashing the debt means lower taxes for Canadians, and that is one of our government's top priorities. That is how it will achieve intergenerational equity.

After all, who would want his children and grandchildren to inherit his debts? Nobody. That is exactly what the Liberals and the New Democrats would do.

[English]

Canadians never expect a fiscally responsible NDP. That is the party of carbon taxes and Dutch disease. The NDP has never met a spending proposal it does not like or a spending commitment it did not want to double-down on.

Canadians today are also faced with a back to the seventies Liberal Party. On policy, that party divides its time between sitting on the fence and hiding in the weeds, smoking weed.

Our economic action plan has five pillars that have helped create more than one million new jobs since the recession. The Liberal plan has one line: the budget will balance itself.

How will the Liberals' manage that? It is a question that puzzles most Canadians. After all, at its last policy convention, the Liberal Party committed to no less than 10 new national strategies. Back to the seventies indeed.

Two of their proposals call for spending hikes worth 2% of our entire gross domestic product. That alone is almost \$40 billion a year in new spending, \$40 billion out of Canadians' pockets into Ottawa's pockets, never mind the other national strategies.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve a real plan to balance the budget, pay down the debt, and lower taxes. One party is delivering that to them, our Conservative Party. One leader is delivering that to them, our Prime Minister. Now is not the time for Liberal experiments. The global economy remains fragile. Our government has a plan to meet these challenges, a plan that is working, and we intend to stay the course.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister of Finance what is the biggest downside risk to the Canadian economy and the assumptions underpinning his fiscal projections, but if he only has a minute and a half to answer that, perhaps I will save that question until after I speak.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us in which year the EI account is projected to reach a surplus?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we have frozen EI increases for a period of three years. We understand that small business is the cornerstone of our economy, creating jobs that support families and communities. That is why we announced the three-year freeze. This will \$660 million in the pockets of job creators and workers this year alone.

What is more, beginning in 2017, premiums will be set according to a seven-year break-even rate, and that will ensure premiums are no higher than they need to be.

• (2005)

**The Chair:** The question took about 10 seconds and the answer was almost a minute. I ask the minister to try to bring his answers in line to some reasonable proportionality to the length of the questions.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, what is the minister's view on the relationship between payroll taxes and job creation?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the view of our government is that it would be a serious mistake to increase the EI premiums at this time, given the international fragility, and certainly payments for pensions would fall into the same category.

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, if the minister believes that unnecessarily high payroll taxes are a job killer, why is he projecting a surplus of \$2.4 billion in 2015 and \$6.4 billion in 2016 under his current levels of EI premiums, and if he actually wants to live by his previous statement, will he cut EI premiums to reflect the sustainability of the program?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** As I mentioned, Mr. Chair, beginning in 2017, premiums will be set according to a seven-year break-even rate. That is preceded by a three-year freeze on EI rates, leaving \$660 million in the pockets of job creators this year alone. The break-even will ensure that premiums are no higher than they need to be.

Liberals used EI premiums paid by workers and businesses as a political slush fund. They raided and completely wiped out the EI account of almost \$60 billion.

**The Chair:** I would ask the minister to try to direct his answers more specifically and narrowly to the questions that are being asked.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, if the minister believes that unnecessarily high payroll premiums are a job killer and we have long-term unemployment in Canada, twice that of 2008—in fact around 130,000 Canadians have been unemployed for over a year today, compared to 60,000—some back in 2008—why is the minister waiting until 2017 to reduce EI premiums? Why will he not cut EI premiums next year?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I have explained at least on two occasions, we have a break-even period of seven years.

The member opposite wants to find out what is in the budget. He apparently likes the current budget so much that he cannot wait for the new one.

We will be consulting extensively with Canadians before we announce the next budget.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, at the House of Commons finance committee pre-budget consultations, we heard testimony that:

Debt reduction is a priority, but not the number one priority.... The measures we have been advocating are designed to create a more dynamic and growing economy, which increases the GDP, which by itself reduces the proportion of debt to GDP. It's the ratio that is more significant than the actual absolute dollar amount.

Does the minister agree with this testimony before the finance committee that in fact Canada can grow its economy and that growing the economy will help Canada take care of its debt problem?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, let me just go back to a previous question. The rate on EI will be cut to 1.47%, which is the lowest on record. There is no question that a growing economy addresses the debt issue in part, but of course that only can happen if we are not in a deficit situation, so when we get out of the deficit situation and move to a surplus next year, the growth in the economy will of course, over time, reduce the ratio of debt to GDP. That is even without the money allocated to the repayment of debt, which is something that we will be considering as well next year.

● (2010)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, I am actually quite glad that the minister recognizes that in fact economic growth can help Canada take care of its debt issue and he actually agrees with my leader in

that regard. In fact, the expert testimony I was quoting was the hon. member when he appeared before the finance committee.

I would like to move on to CPP. Does the minister agree with the following statement?

...I am concerned that some Canadians may not save enough for their retirement. ...I heard strong support for the Canada pension plan and the central role that it plays in our government-supported retirement...system.

I believe that we should consider a modest, phased-in and fully funded enhancement to defined benefits under the CPP in order to increase savings adequacy in the future.

Does the minister agree with that?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, first, I must say I am a bit amused. I think the member opposite was actually implying that I agreed with the proposition of his leader, that budgets balance themselves. This, of course, is not reality. When the economy grows, it does reduce the debt burden, provided there is no deficit. That is precisely the point. A balanced budget requires a plan and it requires discipline. Budgets do not balance themselves.

In respect to CPP, Canadians do not want to pay a higher payroll tax, and that is why we lowered taxes and brought forward new incentives for Canadians to save for retirement. We introduced pension income splitting, pooled registered pension plans, and tax-free savings accounts, and launched consultations on a new target benefit pension plan. Despite the opposition's reckless high tax plans, we continue to take action to put more money back into the pockets of retirees.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, thank you for the rest of the time we have available in this slot. I would point out that by the minister's last two answers, he has managed to contradict both himself when he appeared before the finance committee and his predecessor in the portfolio of minister of finance.

I would like to draw his attention to a couple of very specific taxation issues and the design in particular of the family tax credits that the government has introduced for children in sports programs, for example, for children in arts programs, for volunteer firefighters, and for some others. The eligibility for those tax credits is based on level of income. Above a certain level of income, people are able to claim the tax credit. Below a certain level of income, they are not eligible.

Why would children in higher income families be more worthy of sports programs and arts programs than children from lower income families? Why would it not be appropriate to make those tax credits refundable and therefore available to all Canadians regardless of income level?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, with respect to the beginning of the speech, I would just say assertions without facts prove nothing. Unlike the high-tax, high-spend Liberals, our Conservative government believes in low taxes, leaving money where it belongs, in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. We have a strong record of tax relief. It has meant saving nearly \$3,400 for a typical family of four. This includes cutting the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%, increasing the amount Canadians can earn without paying tax, introducing pension income splitting for seniors, reducing the GST, eliminating over a million poor Canadians from the income tax roles, introducing and enhancing the workers' income tax benefit, and the list goes on.

● (2015)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Mr. Chair, the minister appears to have no explanation for why the government considers children in low-income families less deserving than children in high-income families. That is the problem. It is unfair. It is discriminatory. Availability of tax credit should not depend upon one's level of income.

I have another question. I would like to ask the minister about the registered disability savings plan. It is a plan that I think is broadly supported in the House. It is a good idea as a matter of policy principle and an idea upon which some improvements have been made in recent budgets. That is all to the good.

However, there is still a key flaw in the design of the registered disability savings plan, which is the exclusion of those with certain impending disabilities, like multiple sclerosis, for example, where a person may be diagnosed with that debilitating disease. They do not have any symptoms at the moment, but inevitably, at some point down the line, they will begin to suffer from those symptoms. The requirement of the registered disability savings plan is that to be eligible, one must qualify fully for the disability tax credit. That means one must be fully disabled before one can apply for the plan.

That means if people with MS, who knows what their long-term prognosis is likely to be, wants to set up a plan now, they are ineligible because they are not fully disabled now. It is a simple problem to solve for the government. Does the government have the intention, in the next budget, of bringing this correction into place so that those who are diagnosed but not yet fully disabled can begin to save when they still have some earning power and can still be gainfully employed and therefore take maximum advantage of this good idea?

It is a good idea. The government could make it better. Will it do that?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we have introduced a lot of programs for those who are disabled and also for low-income families. We have reduced the GST. We reduced the lowest personal income tax rate. We increased the basic personal amount. We introduced the universal child care benefit, which provides \$100 a month to families for each child under age six. We are introducing and enhancing the working income tax benefit, thereby lowering the welfare wall and strengthening work incentives for low-income Canadians already working. We are increasing the amount of income that families can earn before the national child benefit supplement is fully phased out. We are maintaining the GST credit level.

We have also taken actions to support vulnerable Canadians, including seniors and low-income veterans, by increasing from \$500 to \$3,500 the amount that can be earned before GIS is reduced. We are introducing a new guaranteed income supplement top-up for low-income seniors. We have provided almost \$220 million over five years to extend war veterans allowances. We have done many things for Canadians.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Mr. Chair, so there is no answer on the registered disability savings plan.

One final question. In its last financial statements, the government indicated that, before it gets to the point of a prospective balance sometime in the next year or so, it will have accumulated \$163 billion in new federal debt under this government. That works out to approximately \$20,000 in new Conservative debt for every Canadian family.

Does the minister take satisfaction in that debt number? Why, in arriving at that sorry position, did his government put our country into deficit again, before the recession occurred? It was not because of the recession. It was before the recession. That is when they blew the fiscal framework.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, with respect to the previous question, I did not want to ignore the member's suggestion regarding the disability plan. He can make that suggestion. We will take it into consideration, as we do all legitimate suggestions for the budget.

Here again, like the party of the opposition, the member is implying that the debt that was incurred in response to the great recession would have somehow been less if his party had remained in power. Of course, the opposite is the case, because his party urged us to spend a great deal more. We would have been nowhere near a position of having a surplus this year.

● (2020)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate this opportunity to speak tonight about our government's work on balancing the budget. It is a key part of our economic policy that has placed Canada in the best possible position to weather the recent global recession. It is why I am especially pleased to report that the government is well on track to return to balanced budgets in 2015. The deficit has been reduced by almost two-thirds since 2009-10 through our Conservative government's fiscal responsibility and sound economic policy. Including measures in economic action plan 2014, the deficit is project to fall to \$2.9 billion in the current fiscal year. A surplus of \$6.4 billion is expected in 2015-16 after taking into account a \$3-billion annual adjustment for risk.



*Business of Supply*

While this is indeed good news, it is also crucial that Canadians understand that balancing the budget is not an end in itself, but rather a means to deliver on the priorities of Canadians, increase Canada's economic potential, improve employment opportunities, and raise all Canadians' standard of living.

First, let me remind hon. members of the distinction between our Conservative government and that of the previous Liberal governments.

Canadians can rest assured that federal transfers to individuals that provide important income support, such as old age security and major transfers to other levels of government for social programs and health care, will not be cut but rather will continue to grow over the forecast horizon.

The cornerstone of the government's efforts to create jobs and opportunities for Canadians is the commitment to return to balanced budgets in 2015. As economic action plan 2014 makes clear, the government is on track to deliver on this commitment.

I will explain, first, what the merits of balancing the budget are; second, how controlling government program spending and improving the integrity of the tax system are crucial to honouring our commitment to balance the budget; and third, how this strategy is and will continue to create the winning conditions for businesses to grow and compete.

I also wish to put this in the broader context by pointing out that since the beginning of the recovery, Canada has achieved one of the best job-creation records in the G7 countries as well as one of the G7's best economic performances.

Balancing the budget and reducing debt are not an end to themselves. Balancing the budget and reducing the debt are a means to increase Canada's economic potential, and as stated previously, to improve employment opportunities and increase the standard of living of Canadians.

The government's plan to return to balanced budgets ensures tax dollars are used to support important social services like health care rather than paying interest costs. It preserves Canada's low-tax plan and allows for further tax reductions, fostering growth and the creation of jobs for the benefit of all Canadians. It helps to keep interest rates low, instilling confidence in consumers and investors whose dollars spur economic growth and job creation. It strengthens the country's ability to respond to longer-term challenges, such as population aging and unexpected global economic shocks. It also signals that public services are sustainable over the long run and ensures fairness and equity for future generations by avoiding tax increases or reductions in services.

Canada's responsible fiscal position is critical to economic growth and job creation for the long term. Canada's efforts to pay down debt before the global recession and control spending have helped ensure that Canada's net debt-to-GDP ratio is the lowest by far of any G7 country and among the lowest of advanced G20 countries as well.

While other countries continue to struggle with debt that is spiralling out of control, Canada remains in an enviable fiscal position among G7 countries. It is also why Canada is among only a handful of countries with an undisputed AAA credit rating with a

stable outlook from all major credit rating agencies. I should also point out that Canada is the largest economy that still has an AAA credit rating.

● (2025)

Since budget 2010, our government has controlled direct program spending through targeted savings and reviews focused on reducing spending without compromising priority services to Canadians. Taking into account the new measures in economic action plan 2014, direct program spending is projected to remain broadly in line with the 2010-11 level over the forecast horizon. In fact, direct program spending has declined for three consecutive years, a trend that has not been observed in decades. Rest assured that federal transfers to individuals and major transfers to provinces and territories, including those for social programs and health care, will continue to increase.

These steps have been accompanied by measures to improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system, with a view to ensuring that everyone pays their fair share. Consistent with this commitment, economic action plan 2014 includes measures that address international aggressive tax avoidance, improve tax integrity and strengthen tax compliance, and enhance the fairness of the tax system. Since 2006, and including measures in economic action plan 2014, the government has introduced more than 85 measures to improve the integrity of the tax system.

Together, measures in economic action plan 2014 to address international aggressive tax avoidance, improve tax integrity, strengthen tax compliance, and enhance the fairness of the tax system will provide savings of \$44 million in 2014-15 and rising to \$454 million in 2018-19, for a total of \$1.8 billion from 2013-14 through the following five years.

Our government recognizes the importance of businesses to job creation and economic development. Our government delivered tax reductions totalling more than \$60 billion to job-creating businesses from 2008 through 2014. Among these tax-relief measures were the reduction of the federal general corporate income tax rate to 15% in 2012 from over 22% in 2007 and an extension, through 2015, of the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance for machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and processing.

*Business of Supply*

Canada's tax competitiveness and overall business environment have been significantly improved, with the result that Canada now has the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment in the entire G7. The competitiveness of Canada's business tax system is supported by third-party analysis. KPMG's "Competitive Alternatives" 2012 concluded that Canada's total business tax costs are the lowest in the G7 and more than 40% lower than those in the United States. It is also why Canada has been ranked the second best place to do business in the world by Bloomberg, and KPMG's "Competitive Alternatives" 2014 study ranked Canada the most competitive, mature market country for business.

The foundation of our initiatives since 2006 rests on the bedrock of a low-tax plan for jobs, growth, and prosperity. It has seen us through the worst of the global economic and financial crisis. While the NDP and the Liberals keep demanding reckless spending and want to impose higher taxes, our Conservative government remains on track to return to balanced budgets in 2015-16.

We cannot be complacent and must make tough decisions. That is the core of economic leadership and fiscal responsibility, the very same leadership that has allowed Canada to lead the global economic recovery. This is why our government will balance the budget in 2015 and will continue to pursue a prudent fiscal path.

My question for the Minister of Finance is the following: What is the biggest downside risk to the Canadian economy and the assumptions underpinning his fiscal projections?

• (2030)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the member for North Vancouver for that excellent question.

The key risks to Canada's outlook remain external and tilted to the downside. The risk of a sovereign debt crisis in Europe has declined, but it has not been eliminated as yet. Growth is low and inflation is very low.

The move towards a more normal monetary policy in the U.S. has exposed vulnerabilities in some emerging economies, and several are experiencing higher capital outflows, weaker exchange rates, and declining equity prices. This could translate into weaker than expected growth for these countries and increased volatility in global capital markets. In addition, the pace of economic growth in the U.S. was much weaker than expected during the first quarter of the year. While growth was affected by temporary factors, including severe winter weather, there is a risk that the projected pickup in U.S. growth during the remainder of this year could be lower than expected.

In light of these risks, for fiscal planning purposes, the government has maintained the downward adjustment for risk to the private sector forecast for nominal GDP at \$20 billion for 2014 through 2018.

The government will continue to evaluate economic developments and risks to determine whether or not it would be appropriate to maintain this adjustment for risk in the future.

As we have repeatedly said, Canada is not immune to the global economic challenge beyond our borders, which is why we must

focus on positive initiatives to support job creation and economic growth while returning to balanced budgets.

While the opposition would introduce reckless spending during a time when the recovery is still fragile and risks remain, our Conservative government will take no economic lessons from them. We will stay the course. Economic action plan is working. It is connecting Canadians with good-paying jobs, and it is securing Canada's long-term prosperity.

As long as Canadians are still looking for work, our job is not yet done. Our government is always exploring new ways to unlock Canada's full economic potential.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Chair, the Minister of Finance uses tax multipliers to model the impact of budget measures on economic growth.

Can the minister tell us the tax multiplier used for infrastructure investment measures in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, that number is about 1.75.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us the tax multiplier used for measures targeting low-income households and the unemployed in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, that number is 1.6.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us the tax multiplier used for investments in housing in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, it is about 1.7.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, could the minister confirm the tax multiplier used for EI premiums in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have that figure with me right now, but I can send it to the member.

• (2035)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, in 2011, the tax multiplier for measures related to EI premiums was 0.6.

Can the minister tell us the tax multiplier used for measures related to personal income tax in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, it was approximately 1.5.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, could the minister tell us the tax multiplier used for measures related to corporate income tax in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I cannot.

However, if the hon. member has the figures, then why is he asking these questions?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, I do not have the figures for 2014. I have the figures for 2011. That is why I am asking about the latest tax multipliers used by the Department of Finance to prepare the budget and the latest budget. I will therefore repeat my question.

Does the minister know what tax multiplier was used for measures related to corporate income tax in the latest budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have the exact figures. I know that they are not very high but that they will have a significant long-term impact.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, in 2011 the tax multiplier used was 0.3. In other words, a \$1 reduction in corporate taxes meant economic growth of only 30¢ on the dollar.

According to the finance department, investments in housing, infrastructure, low-income households and unemployed workers have a much higher tax multiplier than the measures taken by the government since 2011, which focus mainly on personal and corporate income tax and the reduction of EI premiums.

Knowing that, why does the government choose the least effective measures when preparing its budget rather than much more effective measures that would promote economic growth?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we have done many things to stimulate the economy.

Some initiatives have a short-term impact and others have a long-term impact. Our government's solid record on tax relief includes many things. I can name them if I have the time to do so.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, with regard to economic stimulus, I have just shown the minister that measures that target housing, low-income families and the unemployed, as well as investments in infrastructure, are much more effective, according to data from the Department of Finance, than the measures adopted by the government.

Once again, why does the government choose only the least effective measures?

[English]

**The Deputy Chair:** Order, please.

There seems to have been a problem with the translation, but I believe it is functioning now. Would the member restate the question?

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, the minister is telling us that he prefers measures with a lower fiscal multiplier, measures that have less of an impact, such as cutting personal and corporate income taxes and lowering premiums.

The Department of Finance is telling us that investments in infrastructure and housing and measures targeting low-income households and the unemployed are most effective in stimulating economic growth.

Why are less effective measures chosen over more effective measures, which the government does not seem to prefer?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, first of all, I would like to give out 2 numbers: Montreal, 2; Boston, 0.

Lowering corporate taxes is one of the fiscal measures with the highest multiplier in the long term. That is indicated by the multipliers in the 2009 budget.

Furthermore, our studies on finance show that cutting corporate taxes is the most efficient way to stimulate long-term growth.

• (2040)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, what the minister is not saying is that measures such as reducing access to employment insurance harm economic growth and contribute to widening economic inequalities.

Two weeks ago, an OECD report showed that income inequality in Canada was among the worst in developed countries: 12.2% of the current income in Canada goes to the top 1%. Only the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany are worse.

Why is this government ignoring the reality of the growing income inequality?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the numbers prove the opposite.

Canadian families in all income groups have seen increases of about 10% or more in their real after-tax, after-transfer income since 2006. Lower income families have seen their real income increase by 14%. That is quite significant.

It should also be noted that in 2011, Canadian families in all income groups had a higher income than before the recession. As a result of the balanced growth in the different income groups, income inequality has not increased in Canada since 2006.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, unfortunately, the minister is choosing the figures that suit him, but he is ignoring other statistics.

Statistics Canada, among others, finds that the share of total income in Canada that goes to the 20% wealthiest people has increased from 43.9% to 44.4% since 2006, while the income of the remaining 80% has decreased from 32% to 31.7%.

Again, how can the minister deny that there is a growing income inequality in the country?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, clearly, the hon. member is also being selective about which figures he mentions.

However, there are many international studies that show that the income gap between the poor and the middle class is not greater in Canada than it is in other countries. One study shows that, from one generation to another, there is more mobility in Canada than in the United States, England and Australia.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, there is much less than in other European countries.

He is saying that I am being selective about the figures I mention, but I have others from Statistics Canada. According to Statistics Canada, the Gini coefficient—an index developed specifically to measure income inequality after taxes—has increased from 0.318 to 0.324 since the Conservatives took office.

Once again, how can the minister ignore these statistics and the reality of growing income inequality?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I said, job creation and the continued well-being of Canadians are important priorities for our government.

As I explained, the real income of families in the low-income category has increased by 14% since 2006. What is more, the ratio of Canadians living in low-income families dropped to the lowest it has been in 30 years. That is remarkable.

• (2045)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, it is too bad that he has to repeat the statistics he gave me in response to my first question.

[English]

I will switch to English. Could the minister tell us if in his opinion the current housing market is heating or cooling?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not make forecasts and I am not a market prognosticator. What we have said is that the government is focused on providing long-term stability in Canada's housing market and, reflecting this, the government has adjusted the rules for government-backed mortgage insurance on four occasions since 2008.

The most recent changes were implemented in July of 2012. There were more changes more recently, and I can run through those changes for the member.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, I rise on a point of order. You raised this issue earlier with the minister.

There is meant to be some level of equivalency. That is how committee of the whole is guided. We have had some latitude from the opposition in not interrupting the minister prior, but we are going to be here for some time. When the questions are put, there is meant to be some equivalency from the minister in terms of the answers that are given. Simply ragging the puck through the process does not help anybody. It certainly does not help us in getting the answers that we seek.

I would remind you, Mr. Chair, and I would remind the minister through you, that equivalency is an important guide for committee of the whole. It allows some fairness in the debate so that members can get through a series of questions.

**The Deputy Chair:** The Chair certainly appreciates the reminder from the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley in terms of how to manage this process. I looked at the clock for the past several questions. The hon. member's question took 30 seconds and the answer was 46 seconds. The question was 26 seconds and the answer again was 46 seconds. The next question was 15 seconds followed by an answer of 40 seconds.

If the member thinks that the Chair should take a strict legalistic approach to this, very often a question can be asked in 10 or 15 seconds. I think all hon. members would agree that it is difficult to give an answer to that question in that period of time. Certainly the Chair has on many occasions reminded members when they are giving very lengthy answers and appear to be just trying to use up the clock that it is inappropriate to do that, but when a question is 20 or 30 seconds and the answer is 30 or 40 seconds, that certainly is within acceptable limits.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, the Canadian Real Estate Association reported that the national average price for a home in March was \$401,000, an increase of 6% since March 2013. It doubts that the housing market has reached equilibrium or is cooling. Are we in a bubble right now? It is hard to know.

According to CIBC deputy chief economist Benjamin Tal:

The gap between the importance of the real-estate market to the economy and the lack of publicly available information on it is mind-boggling.

Will the minister work to increase the quality of the available data to allow Canadians to properly assess current risks in the market?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions is working on this issue to obtain all the information it needs. There is a great deal of information out there, and we will continue to monitor the market.

As the International Monetary Fund recently noted,

The macro-prudential measures introduced over the past few years have been effective in moderating the pace of household debt accumulation and cooling off the housing market.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for one final question.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, I would like to know whether the government is planning to privatize the CMHC.

[English]

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** No, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Chair, Professor Ian Lee believes that the government has "a plan for CMHC which it has not disclosed yet".

The *Financial Post* says:

Rob McLister, editor of *Canadian Mortgage Trends*, agrees the latest moves are likely part of a larger government plan to slowly privatize the mortgage default insurance business.

Sources at Industry Canada told the *Financial Post* that the Department of Finance spearheaded CMHC's move to tighten mortgage insurance rules for that purpose.

I am asking the minister again: is the government preparing right now to privatize CMHC?

• (2050)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I answered the question before. The hon. member cited rumours and now wants to be reassured that I meant what I said, and I do.

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it is good to be here tonight and to be able to discuss some of these issues. I have been sitting here for quite some time listening to the debate.

*Business of Supply*

I guess I am surprised. I thought that the NDP would have come with some positive suggestions, but again tonight it accuses us of ragging the puck. However, what we have seen is the NDP ragging the puck. It basically has no positive contribution to present at all. It is just criticism, as usual. It is always critical, never constructive. Those of us who have had to sit through NDP regimes know how damaging and destructive it is whenever it gets a chance to put any of its policies into place. It is because of the NDP's failed policies that some of us have seen our province fall decades behind others, so I understand why it would not want to present them here tonight.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before this committee. In my time today, I would like to focus on the important contribution that natural resources, forestry, and agriculture make to the Canadian economy.

They are a pillar of our Conservative government's action plan. These sectors create jobs and prosperity, particularly in rural communities across the country.

Consider, for example, Canada's natural resource sector. The sector represents 18% of the economy and over half of our exports. It supports 1.8 million jobs directly and indirectly. Furthermore, it generates about \$30 billion annually in revenue to governments, equal to approximately half of all spending, for example, on hospitals in Canada in 2013.

There are hundreds of natural resource projects under way or planned in Canada over the next 10 years, representing a total potential investment of \$650 billion. A significant element of this economic boost is represented by Canada's unique oil sands industry, and this sector is an asset that will increasingly contribute to the prosperity of all Canadians.

The oil sands are among the world's largest technology projects, contributing about 275,000 jobs across Canada and \$48 billion in GDP, numbers that could grow to an average of 630,000 jobs and a contribution of \$113 billion in GDP per year up to 2035. This is owing to an increase in global demand for resources, particularly from emerging economies.

Increasing global demand for resources such as oil, particularly from those economies, will create new economic and job opportunities from which all Canadians will ultimately benefit. However, Canadians will only reap the benefits that come from our natural resources once investments are made by the private sector to bring those much-needed resources to market. Approval processes can often be long and unpredictable. Delays and red tape often plague projects that pose few environmental risks. That is why our government has worked hard since 2006 to streamline and improve the regulatory process at the same time as it is safeguarding our environment.

A modern regulatory system should support progress on economically viable major projects and sustain Canada's reputation as an attractive place to invest. That is why, as part of Canada's economic action plan, we are modernizing the federal regulatory system. We would establish clear timelines, reduce duplication and regulatory burdens, and focus resources on large projects with the greatest potential environmental impacts. For example, we would

implement system-wide improvements to achieve that goal of one project, one review within clearly defined time periods.

We have invested \$54 million over two years to support more effective project approvals through the major project management office initiative.

In the most recent budget, we supported the National Energy Board by announcing \$28 million over two years for the comprehensive and timely reviews of applications and to support participant funding programs, and we would eliminate tariffs on mobile offshore drilling units used in offshore oil and gas exploration and development.

We also announced an extension of the mineral exploration tax credit until March 31, 2015. This credit helps junior exploration companies raise capital by providing an incentive to individuals who invest in flow-through shares issued to finance mineral exploration. The credit is in addition to the regular deduction provided for the exploration expenses flowed through from the issuing company. Since 2006, this measure has helped junior mining companies raise over \$5 billion for exploration.

Our Conservative government has also amended the Coasting Trade Act to improve access to modern, reliable seismic data for offshore resource development. Offshore oil and gas developments create jobs and support economic growth in Canada's communities. Continued exploration activity is required to bring new projects to communities and sustain these economic benefits over the long term.

• (2055)

However, it depends on modern, reliable seismic technology and data, which is why amending the act would ensure companies have the information they would need to identify potential resource development opportunities.

In addition to supporting responsible resource development, we must not forget the important contribution our forestry sector makes to our country as well. Canada's forestry sector directly employs over 200,000 workers in all regions of the country, including in 200 communities that rely on the sector for at least 50% of their economic base. Our government has helped this vital industry stay strong. The investments in the forest industry transformation program introduced in budget 2010 have been very successful in enabling Canadian forest companies to lead the world in developing and demonstrating the viability of innovative technologies that improve efficiency, that reduce environmental impacts and that create high-value products from Canada's world-class forest resources.

*Business of Supply*

Through programs like IFIT, we have seen an over 1,000% increase in exports to China, which has helped this sector weather the economic downturn in the United States. For example, IFIT provided support to the Tolko Industries mill in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan to develop the first facility in North America to use innovative technology to boost productivity by enabling the production of different types of oriented strand board on one single production line. Economic action plan 2014 will provide \$90.4 million over four years, starting in 2014-15 to renew the IFIT program. Our government will continue to work with the forestry sector as it invests in innovative new products and pursues new markets for Canadian forest products.

Finally, the last topic I would like to highlight is our support for the agriculture and agri-food sector. This sector accounts for \$100 billion in economic activity and provides employment to over 2.1 million Canadians. It is a sector that we continue to support. Since 2007, we have partnered with federal, provincial and territorial governments. We have partnered with producers through a suite of business risk management programs, including agri-stability, agri-insurance, agri-invest and agri-recovery to provide assistance to producers in cases of severe market volatility and disasters. In addition, federal, provincial and territorial governments invested substantial amounts, actually over \$2 billion during the first growing forward agricultural policy framework, to promote competitiveness and innovation, to promote food safety and environmentally responsible farming practices.

In April 2013, working with the provinces, we introduced the new Growing Forward 2 policy framework, which will provide more than \$3 billion over the next five years for investments, innovation, competitiveness and market development.

In February, through economic action plan 2014, we announced the expansion of the types of farming livestock that qualified for tax deferral on sale by farmers dealing with drought or with excess moisture conditions.

Since 2006, our government has continued to create the right conditions to enable Canadians and Canadian businesses to feel confident to invest, to create jobs, to participate in the global marketplace and to grow our economy. The role of government is to put in place the right balance of policies and initiatives to support growth and to unleash potential. That is exactly what we are doing. We believe it is the ingenuity and creativity of individual Canadians that will create lasting economic growth in jobs in their communities and across the country.

Considering the importance of this sector, I would like to ask the minister a question. What recent measures has the government introduced to support the mining, forestry and agriculture sectors in Canada?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I thank the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for his excellent question, his penetrating remarks and his very interesting introduction.

Supporting mining, forestry and agriculture in Canada helps create jobs and economic development right across the country.

Economic action plan 2014 is proposing measures to support these important sectors, including extending the mineral tax credit

for investors in flow-through shares an additional year until March 31, 2015; \$18 million over four years, starting in 2014-15 for early intervention to prevent the spread of spruce budworm in Atlantic Canada and Quebec; and expanding the types of farming livestock that qualifies for tax deferral on sale by farmers during a drought or excessive moisture conditions.

First, let me expand on the first point, the extension of the mineral exploration tax credit.

According to the Mining Association of Canada, over 90,000 Canadians are employed in mineral extraction and mining support activity in communities right across the country. Promoting the exploration of Canada's mineral resources by junior exploration companies helps create jobs and economic development. By extending the mineral exploration tax credit, it will help junior exploration companies raise capital by providing an incentive to individuals who invest in flow-through shares issued to finance mineral exploration.

Since 2006, the mineral exploration tax credit has helped junior mining companies raise over \$5 billion for exploration. In 2012, over 350 companies issued flow-through shares with a benefit of the credit to more than 30,000 individual investors.

Second, as the 2013 Speech from the Throne highlighted, Canada's forestry sector remains essential to Canada's rural economy. The government will continue to support innovation and pursue new export opportunities for the sector.

Economic action plan 2014 will provide \$18 million over four years, starting in 2014-15 to support early intervention measures to stop the spread of the spruce budworm in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, including \$2 million through Natural Resources Canada.

The spruce budworm is one of the most damaging insects to spruce trees in Canada, causing defoliation and tree mortality. Early intervention to prevent the spread of spruce budworm in Atlantic Canada and Quebec will protect the region from losing valuable forest resources to the severe defoliation that would be caused by a major outbreak.

Finally, our government will help ensure the agriculture and agri-food sector plays a significant role in the Canadian economy, accounting for over \$100 billion in economic activity and providing employment for over 2.1 million Canadians in 2011.

Economic action plan 2014 highlights measures that will expand the types of farming livestock that qualify for tax deferral on sale by farmers dealing with drought or excess moisture conditions.

• (2100)

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate that I had the chance to work with the minister in Natural Resources. Once again tonight I hear him coming back to some of the things for which he was responsible, looking after the forestry across the country.

We know there have been global economic challenges, and Canada has faced them head on. We have been a leader over the last several years. I am often surprised. Opposition members probably should be praising us for what we have done. Too often they fail to do that or they are too embarrassed to do that.

Could the minister tell us a bit about how Canada's economy is leading the way, leading the economic recovery, and how it is putting us in an enviable position?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, our economic action plan has resulted, after a robust stimulus program during the depths of the recession, in the creation of one million jobs, and in a debt level, which is one-half of that of the G7. We are expanding our trade with the world, most recently with Korea, the first Asian country with which we have entered into a free trade agreement. Then there is the landmark agreement in principle with the European Union, which will bring in half a million new consumers, a \$17-trillion economy.

Through our responsible natural resource development program, we will capitalize on the opportunities that \$650 billion of projects over the next 10 years will present. We will only go ahead with projects that are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment, but we believe we can do both. We can develop our resources and do it in a way which is safe environmentally.

Through a whole host of measures, including the reduction of taxes to a lower level than they have been in 50 years, our government is working for Canadians to build a prosperous future for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

• (2105)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I have seen the minister's version of sustainability when it comes to natural resources. I hope he does not apply that same distorted view when it comes to fiscal sustainability.

Could the minister tell us what projections his department has made to the debt-to-GDP ratio, including the provinces, between now and 2050?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we are anticipating a reduction in the debt-to-GDP ratio to 25% by 2022. I do not have the numbers for the next 50 years.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, does that estimation include the provinces?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, this is for the federal government. The current net debt ratio according to international calculation is 38.5%.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, it may be convenient to exclude the provinces, but there is only one taxpayer, so let us talk about that.

The PBO tells us that the combined debt-to-GDP ratios for the federal and provincial governments will be around 100% by 2050. Could the minister give us the number projected by his department?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I am not sure what the hon. member is really getting at. I told him what the number was today. For the federal government, it is about 33%, including all the provinces. It is a slightly different calculation but the international calculation is 38.5%. Our number is going down to 25% and one would expect it would continue to decrease from there.

### *Business of Supply*

Therefore, I can only assume that the hon. member has in mind vast increases in provincial debt. We know that some provinces are not doing very well at all, but that is outside federal jurisdiction.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, federal jurisdiction, but affected by the federal choices made by the minister and his government.

The PBO estimates that the current fiscal gap for the provinces is currently 1.9% of GDP. It will get larger each year at current levels of projected spending, including Ontario, as my friend from Ontario would point out.

What is the minister doing to alleviate the gap in future budgets?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the first point to make is that federal support has reached historic levels, nearly \$65 billion, and will continue to grow every year. Federal support for health, education and social services has increased 56% since we formed government. We have also made changes to ensure transfers grow in line with the economy, allowing the program to remain affordable and sustainable. We are protecting transfers to provinces. Health and social transfers will, as I said, continue to grow.

Perhaps the member opposite is thinking about the former government, the Liberal government, which shamefully slashed transfer payments to the provinces and the territories.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, yes or no, does the minister plan to honour the Conservative 2011 commitment to introduce income splitting in the next budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I am not sure whether the member opposite is in favour or not of this policy, but as I have said, and as the Prime Minister has said, income splitting is a policy that is good for seniors and we will devote our attention to reducing the tax rate for Canadian families next year.

• (2110)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, is the minister in favour of income splitting in the next federal budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, again, I guess the member opposite likes our current budget so much that he cannot wait for the next one. However, good things are worth waiting for, and at the appropriate time we will reveal it in this House.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the Department of Finance has done a study on the impacts of income splitting. Has the minister read that report?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the department, of course, analyzes a whole variety of policy alternatives and I am briefed on them.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, that was a very direct and simple question. A report has been prepared. The former finance minister acknowledged this. Has the current Minister of Finance read the report on income splitting from his department?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I thought I was fairly clear. The department provides analyses on a wide range of policy alternatives. I look at them, I am briefed on them, and we discuss them. We then make our decisions after a robust consultation period with Canadians right across the country.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, I asked the minister if he has actually read a report on income splitting. He cannot tell us or will not tell us. Either he has not read the report or he has read the report and he will not admit to that fact.

It is a simple question. Has the minister read the report that his department has prepared on income splitting, yes or no?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, there are a variety of reports, and I have certainly read reports on this subject, as I have on a variety of subjects. I will continue to look at them.

I do not know about this focus on income splitting. It seems the only thing the NDP knows about is splitting Canadians' income from their pockets.

**The Deputy Chair:** Before we continue, members should be on their feet when they have the floor and in their seat when they do not. A minute ago we had both members on their feet.

I would ask members to stand when they ask a question and subsequently sit, and I ask the minister to do the same thing.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us how many Canadians will benefit from his income-splitting plan?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I said, this is not my plan. This is a policy alternative that we are looking at, along with many others.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, does income splitting help single Canadians?

**The Deputy Chair:** Can the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley take his seat between questions, please?

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, since there is so much interest in this subject, let me just say that, since 2006, our government has introduced a number of broad-based tax relief measures from which families are benefiting. They include reducing the GST to 5% from 7%, increasing the amount Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax, reducing the lowest personal income tax rate to 15% from 16%, and introducing the incredibly successful new tax-free savings account, which helps Canadians meet lifetime savings needs. Half of Canadians have participated in this account, and the amount involved I believe is now \$80 billion.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, will people making less than \$44,000 a year benefit from income splitting?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the member opposite wants me to talk about a policy that we have not adopted. He wants me to get into details with respect to something in which there are a variety of alternatives, and so no answer is possible.

I am not certain what the objective of the questions is. I have been very clear that we are not going to announce this until the next budget, after an extensive period of consultation with Canadians.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the minister does not seem to understand the basic connotations of what income splitting might be.

Based upon the fact that this is a promise that is sitting on the books with the Conservatives, contingent upon a balanced budget in the next federal budget, I am asking, simply, if he understands who does and who does not benefit from income splitting. It seems like a fair question and a straightforward one.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, our government has taken a million people off the tax rolls. We will look at each policy alternative that is reasonable, and we will analyze it to determine its benefit for Canadians.

Rest assured that we will not engage in a reckless spending spree. We will focus on reducing taxes for hard-working Canadians.

• (2115)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, income splitting will not help 85% of Canadians. The minister ought to know that before he starts to trumpet its values.

I have a question about budget cuts. Would the minister agree that cuts to program spending would have a negative effect on the short-term GDP growth?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we will ensure that we deliver services to Canadians in the most efficient way possible. Canadians demand that. Canadians deserve that. If we do not spend the money, we are in a position to experience a higher surplus and then be in a position to reduce taxes, which enhances growth.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, is the minister familiar with the Parliamentary Budget Officer's assessment of budget cuts and the impact on GDP growth in Canada?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, there are a variety of studies done. I am not certain what he is referring to, but I am sure we will find out, or I am not sure we will find out.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, he got handed the answer just at the last minute, so let us help out. The PBO estimates that the number as -0.5% of the GDP.

Can the minister tell us what the effect of 0.5% negative GDP is on jobs in the Canadian economy?



*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the first point is that the PBO estimate is not something we agree with. We believe that the best contribution the government can make to securing sustainable long-term growth and job creation is promoting sound and sustainable fiscal finances. We do not believe that balancing the budget and reducing the debt is an end to itself, however; rather, balancing the budget and reducing debt would provide a host of benefits to Canadians for years to come. It would free up tax dollars that would be otherwise spent on debt, keep interest rates low, and many other advantages.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, no doubt he does not agree, because it is going to cost 46,000 jobs as of 2016.

How much did the Department of Finance spend on economic action plan advertising in 2012-13?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the economic action plan communication strategy is to make Canadians understand the consequences and the advantages for the Canadian economy and for individual Canadians of our economic action plan. It was a bold and innovative initiative, and it has created good jobs and sustained a higher quality of life; so it is the responsibility of the government to communicate on important programs and services.

In fact, the awareness of the plan has increased dramatically in the country.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, the consequences are that it cost the Canadian taxpayer \$15 million. The fact that the minister did not know that answer or was unwilling to tell it is disturbing.

Since 2009, how much has the government spent on economic action plan advertising?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, in 2009, the number was \$17 million; the next year, \$10 million; \$8.7 million; \$16 million. The total is \$73.2 million.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, \$73 million; increasingly annoying Canadians with their own tax dollars is adding insult to injury.

How much did the government spend advertising the job grant program that did not exist?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the job grant program exists, of course.

Let me just reference the, I guess, illusion that the member opposite was making to the advertising's effectiveness.

Awareness of economic action plan continues to increase. Canadians aware of the plan have increased from 20%, in the fall of 2009, to 61%, in the fall of 2013. The Department of Finance continues to be responsible for the development and implementation of the advertising campaign, which supports measure-specific campaigns by line departments.

• (2120)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, awareness has grown with the annoyance among Canadians for these same ads.

Let us talk about tax compliance for a moment. The government produced a study about compliance costs for taxes on small business.

Has the finance department done any studies on the compliance costs of tax credits?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have that direct information, but I can pass it on to the hon. member as soon as I do.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Chair, does the Department of Finance do any estimates on tax compliance costs with any new tax credits that it is introducing, in advance?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the department always looks at the economic consequences of tax measures it introduces in the budget. That is the normal procedure for the government. When we do that, then we come to the determination whether it is cost effective.

**The Deputy Chair:** That concludes this 15-minute segment.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it is a pleasure to stand this evening and address the House of Commons Committee of the Whole on keeping taxes low and creating a strong business climate.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss our government's commitment to keeping taxes low and leaving more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families and job-creating businesses.

What I will not do, of course, is disrespect your office, Mr. Chair, and stand during my question when the minister is answering. It becomes confusing, as to who is asking the question and who is answering the question. Quite frankly, what I will also not do is disrespect your office, Mr. Chair, by sitting on the arm of my chair when I should be sitting in the chair.

Over the next several minutes, I would like to provide an overview of our government's actions that have kept taxes low for families and businesses, and have led to the creation of jobs and opportunities, economic growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians. Supporting this track record is our unwavering commitment to return to balanced budgets in 2015, which will allow us to have more dollars available to invest in priorities that matter to Canadians and to allow even further tax relief for families.

Allow me to elaborate on the measures we have taken since 2006 to keep taxes low. Our government has a proven track record of success when it comes to supporting families and communities. The opposition, on the other hand, has a proven record of voting against that support. For all Canadians out there watching, it is a fairly easy matter to check the record on how members of Parliament vote on various subjects. Certainly when it comes to tax relief for Canadians, the opposition has an extremely solid record of voting against tax relief for Canadians.

*Business of Supply*

We have worked hard to create economic advantages for all Canadians so they can enjoy a high quality of life and long-term prosperity. We have lowered taxes to the point where the overall federal tax burden is now the lowest it has been in 50 years. Going forward we will examine ways to provide further tax relief for Canadians while taking into account the goal of returning to balanced budgets by 2015.

Unlike the high-tax NDP and Liberals, our Conservative government believes that Canadians should not pay more taxes, they should actually pay fewer taxes. In fact, our strong record of tax relief has meant savings of nearly \$3,400 for a typical family of four in 2014, allowing them to invest those savings in important family priorities.

Since 2006, our government has lowered taxes in a number of ways, including increasing the amount of income that all Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax, increasing the upper limit of the two lowest personal income tax brackets so that individuals can earn more income before being subject to higher tax rates, reducing the lowest personal income tax to 15% from 16%, and introducing the tax-free savings account to help Canadians save by earning tax-free investment income.

Our government's ambitious agenda of tax relief for families, individuals, and businesses is aimed at creating a tax system that fuels job creation and growth in the economy, and allows Canadians to keep more of their hard-earned money.

Our tax cuts have also given individuals and families the flexibility to make choices that are right for them. Our government support for families has also meant supporting the businesses that create good jobs, and allowing families to enjoy a high standard of living. In particular, we have taken action to lower taxes for businesses so that they can create good jobs here at home while allowing them to compete in the global economy.

In 2007, prior to the global crisis, Canada implemented a bold tax reduction plan that would help brand Canada as an attractive destination for business investment. This plan has reduced the federal corporate income tax rate from 22.12% in 2007. We legislated our rate reductions to just 15% today, one of the best records in the G7. In fact, Canada now has an overall tax rate on new business investment that is lower than can be found in any G7 country, and below the average of the 34 member countries of the OECD.

We also recognize the vital role small businesses play in the economy and job creation. That is why we are committed to helping them grow and succeed.

• (2125)

That includes reducing the small business tax rate from 12% to 11% and increasing the small business limit to \$500,000. Indeed, because of our low-tax plan, a typical small business with \$500,000 of taxable income is now saving \$28,600. That is a lot of money for a small business to invest back into that business, to invest in machinery, or to invest in human capital. That is more money that can be reinvested in growing businesses and creating jobs.

This investment-friendly tax environment is critical to the future of Canada's economy. It is a broad-based, fiscally durable,

structurally sound and increasingly powerful selling feature in attracting the investments that Canadian businesses need to grow and to thrive. Today, and in the years to come, this low-tax environment will play a crucial role in supporting economic growth and enabling businesses to invest more of their revenues back into their operations.

In addition to low taxes, our government has eliminated close to 1,900 tariffs and concluded multiple free trade agreements, which together are providing another \$590 million in annual tariff relief for Canadian consumers and businesses.

We became the first government in Canadian history to reach a free trade agreement with the European Union, an agreement that will open up new markets to Canadian exports and bring countless benefits to Canadian businesses and Canadian families.

I just want to enlarge on the European free trade agreement. The key here is not just those 500 million consumers in Europe. It is positioning Canada in a very enviable position between those 500 million, quite frankly, affluent consumers in Europe and those 330 some million American consumers we get to trade back and forth with on a daily basis. That is 800 million consumers accessible to Canadian businesses.

I would like to conclude today with a few brief words on the impact our economic action plan has had and will continue to have on Canadians. In today's uncertain world, Canada's economic action plan is working. It is creating jobs, it is keeping our economy growing, and it will return us to balanced budgets in 2015, which bodes well for not only the current generation of Canadians, but also for future generations of Canadians who, quite frankly, the NDP quite often forgets about in its tax-and-spend scheme of today.

A recent analysis by *The New York Times* of the Luxembourg Income Study suggests that Canada's medium-income households today are the richest out of 20 peer countries, including the United States. It also shows that Canada's medium-income households have seen increases of about 20% in their take-home incomes between 2000 and 2010. This confirms that our government's low-tax plan for jobs and growth is working and increasing long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

The federal tax burden is now the lowest it has been in more than 50 years and more than one million low-income Canadians have been removed completely from the tax rolls. The share of Canadians living in low-income families is now at the lowest level over the past three decades. That is worth repeating because we hear a lot from the opposition. The share of Canadians living in low-income families is now at the lowest level over the past three decades.

Going forward, the government will keep taxes low and will examine ways to provide further tax relief for Canadian families, while returning to balanced budgets. With our economic action plan, Canada is on track to have a stronger and more prosperous future.

*Business of Supply*

In closing, I would ask the Minister of Finance to please tell us what tax relief measures the government has offered to Canadian families. I know this is not a short answer. There are a lot of tax relief measures we offered, but I would ask him to try to sum them up.

• (2130)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, keeping taxes low and supporting families has been a cornerstone of our low-tax plan for jobs and growth. Since 2006, our government has introduced significant broad-based tax cuts that have benefited Canadian families. For example, we have delivered on our commitment to reduce the goods and services tax to 5% from 7%. We have increased the amount that Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax. We have reduced the lowest personal income tax rate to 15% from 16% and increased the amount of income that individuals can earn before facing higher tax rates by increasing the upper limit of the two lowest personal income tax brackets.

We have introduced a tax-free savings account, which is an increasingly popular way for Canadians to save for their goals and their future.

Canadian families are also benefiting from the introduction of the child tax credit, the children's fitness tax credit, and the children's arts tax credit.

Indeed, Canadians at all income levels are benefiting from tax relief introduced by our government, with low- and middle-income Canadians receiving proportionally greater relief. Benefits for low- and middle-income Canadians delivered through the personal income tax system and support for families with children have also been increased and enhanced.

Our government has introduced the universal child care benefit, which provides \$100 per month to families for each child under the age of six.

We have introduced and enhanced the working income tax benefit, lowering the welfare wall and strengthening work incentives for low-income Canadians already working while encouraging other low-income Canadians to enter the workforce.

We have increased the amount of income that families can earn before the national child benefit supplement is fully phased out and before the Canada child tax benefit base benefit begins to be phased out.

We have maintained the GST credit level while reducing the GST rate by two percentage points, translating into about \$1.2 billion in GST credit benefits annually for low- and modest-income Canadians.

As a result of the tax relief provided by this government since 2006, more than one million low-income Canadians have been removed from the tax rolls.

Overall, this government has cut taxes for an average family of four by close to \$3,400.

We have been able to accomplish all of this while still being frugal with taxpayer dollars by paying down \$38 billion on the national debt before the recession, the lowest level in a quarter of a century. We have lowered the government debt to the lowest debt in the G7.

For the first time in Canadian history, the direct spending program has fallen for three consecutive years by over \$5 billion since 2009-10, and we are freezing the government's operating budget again.

We are the only G7 country to have recovered all of the business investment lost during the recession. Moody's, Fitch, Standard and Poor's have reaffirmed our AAA rating, but there is more work to do. Of every government revenue dollar, 11¢ goes to service the debt. We are committed to reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio to 25% by 2021, ensuring that future governments will have to mind the taxpayers' dime as we have through the introduction of balanced budget legislation.

Most importantly, Canadians across the country can count on our Conservative government to keep their taxes low while continuing to examine ways to provide further tax relief for Canadian families.

• (2135)

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Chair, let me change the topic slightly.

Does the minister agree that gender considerations should be integrated into all aspects of the budgetary process?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we do integrate them into the budgetary process.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, does Finance Canada evaluate the department's gender-based analysis practices, and is that available publicly?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we do generate the analysis. I am not certain of the full publication. I can get back to the hon. member on that.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, I would appreciate his getting back to us on that.

The Auditor General has found that senior staff and policy analysts at Finance Canada lack gender-based analysis training. How many senior staff and policy analysts have been trained since the audit?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have the number, but I know that this training is available to all staff.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, something is happening. We are not sure.

Does Finance Canada regularly conduct a gender-based analysis on new and current tax measures, and is that available publicly?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I will have to get back to the member on that question.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, if it helps, the government has said that departments and agencies are required to include gender-based analysis in the development of new spending measures, so hopefully, that is available publicly.

*Business of Supply*

In April 2011, the government proposed an income-splitting program at an estimated cost of \$3 billion. Does the minister believe that this is the best use of federal taxpayer dollars, since income splitting would benefit, at most, 16% of Canadians, and they would be the richest 16% of Canadians, while costing 100% of Canadians in lost services? Second, has the minister conducted a gender analysis of this program?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I have said in response to numerous questions on this subject, the Prime Minister has said, and I have said, that income splitting is good for seniors. It can be good for families. We will await the budget for the details. However, I should point out that since 2006, our government has introduced a number of broad-based tax relief measures from which families are benefiting. They include reducing the GST, increasing the amount Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax, reducing the lowest personal tax rate to 15%, and introducing the new tax-free savings account.

Low-income families and individuals are also benefiting from measures to increase and enhance benefits through our tax system, including the universal child care benefit, introducing and enhancing the workers' income tax benefit, increasing the income under the national child care benefit, and others.

• (2140)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, I would assume that the government is going to conduct a gender analysis of a program it is thinking of introducing, one that apparently does not benefit 84% of Canadians, so we look forward to that.

Does the minister know how many jobs have been lost or how much unemployment has increased in Ontario in the last year? Let me just clarify. Does the minister know how much unemployment has increased in Ontario in the last year? How many jobs have we lost?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, first I would like to answer an implied question raised earlier in respect to income splitting, which we discussed. All measures are analyzed for gender balance, as I said before.

With respect to the labour market, it is important to get the facts straight. Canada has posted one of the strongest job-creation records in the G7 over the economy. The majority of the jobs have been full-time private sector positions in high-wage industries, and while labour market data are volatile, it is important to look at the longer-term trend, and we are very positive.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** The number he is looking for, Mr. Chair, is 11,400 jobs. That is how many jobs were lost in Ontario last year. That is some record.

Will the minister admit that this is a troubling indication of a stalled and even slipping recovery in his home province? Will he at least admit that?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the province of Ontario numbers are lagging other parts of the country. Clearly, Canada cannot reach its full potential if its largest province is struggling. We believe that the economic recovery is continuing apace, and we think that with sound fiscal policies, that can continue in Ontario as well.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, there are 11,000 families now without jobs.

Does the minister, who is also the minister for the GTA, know that the City of Toronto reported that unemployment increased to 9.2% last month? Does the minister consider this to be acceptable in Canada's largest city?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, this government is continuing to introduce policies, including tax policies and infrastructure initiatives, that will be building employment right across the country. Toronto is, of course, an economic engine not only for Ontario but for the entire country. It has a vibrant financial services sector, which is doing very well, and we would like to see all Torontonians benefit. We would like to see policies adopted in Ontario that focus on job creation.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, even Bay Street does not seem to be helping, because unemployment is increasing in the city of Toronto.

Does the minister know by how much temporary jobs have increased since the end of the 1990s in the Toronto census metropolitan area, that is, the Toronto area? Does he know by how much temporary jobs have increased, say since 1997, before the recession?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the first point I would like to correct is the unemployment rate in Toronto. It is now at 7.5%, down from its recession high of 10.2% in June 2002. The long-term unemployment rate, the share of the labour force unemployed for 27 weeks or more, has fallen by one-quarter from its peak during the recession. It is now below its long-term historic average.

• (2145)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, we can duel over unemployment numbers. I can tell you that unemployment is up in the city of Toronto, and you did not answer my question. My question is this: do you know by how much temporary jobs have increased in Toronto since 1997?

**The Deputy Chair:** I would remind hon. members to direct their questions to the Chair rather than directly at the minister.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have the specific number for Toronto. I can say for Canada that full-time employment is at 87%. A million jobs were created. There are almost 18 million people employed, 87% full time, with 64% in high-wage industries and 83% in the private sector. If the member opposite needs specific numbers by city or by region, we can provide those to the extent that they are available.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, the number is actually 40%. Temporary jobs have increased by 40% over about the last 20 years. It is less than that. It is 15 years.

Does the minister really think that increasingly shifting to part-time and precarious work is an acceptable replacement for full-time jobs?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** As I have said, Mr. Chair, the bulk of the jobs are, in fact, full time. The majority of jobs are in the private sector. The majority of the jobs are high-wage jobs, and we are very pleased about that. We think that it is proof of the resilience of the Canadian economy.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, that is simply ridiculous and illogical. It is simply not the case. I would love to dig down into these numbers, but I have such limited time that I need to move on to another topic. However, it is ridiculous to say that most of the jobs being created are high wage, permanent, long-term jobs. It is simply not the case.

Let me turn to the issue of infrastructure. Downloading by Liberal and Conservative governments has led our cities to the point of crisis. Does the minister know the current infrastructure deficit?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the infrastructure invested in in Canada creates jobs, promotes economic growth, and provides a high quality of life for families in every city and community across the country. In recognition of the importance of efficient public infrastructure and Canada's economic prosperity and quality of life, our Conservative government has made significant investments since 2006 to build roads, bridges, subways, rail, and much more.

Indeed, under the \$33 billion Building Canada plan launched in 2007, we supported over 12,000 infrastructure projects across the country. Furthermore, last year, our government announced the new Building Canada plan, a \$53-billion investment in predictable infrastructure funding for the next 10 years. It is the largest and longest federal investment in job-creating infrastructure in Canadian history.

**The Deputy Chair:** In anticipation of a concern, I would just remind participants that the previous question was 40 seconds, and the response was one minute and four seconds, so it was a bit long. I would remind all participants to work together.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, the answer also had nothing to do with the question. My question was whether he knows how much the infrastructure deficit is. Either he does not know or he does not care to say. Let me help him out. The answer is at least \$170 billion, which is a pretty big number. I think even he would agree.

Let me ask the minister this: What reduction in infrastructure plan funding did budget 2013 announce for the subsequent five years?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I said, in 2013 we announced a new Building Canada plan, which is a \$53-billion investment. Our government has supported an additional 30,000 infrastructure projects through the stimulus phase of the economic action plan. We have provided increased and ongoing support through the gas tax fund by doubling its size to \$2 billion a year, making it permanent, and indexing it at 2% per year.

We have provided over \$9 billion to first nations communities to build, operate, maintain, and renovate community infrastructure on reserves and \$1.7 billion annually for close to 600,000 households on and off reserves across Canada.

Because I do not have enough time, I cannot list all the additional programs.

● (2150)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, once again, unfortunately, my question was not answered. My question was what the 2013 budget announced on the reduction in infrastructure spending for the next five years. The answer was a \$5.8-billion cut over the next five years compared with the 2012-13 funding levels.

Yes, they announced funding for the future, way down the road, when they will no longer be the government, but for now, they actually announced a cut.

Let me ask another question. Does the minister know the cost of gridlock in the city of Toronto, the city he is also the minister for?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have the cost of traffic jams in Toronto, but we will hear it from the hon. member, perhaps.

**The Deputy Chair:** That concludes this round. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton—Leduc.

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am pleased to welcome all those Canadians from coast to coast who were watching the hockey game. I know they will now be tuning in to this committee of the whole tonight.

It is my pleasure to address this committee tonight to highlight one of the central initiatives in the budget, the important role our government plays in Canada's science, technology and innovation system.

Since 2006, this government has provided more than \$11 billion in new resources to support science, technology and innovation in Canada.

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

Canada remains the G7 leader in research and development expenditures in the higher education sector as a share of the economy. Our universities and post-secondary institutions are recognized internationally for providing a truly world-class education.

Canada's strengths in post-secondary research make our nation a destination of choice and Canadian institutions have attracted some of the world's best researchers.

However, we cannot be complacent as Canadian post-secondary institutions face significant competition from their counterparts in other countries for the best minds, partnership opportunities and breakthrough discoveries.

Canada's ability to attract top research talent, innovators and enterprises requires its world-class institutions to be able to seize emerging opportunities and excel on the global stage.

*Business of Supply*

That is why the economic action plan 2014 will create the Canada first research excellence fund to help Canadian post-secondary research institutions leverage their key strengths to the benefit of all Canadians.

The plan will provide the Canada first excellence research fund with \$50 million in 2015-16, growing to \$100 million in the following year, \$115 million in 2017-18, and reaching a steady state level of \$200 million annually in 2018-19 and beyond.

Within the next decade, this fund will provide an additional \$1.5 billion to advance the global research leadership of Canadian institutions. This initiative will position Canada's post-secondary institutions to compete with the best in the world for talent and breakthrough discoveries, creating long-term economic advantages for Canada.

I would like to highlight some of the comments of economic action plan 2014 investments and, in particular, this fund and these investments received.

The president of the University of Alberta, Indira Samarasekera, said the measures in budget 2014:

—demonstrate the Government of Canada's commitment to excellence in higher education, research and innovation and I would like to thank it for such strong support. I am convinced that this investment will help universities such as the U of A meet rising global competition. With it, we will be able to increase our capacity to attract and retain the best and brightest faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and international partners to advance the scientific discoveries, solutions and ideas that will benefit Canadians for generations to come.

Another comment is from the president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Mr. Paul Davidson said:

Today Canada is signalling to the leading research nations of the world that it intends to compete with the best in terms of support for research excellence and attracting top innovators to our universities...This new strategy recognizes that research excellence takes place at universities of all sizes and in all regions of the country; the benefits will be shared by communities, students and faculty across Canada.

Obviously our government is very pleased to see such strong support for economic action plan 2014. I would like to recognize people like Indira and Paul Davidson for the work they did in encouraging the government to invest in this manner.

Our government has also taken numerous steps to strengthen our nation's capacity for advanced research, the kind which leads to breakthroughs at universities, colleges or other institutions across the country. As an example, let me highlight one of the jewels in Canada's scientific community, one of our big science projects, the TRIUMF cyclotron particle accelerator, a facility that the industry committee visited during our study of science, technology and innovation across the country years ago.

Through TRIUMF's ambitious international partnerships, Canadian researchers have been at the centre of some of the most important international research projects, most recently making critical contributions to the discovery of the Higgs boson particle at the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research.

TRIUMF has also forged highly successful partnerships with industry leaders in order to commercialize the scientific breakthroughs, and is recognized globally for its innovative work in the

production of medical isotopes used for treating thyroid, breast and other cancers.

● (2155)

It has helped to launch several spin-off companies and accelerate the growth of existing firms by sharing expertise, laboratory and research space and jointly developing leading edge research equipment.

Our government strongly supports these efforts and, starting in 2015, our government will be providing an additional \$126 million over five years to further support the world leading research taking place at TRIUMF. Initiatives such as TRIUMF have proven that Canada's innovators are up to the task of competing on the world stage if they have the opportunity and the resources to do so.

Unfortunately, all too often our nation's innovative enterprises lack access to the very fuel that would drive their success, mainly venture capital. Venture capital plays a critical role in providing the investment and resources needed for these promising enterprises to realize their full potential.

The Canadian capital venture market has had mixed results over the past decade, which has resulted in an overall decline in venture capital fundraising. Clearly there is a need to expand the supply of venture capital in Canada, as was noted by the expert panel review of federal support for research and development. However, this is not a challenge the government can address on its own.

That is why in 2013 our government introduced the venture capital action plan, making significant resources available to support Canada's venture capital industry, including \$400 million to help increase private sector investments in early stage risk capital, fulfilling a commitment that was made in 2012.

Business accelerators and incubators are important players in the venture capital system. These organizations bring entrepreneurs together and provide them with working spaces, hands-on mentorship by successful innovators, and access to specialized business services in order to develop their ideas and grow their businesses, one of our biggest challenges in our country. Graduates of these programs can present superior investment opportunities for venture capital funds, attracting more investors and more capital.

Budget 2013 announced \$60 million over five years to help outstanding and high potential incubator and accelerator organizations expand their services to entrepreneurs to be delivered through, I think, one of the best programs through the Government of Canada, the National Research Council's industrial research assistance program, IRAP.

*Business of Supply*

Our most recent budget will boost this investment by providing an additional \$40 million over four years, bringing the program's total funding to \$100 million.

Working together, we will strengthen Canada's venture capital system and help promising Canadian firms not only to launch their innovations, but unleash their unlimited potential.

These programs not only strengthen Canada's capacity for world leading research, but they will also help improve the commercialization of Canadian innovations. The research they support and the researchers they develop will help sustain Canada's economic advantage well into the future.

Since 2006, sustaining Canada's economic advantage has been a priority of our government.

I ask the Minister of Finance to highlight what the government is doing to support advanced research and specifically how our record and our plan compares with the plans of the other parties.

• (2200)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, economic action plan 2014 reinforces Canada's economic strength with new support for research and innovation, totalling more than \$1.6 billion over the next five years. The government plays an important role in Canada's science, technology and innovation system. Since 2006, the government has provided more than \$11 billion in new resources to support basic and applied research, talent development, research infrastructure and innovative activities in the private sector, including more effectively aligning federal support for research with business needs.

To be successful in the highly competitive global economy, Canada must continue to improve its ability to develop high quality, talented people to perform world-class research and generating new breakthrough ideas.

The government has increased support for these activities in each year since 2006, even during the global recession. In 2013, this support exceeded \$3 billion for research and post-secondary education alone.

Economic action plan 2014 builds on these commitments with the creation of the new Canada first research excellence fund. The fund, which is based on the principles of openness, excellence and peer review, will provide what many in the research community have asked for in recent years: significant, flexible resources to further drive Canada's post-secondary research institutions to become the world's best.

Let me quote the president of McMaster University, who said:

It's an exceptional government investment...Countries that have made extraordinary leaps in research and innovation have made these types of landmark investments. For Canada to now have this type of support from the government will allow our country to compete and collaborate at the highest levels.

Canada has a rich research tradition that has been boosted by the significant investments our government has made since 2006. Our government's investments in science, technology and innovation have helped ensure Canada leads the G7 in post-secondary research expenditures as a share of the economy, and our commitment remains strong.

In economic action plan 2014 alone, we announced the largest annual increase in funding for research through the granting councils in over a decade. This includes \$46 million a year on an ongoing basis.

The investments we have included in this year's budget will promote Canada's economic advantage both now and for many years to come. This is where our government and the Liberal Party differ. Where our government makes wise, strategic and targeted investments that will lead to greater prosperity for Canadians, the Liberal leader threatens unrestricted higher spending.

As both the member for Edmonton—Leduc and I have noted, on budget day this year there were numerous universities and other educational institutions that affirmed their support. At the exact same time, the leader of the Liberal Party was live on television saying the exact opposite. Instead of supporting the road to balanced books, he attempted to persuade Canadians that the budget would somehow balance itself. In my many years working in the finance sector, I must say this is a first. I have never heard that budgets can magically balance themselves.

Despite the Liberal leader's new philosophy, we remain on track to balancing the budget in 2015, while continuing to make important investments to attract, educate and train the world's top research talent. We believe that with the initiatives we announced this year and all our budgets that came before it, Canadian visionaries and entrepreneurs will have all the support they will need to be world leaders.

**Mr. James Rajotte:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate that response by the minister and all the investments in this area.

If I have time, I would like to perhaps pose another question for the Minister of State for Finance with respect to financial literacy. I was very pleased when he made the recent announcement that Jane Rooney would be the Financial Literacy Leader in Canada. She has done outstanding work at the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada for years and that organization has done excellent work. I encourage all Canadians to visit that website to see the amount of work it has done for individuals, families, schools and other such organizations.

Perhaps the Minister of State for Finance could indicate where the government is going in terms of this path. This is obviously an issue of concern to many Canadians, but it is something that I introduced a motion on this topic to Parliament in 2010 and was very gratified it was adopted by the House nearly unanimously. I am very pleased with the government's follow-up with respect to that specific motion. Could the Minister of State for Finance indicate where the government is going with respect to financial literacy?

• (2205)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for Edmonton—Leduc.

*Business of Supply*

The member is correct; our government has demonstrated an unprecedented commitment to enhancing financial literacy here in Canada, and I think he can rightfully take much of the credit for the measures this government has taken. As chair of the finance committee, stepping forward with proposals through his own private member's bill, he was the push for our government to do some of the good things we have done.

We want all Canadians to have the skills they need to make solid financial choices that benefit them, just as our government has been making the right financial choices for Canada. We know that understanding the basics, such as budgeting, saving, credit, and debt, will help Canadians keep their finances in good shape.

We created the task force on financial literacy, dedicated November as Financial Literacy Month, and designated new resources to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada. As well, the member is also right that we appointed a very good financial literacy leader, Ms. Jane Rooney, to help with the strategy across Canada.

The financial literacy leader's mandate is to collaborate and coordinate activities with stakeholders, ultimately strengthening the financial understanding of all Canadians. The financial literacy leader will also lead consultations on the development of a national financial literacy strategy that, among other things, will specifically focus on the needs of seniors. We know there are other groups as well that are vulnerable.

There is much to be done with youth. We have seen some of the things that schools across this country are doing. Again, it is because of much of what our government has moved forward on, and the member for Edmonton—Leduc can take much of that credit.

We are excited about the financial literacy in our country. We know that it is going to be a challenge and we are also excited by the number of stakeholder groups that have come forward to help us in this endeavour.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that an annual income of \$12,500 per year from CPP is enough for a Canadian senior to live on? If not, does he agree with his predecessor who wrote to the provinces saying that we should consider a modest phased-in and fully-funded enhancement to define benefits under the CPP?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, our government understands the importance of a secure and dignified retirement for people who have worked so hard to build this country. We have lowered taxes and brought forward new incentives for Canadians to save for retirement, including pension income splitting for seniors, pooled registered pension plans, and tax-free savings accounts, and launched consultations on a new target benefit pension plan.

Since 2008, about \$2.8 billion in annual tax relief has been provided to seniors and pensioners, including increasing the age credit, the pension income credit—

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Okay, that will have to do it.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** —increasing the age of—

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Order. We are moving on to the next question.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, there should be some adjustment for time.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** We are in fact doing that.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants has the floor.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, does the minister agree with the following quote from Finance Canada's briefing materials?

In the long run, expanding the CPP would bring economic benefits. Higher savings will lead to higher income in the future and higher consumption possibilities for seniors.

• (2210)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, Canadians simply cannot afford to pay higher CPP payroll taxes, especially during a fragile economic recovery. That is why we have brought forward pension income splitting, pooled registered retirement plans, and tax-free savings accounts and launched extensive consultations on a new target benefit retirement plan.

The result of all of this is that poor seniors represent a smaller proportion of the population than poor Canadians overall.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, why is it okay for the minister to pad his books with higher EI premiums to create a phony surplus on the eve of an election, but it is not okay to gradually increase CPP premiums to help Canadians have a better retirement?

Why are higher payroll premiums okay for Conservative politics but not okay for Canadian pensioners?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we understand that small business is a cornerstone of our economy, creating jobs that support families in all our communities.

That is why we introduced a three-year freeze on EI rates. That will leave \$660 million in the pockets of job creators and workers this year alone.

What is more, beginning in 2017, premiums will be set according to a seven-year break-even rate. This will ensure that premium revenues are no higher than the actual costs of the EI program.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, the minister is freezing EI premiums at a higher rate until after the election.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** It is two years after.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** I should say two years after the election.

Mr. Chair, 57% of Canadians believe the next generation will be worse off than they are today. Why does the minister believe that is the case? Why do Canadians believe that?



*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I am happy to report that Canadians are better off by over 10%, and poorer Canadians by 14% than in the previous 10-year period.

Canadians have enjoyed the strongest income growth in the G7. Canada is the only G7 country to have fully recovered business investment lost during the recession.

From an intergenerational perspective, mobility for Canadians is greater than in many of the other countries that we compare ourselves to. Canada, with half the debt-to-GDP ratio of the major industrial countries, is in a very strong position to do better for Canadians.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, let me help the minister. He seems out of touch with the realities faced by young Canadians and their parents.

The reality is that the Canadian economy has lost about 260,000 jobs for young Canadians since 2008. That is one of the reasons why Canadian parents are worried about their children's future.

TD Bank estimates it is a \$22-billion cost to the Canadian economy, the sustained youth underemployment and unemployment. CIBC economics is using the term “lost generation” of Canadian youth.

Does the minister recognize that some economists are linking the growth in the number of low-skilled temporary foreign workers under the Conservatives with higher youth unemployment in Canada and wage suppression for Canadian youth?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the government invests over \$300 million annually to address youth employment challenges through the youth employment strategy, which provides skill development and work experience for youth at risk, summer students, and recent post-secondary graduates.

Our economic action plan announced that the government will review the youth employment strategy to better align it with the evolving realities of the job market, and ensure Canadian investments provide young Canadians with real life experience.

Canada will continue to have one of the lowest youth unemployment rates in the G7. We have helped 2.1 million youth obtain skills, jobs, and training. We recognize more has to be done, and that is why we are helping young Canadians get the skills they need, helping young entrepreneurs start more businesses, and supporting more paid internships for graduates.

• (2215)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, last summer we saw some of the worst summer job numbers for Canadian youth in 40 years.

At the same time, in fact about a year ago, the government was running economic action plan ads during the playoffs that cost about \$100,000 for a 30-second ad to advertise a program that did not even exist, the job skills program.

Does the minister feel that it makes sense to spend \$100,000 advertising a program that does not exist, or would it make more sense to create 32 summer jobs for students who are desperately in need of them?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I said, we have initiated significant programs for youth. We announced that funding would be reallocated from within the youth employment strategy to support 3,000 internships in high-demand fields and 1,000 internships in small and medium-sized enterprises.

These initiatives complement recent and ongoing investments to provide better and timely labour information to inform young people about fields of study for in-demand occupations. To help students make better choices about their education, it is important for them to have that information.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, does the minister feel it was good public policy for his government to tighten mortgage rules, shorten mortgage amortization limits, and eliminate 40-year mortgages with no down payment?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I said earlier, the government is moving to reduce the exposure of Canadian taxpayers to the mortgage market and to reduce consumer indebtedness. The reduction of the amortization period from 40 years to 35 years to 30 years to 25 years is consistent with that.

What we do not want to see is a real estate bubble. There are a number of measures the government has taken in that regard, in addition to the amortization. Requiring a minimum down payment of 5% for new government-backed insurance mortgages, progressively lowering the maximum amount Canadians can borrow, and—

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Order, please.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, the minister agrees with reducing the amortization from 40 years and getting rid of 40-year mortgages with no down payment, which must mean that he disagreed with his government's decision to actually introduce 40-year mortgages with no down payment in budget 2006, which created, by the first half of 2008, half the mortgages issued in Canada being 40-year mortgages.

Speaking of housing bubbles, we really need good data. CIBC's deputy chief economist, Ben Tal, issued a report recently saying that we need better data on the Canadian housing market and that we need to increase funding for Statistics Canada to get that type of data for Canadian consumers and investors.

Does the minister agree that we need better information communicated to Canadian investors and homeowners?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I find it a bit puzzling that the hon. member seems to be favouring an increase in the amortization rate from the current 25 years to 40 years. I am not sure what he thinks the economic consequence of that would be, but it is certainly not the direction we feel it would be prudent to go at this time.

Economic circumstances change, and interest rates change. It is appropriate, therefore, for amortization to change as well when the economic data warrants it.

*Business of Supply*

The IMF has recently noted that the macroprudential measures introduced in Canada over the past few years have been effective in moderating the pace of household debt accumulation, cooling the housing market.

We believe that the initiatives taken by the government since 2008 indicate our concern that the housing sector be well regulated, because it is an important source of strength in the economy. While conditions in the housing market remain firm, housing market activity has moderated, and this partly reflects a series of proactive measures taken by the government.

● (2220)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Chair, the minister continues to attack his predecessor's and his government's decisions to loosen mortgage rules in Canada. They introduced, for the first time ever, 40-year mortgages, with no down payment.

We as Liberals are actually quite happy that he has gone back to a Liberal policy of 25-year amortizations after realizing that what they did was reckless and has created, potentially, a housing bubble in Canada, if we look at what *The Economist* magazine and Paul Krugman and others are saying about the Canadian housing market.

Does the minister agree with *The Economist* magazine's recent assessment of Canada when it cites the IMF projecting that growth will be 2.3% this year, behind Britain and the United States? Our employment rate is still below pre-crisis levels. We rank fifth in the G7 for job creation since 2008, only ahead of Italy and the U.S. *The Economist* is saying that Canada's post-crisis glow is dimming.

Does the minister not realize that, in fact, the status quo is not working? A lot of Canadians are falling behind, and we are falling behind our peers in the G7.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we are very comfortable that Canada will continue to grow at a strong rate and we are very comfortable that our policies will result in a budgetary surplus next year. We have posted one of the strongest performances among the G7 over the recovery and the recession, both in terms of output growth and job growth. Data recently released by the OECD show that Canada's employment rate, the percentage of people 15 to 64 who are employed, is the second-highest in the G7. Moreover, Canada has had one of the strongest job creation performances in the G7 over the recovery.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** That will complete that round.

Now we will move to the hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to be here this evening with the minister. I would like the opportunity to discuss our government's commitment to opening new markets for Canadian exports.

Over the next several minutes, I am going to provide an overview of our government's actions that have opened new markets for Canadian businesses, allowing them to thrive and compete in the global economy, much like the Montreal Canadiens did tonight as they opened a new market called the "conference championship", so it is good to see that.

Through Canada's economic action plan, our government has delivered remarkable economic results for Canadians following the

deepest global economic recession since the 1930s. We have provided a balance between stimulating our economy for the short term, balancing the budget in the medium term, and building our capacity in the long term.

Contrary to what the opposition leaders may believe, our country remains in a very enviable position. Since the depth of the recession, over one million net new jobs have been created, most of them in high-wage industries. There are now over 600,000 more jobs than at the pre-recession peak, which is among the strongest job-growth records among G7 countries over the course of the recovery. Almost 90% of all jobs created since July 2009 have been full-time positions, with close to 85% of those coming from the private sector. It is clear that Canada's economic action plan has established a solid foundation that has allowed Canadian businesses to create jobs and drive economic growth.

That said, our government is under no illusions that our work here is finished. We have some major challenges ahead. The global economy remains fragile, with growth in advanced economies slower than expected. Canada is at risk from the financial instability beyond our shores. Indeed, the head of the IMF recently noted that the great recession is not yet completely over for many countries, noting specifically:

...that does not mean that the crisis is over and our mission accomplished.

She argued that the crisis will not be over until the flow of credit from banks in southern Europe is repaired, adding:

In addition, the permanently low inflation brings additional risks.

Given this environment, our government understands that Canadians' standard of living and future prosperity depend on growing trade and investment. That is why Canada's economic action plan actively pursues new trade and investment opportunities, particularly with large, dynamic, and fast-growing economies. I was particularly encouraged to hear our Minister of International Trade speak today in question period about his upcoming trade missions to China and to Africa, as the hard-working minister continues to develop our trade markets around the world.

Our government has pursued the most ambitious trade agenda in Canadian history. Since 2006, our government has increased the number of free trade arrangements Canada has from five countries to an astounding 43 countries.

Looking forward, the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement would eliminate an additional \$750 million in annual tariffs on imports from the EU. The Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement is by far Canada's most ambitious trade initiative, deeper in ambition and broader in scope than the historic North American free trade agreement, which we all refer to as NAFTA. In fact, the comprehensive economic and trade agreement would add more than 80,000 new jobs to the Canadian economy.

*Business of Supply*

John Manley, president and CEO of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, had this to say:

A strong and ambitious trade agenda continues to be at the core of this government's strategy for jobs and economic growth.... On both sides of the Atlantic, the CETA will create jobs, spur investment and promote economic growth.

Indeed, this historic agreement will produce substantial gains for many of Canada's key sectors, generating significant benefits for businesses, workers, and workers' families. Almost 94% of E.U. agricultural tariff lines will be duty free when CETA comes into effect.

I would be remiss if I did not talk a bit about the impact this would have in New Brunswick as well. When we look at some of our major sectors in New Brunswick, we see that just in the service sector, approximately 75% of the provincial GDP in New Brunswick comes from the service sector, and it employs over 277,000 people.

● (2225)

Access to the European service economy, which is valued at \$12.1 trillion, opens up a significant market to auditing, architecture, engineering, finance, investments, software development, health and life sciences, and aerospace development and defence.

I should also indicate that between the exports of fish and seafood products, as well as value-added forestry, and New Brunswick's world-class agriculture and agri-food products, we are talking somewhere in the order of about 30,000 direct jobs just in those three sectors in the New Brunswick economy. I have probably one of the largest per capita potato-producing regions in the country, with two large McCain Foods plants. The tariffs on frozen potato products going to the EU is currently 17.6%. This trade agreement is significant for New Brunswick. It is significant for those major industries. When we look at the value-added wood products again, plywood, veneer products, there is a 10% duty. This means significant benefit to New Brunswick, not just in sectors but clear across the country.

Our government has successfully negotiated an outcome that allows Canadian exporters to benefit from tariff-free access, as I have indicated, making Canadian products cheaper and more competitive, and providing our exporters a significant advantage over their competitors. In this deal we are ahead of the U.S. in getting entry into that market.

In addition to opening new markets in Europe for Canadian exporters, we are also concentrating our sights on the lucrative and fast-growing Asian market. For example, we recently reached a landmark agreement with South Korea. This is Canada's first trade agreement in this Asia-Pacific region and will provide new access for Canadian businesses and workers to the world's fifteenth largest economy and the fourth largest in Asia. South Korea is not only a major economic player in its own right and a key market for Canada, it also serves as a gateway for Canadian businesses and workers into the dynamic Asia-Pacific region as a whole. The agreement will eliminate an additional \$176 million in annual tariffs on imports from Korea.

Canada is also actively engaged in the trans-Pacific partnership negotiations that will open new markets and deepen our ties with several Asian economies, including Japan. Canada was built on trade and now more than ever before we are looking to diversify and

deepen our trade relationships. Unlike the opposition, our government understands that pursuit of free trade is key to our growth agenda. Too often, as we often hear in this House, growth policy is characterized by only fiscal stimulus. Growth policy is dictated by trade and a low-tax environment for our businesses.

In our view, a diverse and balanced growth agenda includes structural reforms, including trade liberalization, that allow for Canadian businesses and their workers to compete more effectively in global markets. With one of the most successful economies in the world today, Canada offers many advantages as an investment destination and partner for global business. Canada's competitiveness, excellence, depth of talent, innovation, and creativity offer a great environment to potential investors from around the globe.

Our government remains firmly committed to supporting Canadian jobs and fostering long-term prosperity for Canadians and their families. The low-tax approach I just mentioned in Canada's economic action plan continues to be a beacon to other nations around the world in a time of global economic uncertainty.

In 2007, prior to the global crisis, Canada passed a bold tax reduction plan designed to brand Canada as a low-tax destination for business investment and we have since been recognized the world over for just that.

The KPMG publication "Competitive Alternatives 2012" rigorously analyzed the impact of federal, state, provincial, and municipal taxes on business operations. KPMG concluded that Canada's total business tax costs are more than 40% lower than those in the United States, and confirmed that Canada has the lowest business tax costs in the G7.

Ernst & Young has noted that Canada has become one of the top five destinations in the world to start a business, saying:

Canada has emerged as a real leader in fostering an entrepreneurial culture.

[We offer] a supportive tax and regulatory environment for entrepreneurs.

Canada's government has been highly supportive of entrepreneurs, providing regulatory and tax regimes that have enabled start-ups and growing companies to flourish.

We have also been recognized by Bloomberg as the second best country in the world to do business.

● (2230)

Along with our support for free and open trade, the government continues to support the low-tax environment that is required to create jobs and economic growth in any condition. That being said, we support low taxes; we do not support higher taxes in the form of any kind of carbon tax.

*Business of Supply*

Our Conservative government understands that Canada's competitive tax system plays a crucial role in supporting economic growth. These tax reductions leave more money for the private sector to reinvest in machinery, equipment, information technology and other physical capital that will further boost the recent productivity gains we have seen in businesses across Canada, including the Forest Products Association of Canada, which has experienced a 2.5% productivity growth.

That said, could the Minister of Finance please tell us how Canadians will benefit from various trade agreements that are part of the government's economic action plan?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, Canada's economic action plan includes measures to open new markets to Canadian exports, which will create jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity for Canadians. These measures benefit not only Canadian businesses, which create jobs and keep our economy strong, but they also benefit Canadian consumers and families.

Our government is focused on creating jobs and opportunities for hard-working Canadians in every region of the country. Providing businesses, especially the crucial small and medium-size enterprises, or SMEs, which employ so many Canadians, with new and improved market access so they can expand and compete globally is a key part of our government's pro trade plan, the most ambitious in our nation's history.

Through CETA, our government is creating new and historic opportunities in Europe for agricultural exporters from across Canada. Indeed, Canadian workers in every region, including the Atlantic provinces, in such sectors as fish and seafood, chemicals and plastics, forest products, advanced manufacturing, ICT, metals and minerals, and agriculture and agri-foods, to name just a few, will benefit from increased access to the lucrative EU market.

Another agreement in Canada's pro trade plan is the Canada-India comprehensive economic partnership agreement, CEPA, which remains a key priority. There has been good progress in all areas under negotiation and Canada seeks to conclude negotiations with India as soon as possible. A trade agreement with India would eliminate or reduce tariffs on goods and liberalize trade and services. When it is in place, CEPA will play an important role in boosting trade and investment, creating more jobs and increasing prosperity for Canadians.

More recently, one of our major accomplishments with respect to our trade agenda has been the new free trade agreement reached with South Korea, Canada's first in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region. The Canada-Korea free trade agreement will provide Canadian businesses and workers with unprecedented access to South Korea, directly benefiting Canada's SMEs.

Specific measures that will help SMEs to access the South Korean market include: eliminating tariffs, locking in fair and predictable conditions for businesses and ensuring non-discriminatory treatment; that is that each country treats the other companies and goods the same way as it treats its own. The agreement will result in increased trade opportunities through tariff elimination in a broad range of sectors, such as industrial goods, for example, aerospace, information communication technology, metals and minerals, chemicals, plastics, pharmaceuticals, industrial machinery, cosmetics, agri

products, forestry and value added products. The agreement will provide Canadians with access to new markets.

• (2235)

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Mr. Chair, in addition to creating the wealth and wealth for citizens working in these businesses, could he share with us briefly what the government has done to help consumers in Canada?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, our government has a consumer first policy and we have pursued that in a number of ways. However, before I get into that, I just wanted to complete a couple of comments I wanted to make with respect to free trade.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Order, please. Unfortunately, we have run out of time for that. We had time for a brief response. Perhaps the minister will have an opportunity, though, in responses to other questions.

We are moving on to the next round of debate. The hon. member for Québec.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Chair, to begin, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Sudbury.

Because the Minister of Finance is also the minister for Toronto, my colleague from Parkdale—High Park asked him if he knew how much gridlock is costing the City of Toronto. We know it is a problem.

However, the minister did not answer the question. In 2013, the C. D. Howe Institute estimated that traffic gridlock costs \$11 billion a year. That is absolutely incredible. Since the Minister of Finance seems to be suggesting that he is more familiar with consumer affairs, let us see if that is the case.

My question is simple. Can the minister tell us how much Canadians are paying to withdraw their own money from ATMs each year?

• (2240)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, Canadian consumers deserve access to credit on fair and transparent terms.

According to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, Canadians have more low-cost or no-cost banking options than ever before. As was stated in the throne speech, the government will take additional measures to extend no-cost banking options to all Canadians.

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Chair, my question required only a single-sentence answer. Canadians pay \$420 million a year to withdraw their own money from ATMs. It is simple.

*Business of Supply*

In 2011, a U.S. senate committee studied the issue of transaction fees in the financial industry. This report is better known as the Durbin report.

Is the minister familiar with this report?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, in our plan we reduced cheque hold periods and required banks to provide immediate access to the first \$100 deposited by cheque.

Furthermore, we more than doubled the maximum penalty—from \$200,000 to \$0.5 million—for financial institutions that violate the consumer protection provisions. We banned negative option billing for financial products and made mortgage insurance more transparent and easy to understand, by strengthening disclosure and other measures.

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Chair, my question was simple. I wanted to know whether the Minister of Finance of Canada was familiar with the famous Durbin report, but I guess not, since he is avoiding the question. I suppose that means he does not know the answer.

Does the minister know the estimated administrative cost of an ATM transaction? In fact, what Canadians do is quite simple: they go to an ATM to conduct a transaction. All I want to know is the cost. I want a single figure. What is the cost of one transaction?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as everyone knows, if you withdraw money from your own bank, there are no fees.

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Chair, according to the famous Durbin report, it costs 36¢ to withdraw that money. The Minister of Finance may have confused this American report with withdrawing money from an ATM in the U.K.

Could the minister tell us what percentage of ATM withdrawals are free in the U.K.? The minister seems to believe that it is free. However, everyone who withdraws money tells me that they have to pay a lot of fees for that.

What percentage of ATM withdrawals are free in the U.K.?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we live in Canada, not the United Kingdom. If the hon. member wants that information, we can do the research and give her an answer.

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Chair, in Canada, people pay \$420 million to withdraw their own money from ATMs. Contrary to what the minister says, it is not free. In the United Kingdom, however, the truth is that 97% of ATMs are free. That is not the case in Canada.

Credit card debt is a big problem in Canada. Can the minister tell us the aggregate unpaid balance that Canadians are carrying on their Visas and MasterCard?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, in 2010, we introduced new consumer protection rules. We mandated a minimum 21-day interest-free grace period on all credit card purchases. If a cardholder pays less than the full balance owing, card issuers must allocate payments to the balance with the highest interest rate first or distribute the payments based on the relative proportion of each. In addition, the cardholder's consent is required for credit limit increases.

●(2245)

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Chair, I will be brief. All I am asking for is a yes, a no or a figure. It is no more complicated than that. The minister is just going on and on.

The answer is simple. According to the Coalition des associations de consommateurs du Québec the total was \$43 billion in 1991, \$139 billion in 2001 and reached \$332 billion in 2011. When we consult these people, they give us the figures. The minister could have replied in 10 seconds, but he did not.

I will give him one last chance. Canadian retailers have to pay credit card transaction fees that are among the highest in the world. Can the minister give us the annual cost, for Canadian businesses, of the transaction fees for credit cards?

I do not want a long speech. I want the answer to be a number. I am relying on the knowledge of the Minister of Finance of Canada.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, she is asking the Minister of Finance questions that have very detailed answers. I can tell her about the government's policy.

The government is concerned about high credit card acceptance costs. We heard the concerns of small businesses in Canada. That is why we created a code of conduct. It has been applauded by consumers and industry groups, especially small businesses. We continually monitor compliance with the rules, and we work with small businesses and consumers to ensure that these two groups are heard.

[English]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Chair, the minister is touting a voluntary code that is actually toothless and has done nothing, because we just heard him admit that the rates are still going up.

I would like to hear from the minister why it is that they continue to do a lot of talking about protecting small businesses and making sure that they are going to do something about merchant fees but have refused to act, except to put in a voluntary code that the small business communities across the country are still saying is toothless, does nothing to protect them, and is costing them \$4.2 billion a year. I would like to hear the minister's response to that.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I have said, Canadian consumers deserve access to credit on fair and transparent terms. That is why we have taken action to protect Canadians using credit cards by strengthening the position of credit card users by imposing mandatory 21-day interest-free grace periods on credit cards, banning unsolicited credit card checks, and requiring consent for credit limit increases. We are better protecting Canadians using pre-paid credit cards with increased transparency and new consumer protection rules and are banning fees for the first year.

Our government also takes the issue of fraud and consumer protection very seriously.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Chair, let me explain to the minister that his answer to that was on the consumer side. What we were talking about a minute ago was the small business side. The minister really has to get an understanding of which side of the credit card issue we are talking about right now, because the Competition Tribunal said in a recent decision that the credit card processing fees and the practices of Visa and MasterCard are having an adverse effect on competition in the market. They punted the issue back to Parliament for action, so I would like to know if the minister agrees with the Competition Tribunal that the practices of the credit card companies are anti-competitive. I would like to hear an answer on the small business side this time.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the small business sector is extraordinarily important because it generates more employment than any other sector.

We are working with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to look at these important issues. We have made regulations on credit agreements, including lines of credit and credit cards, and these rules limit business practices that are not beneficial to consumers. They require provision of clear and timely information to Canadians about credit products.

We are working with small business to make sure that the impact on small business is appropriate with the competitive circumstances.

• (2250)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Chair, the minister's initial response was that small businesses are important to the government. Why, then, did it cut the small business hiring tax credit?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we have reduced the tax on small business to 11% and we have taken other measures that help small business, which is why the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is so supportive of the actions of our government. Keeping taxes low is precisely what small businesses need. Avoiding increases in EI rates is another important factor in protecting jobs across the country.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Chair, I doubt that 60,000 businesses that just lost their opportunity to apply for this tax credit that used it before would agree with the minister.

In terms of lost revenue, could the minister tell us what the estimated annual cost of the hiring credit for small businesses was?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I said, we have taken a number of steps to produce tax relief for Canadian businesses by reducing the general federal corporate tax to 15% from over 22%, eliminating the federal capital tax, reducing small business rates to 11%, and increasing the amount of eligible income for the lower rate to \$400,000 in 2007 and then to \$500,000 in 2009. We have increased the lifetime capital gains exemption for qualifying small businesses shares to \$750,000. We have taken steps to reduce the compliance burden on businesses by reducing the frequency of various tax filings, eliminating retail sales taxes in Ontario and P.E.I. in harmonization with the—

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** The hon. member for Sudbury.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** So the easy answer to that, Mr. Chair, was \$225 million each year, but let us contrast that with the government's no-strings-attached corporate tax cuts. The estimate of that from the PBO is \$1.85 billion. Therefore, it is \$225 million to help the small

businesses that are creating most of the jobs in this country or just giving a free-for-all of \$1.85 billion to corporations.

Could the minister explain why the government is actually not supporting small businesses in Canada as it continues to cut any type of hiring credits and is not acting on any of the merchant fees? It is actually starting to get despicable.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** That will be the last question in that round.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as I was saying, we have taken a number of steps to reduce the tax compliance burden for Canadian businesses.

We are amending the Canada-Ontario tax collection agreement to provide for federal administration of Ontario's corporate taxes and implementing administrative and service improvements by the Canada Revenue Agency.

We have made tangible progress in implementing the red tape reduction action plan, including the one-for-one rule. We have already saved Canadian businesses 98,000 hours in time spent dealing with red tape.

We have frozen EI premiums for three years.

We have fostered an innovative economy by providing more than \$11 billion in new resources to support basic and applied research talent development, research infrastructure, and innovative ideas.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Chair, we have heard today about our government's outstanding record of achievement with respect to creating jobs and economic growth. I would like to dedicate my time in exploring in more detail how we are building on these results by helping to connect Canadians with available jobs.

Despite our excellent employment performance, our government is constantly looking for ways to make it better. We find it unacceptable that many Canadians are still out of work, or underutilized, at a time when skills and labour shortages are emerging in certain sectors and regions.

As long as there are Canadians looking for work, we as a government cannot sit on our laurels and must take action. Indeed, many employers agree with us and continue to identify the shortage of skilled labour as an impediment to growth. In fact, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce lists skills and shortages as the number one barrier to Canada's competitiveness.

*Business of Supply*

Faced with this challenge, we have taken effective and concrete action to support the development of a skilled, mobile and productive workforce.

In the last fiscal year, 2013-14 alone, our government has transferred \$2.7 billion to support labour market programming with \$1.95 billion to provinces and territories, through labour market development agreements; \$500 million to provinces and territories through labour market agreements included in budget 2007; and \$218 million to provinces through labour market agreements for persons with disabilities.

What is more, we are investing over \$10 billion annually in support of post-secondary education, which includes providing students with financial assistance through Canada student loans and Canada student grants, and specific programming targeted to first nations and Inuit students.

Since 2006, our Conservative government has provided support for skills training for youth through the youth employment strategy, with investments of over \$340 million per year.

On the other end of the spectrum, our government has also taken action to support the labour market participation of older Canadians who wish to remain in the workforce. Budget 2011 extended the targeted initiative for older workers, a federal-provincial-territorial employment programs, providing assistance and offering activities to provide the employability of unemployed workers aged 55 and over.

Finally, we are supporting opportunities for aboriginal peoples through annual investments of \$438 million, including support for post-secondary education, as well as project-specific training that responds to the demands of the Canadian labour market.

These are all important measures, but the real game change in our efforts to connect Canadians with available jobs has to be the introduction of a Canada jobs grant. By ensuring that federal funding responds to the higher needs of employers and by giving them the opportunity to participate meaningfully as partners in skills training, this initiative is transforming skills training in Canada.

The Canada jobs grant could provide up to \$15,000 per person for training costs, including tuition and training material, which include up to \$10,000 in federal contribution with employers contributing on average one-third of the cost of the training.

After consulting extensively with employers and provinces on the design of the grant, Canadians will be able to take advantage of it by July 1, offering them real support toward improved employment and earning prospects.

As important as this milestone is, economic action plan 2014 went one step further by creating the Canada apprentice loan to help registered apprentices with the costs of their training. It will do so by expanding the Canada student loans program to provide apprentices registered in Red Seal trades with access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year.

Economic action plan 2014 also introduces the flexibility and innovation in the apprenticeship technical training pilot project to expand the use of innovation approaches to apprentice technical training.

● (2255)

With this initiative, we are continuing to work with provinces and territories to harmonize apprenticeship systems and reduce barriers to certification in the skilled trades, so apprentices can more easily work and train where the jobs are.

To further support apprentices, economic action plan 2014 takes steps to increase awareness of the existing financial supports available to apprentices through the employment insurance program while they are technical training.

It also announced that our Conservative government would improve the youth employment strategy to align it with evolving realities of the job market, and to ensure federal investments in youth employment would provide young Canadians with real life work experience in high-demand fields, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics and the skilled trades.

Although Canada boasts high levels of post-secondary achievement, the transition to a first job can be challenging. This is why economic action plan 2014 also dedicates \$40 million toward the supporting of up to 3,000 apprenticeships across the country in these high-demand fields.

The Prime Minister Harper recently announced the details of the initiative at Fanshawe College, a great institute near my riding of Chatham-Kent—Essex. Lasting between 6 and 12 months, these internships will give the participants the opportunity to gain the real life work experience and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace now and in the future.

To facilitate the linkages between the small and medium-sized employers and youth, we are reallocating \$15 million annually within the youth employment strategy to support up to 1,000 full-time internships for recent post-secondary graduates and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Last but not least, economic action plan 2014 will invest \$11.8 million over two years and \$3.3 million per year ongoing to launch an enhanced job matching service to ensure Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs that match their skills in the local area.

The enhanced job match service will provide job seekers with modern and reliable tools to find jobs that match their skills and provide employers with better tools to look for qualified Canadians. Through a secure authenticated process, registered job seekers and employers will be automatically matched on the basis of skills, knowledge and experience.

*Business of Supply*

Before I conclude, I would like to address one issue that is a concern to our government and all Canadians, and that is the abuse of the temporary foreign worker program. This is something we cannot tolerate, and any allegations of abuse of the program will be vigorously investigated.

Our message to employers is clear and unequivocal: Canadians must always be first in line for available jobs. As we announced in economic action plan 2014, our government will continue to pursue significant reforms to the temporary foreign worker program to ensure that employers make greater efforts to recruit and train Canadians, and that it is only used as a last and limited resort when Canadians are not available.

These are just some of the central initiatives that will continue to drive our government's jobs and growth agenda, and connect Canadians with available jobs.

I am proud of this record, and would like to thank the hon. members for offering the opportunity to discuss it today. By helping Canadians acquire the skills that will get them hired or help them get better jobs, we are investing directly and effectively in our country's greatest asset, our people. The return on this investment is not just helping individuals, but also supporting their families, communities and our whole community.

Would the Minister of Finance take some time to tell the House what concrete action the government is taking to help connect Canadians with available jobs?

● (2300)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, while many sectors of the economy and regions of the country have skilled job shortages, too many people remain unemployed. Many employers continue to identify the shortage of skilled labour as an impediment to growth. To overcome this challenge, our economic action plan 2013 announced the reform of the three major labour market transfers to provinces and territories in order to transform support for skills training and help to ensure that federal funding responds to the hiring needs of employers. We have made significant progress toward meeting this goal.

First, the core labour market agreements are being reformed with the introduction of the Canada job grant. They are accordingly being renamed the Canada job fund. This will encourage greater employer participation in skills training decisions and ensure that training is better aligned with job opportunities, particularly in sectors facing skills mismatches and labour shortages.

Agreements in principle have been reached with all provinces and territories on the delivery of the Canada jobs grant, which is expected to be available to Canadian employers by July 1 of this year. Including employers' contributions, the grant could provide up to \$15,000 per person toward training costs for a new or better job.

Second, the long-standing labour market agreements for persons with disabilities are being reformed to ensure federal funding supports programing that better helps Canadians with disabilities to obtain the skills they need to fill available jobs. These new agreements will require all jurisdictions to set up a formal process to engage employers and disability community organizers in identifying key labour market barriers and opportunities for persons with disabilities and set corresponding priorities for programing. This will

not only support better employment prospects for persons with disabilities, but it will also better meet the employment needs of businesses.

We are also working to reform the \$1.95 billion a year labour market development agreements with all provinces and territories to reorient training toward labour market demand, as we have with the other federal labour market transfers. Taken together, these renewed labour market agreements will be fundamental in helping to better connect Canadians with available jobs and advance our record of achievement in creating jobs and growth.

We are also taking significant action to that end outside the agreements. For example, our government is creating the Canada apprentice loan to help registered apprentices with the cost of their training. We will also improve the employment insurance system to ensure those on EI will receive more up-to-date information. We are also investing in an enhanced job matching service to ensure that Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs that match their skills in their local area. We are reforming the temporary foreign worker program to ensure that Canadians get the first crack at available jobs and employers hiring temporary foreign workers have a plan to transition to the Canadian workforce.

These are important areas where our Conservative government is making real progress in helping connect Canadians with available jobs while advancing our record of achievement in supporting jobs and growth. While the opposition continues to vote against every one of these job creating measures, our government will stay the course and focus on what matters to Canadians.

● (2305)

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Mr. Chair, I wonder if I could possibly give the minister a break and switch over to the Minister of State for Finance.

There has been a lot of talk about the increase of premiums on CPP. I wonder if he could tell the House why that is a bad idea and why it is something that businesses cannot afford at this time.



*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Chair, again, we have said that this government does not believe now is the time to increase contribution levels on CPP. As we have travelled around the country, Canadians have not asked for increased payroll taxes. In fact, Canadians have said they believe it is important that they keep more money in their pockets. We believe that Canadians cannot afford higher payroll taxes. The economy still being in a fragile recovery, now is not the time to consider it.

We have very strong pension and retirement security programs here in Canada. We have brought forward measures like pension income splitting and pooled registered pension plans for the 60% of Canadians who do not have a workplace pension plan. We brought forward the tax-free savings account, so that Canadians can save more for their retirement. We are pleased to say that now more than nine million Canadians have invested in the tax-free savings accounts.

We have also done other things to help with pensions. We have brought forward consultations on a new target benefit plan, and we are excited about the possibility of new plans even tomorrow.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** That will finish that round.

Now we will go to the NDP and the hon. member for Victoria.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, what is the estimated total annual revenue lost to the underground economy?

• (2310)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I do not have a direct answer to that question, but we can provide an estimate for the hon. member if he would like.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the CRA website claims it is \$35 billion and after a three-year effort, there is no national strategy to combat the underground economy.

As of the most recent publicly available assessment in 2012, what is the outstanding balance in undisputed unpaid taxes?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, this is the second question in a row that should be directed at the CRA. Either the member already has it or he can get that information from speaking to the CRA directly.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the finance minister would know about unpaid taxes, but the answer the Auditor General reports is \$29 billion as of March 31.

How much Canadian money was estimated to be held in offshore tax havens as of 2013?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the government has taken a number of initiatives to address international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, and we take those matters very seriously. Since 2006, the government has introduced over 85 measures to improve the integrity of the tax system and by closing tax loopholes, strengthening tax compliance, and combatting international tax evasion our government is working to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, either the minister cannot say or will not say, but the answer, according to Statistics Canada, is that Canadian money stashed in 10 offshore tax havens hit \$170 billion last year.

What is the estimated total amount of Canadian tax revenue lost to offshore tax havens every year?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I think the member opposite is confusing a number of issues, but the offshore tax gap generally refers to federal income taxes that are not collected because of the under-reporting of foreign source investment income by Canadian individuals. By its very nature, international tax evasion is difficult to quantify since it involves people or entities deliberately and aggressively hiding money from the authorities. Estimating income from deliberately hidden or secret offshore investments is extremely difficult. Apparently, the member opposite has information that most of us do not have.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the number, of course, is between \$5 billion and \$7.8 billion lost annually.

Will the minister follow through on the 2011 platform commitment to double the annual TFSA contribution room in the next budget?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the next budget will contain the measures, which it does. In the meantime, we will be undergoing analysis and consulting with Canadians across the country.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, that was a 2011 platform commitment.

The Auditor General noted in 2012 that Finance Canada has projected the mushrooming fiscal impact of TFSAs out to the year 2050. What is the projected cost to 2050?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I am very proud of the tax-free savings account, which has provided an opportunity for millions of Canadians to shelter income from taxes. This is a very popular program. Over nine million Canadians are participating, it is very broad based, the numbers are increasing, and this is a very positive thing for those who believe, first and foremost, that individuals should keep their own money rather than give it to the government. Those who believe by default any money earned is the government's, of course, will not be happy with this program.

• (2315)

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, in December 2012, the Department of Finance refused to give the Parliamentary Budget Officer access to that information to calculate that figure himself. Will the minister reverse the decision and share the data, as the PBO has asked?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, this is, of course, a measure the party of the member opposite voted against.

*Business of Supply*

It is an extraordinarily popular measure. I do not know whether it would be the NDP's policy to actually stop this program. It would be interesting to hear from the member opposite whether the members of the NDP believe that the tax-free savings account program should be stopped. I would like to hear his answer. Yes or no.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, I asked whether the minister would reverse a decision by his department to give the Parliamentary Budget Office what it wanted to measure the impact, and apparently the answer is, I do not know.

Because money from a TFSA does not count as income for the purposes of OAS or guaranteed income supplement, wealthy individuals could qualify for these income-tested benefits. What is the projected cost to the old age security program due to the tax-free savings account up to 2050?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, as the member opposite knows, the old age security and guaranteed income supplement go to less advantaged people. In total, the two combined provide \$40 billion a year in benefits over five million beneficiaries and combined benefits of up to \$15,600 per year or a little over \$25,000 per year for couples.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the answer to the question is that it will reach an extra \$4.2 billion a year, according to the chief actuary.

Has the minister considered capping the total lifetime contributions an individual could make to TFSAs?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I understand that a party that voted against this wildly popular tax saving measure, which would provide security for Canadians in their retirement, is one the NDP would like to see capped, but that is not the decision of our government.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, how much will the Conservative cuts to old age security cost Canadian seniors by 2030, given the increase in the eligibility age from 65 to 67?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, we have introduced this measure to ensure the long-term viability of the system, given actuarial changes and the fact that Canadians are living longer and in good health. This is a step we have taken, and other countries have taken, to maintain the viability of the system to provide for benefits to seniors going forward.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the answer to that question is that it will cost \$11 billion for that program cut.

How many Canadians will face a drop of more than 20% in their standard of living when they retire, according to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, with respect to the last question, it will not cost. It will save money.

Canada has one of the strongest retirement income systems in the world. The old age security program, which includes the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement, is one pillar.

We are gradually increasing the age of eligibility to ensure the sustainability of the program. As I said, changes in the program will be phased-in starting only in April 2023, with full implementation by

January 2029, to ensure that Canadians have sufficient advance notification to plan for retirement.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the question that was asked, but never answered, was this: How many Canadians will face a drop of more than 20% in their standard of living when they retire, according to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce?

• (2320)

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, I am not sure why the member opposite is asking me what a particular bank is forecasting. I mean, if he has the information, why does he not simply tell us?

What we are trying to do with the TFSA, of course, is encourage savings. That is a critical objective and priority of our government.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, according to that bank report, well known and well publicized, 5.8 million Canadians, nearly a third of our workforce, are facing a steep decline in the standard of living on their retirement.

My next question is this. Did the Department of Finance tell the minister of state this in a report it wrote?

In the long run, expanding the CPP would bring economic benefits. Higher savings will lead to higher income in the future and higher consumption possibilities for seniors.

Did the minister know that the Department of Finance wrote that?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Chair, we have heard here tonight how the New Democratic Party disliked the tax-free savings account. We know that the New Democrats voted against the pooled registered pension plan. We know that every measure that we bring forward to encourage Canadians to save more, they vote against.

Our government believes, and we stand firm, that now is not the time to consider extra payroll taxes for every employee who is working out there. We believe that employers and employees want to take more of their pay cheque home, not leave more of it with Ottawa, not send it off anywhere else. Canadians cannot afford a higher payroll tax, and that is why we have brought forward pension income splitting. That is why we brought forward the pooled registered pension plan. That is why we brought forward the tax-free savings account. That is why we have even brought forward the target benefit plan. Every measure we bring forward, the New Democrats vote against.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, the Department of Finance said exactly that: "In the long run, expanding the CPP would bring economic benefits", and the like. Anyway, that is the finance department.

How many Canadian citizens will be affected by the intergovernmental agreement contained in the current budget implementation act?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, the Canadians who will be affected are those who have dual citizenship, and I do not have that exact number but I am sure the member opposite thinks he does.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Chair, according to Mr. Ernewein at the finance committee, there were one million people affected, and it is not just dual citizens. He was reporting that there were one million people affected by this and it is not just dual citizens; it is people who are living with or married to dual citizens as well.

How many days were Canadians given to comment on the intergovernmental agreement, an extremely complex agreement, from the time it was made public on February 5 of this year?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, of course this particular agreement has been known for some time, and the public has had ample time to consider it. The U.S. model intergovernmental agreement, which is the platform of the Canada–U.S. agreement, has been in the public domain since July 2012. We had announced that we would enter into negotiations with the U.S. on this agreement on November 8, 2012, and invited public comment. We received many comments, and we signed and released the agreement on February 5, 2014. The agreement was introduced on March 8.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** It was 30 days, Mr. Chair. Are there any formal obligations under the intergovernmental agreement for the government or the banks to notify Canadians when their personal information gets transferred to the IRS via the CRA?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** That is not what the minister said. Where are they getting 30 days? Did she make that up?

**Hon. Joe Oliver:** Mr. Chair, apparently after they get an answer, the members opposite create their own answer, ignoring the facts. However, in fact I gave them an array of dates, which clearly demonstrated that people had much more time than that.

There is no requirement for a financial institution to notify clients that information about their account is being provided to the CRA under the terms of the intergovernmental agreement. Nevertheless, clients of financial institutions whose accounts already have been reported are generally expected to be aware of this fact because they have self-identified as U.S. persons or have been contacted by their financial institutions about information associated with the account that suggests they may be a U.S. person.

• (2325)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** That finishes that round. Now there will only be five minutes remaining for the hon. member for York Centre. We will start in any case.

The hon. member for York Centre.

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it is a great honour to be here this evening to discuss how our government has lowered taxes for seniors and has strengthened Canada's retirement income system.

Since 2006, our government has delivered approximately \$2.8 billion in annual targeted tax relief for seniors and pensioners. The opposition has fought tooth and nail against every initiative that we have attempted to bring in to lower taxes for Canadians and for seniors. I hope the opposition understands that the way to help seniors is not to raise taxes, beginning with a \$21-billion carbon tax.

I hope that what I am about to say, and unfortunately I do not have the full ten minutes to say it, will be a learning experience for the NDP and the Liberals. I encourage them to listen very closely.

Why did we place such importance on tax relief for seniors? Canadians know that our government focuses on what matters most to them. We heard from seniors across Canada who said that they wanted to keep more of their hard-earned dollars in their wallets, where it belongs. That is why we cut the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%. We introduced pension income splitting. We increased the age credit amount by \$2,000. We doubled the pension income credit to \$2,000 and created the tax-free savings account.

The tax-free savings account is the most innovative and popular savings vehicle since the RRSP. Initially allowing Canadians to save up to \$5,000 a year, the tax-free savings account was expanded by our government due to popular demand. We now allow Canadians to save up to \$5,500 a year. Members may be wondering how many Canadians have taken advantage of the TFSA that our government created. I am pleased to tell the House that more than nine million Canadians have taken out a tax-free savings account. The NDP and the Liberals voted against it.

This has been particularly beneficial for seniors. Neither income earned in a TFSA nor withdrawals from a TFSA affect a senior's federal support, such as the guaranteed income supplement.

We have also increased the amount that GIS recipients can earn through employment without any reduction in their benefits. We have increased the amount that recipients can earn from \$500 to \$3,500. For instance, a single pensioner earning at least \$3,500 will now be able to keep up to an additional \$1,500 in annual GIS benefits. This is important. We even introduced the largest GIS increase in 25 years. This is helping more than 680,000 seniors across Canada.

Our government's low-tax plan has even helped remove 380,000 seniors from the tax rolls altogether. In 2014, a single senior can earn \$20,000 and a senior couple can earn \$40,000 before paying any federal income tax.

Under the strong leadership of our Prime Minister, not only have we lowered taxes for seniors, we have also succeeded in ensuring that Canada's retirement income system remains strong. Today, Canada's low-income rate for seniors is one of the lowest in the industrialized world.

*Business of Supply*

Our government understands the importance of a secure and dignified retirement for Canadians who worked hard to build this great country. We want to ensure that Canadians have a secure retirement today and for future generations. Canada's retirement income system is renowned globally for preventing poverty among seniors and ensuring high levels of replacement income to retirees. Such high regard is based in no small part on the effectiveness of our government's actions. These actions have been effective because they are based on guiding principles of fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and innovation. We have applied these principles to strengthen the various pillars of Canada's retirement system with its balanced mix of private and public supports.

● (2330)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** It being 11:30 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 81(4) all votes are deemed to have been reported. The committee will rise and I will now leave the chair.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:32 p.m.)

---





# CONTENTS

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

<b>Trent-Severn Waterway</b>	
Mr. Del Mastro .....	5359
<b>Jan Karski</b>	
Mr. Opitz .....	5359
<b>Foreurs de Val-d'Or Junior Hockey Team</b>	
Mr. Saganash .....	5359
<b>Win4Skin Hockey Tournament</b>	
Mr. Rajotte .....	5360
<b>ted northe</b>	
Ms. Fry .....	5360
<b>Citizen of the Year</b>	
Mr. Payne .....	5360
<b>Mining Industry</b>	
Ms. Péclet .....	5360
<b>Rosy Rhubarb Festival</b>	
Mr. Preston .....	5360
<b>Bullying Awareness</b>	
Mr. Cannan .....	5361
<b>Zamudio Family</b>	
Mr. Dionne Labelle .....	5361
<b>Cannes International Film Festival</b>	
Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora) .....	5361
<b>NDP Women's Caucus</b>	
Ms. Freeman .....	5361
<b>Iran Accountability Week</b>	
Mr. Bezan .....	5362
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Mr. Simms .....	5362
<b>Oil and Gas Industry</b>	
Mr. Warkentin .....	5362
<b>New Democratic Party of Canada</b>	
Mr. Boulterice .....	5362
<b>National Day of Honour</b>	
Mr. Gill .....	5362

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	5363
Mr. Harper .....	5363
<b>Justice</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	5363
Mr. Harper .....	5363
Mr. Mulcair .....	5363
Mr. Harper .....	5363

## Rail Transportation

Mr. Mulcair .....	5363
Mr. Harper .....	5363
Mr. Mulcair .....	5363
Mr. Harper .....	5363

## Employment

Mr. Trudeau .....	5364
Mr. Harper .....	5364
Mr. Trudeau .....	5364
Mr. Harper .....	5364
Mr. Trudeau .....	5364
Mr. Harper .....	5364

## Veterans Affairs

Mr. Stoffer .....	5364
Mr. Fantino .....	5364
Mr. Chicoine .....	5364
Mr. Fantino .....	5364
Ms. Mathysen .....	5365
Mr. Fantino .....	5365

## Employment

Ms. Sims .....	5365
Mr. Kenney .....	5365
Mrs. Groguhé .....	5365
Mr. Kenney .....	5365
Mrs. Groguhé .....	5365
Mr. Kenney .....	5365
Mr. Caron .....	5365
Mr. Saxton .....	5366
Mr. Cullen .....	5366
Mr. Saxton .....	5366
Mr. Cullen .....	5366
Mr. Saxton .....	5366
Mr. McCallum .....	5366
Mr. Kenney .....	5366

## Housing

Ms. Sgro .....	5366
Ms. Bergen .....	5367

## Committees of the House

Mr. Lamoureux .....	5367
Mr. Preston .....	5367

## Housing

Ms. Boutin-Sweet .....	5367
Ms. Bergen .....	5367
Ms. Boutin-Sweet .....	5367
Ms. Bergen .....	5367
Mr. Sullivan .....	5367
Ms. Bergen .....	5367
Mr. Kellway .....	5368
Ms. Bergen .....	5368

<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Wilks.....	5368
Mr. Blaney.....	5368
<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>	
Ms. Ashton.....	5368
Mr. MacKay.....	5368
Mr. Genest-Jourdain.....	5368
Mr. MacKay.....	5368
Mr. Saganash.....	5368
Mr. Valcourt.....	5369
Ms. Crowder.....	5369
Mr. Valcourt.....	5369
<b>The Environment</b>	
Mr. McKay.....	5369
Mrs. Aglukkaq.....	5369
<b>Veterans Affairs</b>	
Mr. Valeriote.....	5369
Mr. Fantino.....	5369
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mr. Dewar.....	5369
Mr. Obhrai.....	5370
Ms. Laverdière.....	5370
Mr. Obhrai.....	5370
<b>The Environment</b>	
Mr. Leef.....	5370
Mrs. Aglukkaq.....	5370
<b>Forestry Industry</b>	
Ms. St-Denis.....	5370
Mrs. Block.....	5370
<b>Champlain Bridge</b>	
Mr. Mai.....	5370
Mr. Lebel.....	5370
<b>International Trade</b>	
Ms. Bateman.....	5371
Mr. Fast.....	5371
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Garrison.....	5371
Mr. Blaney.....	5371
Mr. Rathgeber.....	5371
Mr. Blaney.....	5371

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	5371
<b>Supplementary Estimates (A), 2014–15</b>	
<b>Interparliamentary Delegations</b>	
Ms. Mathyssen.....	5371
<b>Committees of the House</b>	
<b>Official Languages</b>	
Mr. Chong.....	5372
<b>Holidays Act</b>	
Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest).....	5372

Bill C-597. Introduction and first reading.....	5372
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed).....	5372

## Petitions

<b>Agriculture</b>	
Mr. MacKenzie.....	5372
<b>Canada Post</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux.....	5372
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Mr. Chong.....	5372
<b>Canada Post</b>	
Mr. Simms.....	5372
<b>Agriculture</b>	
Mr. Albrecht.....	5372
<b>Abortion</b>	
Mr. Albrecht.....	5372
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Ms. May.....	5372
<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	5372
<b>Questions Passed as Orders for Returns</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	5373
<b>Motions for Papers</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	5375

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Business of Supply

<b>Opposition Motion—Affordable housing</b>	
Mr. Sullivan.....	5375
Motion.....	5376
Ms. Bergen.....	5377
Mr. Lamoureux.....	5377
Ms. Boutin-Sweet.....	5377
Ms. Boutin-Sweet.....	5378
Mr. Butt.....	5379
Mr. Lamoureux.....	5380
Mrs. Hughes.....	5380
Ms. Bergen.....	5380
Mr. Sullivan.....	5382
Mr. Lamoureux.....	5382
Mr. McColeman.....	5382
Mrs. Hughes.....	5384
Mr. Lamoureux.....	5384
Ms. Sgro.....	5384
Mr. Sullivan.....	5386
Mr. Albrecht.....	5386
Mr. McCallum.....	5387
Mr. Gravelle.....	5388
Mr. Butt.....	5388
Mr. Kellway.....	5388
Mr. Calandra.....	5390
Mr. McCallum.....	5390
Ms. Nash.....	5390
Mr. Albrecht.....	5392
Motion negatived.....	5393



## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Promotion of Local Foods Act

Bill C-539. Second reading .....	5393
Motion negatived .....	5394

### Meat Inspection Act

Bill C-571. Second reading .....	5394
Motion negatived .....	5395

### Official Report

Mr. Leef .....	5395
----------------	------

### Pan-Canadian Palliative and End-of-life Care Strategy

Motion .....	5395
Mr. Valeriote .....	5395
Mr. Angus .....	5397
Mr. Vellacott .....	5398
Mr. Scarpaleggia .....	5400
Ms. Freeman .....	5401
Mr. Albrecht .....	5402
Mr. Angus .....	5404
Division on motion deferred .....	5405

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

### Fisheries and Oceans

Mr. Simms .....	5405
Mr. Kamp .....	5405

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Business of Supply

#### Finance—Main Estimates 2014-15

(House in committee of the whole for consideration of all votes under Finance in the Main Estimates, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair) .....	5406
Mr. Comartin .....	5406
Mr. Cullen .....	5406
Mr. Oliver .....	5406
Mr. Oliver .....	5408
Mr. Saxton .....	5410
Mr. Brison .....	5410
Mr. Goodale .....	5411
Mr. Saxton .....	5412
Mr. Caron .....	5414
Mr. Anderson .....	5416
Mr. Cullen .....	5419
Mr. Keddy .....	5421
Ms. Nash .....	5423
Mr. Rajotte .....	5425
Mr. Sorenson .....	5427
Mr. Brison .....	5428
Mr. Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac) .....	5430
Ms. Papillon .....	5432
Mr. Thibeault .....	5433
Mr. Van Kesteren .....	5434
Mr. Rankin .....	5437
Mr. Adler .....	5439
All Finance votes reported .....	5440

Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>