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Monday, May 26, 2014

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 26, 2014

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1105)

[*English*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC) moved that Bill C-483, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (escorted temporary absence), be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today at third reading to discuss my private member's bill, Bill C-483, the escorted temporary absence act. I firmly believe this bill would provide a good balance between the need to reintegrate prisoners into Canadian society and the need to do everything in our power to keep our streets and communities safe.

Even if we have not been personally affected by crime, it is not hard to imagine the trauma that victims or their loved ones may feel when they learn that the criminals who victimized them have been granted an escorted temporary absence. Regardless of the reason, it is my belief that Canadians want assurances that all possible measures are taken to ensure their safety when the prisoners are in the community. We find these measures in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which outlines the decision-making criteria for escorted temporary absences.

As we have heard in these debates, escorted temporary absences, or ETAs, can be divided into two main categories: those that are obligatory or necessary, as for court proceedings or medical treatment, and those that are for correctional purposes. There is no question that there are circumstances when an inmate must leave a penitentiary for obligatory reasons, such as for court proceedings or medical reasons. In these cases, the releasing authority determines and applies the proper security escorts, up to and including the use of physical restraints. These decisions are for the most part straightforward. Even a high-risk prisoner, for example, must have access to emergency medical treatment when it cannot be provided within penitentiary walls. These types of absence are granted because they are necessary.

It is when we get into the non-obligatory absences—in other words, those that are for correctional purposes—that victims become concerned about how decisions are being made to allow the inmate to be absent from a penitentiary. The decision to send an inmate outside penitentiary walls for non-obligatory reasons is made using greater discretion, taking into consideration among other factors whether the absence would contribute to the goals outlined in the inmate's correctional plan.

Today decisions on escorted temporary absences for inmates serving minimum life sentences are authorized by the penitentiary warden. However, some of them require the approval of the Parole Board of Canada, based on the scheme outlined in the Criminal Code. To be clear, minimum life sentences are imposed for first degree and second degree murder, as well as high treason.

The current ETA scheme for inmates convicted of these offences works as follows. For inmates serving minimum life sentences, the Parole Board must approve the ETA from the start of the sentence up until the time of day parole eligibility. Once at day parole eligibility, the Correctional Service of Canada takes over as the sole releasing authority. For those inmates who committed murder before they turned 18, the Parole Board must approve the ETA from the start of the sentence up until the expiration of all but one-fifth of the specified number of years that the inmate is to serve without parole eligibility. Once at the one-fifth mark, Correctional Service Canada becomes the sole releasing authority.

Over the past several years, our government has made a number of legislative changes that give victims a larger role in the corrections and conditional release system. Of note, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, which came into force in 2012, enshrined in law the entitlement of victims to attend parole hearings and to make a statement, and it expanded the definition of who can be considered a victim. Measures like these have contributed to a greater public understanding of the decision-making process surrounding the conditional release of federal offenders. It only stands to reason that victims of crime want every opportunity to make their views known and have their safety considered.

Bill C-483 builds on these efforts, and responds to calls from victims who want the Parole Board to remain the releasing authority for all temporary absences, regardless of when an inmate becomes eligible for parole. Shifting decision-making authority for ETAs to the Parole Board after an inmate reaches day parole eligibility would address victims' concerns. As members of this House know, the bill has received thorough examination in committee, and, as mentioned earlier, the objective of the bill is to provide the Parole Board with greater decision-making authority for ETAs for inmates serving minimum life sentences.

To ensure the bill would meet this goal, amendments were passed in committee so that the Parole Board is explicitly named in the CCRA as the decision-making authority for escorted temporary absences after day parole eligibility. Through these amendments and existing provisions within the Criminal Code, the Parole Board would be responsible for ETAs for the duration of an inmate's life sentence.

At the same time, we have also clarified certain conditions relevant to this authority. For example, if an inmate reaches day parole eligibility and successfully completes a rehabilitative ETA, authority would move to Correctional Service Canada to grant all future escorted temporary absences. At that point, if an inmate breaches any conditions of a subsequent escorted temporary absence granted by Correctional Service Canada, this decision-making authority would revert back to the Parole Board.

Complementary to this, we have moved an amendment to limit the authority of an institutional head of Correctional Service Canada to authorize ETAs to inmates serving life sentences imposed as a minimum punishment. As a further measure to keep the Canadian public safe, the amended bill now states that Correctional Service Canada has authority to cancel all ETAs, including those authorized by the Parole Board if deemed necessary. This particular amendment would ensure that if an inmate's behaviour changes or if there is an issue within the penitentiary that prevents the ETA from taking place, Correctional Service Canada can make the decision to cancel the ETA.

Taken together, these amendments would ensure that the bill meets its intended objective. I ask all members of the House to support this bill as amended, and ensure its swift passage.

● (1110)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Oxford for bringing this bill forward and for the compromises that were made in committee, which creates a situation that would both protect the rights of victims and is also workable for the Parole Board and the parole system.

My question for the member is this. New Democrats had proposed an amendment in committee that on the first escorted temporary absence from prison, those convicted of murder should be accompanied by two correctional staff. The current regulation says that they can be accompanied by anyone and it only needs to be a single person. Given the serious incidents we have had with those convicted of murder on their first escorted temporary absence, we suggested the requirement that the convict be accompanied by two Correctional Service employees for the first escorted temporary absences.

Since the government voted against that motion in committee, I wonder what the member would think about that as an addition to this bill and why the government did not support it.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, the issue of which he speaks was brought up by the union that represents members of Correctional Service Canada. Most of the incidents date back a few years, when there were very serious incidents. The whole issue about the manning and so on rests with Correctional Service Canada. I believe that if the member wishes to pursue that, he should pursue it through Correctional Service Canada on its staffing issues with respect to absences and other issues that deal with prisoners leaving institutions.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the remarks by the member for Oxford, and Liberals will certainly be supporting this bill. However, does the member not recognize that this bill is substantially different than what was originally introduced?

All of the witnesses who came before the committee actually believed that the Parole Board would be making decisions on all escorted temporary absences. The bill, now, is not anywhere near that. It is not that I disagree with the bill now, as I think the amendments were correct. However, I have a problem with private members' bills being debated in this place as if that is the reality. After the witnesses left, the justice committee amended the bill substantially and we have a substantially different bill. I wonder if the member could comment.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I am very satisfied that the bill meets the requirements that were originally set out in the bill. It is about victims and their rights. Victims retain those rights in this bill in the same manner, but the bill has been amended so that prisoners will not receive any escorted temporary absences unless the national Parole Board has granted them.

In the past, the national Parole Board would turn down an application and then the individual could go to the warden and receive an escorted temporary absence pass. That is the whole problem with what was in the previous legislation. When the member for Malpeque was the solicitor general, I wish he had fixed that problem in his time, and then we would not be dealing with it here today.

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Oxford for bringing this important legislation forward.

I have two questions. The first one is a very general one. Why did the member choose to bring this type of legislation forward? The second one is a little more specific. Was it brought forward in relation to or in respect of any problems known currently within Correctional Service Canada with regard to the escorted temporary absence process?

● (1115)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for the support of this bill.

In response to her question, the issue was not one of the prison wardens. That was not the issue, ever. It was the legislation that was in place that created this particular issue.

I am very satisfied with the response we have received from a number of family members of victims that this was exactly what they were looking for, something that gives them an opportunity to have a voice in the system on releases.

We have taken a government approach and a private members' approach that victims are the people who are important, not the prisoners. We understand that the prisoners have their rights and they are enshrined in many places, but in the past the victims have been the misplaced people. We are just trying to put them back into the equation.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today in support of the member for Oxford's private member's bill, Bill C-482. On this side of the House, we share the concern of all Canadians for the victims of crime and we support initiatives that will help to better support those victims within the legal process, which for victims can often be bewildering and often forces them, on a repeated basis, to relive the emotional impacts of victimization. Therefore, anything we can do to make that legal process easier for victims, while allowing them to have that input, is certainly something worthy of support.

However, on this side of the House, we are also concerned about assistance to victims of crime in helping put their lives back together. We have some concerns that the private members' bills that have come forward, and even the government's victims bill of rights, neglect that part of treating victims fairly, that assistance to them in getting counselling or whatever else they need to get back to whatever they can of their previous life.

Some of this is in provincial jurisdiction, but I am concerned that most provinces have severely underfunded their victims' compensation funds and in some of the provinces, including all the provinces in the Atlantic, these funds have actually been eliminated. Examples of assistance that people might need, let us say if they had a loved one murdered who was the sole breadwinner, are job training to get back into the workforce or those kinds of assistance that we often forget about in focusing on the legal process, which is important. However. there is another side to this.

On this side of the House, we are also concerned that we take measures to ensure we do not create new victims, and that means both effective crime prevention and rehabilitation programs.

We understand the concern that many victims have about escorted temporary absences. We know that to many of them it feels like some kind of early release or privilege to which the perpetrators are not entitled. Therefore, helping victims better understand the process and participate in that is a worthy objective.

We clearly understand the need to prevent surprise encounters. We have had too many instances where families have not known that someone is actually out on escorted temporary absences and they might run into them in the community, which is a great shock to them. I know Correctional Services Canada endeavours to ensure that this does not happen. This bill would actually strengthen the requirements to give notice to victims of those temporary absences.

There is another concern about escorted temporary absences, which I raised just a moment ago in the question for the member for Oxford; that is the safety of those absences both for the public and for the Correctional Service employees of those who are serving sentences for the most serious crimes.

At committee, we urged the government to place in legislation the requirement that those first escorted temporary absences for those serving sentences for murder be accompanied by two fully trained Correctional Service employees, not just one employee. The most serious problems we have had with escorted temporary absences have always been on early escorted absences for those convicted of murder.

Recently in 2011 in Drumheller, we unfortunately had an incident where a convicted murderer was being escorted by a single corrections staff in a non-secured vehicle. The person escaped and took hostages. This creates both a threat to the public and to the corrections staff involved. We were disappointed that the government was not interested in accepting this additional improvement to legislation.

We did support the bill at second reading, but we had some concerns about the original version of the bill. As I said before, I was pleased that the member for Oxford and the government side were prepared to accept a compromise version of the bill that we had suggested. In its main provisions, the bill is substantially different, although not different in principle, than what was originally introduced.

The member for Oxford talked about the current provision for those convicted of serious crimes in which the warden would become the granting authority for escorted temporary absences in the three years immediately prior to parole. The bill would now create a workable situation where the Parole Board would still have the first authority to decide on escorted temporary absences.

● (1120)

If the bill had remained as in its first version, we were concerned that the Parole Board would conduct all hearings into escorted temporary absences and, frankly, that was not workable. That would have required, in the estimates of officials, an additional 900 hearings at the Parole Board every year, placing a large burden upon the Parole Board and also placing a very large burden upon victims who would have had to submit impact statements at each of those additional 900 hearings.

The compromise that has been adopted will have the Parole Board make that initial decision before escorted temporary absences are granted. Then, if there are no problems, additional escorted temporary absences can be granted by the warden. We think that is quite workable and it guarantees a role in that initial decision for victims.

The other provision is that if people fail in their escorted temporary absences, and it does not have to be a hostage taking, then it would go back to the Parole Board, not just to the warden, for a decision on whether they should be granted future escorted temporary absences. Again, on this side, we think that is a reasonable provision. It will also allow victims to have a say at that time. If people had done something which violated the terms of their temporary absence, then the victims would get to talk about that and make their opinions known.

Again, the compromise is important, both in protecting the rights of victims to have input and in not interfering with the role of escorted temporary absences as part of a rehabilitation program. When we stop to think about it, escorted temporary absences are the first step on that road to recovery for many of those who have been convicted of serious crimes and it is a way of testing whether they are ready to go out into the public. Therefore, is important that they be under supervision the first time they are released.

The second part to rehabilitation is that escorted temporary absences create an incentive to complete rehabilitation programs, an incentive to move along through the correctional plan so when those people return to the community, they are not the same as they were when they originally committed those serious crimes. In ensuring that ETAs still play a role in rehabilitation, we will help to guarantee there will not be future victims by the same perpetrators.

I want to stress that we support Bill C-483 in its compromised version. We thank the government for being willing to consider our ideas on this and adopt that compromise. We look forward to having a further debate on how we can have effective crime prevention and rehabilitation programs to prevent their being future victims. When we get to the government's bill on victims' rights, we look forward to talking about how we can provide additional supports, not just rights, to those families that have been victims of serious crime.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand at third reading to further discuss Bill C-483.

As I indicated in my question, I listened to the member for Oxford as he spoke on the third reading of this bill. What he did not say, though, was that this was now a substantially different bill than was originally introduced. I personally believe we are seeing a pattern where backbench members introduce private members' bills with all of these quite out there intentions in terms of protecting victims.

A set of hearings are held on original bills. Quite a number of witnesses come in and make presentations based on original bills. After the hearings are done, the Department of Justice comes in and sometimes makes more amendments than there are clauses in the bill, which means it is a substantially different bill at the end of the day. The victims who have come before the committee, at the request of Conservative members, still believe the bill is in its original intent. However, it is not. Justice has come in and changed the bill substantially.

In my view, to a great extent victims are being misled on what legislation is being implemented here at the end of the day. The original intent of Bill C-483 would have required the full participation of the Parole Board of Canada in virtually all escorted temporary absences for those convicted of either first or second degree murder rather than the warden of federal institutions being responsible for that program.

The targeting of only those convicted of first and second degree murder in this legislation implies that both the number of offenders involved and the likelihood of their early release represents a threat to the community. The information by the promoter of the bill identifies a single case of the release of an offender on the authority of the warden of the institution who had been denied a similar request the year prior. No evidence was provided that the offender in question committed any offence while on temporary release. The legislation as it was originally presented to the House was not supported by evidence indicating an abuse of the escorted temporary release program, which would justify such legislative change.

Even in its current form, it remains to be seen as to what degree the legislation is actually addressing an issue or whether it is an example of the Conservatives playing to their base and creating an issue. If the issue was what was stated in the beginning with this legislation, then why the amendments by the Department of Justice?

As I said earlier, when victims come before the committee, they base their decisions on the original legislation, which in this case is that the Parole Board would have to review all escorted temporary absences. That is no longer the case because the bill has been substantially amended by the Department of Justice after the witnesses presented at the hearings. It certainly does not look at the evidence of the witnesses who came before the committee because the witnesses wanted to go a bit further in many cases.

What evidence has been produced has indicated that ETA program, or escorted temporary absences, as currently structured, basically has a 99% success rate. That has to be said.

● (1125)

Escorted temporary absences are granted to allow offenders to obtain treatment that is unavailable in a penitentiary, to be with critically ill family members, to attend funerals, and to prepare for other types of conditional release. During these absences, an offender is escorted by a Correctional Service Canada staff member or a trained citizen escort.

Offenders are eligible for an ETA at any time during their sentences. The duration of an ETA varies from an unlimited period for medical reasons to not more than 15 days for any other specified reason. Wardens typically authorize ETAs. In certain instances, for offenders serving life sentences, Parole Board of Canada approval is required.

The category of escorted temporary release, as defined above, in 2011-12, involved 2,675 offenders, and for all categories and all offenders it was granted on 44,182 occasions.

The point was raised by some witnesses that the government should be taking control of its justice agenda and should introduce well-thought-out and carefully drafted legislation, rather than using the private members' bill process, which has required government intervention during the committee process to bring the private members' bills into conformity with Canadian law.

As I said, and I really want to emphasize this point at third reading, some 16 private members' bills have been brought forward by backbench members on the government side. We have seen some challenges in the courts to some of the legislation coming out of this place. When witnesses come before committee on various private members' bills, they look at the original bill and everything that is intended to be done by the original bill. The hearing process is based on that.

As I said, there are 16 different bills we have seen or that are yet to come forward.

With respect to this particular legislation, the NDP proposed an amendment. That amendment was based on evidence that witnesses had produced before committee. The Liberal Party also had an amendment, which would have changed the word “may” to “shall”, to make it compulsory for the Department of Justice and the correctional release system to do such and such.

The opposition parties had amendments based on the evidence of witnesses who appeared before committee. What happened at the end of the day? The Department of Justice or Public Safety Canada, somewhere on the government side, or someone within the bureaucracy, decided to make a number of amendments. They are usually made to soften legislation from its original intent and to narrow the focus, so the bill is substantially different. That is the problem I have with the way the government is proceeding with all of these bills, not just this particular bill.

On April 1, the government presented its amendments to Bill C-483 at the public safety committee. That is where my concerns arise.

The government's amendment, however, has undermined the principle of the legislation. It was presented to the House in the third report of the committee. I am running out of time, so I will not go into it, but it is available in the committee record.

The principle of the bill, as the witnesses who appeared before the committee testified, which was that decisions related to the authority to grant ETAs would be removed from the office of the wardens of the institutions and would be placed under the control of the Parole Board of Canada, has been removed from the bill. The intent that all temporary absences be approved by the Parole Board is no longer there. That changes the bill.

We will support Bill C-483, but it has substantially changed.

● (1130)

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Oxford, once again for his demonstrated commitment to supporting victims of crime. Whether it is his great work as a member of Parliament or his numerous years as a law enforcement officer, he has spent his life keeping Canadians safe.

It was this member who brought forward the bill we are discussing today, which would further strengthen victims' participation in the corrections and conditional release systems.

As all members of the House know, our Conservative government has taken strong action to support victims of crime. We believe that the criminal justice system must provide victims with an opportunity to have their voices heard.

Since 2006, we have established the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime to provide information on victims' rights and services for victims, to receive complaints, and to raise awareness of victims' concerns among policy-makers and in the justice system. We have also made the rights of victims a priority in our reforms to the justice system and have recently followed through on our commitment in the Speech from the Throne to introduce legislation to create a Canadian victims bill of rights.

Our government is determined to do more and will continue to listen to the concerns being raised by victims. Our commitment is that we will act on victims' concerns to ensure that we provide them with the support they need.

Simply put, an escorted temporary absence is a short temporary release of an inmate into the community under escort. There are two types of ETAs. These are rehabilitative and non-rehabilitative. As it stands now, ETAs for inmates serving minimum life sentences must first be approved by the Parole Board of Canada before being authorized by Correctional Service Canada. This scheme is found in the Criminal Code, which states that the Parole Board of Canada has to approve ETAs for inmates serving minimum life sentences from the start of a life sentence up until he or she reaches day parole eligibility.

Once an inmate reaches day parole eligibility, Correctional Service Canada's authorization of ETAs is no longer subject to the Parole Board of Canada's approval. In other words, if an inmate who is serving a life sentence is never granted parole, Correctional Service Canada remains the releasing authority for ETAs for the remainder of the sentence.

The Criminal Code also states that although the Parole Board has the authority to approve ETAs up until day parole eligibility, Correctional Service Canada has the authority to grant temporary absences for medical reasons, court proceedings, or coroners' inquests at any time in an inmate's life sentence. While the current regime works well in that almost all ETAs are successfully completed, we feel that it is important to consider the position of victims.

Prior to the introduction of this bill, we heard from victims that the Parole Board of Canada needed greater decision-making authority over these types of absences. During the study of the bill, committee members were given an opportunity to hear first-hand how the ETA scheme currently operates and what concerns members of the public have about the current system. Among the witnesses who appeared at committee were victims support groups and victims themselves, who shared their concerns about the current system and questioned why ETA releasing authority is transferred to Correctional Service Canada.

We heard from a witness who said that victims are asking for an open, transparent, and accountable system. On the point of accountability, we heard that the current ETA system does not go far enough in terms of adequate checks and balances. Victims believe that the power to grant ETAs more appropriately belongs within the Parole Board of Canada, through which it is felt there is increased rigour and accountability involved in making these types of release decisions. Our government wholeheartedly agrees.

Bill C-483 would do just what victims have asked us to do. It would give the Parole Board of Canada almost exclusive authority to grant ETAs to inmates who are serving minimum life sentences. That is the primary reason we support this proposed legislation.

That being said, our government felt it was important to introduce amendments at committee to ensure the sound application of the measures laid out in this proposed legislation. We are pleased that two government motions were adopted at committee stage. These motions would work in tandem to give the Parole Board of Canada greater authority over escorted temporary absences. The bill, as amended, would ensure that the Parole Board would maintain decision-making authority for ETAs after an inmate reached day parole eligibility. In other words, the amendment would ensure that decision-making authority for ETAs would not continue to be automatically transferred to Correctional Service Canada once an inmate reached his or her day parole eligibility date.

We have also ensured that Correctional Service Canada wardens would have limited authority to authorize ETAs for inmates serving minimum life sentences. Under the proposed scheme, if an inmate was never granted a rehabilitative ETA, or if an inmate was unable to successfully complete this type of ETA, the Parole Board would remain the releasing authority for the entirety of his or her custodial sentence.

● (1135)

By virtue of our amendments, the only time rehabilitative ETAs would be granted by Correctional Service Canada is if an inmate successfully completed a rehabilitative ETA after day parole eligibility. Only at that time would CSC be able to take over as releasing authority.

Although the proposed scheme would allow ETA releasing authority to be transferred to CSC in limited circumstances, we would also ensure that the authority could revert back to the Parole Board as needed. When would this occur? If an inmate failed to successfully complete an ETA authorized by CSC, releasing authority would go back to the Parole Board.

These amendments respect the spirit of the bill, which is to ensure that the ETA decision-making authority stays almost exclusively in the hands of the Parole Board of Canada. In addition to respecting the intended objective of the bill, the amendments would also ensure legislative harmony between the ETA scheme in the Criminal Code and the scheme we are proposing in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

The ETA schemes in both pieces of legislation would work together to ensure that the Parole Board had greater authority over escorted temporary absences for inmates serving minimum life sentences. The Criminal Code would continue to give the Parole Board authority to approve ETAs from the start of a life sentence up until day parole eligibility. Once at day parole eligibility, the ETA scheme we are proposing in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act would take over and would state that the Parole Board would continue to have decision-making authority over ETAs.

This bill builds on the strong measures we have taken to support victims of crime and to improve our federal correctional system. I hope that all members will support us in our goal to improve the rights of victims, and I ask for full support to pass this bill as amended.

● (1140)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support from across the House.

The member for Malpeque has brought forward an argument he has used several times with respect to the amendments to the bill. He brought a motion before the House that has already been dealt with by the Speaker. The amendments are appropriate and do not change the intent of the legislation. However, I want to move past that part.

For anyone serving a minimum life sentence, it is as a result of a very serious crime. In most cases, it is likely the result of the death of an individual.

A particular case I am fully aware of is the death of Detective Constable William Hancox of the metro Toronto police. He was brutally murdered by two individuals. His widow, Kim Hancox, has been very supportive of changes in the legislation so that the victim's families have the opportunity to know what is happening with respect to releases. She is very upset that in many cases, the Parole Board of Canada turned down release applications only to have them granted later by the prison authorities.

There is no complaint about the prison authorities. The problem has been the legislation. This bill attempts to change that legislation to put the real authority back in the hands of the Parole Board of Canada, which it would do. To that end, we are very happy.

I will be so pleased to see this bill clear the House on Wednesday of this week, when I believe there will be a vote. We can move forward then.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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): Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 28, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House will now suspend until 12 p.m.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:43 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

* * *

● (1200)

POINTS OF ORDER

USE OF HOUSE OF COMMONS RESOURCES

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, and it will not take up too much time. This is a matter that seems pretty straightforward to me, but I rise in the House to address some of the arguments the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons made on May 16, just before we adjourned.

The arguments made by the government House leader were made in response to the point of order I raised regarding the fact that the motion moved under Standing Order 56.1 on March 27 by the Minister of Labour should have been deemed inadmissible. The concerns I raised on May 16 were that with no framework around Standing Order 56.1, this could well mean open season on smaller parties in the House of Commons.

The first argument the government House leader put forward is that Standing Order 56.1 does indeed allow motions to be moved under this standing order to "establish the powers" of committees of

the House. He is absolutely right in this regard, which is something I also mentioned during my initial intervention on this point.

However, where the government House leader is wrong is in his suggestion that establishing the powers means instructing a committee to undertake a study, as was the case of the March 27 motion. Giving an instruction to a committee in fact goes beyond the scope of Standing Order 56.1.

[*Translation*]

Standing Order 56.1, concerning the powers of committees, refers to very limited powers, including a committee's ability to travel.

In his response, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons quoted Speaker Milliken, who clearly stated the following in very relevant passage on page 461 of O'Brien and Bosc:

> ...this rule was meant to be used not to reach into the conduct of standing committee affairs to direct them, but rather in a routine manner, to provide them with powers they do not already possess, such as the power to travel.

We know that the Conservatives like to use quotations from experts out of context, so please allow me to put this one into context as it clearly demonstrates that Standing Order 56.1 cannot be used to instruct a committee. I would like to quote the footnote, also on page 461 of O'Brien and Bosc, that accompanies this quote from Speaker Milliken:

> The government used this rule to dispose of a motion to apply closure to the debate at committee stage of Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act. In response to a point of order, the Speaker ruled that using this rule to direct the business of a committee was a new development in the House and one he found out of order.

[*English*]

As I mentioned at the beginning, this seems to me to be a pretty straightforward case, but for the sake of clarity, let me address the other arguments presented by the government House leader on May 16.

He mentioned that Standing Order 56.1 was used on November 8, 2012, to mandate the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study required by section 533.1 of the Criminal Code. He said that this is the same type of motion as the one from March 27, which he therefore believes was also admissible.

The problem with this argument is that its premise is totally flawed. The motions from November 8, 2012, and from March 27, 2014, are two completely different motions achieving different aims, the first one being within the acceptable limits of Standing Order 56.1 but the second one reaching far beyond those limits.

Indeed, the motion from November 8, 2012, is different, because it concerned a mandatory statutory review of an act. Let me quote again from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which governs us all. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, on page 1002, says:

> A number of Canadian statutes contain provisions that require their review by a committee once they have come into effect. ... Depending on the legislation in question, such a review must normally be done by a committee of the House of Commons or of the Senate, or by a joint committee. It is up to the Houses of Parliament to choose the appropriate committee to carry out the review.

● (1205)

I may add that it often happens that acts do not specify which committee is to conduct the statutory review to avoid problems caused by name changes of the committees. Subsection 533.1(1) of the Criminal Code says:

> Within three years after this section comes into force, a comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of this Part shall be undertaken by any committee of the Senate, of the House of Commons or of both Houses of Parliament that may be designated or established by the Senate or the House of Commons, or by both Houses of Parliament, as the case may be, for that purpose.

In the case of the motion moved under Standing Order 56.1 in November 2012, the law already provided for a statutory review from a House committee. The committee needed an order of the House to proceed, as set out in the Criminal Code. This was something the House had to do. It was a routine matter and it fell well within the limits of Standing Order 56.1, which is why we believe that it was right for the Speaker to deem this use of Standing Order 56.1 to be admissible at that time.

The same cannot be said about the motion that was adopted on March 27, which requested PROC, the procedure and House affairs committee, to launch a study without any statutory basis whatsoever. The motion to have PROC launch a study was not a routine matter, since it instructed a committee to launch a substantive new study. It fell well outside the limits of Standing Order 56.1.

[*Translation*]

In his response to my intervention, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons tried to support his arguments with a ruling made by Deputy Speaker Bill Blaikie on June 5, 2007. He argued that the March 27 ruling reflected Deputy Speaker Blaikie's ruling.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons did not read Deputy Speaker Blaikie's ruling in its entirety. If he had, he would know that the motion from March 27 should clearly have been deemed out of order. That is exactly how Deputy Speaker Blaikie ruled on June 5, 2007. He rejected a motion moved under Standing Order 56.1 because the motion went beyond the scope of the Standing Order. His ruling was very clear. I quoted from it when I raised the current point of order.

However, since it seems as though the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons did not understand, I will quote the key components of his ruling again:

> A key element in my ruling today is the fundamental precept that standing committees are masters of their own procedure. Indeed, so entrenched is that precept that only in a select few Standing Orders does the House make provision for intervening directly into the conduct of standing committee affairs....
>
> Interestingly, the only reference to committees in the Standing Order is one allowing motions for "the establishing of the powers of its committees", suggesting that the rule was meant to be used not to reach into the conduct of standing committee affairs to direct them, but rather in a routine manner, to provide them powers they do not already possess. A review of the previous uses of Standing Order 56.1 appears to support this. The only examples dealing with standing committees or standing committee activity the Chair has been able to find have to do with granting standing committees the power to travel. The power to travel is, as all hon. members know, a power standing committees do not possess and so the use of Standing Order 56.1 in that regard falls squarely within the parameters of the rule.
>
> Accordingly, to repeat the words I used when this matter was first raised, the use of Standing Order 56.1 to direct the business of the committee, of any committee, is a new development in the House and one that I find out of order.

● (1210)

[*English*]

I will repeat this last sentence in English so that the government House leader can hear it:

> ...the use of Standing Order 56.1 to direct the business of the committee, of any committee, is a new development in the House and one that I find out of order.

That is the end of the quote. It could not be more clear.

The government House leader then continued his remarks on this point of order by going to great lengths to point out that Standing Order 56.1 cannot be used for substantive matters, such as passing laws, but can be used for non-substantive affairs, and that the motion moved on March 27 did not concern a substantive matter.

This point may be interesting, but it is irrelevant to the question at hand. The point at hand is that the literature on this issue explicitly prevents the use of Standing Order 56.1 to instruct a committee to conduct a study. Let me quote again from page 672 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, the guide that guides us all. In discussing the use of Standing Order 56.1, it states:

> ...its use to give a direction to a standing committee of the House has been deemed contrary to the Standing Orders.

This is in line with Deputy Speaker Bill Blaikie's ruling, which I also just quoted.

Therefore, whether or not the motion from March 27 is considered to be a substantive one might be an interesting point, but it is one that is completely moot with regard to the point of order I raised on May 16, which is that the motion should have been deemed inadmissible because *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* expressly prohibits the use of Standing Order 56.1 to give a direction to a standing committee.

To sum up, with regard to committees, Standing Order 56.1 can be used to allow committees to travel. It can also be used to determine which committee will conduct a statutory review as mandated by an act, as this is a routine matter. Other uses are severely limited by the letter and spirit of Standing Order 56.1.

This is why Standing Order 56.1 cannot be used to give an instruction to a committee. This point is clearly stated in O'Brien and Bosc and was reiterated by Deputy Speaker Blaikie in 2007 when he deemed a motion to be inadmissible because it did just that.

The issue is that the motion of March 27 gave an instruction to a committee and should have been deemed inadmissible by the Chair. This is what I have asked you to rule on. I have also asked for the Chair to give guidance to the House as to how this provision should and should not be used in the future. Otherwise, it is open season on smaller parties in the House.

I look forward to your prompt reply, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I respond briefly to the comments of my friend, who has raised a few points.

The first is the nature of what he is asking, the relief that is being sought here. If I can use an analogy from the judicial side, it is almost in the nature of a reference to whether the government would have the ability to have a reference to the Supreme Court to seek an advisory opinion when there is actually no issue at hand before it. He is seeking your advice, Mr. Speaker, on an issue that is well behind us to give direction for the future, a kind of hypothetical question that he is looking for a response from the Speaker on.

Of course, that is not the appropriate role of the Speaker. The Speaker would adjudicate a particular dispute in order to determine how we go forward in a particular circumstance. However, as you know, Mr. Speaker, you are not in the practice of entertaining academic arguments for the purpose of providing academic answers. I, of course, could come up with very many interesting questions that I could pose as points of order to you, Mr. Speaker, to seek your answers even though they were not matters that had come into dispute before the House, but it is not the practice of the Speaker to do that as in the form of a reference.

With regard to the particular issue, it is behind us now, and the Speaker's practice is quite clear that in such matters the point of order has to be brought at the earliest possible opportunity and certainly at an early enough opportunity to allow the Speaker's decision to be of some consequence and to affect the future deliberations of the House and the process as we go forward. To raise the question at such a late point certainly is not an appropriate fashion in which to do it, and certainly not a point at which you, Mr. Speaker, would deal with it.

There are some precedents that clearly refer to that. If I look at decisions of Mr. Speaker Milliken in *Debates* at June 12, 2001, page 5031, when such a circumstance arose, Mr. Speaker Milliken said:

> In so far as today's proceedings are concerned, the Chair is satisfied that the motion was adopted this morning without 25 members rising in their place and without objection at that time as to the procedural acceptability of the motion. The matter has come before the House at this late hour and, in my view, the motion has been adopted and will apply for tonight's proceedings, and we will leave it at that.

Clearly, the procedural objection has to be brought at that time, and that is the precedent that has been set there. That is certainly not the case here. That is a higher test than even the one I was putting to you, Mr. Speaker. That was a case where it still could have affected the proceedings going forward that evening, but even then Mr. Speaker Milliken ruled that it was brought late and out of time.

Then there was an additional occasion on September 18, 2001, at page 5256 of *Debates*. Mr. Milliken said:

> At that time I ruled that the terms of the motion would stand, having been adopted by the House some eight hours before the hon. member raised his point of order.

Then further, two pages later, at page 5258, he said, again on September 18, 2001:

> As I previously indicated, I allowed the motion adopted on June 12, 2001, to go ahead because there were no objections raised at the time it was moved. By the time hon. members expressed concern to the Chair some eight hours later, the Chair saw no alternative but to proceed with the terms of the motion.

Those are perfectly good precedents in this case for the reason that, first, we do not engage in hypothetical points of order, which is what we have before us; second, in the case of an actual dispute the objection to the process and the procedure, including Standing Order 56(1), a motion has to be brought immediately at that time, which was not the case here; and third, we are being asked to deal with this very much after the train has left the station.

The House has proceeded and has rendered it. It has been brought out of time. As such, it should not be dealt with by the House in that fashion.

● (1215)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Chair will take the comments from the two House leaders under advisement and return if needed to the House subsequently.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS

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

> That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, commencing upon the adoption of this Order and concluding on Friday, June 20, 2014:
>
> (a) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 12 midnight, except that it shall be 10 p.m. on a day when a debate, pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1, is to take place;
>
> (b) subject to paragraph (d), when a recorded division is demanded in respect of a debatable motion, including any division arising as a consequence of the application of Standing Order 61(2), but not including any division in relation to the Business of Supply or arising as a consequence of an order made pursuant to Standing Order 57, (i) before 2 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of oral questions at that day's sitting, or (ii) after 2 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, or at any time on a Friday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of oral questions at the next sitting day that is not a Friday;
>
> (c) the time provided for Government Orders shall not be extended pursuant to Standing Order 45(7.1);
>
> (d) when a recorded division, which would have ordinarily been deemed deferred to immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business on a Wednesday governed by this Order, is demanded, the said division is deemed to have been deferred until the conclusion of oral questions on the same Wednesday;
>
> (e) any recorded division which, at the time of the adoption of this Order, stands deferred to immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business on the Wednesday immediately following the adoption of this Order shall be deemed to stand deferred to the conclusion of oral questions on the same Wednesday;
>
> (f) a recorded division demanded in respect of a motion to concur in a government bill at the report stage pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(9), where the bill has neither been amended nor debated at the report stage, shall be deferred in the manner prescribed by paragraph (b);
>
> (g) for greater certainty, this Order shall not limit the application of Standing Order 45(7);
>
> (h) no dilatory motion may be proposed, except by a Minister of the Crown, after 6:30 p.m.; and
>
> (i) when debate on a motion for the concurrence in a report from a standing, standing joint or special committee is adjourned or interrupted, the debate shall again be considered on a day designated by the government, after consultation with the House Leaders of the other parties, but in any case not later than the twentieth sitting day after the interruption.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the government's motion proposing that we work a little bit of overtime over the next few weeks in the House.

I have the pleasure of serving in my fourth year as the government House leader during the 41st Parliament. That is, of course, on top of another 22 months during a previous Parliament, though some days it feels like I am just getting started since our government continues to implement an ambitious agenda that focuses on the priorities of Canadians. We still have much to do, and that is the basis for Motion No. 10, which we are debating today. Regardless of what other theories that folks might come up with, our objective is simple: to deliver results for Canadians, results on things Canadians want to see from their government.

As government House leader, I have worked to have the House operate in a productive, orderly, and hard-working fashion. Canadians expect their members of Parliament to work hard and get things done on their behalf. We agree, and that is exactly what has happened here in the House of Commons. However, do not take my word for it. Let us look at the facts.

In the previous session of the 41st Parliament, 61 government bills received royal assent and are now law. In 2013 alone, which was a shorter parliamentary year than normal, the government had a record-breaking year with 40 bills becoming law, more than any other calendar year since we took office, breaking our previous record of 37 new laws in 2007 when I also had the honour to be the leader of the House. That is the record of a hard-working, orderly, and productive Parliament. With more than a year left in this Parliament, the House has accomplished so much already, handing many bills over to the Senate for the final steps in the legislative process.

Just as we had a record year for legislative output, Canadian grain farmers experienced a bumper crop with a record yield in 2013. Understanding the real challenges faced by grain farmers, our government acted quickly on Bill C-30, the fair rail for grain farmers act, moving the bill through three readings and a committee study before handing it over to the Senate. This bill would support economic growth by ensuring that grain is able to get to market quickly and efficiently. The House also passed Bill C-23, the fair elections act, which would ensure that everyday citizens are in charge of democracy, ensuring the integrity of our electoral system and putting rule breakers out of business.

● (1220)

[*Translation*]

Two supply bills received royal assent, thereby ensuring that the government has the money it needs to continue providing services to the people.

When we passed Bill C-25, the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Act, we fulfilled our promise to protect the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation's enrolment process, making it fair and equitable while ensuring that only eligible individuals will be granted membership.

Earlier this spring, royal assent was also given to Bill C-16, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act, making the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation the first self-governing nation on the prairies and the 34th aboriginal community in Canada to achieve self-governance.

Next on the agenda is Bill C-34, the Tla'amin Final Agreement Act, which will implement the agreement with the Tla'amin Nation. Bill C-34 will give the Tla'amin increased control over their own affairs. They will have ownership of their land and resources and will be able to create new investment opportunities and make decisions determining their economic future.

We considered and passed through all stages of Bill C-5, the Offshore Health and Safety Act, which will enhance safety standards for workers in Canada's Atlantic offshore oil and gas industry to protect Canadians and the environment while supporting jobs and growth.

[*English*]

Bill C-14, the Not Criminally Responsible Reform Act, became law just a few weeks ago. This act will ensure that public safety should be the paramount consideration in the decision-making process involving high-risk accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder.

Also, this spring, our government passed Bill C-15, the Northwest Territories Devolution Act, which honoured our government's commitment to giving northerners greater control over their resources and decision-making and completing devolution all before the agreed-upon implementation date of April 1, as well as Bill C-9, the First Nations Elections Act, which supports the Government of Canada's commitment to provide all Canadians with strong, accountable, and transparent government. Bill C-9 provides a robust election framework, improves the capacity of first nations to select leadership, build prosperous communities, and improve economic development in their communities.

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

However, despite these many accomplishments, there is more work to be done yet before we return to our constituencies for the summer, let alone before we seek the privilege of representing our constituents in the 42nd Parliament.

During this mandate, our government's top priority has been jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity.

[*English*]

It is worth saying that again. During this mandate, our government's top priority has been jobs, economic growth, and long-term prosperity. That continues. Through three years and four budgets since the 2012 budget, we have passed initiatives that have helped create hundreds of thousands of jobs for Canadians, as part of the one million net new jobs since the global economic downturn. We have achieved this record while also ensuring that Canada's debt burden is the lowest in the G7 and we are on track to balance the budget in 2015.

As part of our efforts to build on this strong track record, our government has put forward this motion today. Motion No. 10 is simple. It is straightforward. It would extend the hours of the House to sit from Monday through Thursday. Instead of finishing the day around 6:30 p.m. or 7 p.m., the House would, instead, sit until midnight. This would give us an additional 20 hours each week to debate important bills. Of course, the hours on Friday would not change.

Extended sitting hours is something that happens practically every June. Our government just wants to roll up its sleeves and work a little harder a bit earlier this year.

Productivity is not just a function of time invested, but also of efficiency. To that end, our motion would allow most votes to be deferred, automatically, until the end of question period to allow for all hon. members' schedules to be a bit more orderly.

Last year, we saw the New Democrats profess to be willing to work hard. Then, mere hours later, after the sun would go down and people were not watching, what would the NDP do? It would suggest we pack it in early and move adjournment, without any accomplishment to show for it.

In order to keep our focus on delivering results and not gamesmanship, we are suggesting that we use our extra evening hours to get something done, not to play idle, unproductive games. We are interested in working hard and being productive, and doing so in an orderly fashion. That is the extent of what Motion No. 10 would do. Members on this side of the House are willing to work a few extra hours to deliver real results for Canadians. What results are we seeking? Bills on which we want to see progress, that are of great significance to Canadians, are worth spending a little extra time to see them considered and, ideally, passed.

[*Translation*]

Of course, we have the important matter of passing Bill C-31, Economic Action Plan 2014, No. 1. This bill implements our government's budget—a low-tax plan for jobs, growth and a stronger Canadian economy. It is also an essential tool in placing the government on track to balanced budgets, starting in 2015.

We have a number of bills that continue to build on the work we have done in support of victims of crime. Bill C-13, the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, is another essential piece of legislation that will crack down on cyberbullies and online threats by giving law enforcement officials the tools necessary to investigate and tackle these crimes. We are taking clear action to combat cyberbullying and I ask the opposition to join us in this pursuit.

Every day in Canada, our most vulnerable—our children—are the victims of sexual abuse. This is truly unacceptable and as a society we must do our part to better protect our youth. With Bill C-26, the Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act, we are doing our part.

[*English*]

Our government's comprehensive legislation will better protect children from a range of sexual offences, including child pornography, while making our streets and communities safer by cracking down on the predators who hurt, abuse, and exploit our children.

Therefore, I ask the opposition to work with us, support this important piece of legislation by supporting this motion.

It is also important that we move forward with one of the most recent additions to our roster of other tackling crime legislation. Last month, we introduced Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act, which will give victims of crime a more efficient and more effective voice in the criminal justice system. It seeks to create clear statutory rights at the federal level for victims of crime, for the first time in Canada's history. The legislation would establish rights to information, protection, participation, and restitution, and ensure a complaint process is in place for breaches of those rights on the part of victims. It would protect victims, and help to rebalance the justice system to give victims their rightful place. I hope we can debate this bill tomorrow night. By passing Motion No. 10, we will make that possible.

Our efforts to protect families and communities also extend to keeping contraband tobacco off our streets, so that the cheap baggies of illegal cigarettes do not lure children into the dangers of smoking. Bill C-10, the tackling contraband tobacco act, would combat this by establishing mandatory jail time for repeat offenders trafficking in contraband. Aside from protecting Canadian children from the health hazards of smoking, it will also address the more general problems with trafficking and contraband tobacco propelled by organized crime roots. With luck, I hope we can pass this bill on Friday.

Just before the constituency week, the Prime Minister announced Quanto's law. Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, would pose stiffer penalties on anyone who kills or injures a law enforcement, military, or service animal. I know that the hon. member for Richmond Hill, having previously introduced a private member's bill on the subject, will be keen to see the extra time used to debate and pass this bill at second reading before we head back to our constituencies.

Bill C-12, the drug-free prisons act, could also have a chance for some debate time if we pass Motion No. 10. This particular bill will tackle drug use and trade in the federal penitentiaries to make the correctional system a safer place, particularly for staff, but also for inmates, while also increasing the potential for success and rehabilitation of those inmates. As a former public safety minister, I can say that this is indeed an important initiative.

Delivering these results for Canadians is worth working a few extra hours each week. Our clear and steady focus on the strength of our Canadian economy does not simply apply to our budgets. We will also work hard next week to bring the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement into law. Bill C-20, the Canada-Honduras economic growth and prosperity act, would enhance provisions on cross-border trading services, investment, and government procurement between our two countries. It would also immediately benefit key sectors in the Canadian economy, by providing enhanced market access for beef, pork, potato products, vegetable oils, and grain products.

As a former trade minister, I can say first-hand that this government understands that trade and investment are the twin engines of the global economy that lead to more growth, the creation of good jobs, and greater prosperity. Trade is particularly important for a country like Canada, one that is relatively small yet stands tall in terms of its relationship and ability to export and trade with the rest of the world. If we are to enjoy that prosperity in the future, it is only through expanding free trade and seizing those opportunities that we can look forward to that kind of long-term prosperity.

Through Bill C-18, the agricultural growth act, we are providing further support to Canada's agriculture producers. This bill would modernize nine statues that regulate Canada's agriculture sector to bring them in line with modern science and technology, innovation, and international practices within the agriculture industry. The act will strengthen and safeguard Canada's agriculture sector by providing farmers with greater access to new crop varieties, enhancing both trade opportunities and the safety of agriculture products, and contributing to Canada's overall economic growth.

As the House knows, our government has made the interests of farmers a very important priority. We recognize that since Canada was born, our farmers in our agriculture sector have been key to Canada's economic success. As a result, Bill C-18 will be debated this afternoon. It would be nice to have the bill passed at second reading before the summer, so that the agriculture committee can harvest stakeholder opinion this autumn.

Over the next few weeks, with the co-operation and support of the opposition parties, we will hopefully work to make progress on other important initiatives.

● (1230)

My good friend, the President of the Treasury Board, will be happy to know that these extra hours would mean that I can find some time to debate Bill C-21, the red tape reduction act. This important bill should not be underestimated. It would enshrine into law our government's one-for-one rule, a successful system-wide control on regulatory red tape that affects Canadian employers. Treasury Board already takes seriously the practice of opining that rule, but we want to heighten its importance and ensure that it is binding on governments in the future. We want to ensure that Canadians do not face unreasonable red tape when they are simply trying to make a better living for themselves, and creating jobs and economic growth in their communities.

Another important government initiative sets out to strengthen the value of Canadian citizenship. For the first time in more than 35 years, our government is taking action to update the Citizenship Act. Through Bill C-24, the strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, we are proposing stronger rules around access to Canadian citizenship to underline its true value and ensure that new Canadians are better prepared for full participation in Canadian life. This legislation will be called for debate on Wednesday.

The health and safety of Canadians is something that our government believes is worthy of some extra time and further hard work in the House of Commons.

Tomorrow evening, we will debate Bill C-17, the protecting Canadians from unsafe drugs act. Under Vanessa's law, as we have called it, we are proposing steps to protect Canadian families and children from unsafe medicines. Among other actions, the bill would enable the government to recall unsafe drugs, require stronger surveillance, provide the courts with discretion to impose stronger fines if violations were intentionally caused, and compel drug companies to do further testing on a product. In general, the bill would make sure that the interests of individual Canadians are looked out for and become a major priority when it comes to dealing with new medications and drugs.

Bill C-22, the energy safety and security act, would modernize safety and security for Canada's offshore and nuclear energy industries, thereby ensuring a world-class regulatory system, and strengthening safety and environmental protections. This legislation, at second reading, will be debated on Thursday.

Bill C-3, the safeguarding Canada's seas and skies act, could pass at third reading under the extended hours, so that we can secure these important updates and improvements to transportation law in Canada.

We could also pass the prohibiting cluster munitions act. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs explained at committee, the Government of Canada is committed to ridding the world of cluster munitions. Bill C-6 is an important step in that direction, but it is just the beginning of our work. Extending the relevant elements of the Oslo Convention into domestic law would allow Canada to join the growing list of countries that share that same goal. I hope members of all parties will support us in this worthy objective.

By supporting today's motion, the opposition would also be showing support for Canada's veterans. The extra hours would allow us to make progress on Bill C-27, the veterans hiring act. The measures included in this legislation would create new opportunities for men and women who have served their country to continue working for Canadians through the federal public service. As a nation, we have a responsibility to ensure that veterans have access to a broad range of programs and services to help them achieve new success after their time in uniform is complete. This initiative would do exactly that.

Of course, a quick reading of today's order paper would show that there are still more bills before the House of Commons for consideration and passage. I could go on and on, literally, since I have unlimited time to speak this afternoon, but I will not. Suffice it to say that we have a bold, ambitious, and important legislative agenda to implement. All of these measures are important, and they will improve the lives of Canadians. Each merits consideration and hard work on our part. Canadians expect each one of us to come to Ottawa to work hard, to vote on bills, to make decisions, and to get things done on their behalf.

I hope that opposition parties will be willing to support this reasonable plan and let it come to a vote. I am sure that members opposite would not be interested in going back to their constituents to say that they voted against working a little overtime before the House rises for the summer.

I commend this motion to the House and encourage all hon. members to vote for adding a few hours to our day to continue the work of our productive, orderly, and hard-working Parliament, and deliver real results for Canadians.

● (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, of course on this side of the House we are always ready to work hard. The problem is that we have a government that does not really listen. When we look at what has happened in the past few weeks, we see that a number of bills have been rejected by the Supreme Court of Canada, precisely because the Conservatives did not do their job.

Of course it is important to have a debate in the House, but the government has to listen to the good advice it keeps getting from the NDP.

● (1240)

[*English*]

I am very interested in his comments about hard work, because the government House leader has been in his position for a number of years now. I am new in my position, so I referenced back to June last year. The government House leader, in good faith, is saying that the Conservatives are here to work.

The problem is, and people who are listening to us can go on the House of Commons website and find out for themselves, that last June, 90% of the speakers in the evening sessions were the New Democrats and opposition members. Less than 10% of the speakers were from the Conservative Party. We can see, if we go online, that there was usually only one Conservative MP who would show up to speak in the course of any evening session.

There are exceptions, which the member mentioned. The government House leader referenced the fact that the NDP tried to adjourn the House at one point. The reality was that no Conservatives had shown up to speak that night.

Therefore, my question for the government House leader is this. Will the Conservatives finally show up to work and speak in these evening sessions this year?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, you know, our objective is to ensure that there is an adequate opportunity for debate and to allow bills to pass. When we were dealing with these matters last spring, we were largely dealing with matters at third reading, after many members on the government side had already had ample opportunity to speak to them.

The only folks who were still looking to have more debate, as matters had been debated more than adequately from the perspective of members of the government, were those who were attempting to resist allowing those bills to pass. It was those folks who were attempting to prevent decisions from being taken and who were trying to put off having votes on those matters, and were therefore filibustering.

While I know the hon. member would like to put the best possible face on the fact that the NDP is always willing to filibuster any bill that comes along and is willing to put up speakers to delay decisions being taken, after having had our say and having spoken to bills, we also like to have our say in the fashion of a vote where every member in the House gets a say. The sooner the speeches are finished and the sooner there is ample debate, we can move on to that.

With ongoing filibusters, while they may have some utility to the hon. member, there comes a point when enough has been said, and we believe it is time to make decisions.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate enough to be the chair of the justice committee. As members know, our government has a fairly extensive justice agenda. We are dealing with Bill C-13 at present. We have a number of other issues coming forward.

Could the House leader tell the House the effect that the extended hours would have in helping us proceed with our very important justice agenda?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, as I think the House is aware, some of our priorities this spring have included the budget, job creation, economic growth and long-term prosperity. They have been the core priority of the government throughout.

We have also dealt with the fair elections act, something we know Elections Canada wants us to have in place before the end of June so it is able to prepare for a 2015 election. We are seeking to meet that objective so it can be adequately prepared and ready.

As a result, we have not had as much time as we would have liked so far this spring to focus on our very important tackling crime agenda. The opportunity over the next several weeks, with extended hours, would allow us more opportunity to advance those bills and allow ample debate on them. We are happy to do that, because we know these bills are very important to Canadians.

We need to continue to find ways to send a clear message to criminals that the government will not tolerate crime, and that it is looking to rebalance the justice system to give greater rights to victims, as members can see with the victims bill of rights. We are looking to protect those who are vulnerable in our society.

The tackling crime aspects of the agenda are, in fact, a very significant part of what we hope to achieve over the next several weeks.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I hope that after October 19, 2015, we will be on the government side of the House and the government House leader will be the opposition House leader. We are looking forward to that.

I want to come back to his comments because they are worthy of further examination. He said that, at second reading, the Conservatives had their chance to speak, which was why they did not show up to speak at the evening sessions. He said that was why over 90% of the speakers were New Democrats.

However, there is another compelling statistic. Because of the government's abuse of use of time allocation and closure motions, which is as bad as the Liberals, and that is saying a lot as they were a pretty lousy government, on average, 280 members of Parliament are stopped from speaking. There are 308 members in the House, and, on average, 280 MPs are shut down. Those are Conservatives who vote to shut down their riding representation and their ability to speak on behalf of their constituents.

The reality is that Conservatives are not speaking at second reading either because of time allocation and closure. In the vast majority of cases, Conservative MPs have never spoken on these bills.

I will go back to my question. Since time allocation means that 280 MPs are prohibited from speaking for their ridings and because, when we get to these evening sessions, Conservative MPs, with the rare exception of one per night, do not show up to speak, will Conservatives actually show up to work in these June sessions? Will they actually speak on behalf of their ridings? That is what Canadians want to know.

● (1245)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, since the opposition House leader is apparently fond of hearing speeches, I know he will want to vote for this motion. It would give him many more opportunities to come to this place during the extra time we would set aside in the evenings to hear many great speeches both from the government and I think from the opposition as well.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was here many evenings in the last session and I did hear speeches from the NDP, but they sounded remarkably similar, speech after speech.

I really appreciate our government. We have something to say, we have a few people who debate it very effectively, and then we know it is time to move on rather than repeating and repeating.

As we would have about 80 hours extra, what would that allow us to accomplish for Canadians?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the principal concept is that we would be able to get more done, make more decisions and get more bills passed. This is what I think Canadians expect of their parliamentarians. They expect them to actually come here and make decisions. This is an opportunity to do so, whether it be on our justice, agricultural or citizenship bills as they are all things that Canadians have spoken to across the country. They have asked for our government to take action on these matters, and I think they are looking for results.

When I am at home in my riding talking to constituents, there are very few people who tell me that they think the problem with the House of Commons is that there are too many decisions made, that we should have more lengthy debates, where 280 more members get to speak and never bother taking decisions. They actually want to see decisions and action taken.

When I talk about that approach for a productive hard-working and orderly Parliament, keep in mind what we have been through in the global economy in recent years. We have seen political paralysis in Europe, which has harmed its economy in a devastating fashion, and a similar kind of political paralysis in the United States, which hurt it for quite some time. Canada came through that downturn in a far better position.

Consistently, when we speak to people in the international community, they actually give credit to the Canadian government for taking decisions and getting things done. That was credited as one of the reasons we were able to respond so well in changing economic circumstances, come through the downturn with some of the strongest job creation, in fact, the strongest job creation among major developed economies and the strongest fiscal position.

We are in a position to balance the budget in 2015, something that is generations away in some other countries. They look to us as leaders for competent, capable management with the ability to make decisions and to do so with our political institutions.

This is something of which we as a government can be very proud. It is something we expect to see more of in the weeks ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I saw the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley rising. I am sure he would have pointed out that, according to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, in 2013, of the jobs the current government managed to cobble together, 95% were actually part-time, and we have 300,000 more unemployed than we did the year before. Therefore, the Conservative government, I guess in keeping with not showing up to evening sessions, is a part-time government. The Conservatives are only able to stimulate the economy with part-time jobs, and that is not even going. I know my colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley would also mention the fact that tens of thousands of jobs were lost last month.

We are talking about a government that right now does not seem to be doing much right.

● (1250)

[*Translation*]

It is rather sad that the government is again moving this motion that it is imposing with its majority. The NDP is always willing to work evenings. There is no doubt about that and we have proven it many times. Every June since 2011, NDP members were always in the House ready to debate bills and provide advice. The problem is that this government does not listen and is not prepared to listen to good advice. I will come back to that in a moment.

We are very familiar with the results. We know that bill after bill has been rejected by the court. The government is then often required to make amendments to the botched parts of the previous bill. The government seems to want to bungle everything, not just services to Canadians, but also the legislative process that leads to the introduction of appropriate bills and proposed amendments to improve bills in order to help Canadians. This process does not seem all that complicated, but it is unfortunately often botched by this government.

I am referring to the Conservatives' use of closure and time allocation motions, which is on par with their use by the Liberals when they were in power. It is appalling that this government systematically wants to shut down debate and deprive members of their right to speak. Each time, 280 members, on average, are deprived of their right to speak. The Conservatives vote for these closure motions. That is ridiculous.

In ridings where a Conservative member was elected—I am not so sure they will be re-elected the next time—that member takes away his own opportunity to speak on behalf of his constituents. The Conservatives say they want to shut down debate and therefore they do not want their constituents in Calgary, Red Deer, Lévis or any other riding to be represented in the House of Commons. They want to shut down debate. Thus, the vast majority of Conservative members seldom talk about the needs of the people in their riding or bills introduced in Parliament.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has just stood up and said that the Conservatives are going to work harder, but that also happened last year. My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley knows what I am talking about. Last year, the Conservatives were not in the House to speak. One evening, there was six hours of debate and only a single Conservative member was in the House to speak. Only one Conservative member spoke in six hours. The government moves time allocation and closure motions, and the Conservative members remain silent instead of speaking.

Members of the NDP, on the other hand, are always in attendance when the sitting hours of the House are extended. We are always there to fight, to improve bills and to solicit comments about bills. Meanwhile, the Conservatives are nowhere to be found. They do not come to the House, or perhaps one of them will show up over the course of the evening. As we said earlier, during the debate on S-12, no Conservative members came to speak about the bill. Not one, and we were there for six hours. What were they doing?

I do not know. It is not as though they were out consulting their constituents. The Conservatives are not here. They are not speaking.

I am going to come back to this momentarily, but the result is that we end up with botched legislation because the government does not listen and the Conservative members do not even speak on behalf of their constituents. Honestly.

We receive a generous salary from our constituents, the taxpayers. We are here to work to help our ridings move forward. I represent the riding of Burnaby—New Westminster. It is my duty to be in the House to stand up for the interests of the people of Burnaby—New Westminster.

If members decide to stop speaking, to systematically go along with the government's time allocation and closure motions and therefore deprive their ridings of the right to speak and if, on top of that, members do not even show up for the evening sessions in the House of Commons to contribute to the debate and the legislative process, then this approach becomes a complete sham.

I am fairly certain—and I would take a bet with any Conservative member—that this year, we will have the same problem as we did last year and the year before: 90% to 95% of the time, the NDP, or sometimes other opposition members, will be speaking and the Conservatives will not even be here.

The reasoning behind this motion does not make sense. The Conservatives are not the ones who will be here working. The Conservatives will not be here representing their constituents. The Conservatives will not be here giving passionate speeches about their ridings. They will not be here.

The proof, as we will soon see, is the way this motion is structured. The way the government decided to structure the motion is evidence of how much it will once again diminish the democratic rights all Canadians value so strongly. Canadians across the country want us to be in the House. They want us to represent them, regardless of where we are from.

For example, my colleague from Sherbrooke is an extraordinary young man, and he does a good job representing his riding. He is always in the House and speaks often. He is here; he represents his riding. He understands how important it is to represent Sherbrooke in the House of Commons. The same goes for my colleague from Hochelaga. Her riding is not the wealthiest riding in Canada. The average family income in her riding is below the average. She is always here representing the people of Hochelaga and talking on their behalf. She gives speeches on the importance of affordable housing. That is because she understands her role as member of Parliament.

Members on the Conservative side, on the other hand, refuse to speak at second reading or at report stage because there is a time allocation motion, and they refuse to show up on evenings when we have extended debates. How can the government expand the scope of its activities when it does not listen and when government members refuse to speak on behalf of their constituents? They refuse to defend government bills, they refuse to take action, they refuse to present amendments and they refuse to offer anything at all when it comes to legislation.

In such circumstances, voting Conservative does not mean a great deal. When people voted for the Conservatives, they voted for members who are controlled by the Prime Minister's Office, not members who rise in the House, defend their constituents' rights and speak on their behalf.

● (1255)

I want to speak to the motion now because I know that many of my colleagues are reading it. We want this to be a useful study of an important motion. For those who are watching, I will go step by step.

To begin, the majority government, as usual, wants to force a decision on the House. Unfortunately, debate and democracy are foreign concepts for the Conservatives.

They are proposing that commencing upon the adoption of this order and concluding on Friday, June 20, 2014, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be midnight, except that it shall be 10 p.m. on a day when a debate, pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1, is to take place.

As I said, we do not object to working until midnight. However, what actually happens is that the members opposite rarely show up to speak in the House. Opposition members are the ones who really contribute to the debates, and that is a major problem. If the government listened to us, it would not be problem, but that is not the case.

This has caused many problems with bills in the past. More than once we had to make amendments to botched bills with subsequent legislation, or, again, the Supreme Court clearly indicated that the bills were not in order.

Today, the Conservatives are proposing that we adjourn at midnight, or 10 p.m. if a debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1 is to take place. That refers to emergency debates.

My colleagues in the House, including the hon. member for Laval —who works very hard for the people in his riding—and the hon. member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, are always listening to their constituents and are always ready to raise questions that often result in an emergency debate.

A few weeks ago, in fact, an emergency debate was held in accordance with Standing Orders 52 and 53.1. That debate on the kidnapping of young Nigerian schoolgirls by the terrorist group Boko Haram was proposed by the member for Ottawa Centre. Many people from across the country came here to attend the debate, and people were still talking about it when I returned to my riding, Burnaby—New Westminster, last week.

Now the government wants to prevent us from holding emergency debates before 10 p.m. If the Chair decides that there is to be an emergency debate, that debate cannot begin before 10 p.m. For working people in eastern Canada, who have families and work hard, that is late. They will be denied their right to tune in.

● (1300)

It will not be so bad in my riding because of the three-hour time difference. For example, 10 p.m. here is 7 p.m. back home. That is a reasonable time. However, for the vast majority of Canadians, this government motion deprives them of their right to tune in to the emergency debates that will take place in the coming weeks.

[*English*]

Second, when we look at the second clause of this motion, which deals with recorded divisions, we see that what the Conservatives would now do is put in place a voting system that would have votes occur at the conclusion of oral questions, in the middle of the afternoon. This proposal reveals the whole intent of the government.

The Conservatives say that they want to work harder. We have already ripped up that argument by showing that when they said they wanted to work harder that last year, over 90% of the time it was not Conservatives but New Democrats doing the work. Only one Conservative member would show up every night to speak in the House of Commons, so this idea that somehow the government wants to work harder is simply not true.

Paragraph (b) deals with recorded divisions demanded in respect of any debatable motion before 2 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. In this case the vote would stand deferred until the conclusion of oral questions on that day, while if a division is demanded after 2 p.m., it would stand deferred until the conclusion of oral questions on the next sitting day.

What the Conservatives would do is basically do away with those evening votes. Not only do they not show up to speak, but they also do not even want to show up to vote. This could be perhaps the laziest motion ever put forward in the House of Commons by the government. It is far from wanting to work harder, as we have shown quite clearly when 90% to 95% of the time it is the New Democrats carrying the heavy load.

We are fine with carrying the heavy load. We come from humble roots and we are hard workers. Everybody acknowledges that, and that is why 90% to 95% of the time it is we who do the hard work in the House.

However, now the Conservatives want to even do away with evening votes. They are saying, “No, that is too hard. It is too hard voting at 6:00 or 7:00 at night. We do not want to show up to speak”.

This is a licence for laziness. That is what the government has brought forward. The Conservatives want to make sure that motions are voted on around question period time so that folks can show up around question period and then do whatever it is that Conservative MPs do in the evening. I have no idea of that.

● (1305)

[*Translation*]

I should also point out that, in this motion, the same goes for private members' business. Where this motion mentions Wednesdays governed by this order, it says that recorded divisions will be deferred until the conclusion of oral questions on the same Wednesday. As for other private members' business, the motion says that this too will be deferred until the conclusion of oral questions on the same Wednesday. That is the same thing.

This is really a licence for laziness. As we have shown, 90% to 95% of the time, the Conservatives are not the ones showing up to speak in the House. They do not want to vote in the evening, not even on private members' business. They want to curtail all of these activities and make sure that no votes happen in the evening.

What difference will that make? The NDP will still be here working. We work hard. We have a reputation for working hard. We come from humble roots and we represent our ridings well. I know that the members here this afternoon are very hard-working, and we will continue to work hard. Votes, including votes on private members' business, will now be held in the afternoon. That means the Conservative members will have their evenings free.

[*English*]

That is really the problem. As we move through this motion, we see time and time again that this is like a giant recess for the Conservatives. They have structured this so that they do not have to have votes in the evening anymore. They do not show up to speak in the evening 90% of the time, depending on the evening. It is New Democrats who actually put in the representation of their ridings. What we are seeing again is the Conservatives, through this motion, giving themselves an evening off.

The real clue to what the Conservatives are doing, this licence for laziness, is that they will not show up to speak or to vote, but they are telling the NDP that we can do our stuff and speak on behalf of our constituents. They have also proved that they are not willing to listen to the good advice we offer them, which is why they got into so much trouble having to amend legislation they brought forward previously and having pieces of legislation rejected by the Supreme Court. If they had listened to us and to Canadians, they would not be in so much trouble.

The key to this is paragraph (h): "No dilatory motion may be proposed, except by a Minister of the Crown after 6:30 p.m." The essence of the motion is that Conservatives will not show up to speak in the House of Commons. They will not show up to participate, because they do not do that; they let harder-working members do that. They will also not show up to vote in the evening. They will not show up to vote on private members' legislation, and they will not show up to vote on public legislation. That is why they want the votes after question period, when it is convenient.

That means that the Conservatives are shutting down the rules of the House so that only they can use them. It is incredible. If we had not been through Bill C-23, in which they were trying to cook the next election campaign, it would be unbelievable that after all the decades, a century and a half and more of Canadian parliamentary democracy, a government would say that the rules will exist, but the government members will be the only ones who can use them. Only Conservatives can use these rules. Only a minister of the crown can use these rules.

We will have this period. I know it, because we went through it. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley knows it full well, because I think he probably spent more time in this House than any other member. Night after night, there will be no Conservatives here wanting to speak, or maybe one member of Parliament from the Conservative Party will want to speak. However, the Conservatives will not show up to vote, because they are having all the votes deferred to question period, when it is convenient for them, and they are now saying that all the rules of the House apply only to them. Only they can use them. They are basically putting handcuffs on every single member of the opposition. They are saying that only a Conservative can use the rules that normally function that make this democratic place a democracy. Only the Conservatives can use them. It is unbelievable.

If we had not been through the unfair elections act, where the Conservatives were trying to subvert the next election campaign, we would actually think this could not be Canada. These are not Canadian values. That is what they are doing. They are putting in, and writing it out so that any Canadian can see, "No dilatory motion may be proposed, except by a Minister of the Crown after 6:30 p.m."

This is not an approach to try to work harder. The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons was trying to slide that by us a little while ago, and we simply do not believe it. The evidence simply shows that this is not the case. Conservatives will not be showing up to speak in the House. They did not last year. They did not the year before, and 90% to 95% of the time they let the heavy lifting be carried by New Democrats. We are strong, we are tough, and we do not mind doing it. We will do an even better job in 2015 once we are the government. That is when we will really see changes, when the heavy lifting actually benefits people directly through good governance.

● (1310)

I can tell members something else we will not be doing. It is what I mentioned half an hour ago.

I am enjoying this. I am not sure when I am going to sit down, actually. I think my colleagues from the NDP are appreciating it too.

I just want to mention what happens when due diligence is not done. Conservative members should know this, but they are muzzled. They vote for time allocation and muzzle themselves, so they do not actually speak on legislation in the House. There are 280 MPs, on average, who have their right to speak on legislation ripped away every single time, the dozens and dozens of times, the government has used closure techniques. Sometimes it calls it time allocation, but it amounts to the same thing; it is closure. Every time the government does it, 280 MPs, on average, are denied their right to speak. They do not show up to the evening session to speak. One does, and that is normally it. Then 90% to 95% of the heavy lifting is done by the NDP.

What is the result of this? I will give three examples. I could give tons of examples. I could probably speak for 14 hours on bad, botched Conservative legislation. I could do that, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you and the public would find it interesting, but eventually we are going to have to go to question period. I am going to mention only three examples.

The Conservatives rammed Bill C-38 through the House without due care and attention and without showing up for evening sessions. Bill C-38 was one of the omnibus bills. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley raised major concerns about it at the time. The Conservatives botched the bill. They botched it so badly that the next bill they introduced had to fix the mistakes they made in the first bill. They rammed Bill C-38 through the House with time allocation. It was omnibus legislation, which was quite all right, except it was wrong. It was badly botched in a way only the Conservative government could do it.

It was so badly botched, the government had to introduce another piece of legislation, Bill C-45. Bill C-45 had to fix all the problems in the previous bill. Was that a good use of taxpayers' money? Was it a good, use of this legislative process? The government rammed through Bill C-38 but botched it so badly that it had to bring another piece of legislation in to fix it. That is like bringing one's car in to get fixed and driving off without the wheels. It is incredible. We went through another process, with Bill C-45, to fix what was wrong with Bill C-38.

That is just a snapshot of how the government handles legislation. It is like the guy who has a hammer and thinks everything is a nail. Conservatives think everything is pavement and they can steamroll over all of it, except that when legislation is badly botched, there are consequences.

That brings me to another piece of legislation, Bill C-4. It is the same kind of thing. The Conservatives tried to throw a whole bunch of things in the bill, a laundry list, except that the Supreme Court rejected part of that legislation. As we know, the Leader of the Opposition has been raising this repeatedly in the House.

We have a problem whereby botched legislation leads to more time wasted, because the Conservatives have to introduce other legislation to fix the bad legislation they forced through in the first place without listening to the NDP. If they had listened to the NDP, they would not have had the badly botched legislation in the first place. If they do get it through the House, then, as we saw with Bill C-4, the Supreme Court says, "Sorry, you badly botched this legislation and it is not constitutional". As a result of that, we have to reject part of this legislation.

This is the real problem. It is not that the government, as it likes to say, does its job and produces a quantity of legislation, so everyone should give it a pat on the back. It is bad legislation in so many cases. It is legislation that has to be fixed. New Democrats always offer the amendments and the fixes. We are always there to try to direct the government. We often feel as if we are trying to direct a puppy, because it seems to get distracted often.

● (1315)

The reality is that the work the government does should be very important. The legislation the government presents in the House should be very important. There should be a proper legislative process. There should be amendments that are considered. There should be a process people can actually respect. That is not what happens under the government.

The government just throws legislation out without due respect for parliamentary traditions. It refuses to listen to the opposition to develop the legislation so that it can actually accomplish what it purports to set out to do when it puts the legislation on the floor of the House. The government will not take amendments, will not listen to debate, actually shuts down the debate, and rams legislation through. This costs Canadians enormously.

Every time the government has to provide new legislation to fix the old legislation, and as has happened a number of times in the past few weeks, every time the Supreme Court says that what the government is doing is simply not constitutional, it costs Canadians.

We have this motion that is a licence for laziness. It dismisses Conservatives from voting in the evening. It dismisses Conservatives from having to participate in debates that are actually quite important, because that is how we get legislation fixed, particularly the shoddy legislation the government tends to present in the House.

Now we have a government that has such profound arrogance that it says, quite clearly, "No dilatory motion may be proposed, except by a Minister of the Crown", which means that no dilatory motion may be proposed except by a Conservative, except by a minister of the crown, after 6:30 p.m.

What the government is doing, at the height of its arrogance, is saying to Canadians, "Hey, we are just going to run this government, this country, exactly how we want, and we do not care about the consequences".

We care about the consequences. We care when we see shoddy legislation that has to be corrected, and it takes months of work, because the government did not get it right in the first place. We care when the Supreme Court says that what the government is doing is unconstitutional.

We care when we see, right across this country, growing concern about the government's arrogance and its attacks on a whole host of institutions, not just in the elections act but in the attack on the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and Sheila Fraser. How could anyone attack Sheila Fraser? The Conservatives have been doing just that.

When we see all those attacks, we see a government that has simply done its time. It no longer has any sort of legitimate agenda but just wants to lash out at its perceived enemies and wants to set a perception that is simply not true.

With this motion, this licence for laziness, Conservatives get off scot-free. They do not have to vote in the evening. They do not have to show up in the evening. The government has said it is going to handcuff every single member of the opposition to their desks and not let them use any proper parliamentary procedure after 6:30 p.m. Only the government can.

That arrogance is something Canadians are becoming increasingly aware of. That arrogance is something Canadians are saying they have had enough of. In the most recent poll, the Prime Minister had an approval rating of one-third of Canadians. Two-thirds of Canadians disapprove of the work he is doing.

The leader of the Liberal Party has falling approval levels, but he did better. It was 50/50.

The top approval level in the country is for the Leader of the Opposition. Two-thirds of Canadians see his work in the House of Commons and approve of it. They see him as strong and as defending Canadian democracy.

That is what we are going to continue to do. We are going to ensure that legislation is effective. We are going to continue to speak out and work hard on behalf of our constituents. We are looking forward to that day, October 19, 2015, when we can get rid of the government and start having an NDP government that is going to fully respect our democratic traditions here in the House of Commons and right across the country.

● (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech on the government's motion, which is essentially a licence for laziness.

The government, which is being just as hypocritical as ever, has introduced a motion and is saying that it is going to work hard and that it is hard-working. However, as my colleague pointed out, the motion indicates that the government will allow votes to happen only right after question period. The government says that it is going to work hard in the evenings, but statistics show that it is usually only opposition members, particularly NDP members, who bother to speak about bills. One has to wonder whether the government really intends to work hard or whether it intends to show up for an hour or an hour and a half a day for question period and voting. We do not know what the Conservatives will do after that.

Can my colleague comment on how hypocritical it is of the Conservatives to say that they are hard-working when their motion proves exactly the opposite?

● (1325)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sherbrooke. He is a wonderful example of a hard-working member of Parliament who is in touch with his constituents. He does great work in the House and I would like to commend him for that. He is a role model for all Conservative members.

That is indeed the problem: this motion is a licence for laziness. The motion that the Conservatives just introduced is extremely embarrassing. I do not understand why the Conservatives cannot see that what they are proposing is a mistake. They are not going to hold any votes or come and speak in the evenings. We know full well that only a single Conservative member shows up whenever we sit for extended hours in June. Only one Conservative member shows up each evening.

At some point, after the next election, there will be only a few Conservative members here. Perhaps then one representative will be proportional to their total number of members in the House. When they have only 25, 20 or 15 members—I do not know how many Conservatives will be voted in, but I know that people in British Columbia want nothing more to do with them—then having a single member at the evening debate will be proportional to their total representation. However, refusing to come and speak and vote in the House now when they have 160 members is a sign of tremendous laziness.

The member for Sherbrooke rightly pointed out that the worst part is that they are now saying that the rules apply only to them and that they do not want the opposition to use the same rules. Come on. Enough is enough. It is shameful that the Conservatives are stooping so low.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member of Parliament for the past 20 minutes has talked about all the work that the NDP does through talking. In that same 20 minutes, he said "we spend all our work talking". In the same 20 minutes he said, "we spend all our work talking and in the meantime, we want to get things done".

My constituents never ask me how much talking I have done, or how many times I have repeated myself in the same hour to convince the inconvincible.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I have been invited to Lethbridge and I think most of the member's constituents are wondering where he is, because they cannot seem to find him in the riding.

The reality is that standing up in the House of Commons for his constituents is part and parcel of the work that he should be doing. He should be standing in the House. When the government puts forward time allocation or closure, he should be voting against that because he has not spoken on these issues. Time and time again he has not spoken on the bills that are coming forward.

I love the community of Lethbridge. His folks want him standing in the House speaking on those issues—

Mr. David Anderson: Have you been there?

Mr. Peter Julian: I've been there many times and I love it, Mr. Speaker. Actually, last time we came close to winning, and next time there will be an NDP MP in the city of Lethbridge, I am pretty sure.

However, the member needs to stand up for the people of Lethbridge. He needs to say "no" to closure and time allocation and he needs to show up in the evening debates and I hope he will be there.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not usually agree too much with Conservatives, but I must agree that this was a lengthy discourse we just received from the NDP. However, over the course of this long discourse, I was not able to discern whether the NDP is voting for or against the government motion.

Are New Democrats voting for this motion, or are they voting against this motion?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member will not have much time to wait, of course, because the government is already looking to impose closure and time allocation yet again.

We are the ones who have been in the House every June. I wish the Liberals would show up occasionally. They do, but not often. It is New Democrats who are here in the House 90% to 95% of the time, speaking out, representing our constituents. I am certainly hoping that Liberals will be here as part of what the Conservatives are imposing and we will have a vote tomorrow. We will be looking at all of the various permits that the government has just given itself to basically exempt itself from any evening work.

Do we agree with evening work? Absolutely. Do we agree with the government's process of saying "no" to evening votes, saying "no" to showing up, and handcuffing the opposition as far as the House rules are concerned? Well, that is another story. Stay tuned.

● (1330)

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rose because I too am concerned about hearing from the NDP with regard to the substance of this matter and that is whether or not New Democrats agree to come to work and do the work that is required, as put forward by the Conservatives. I want to thank my colleague from the Liberal benches for agreeing that we need an answer to this.

I am rather disappointed in the member from the NDP who continues to sling mud. Canadians watch this and they are, frankly, fed up. That is what I am hearing in my riding. I am sure many here are hearing the same. The NDP wants to sling mud. Jack Layton was a fine example of a true statesman, a person from the NDP who cared intimately about Canada and about his constituents. The member across the way continues to go against what Jack Layton's dream was, that they be respectful of one another, respectful of other parliamentarians and what their constituents want, and what Canadians want, which is a respectful place here in Parliament. I would encourage him to think about that when he trashes the next member who stands to confront his allegations, which are, frankly, not true.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the kind words of the member for Saint Boniface for Jack Layton. He is someone who is always in our thoughts. Jack Layton would have seen this and would have said exactly the same thing that we are all saying here today, that the idea of working late is something that we are absolutely in favour of. However, I am concerned with the idea that the Conservatives would put handcuffs on every single member of the opposition and say that the rules only apply to them, that only Conservative Party members who are representatives of ministers of crown can move the motions in the evening, that votes would no longer be held in the evening but in the afternoon.

With regard to the track record of the Conservatives, the member for Saint Boniface objects to me raising their record that 90% to 95% of the time last June they were not speaking in the House and New Democrats were. It was 90% to 95% of the time, depending on the evening. They have done the calculations themselves. They know that. It is certainly not in any way insulting to the Conservatives to point out that fact. It should be motivating for Conservatives. However, after two years of bringing forward these kinds of motions and refusing to show up in the House, we are saying they should start showing up and start speaking on behalf of their constituents. That is what their constituents elected them to do and that is what they should be doing in the House of Commons.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite amazing that the New Democrats should go on for such enormous lengths of time without telling us the bottom line as to whether they vote for or against. I do not know what the point of that long discourse was when there is no conclusion to it. In fact, sometimes it is said that in some of the debates here we are living in a bubble, in the sense that not that many Canadians are interested. However, in the case of the member's speech, that is too charitable. At best he is speaking inside a bubble that is inside this bubble. More likely, I would go one step further. He is speaking inside a bubble that is in a bubble that is inside this big bubble. No one is really listening and no one really cares what he is saying because we are not getting any work done. We are just listening to empty rhetoric and we do not have any resolution to the outcome of this motion.

The member complains we do not get enough done in the House. Why do we not get enough done in the House? It is partly because he uses his unlimited time to waste incredible amounts of time in the House.

I remember well when he was finance critic and he went on for days and days. Does he think he got thousands of votes out of that? I do not think he got any votes. All he did was waste the time of the House, prevent the work getting done, which he claims he wants to do. However, given those long speeches leading nowhere, I would surmise that he is the greatest impediment to work getting done.

● (1335)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would ask my colleague from Markham—Unionville this. First, he is supposed to be speaking to a motion. If he does not have anything to say on the motion, it is more appropriate that he sit down. Second, he is not addressing what is actually before the House and that would be showing respect to Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member is correct. All hon. members should make all of their remarks relevant and timely.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

Hon. John McCallum: I thought that since the hon. member was contributing so much, at least in terms of time, to this debate that the nature of his remarks was relevant to the topic at hand, but I think he just was, I would say, blowing bubbles anyway, so I think I can move on from that.

In the spirit of the Liberal Party wishing not to waste time but to get on with the business of the House, whether or not we, as a third party, agree with the outcomes of that business, and more often than not we do not, we at least agree that Canadians want this House to work and to achieve results. The NDP talk, talk, talk, and do nothing. We, on the other hand, do believe that it is normal for the House to have late-night debates toward the end of a session. I have been here a number of years and I believe that has occurred every year. I am not sure whether the NDP opposes that or not. It keeps objecting to the government cutting off debate on closure and, now, we do not know whether or not it wishes to accept the government's offer of more debate in the evenings in the weeks that will follow this week. The NDP's position continues to be contradictory.

However, in the interest of brevity, since I did complain that the NDP was talking too long, I will be very brief and simply say that we, in the Liberal Party, believe that taxpayers do want members to work additional hours toward the end of the sitting in order to get the business of the House done and so, we will be voting in favour of this government motion.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Markham—Unionville was complaining about the length of the opposition House leader's speech. I wonder whether he is aware that he had unlimited time. I thought he used remarkable restraint in only using 10 or 20 minutes instead. I would just point that out.

My experience in Parliament, both this Parliament and the House of Assembly in Newfoundland over some 24 years, is that every time the government seeks to use extended hours in debate, it is for one reason and one reason only; that is, to try to wear down the opposition. It is not only to do work but to try to wear down the opposition. However, I want to assure him that this part of the opposition will be the ones actually doing the work when these extended hours are taking place.

I wonder if he would like to comment on that because that is really what is going on here. It is not the government trying to do more work, but it is the government trying to wear down the opposition by forcing us to do the work by maintaining the idea of holding the government to account. We would happily do it because we represent our constituents.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I would cordially remind my colleague that his province is Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, on the substance of his comments, I guess he would not know what governments do to limit or encourage debate at the end of a session because his party, thankfully, has never been a government at the federal level. However, we and the Conservatives have both been in that position. I think while our objectives are different, as governments we have a lot of work to do at the end of the session. The NDP would not understand this, not having been one. I think it is appropriate to give good return to the taxpayers, that we expend a little more energy and time ourselves in order to get this work done before we break for the summer. I would encourage the NDP to think about that principle.

● (1340)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Markham—Unionville really did not indicate much of anything. He is trying to come after members, and I do not mind that at all. I come from a town where we are pretty tough.

However, I am surprised by the fact that he did not reference the motion, at all.

The member from Thunder Bay is saying he has not read it. I suspect the same because one of the things New Democrats do is read through motions.

I think he must be concerned about some aspects of the motion that are different. I would like him to express his opinion of paragraph (h), which is new, as he knows, and has not been used in the past. Since he seemed to be giving a blank cheque to the government yet again, and that is what the Liberal Party seems to do these days, does he have any concerns at all about the new paragraph (h)?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of not wasting time I will not devote much time to that long intervention by the NDP, except to repeat that for purposes of carrying out our work, we in the Liberal Party do support this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the Liberals are showing their true colours. They do not really care about the work of Parliament. No one from their party will be speaking to this motion and they do not seem to mind that no one will be speaking on their behalf. What is more, they complain that we spend too much time talking in the House.

In reality, they are just like the Conservatives and want nothing to happen in Parliament. They talk as though they were in a bubble, as though the work we do here serves no purpose and no one is listening. They think this work is meaningless. We are seeing the true colours of the Liberals, who see no point in parliamentary work. Actually, I should not be so surprised to hear this coming from the Liberals.

What does my colleague think about the specific aspect of the motion that gives ministers, and ministers only, the right to move a motion after 6:30 p.m.? What does he think of that specific aspect of the motion on the right reserved for ministers to move motions after 6:30 p.m.?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, it is a bit odd that the member is saying that the Liberals are not speaking in the House. I think I opened my mouth and am therefore speaking and I am a Liberal.

I did not speak for long because it would take too long to say what needs to be said. That is what the NDP does. What we are saying is that we need to take the necessary time to debate the nation's business in the House. If we spend hours debating issues that are not important to Canadians, then it is a waste of time. That is why I am limiting what I have to say about this.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, to understand the Liberal Party position, it is that anything the Conservatives want, they get. I think that explains a lot.

The poorest question period attendance in the country by any opposition leader in history is from the current member for Papineau. We have the current member for Papineau not showing up for question period. We have the Liberals saying that they will not speak on matters in the House Commons and that the Conservatives can do whatever they want. Is this the new Liberal Party, a sort of Liberal-Conservative alliance in which the Liberals say that the Conservatives can do whatever they want because the Liberals will not scrutinize, check anything out, or even read the motion?

The member could not even make reference to paragraph (h), which for any opposition member should be a matter of concern. No, he said that it does not matter and he did not read it, but that is fine; the Conservatives get what they want. Has the Liberal Party really gone down to that?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I actually have read it. At least I said which way we are voting on the motion as a whole, which is more than can be said for the NDP.

In terms of members not speaking much in the House, does he not know our member for Winnipeg North? I think he speaks more than all the New Democrats put together.

With regard to our leader, any moment that he is not in the House, he is out connecting with Canadians and reaching out to them. I have no doubt the NDP would be much happier if our leader was in the House all the time rather than reaching out to Canadians and presumably taking a good number of votes away from the NDP, which is certainly not at risk for the Liberal Party when the NDP House leader goes on ad nauseam about nothing.

● (1345)

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say something on behalf of what I would say my constituents in Kingston and the Islands are thinking, which is this: when we are here considering a government motion, why is it that all we are doing is spending time defending the Liberal Party from attacks by the NDP?

Surely the NDP can find something better to do with our valuable time than attack the Liberals on some sort of motion about who talks the most or who has the best arguments for how we should spend our extended hours here in the House of Commons. I think the people of Kingston and the Islands would like to see the NDP focus more on keeping the government to account.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, it is a breath of fresh air to hear from a Liberal. Under current circumstances, I would not even mind hearing from a Conservative, given this deluge from the NDP.

My colleague reminds me of inside baseball. We are not just talking in a bubble; We are talking in a bubble that is in a bubble that is in a bubble. We are a country mile away from anything of concern to Canadians.

My suggestion is that we get this over with quickly and move on to the real business of the House. That business is of some interest to Canadians across the country.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise with a number of comments about the motion at hand because it is a motion that we have seen before. It is a motion about how the House of Commons will be run.

With some passing comments to my friend from the Liberals in the corner there that somehow the way Parliament—

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Careful.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I will be very careful, Mr. Speaker, because as my friend across the way knows, one must be delicate when talking to our friends across the way.

It is important to know that the way the House conducts itself, the way the House performs its function on behalf of Canadians, the way we study legislation and vote on legislation seems incredibly unimportant to my Liberal colleagues right now. I express this with some concern and sadness, because the function of Canada's Parliament should matter to all of us, regardless of our political persuasion.

The motion in front of us directs how the House of Commons will operate over the next four weeks. Specifically, it proposes to extend the hours. It would also give the government unilateral control over how the House would conduct itself past a certain time of day. Only those sitting in the Conservative cabinet would be allowed the basic tools and the basic rules that govern this place. Not even my friends on the Conservative backbench would be allowed the basic tools under the motion. Those rules would be given over exclusively to the Conservative cabinet.

To my friends in the Liberal Party who attempted to belittle the conversation going on here today, it is only going to last so long. I would remind them that the motion would guide the House not on just this one moment but on what will happen over the next four weeks, including a number of important pieces of legislation on which the opposition and my Conservative colleagues in the back would be prohibited from exercising their democratic values and rights.

The Liberals can make fun and talk about bubbles in bubbles, but the constituents that I represent care about our fundamental democratic values. I do not know about Kingston and the Islands or about Markham—Unionville or all the rest, but my constituents care about our fundamental democratic values. The place where that happens the most is right here.

If the Conservatives introduce draconian motions that extend hours and limit the power of MPs to debate pieces of legislation and those measures are not important to my Liberal friends, then so be it. That is fine. That is a decision they can make. We stand opposed to this motion specifically because it would prevent members of Parliament—

An hon. member: It will only take an hour.

Mr. Scott Simms: Will the real House leader please stand up.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how easily shocked the Liberals are to see New Democrats stand up and oppose anti-democratic measures.

They talk about a breath of fresh air. What that means is that when we are pushed by a bully, the real reaction and the proper democratic reaction is to stand up and resist that bully, rather than roll over and pretend that it is not important. I say to my Liberal friends that if we want to correct the abusive behaviour by Conservatives in the House, we must stand up to that abusive behaviour from time to time. That means being here. That means asking questions. That means debating legislation.

At least we can agree with my Liberal friends on this next point, and I will end on this point and then turn my attention to the motion.

The Conservatives put forward absolutely atrocious pieces of legislation, often under time allocation. That technique limits the amount of debate that is allowed to take place on any bill, and those bills were so fundamentally flawed that when they attempted to enact those bills into law in Canada, they not only caused Canadians millions of dollars in real terms but also hundreds of hours of grief.

The laws are designed very badly, yet they are rushed through this process. The Liberals can belittle all they want, but the fact of the matter remains that the Conservative government has used time allocation and closure, which are techniques to limit and shut down debate in Canada's House of Commons, more often than any government in Canadian history.

Let us rest on that moment for a second. Let us rest on that fact just in passing. No government under any other circumstances—times of war, times of peace, depressions, recessions, all of those things—has shut down debate in Parliament more often and with such latitude as the present Conservative government has.

What strikes me as passing strange is that when in opposition, the Conservatives, many of whom are now sitting in cabinet, used to hate when the Liberals did this very same thing. We have all the quotes from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, from the Prime Minister, from the government House leader showing that when the Liberals had a majority government and used these same techniques, it was the Conservatives who were holding up democratic rights and showing some flame for the hopes and aspirations of all Canadians when they look at our Parliament. It was Conservatives, along with New Democrats, who said it was wrong.

However, what they actually took from those days in opposition were the wrong lessons.

● (1350)

They said they were going to use the techniques that the Liberals were using when they were in a majority government and that they were going to expand on them. They were going to put them on steroids and shut down debate more often. As a result, on average, we see two members out of the whole Conservative caucus stand up and speak to any government bill.

One could say that they do not have a lot to say about these pieces of legislation. That is worrisome, because some of them are incredibly complicated and affect the lives of millions of Canadians in some cases. We find Conservatives simply uninterested in speaking and representing.

Liberals may say that nothing that happens here matters, and the Conservatives may join them. One would then question why they ran for office in the first place, if they did not want to speak in the House of Commons or did not think that what happens in this place matters. I join my New Democratic colleagues and say that what takes place here does matter, that our words do matter, and that our words should effect change for the positive.

Hopefully, when we all signed our nomination forms way back when and decided to run for the various political parties here, there was some hope in that exercise. Hopefully there was some belief that we were going to stand in this place and speak on behalf of others, because when we take this place to its fundamental principles, that is all it is. The design of Canada's Parliament is simply to hold the government to account on spending and legislation. That is not solely the responsibility of those of us in opposition, as we are as New Democrats right now; it is also the responsibility of all of those not in cabinet. That includes the majority of my Conservative colleagues across the way.

How are we doing on that account? Conservatives and, I suppose, Liberals support the actions by the government House leader in Motion No. 10. The motion will unilaterally offer all of the tools of Canada's House of Commons, but exclusively to those in cabinet. It will then again extend sitting hours, which is fine. If we look at the attendance records and those who speak to motions at 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, or 12 o'clock at night, we will see that New Democrats are taking the majority of those opportunities to address the legislation before us. That is because we believe in the process.

I am sorry to offend any of the real-world sensibilities of my friends across the way, and now of my Liberal friends as well, by pointing out that New Democrats are so naive that they believe that contributing to the debate in the House of Commons means something. We are naive enough to believe that our best ideas, our best hopes, and our best research should mean something to legislation before Parliament.

Heaven forbid that the job of MPs should not just be to say whatever the Prime Minister's Office tells them to say but to speak on behalf of our constituents with our best guided intelligence and the best information that we have. Heaven forbid that the House of Commons should be that place once more in Canada's life.

We all know that there is a lot of reason for cynicism and despair on behalf of the Canadian people. They look at the unfair elections act, to take one example of one bad piece of legislation. The government seems to be unable to find one expert witness anywhere to defend its act. At any point in this conversation about our democracy and the way in which Canadians will vote, the government was unable to find anyone who would support it outside of the Conservative Party of Canada. Despite that, it rammed this bill through as well. It rammed this act through that will make it easier to cheat and harder to vote.

Conservatives stand up day after day and suggest that they are the holders of all wisdom when it comes to voting. They suggest that all the experts, such as the head of Elections Canada, the former head of Elections Canada, and the former head of Elections B.C., whom the Conservatives hired to give them advice on how to run elections, are all wrong. Sheila Fraser is wrong. She must be partisan, biased, or ill-informed. Conservatives understand how elections should work.

Maybe they do for Conservatives, but not for Canadians. Unfortunately for us, the Conservatives too often offer those Canadians who are losing faith and hope in our democracy even more reason to become cynical and even more reasons to turn away from the ballot box. What does that say to young Canadians in particular? All parties have talked about encouraging young people, or at least New Democrats have. I cannot speak for the others in terms of their efforts to get young Canadians out to vote. Young Canadians in particular are watching the actions of a government that has completely lost its moral compass.

I believe that Reformers and Conservatives used to believe in things aside from just power, but now power is their exclusive view on the way things should work, and we see it again here in Motion No. 10.

● (1355)

It says that the government is not content to just use time allocation, closure, and all of the different tools to shut down debate, and I love what the government House leader said earlier today. For those colleagues of mine who missed it, he said that it was the economy that made them do it. In terms of becoming fundamentally undemocratic, it was the crisis in Europe that forced the Conservatives to shut down debate in Canada's House of Commons.

This is the same Conservative Party that, as the world was entering into the great recession, introduced an austerity budget. The Conservatives said that the solution to caving financial markets was to bring in a budget that would severely cut government spending. As Europe, the United States, and the entire G20 all moved in the opposite direction, the sages in the Conservative Party said that they knew better. On these global recessionary talks that are going on, I remember one Conservative pundit in this place saying that these rumours of a financial crisis are overblown and what we need to do is bring in austerity.

If we set the record straight and clear, it was only when the Prime Minister's own job was threatened—not the jobs of hundreds of thousands of Canadians that were on the line—and his own government was on the line and he feared for the loss of that government, did the Conservatives flip and suddenly introduce a new budget and go all "Keynesian". As the finance minister said at the time, "We're all Keynesians now". That was when they actually believed in the role of government in having some sort of influence over what happens within a country's economy.

The Conservatives introduced a stimulus budget, and they were dragged kicking and screaming into the conversation. It was only that near-death experience for the Conservative Party that opened them up to the idea that there could be an actual reason and role for government.

This is a government that, in its legislation, has decided that omnibus bills are the new answer to governing in Canada; that is, hundreds and hundreds of pages of legislation rammed into one bill. The debate around that legislation is completely shut down. When the opposition introduces amendments based on what we hear from experts who actually know what they are talking about—not from my friends across the way—the government refuses and rejects all of them. I do not mean most of them, I mean all of them. They are rejected from those government omnibus bills.

Then, the mistakes show up. The Supreme Court and other such important bodies show the legislation to be unconstitutional. What does the government do? It introduces another omnibus bill to fix the mistakes from the last omnibus bill, and the Conservatives say that this is good governance. Well, it is atrocious, and we see it here again.

The government wants to introduce a motion to extend hours to which government members will not show up, will not speak to the bills that they say are so important, that Canadians need to have and have yesterday. Then they introduce a set of rules that would allow them, and exclusively them, to alter what happens in the place just for cabinet members, as if they were better.

This is going to be opposed by New Democrats. It should be opposed by all right-thinking members in this place. We will stand proudly for Canadians.

● (1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The time for government orders has expired. The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley will have seven minutes remaining when this matter returns before the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

PROSTITUTION

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with forthcoming legislation on prostitution, Canada must tackle this issue with the clear understanding that prostituted individuals are not criminals. More of them are young women and children. Canada's goal should be to end the violent institution of prostitution in Canada, and not to legalize it.

Front-line Canadian organizations that have worked with trafficked victims have requested a made-in-Canada response that targets pimps and johns with stiff criminal sanctions and provides rehabilitation and assistance instead of arrest for prostituted women.

Last week former U.S. president Carter, having recently written a book about the global epidemic of violence against women and girls, wrote to Canadian parliamentarians, urging Canada to recognize the violence that prostitution causes to women and to take this opportunity to ensure that Canada's future laws focus on preserving human rights.

I am confident that our government will do exactly that.

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INTERNATIONAL CUP KIDS PLAYING FOR KIDS

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the International Cup Kids Playing for Kids is an event that was born in 2006 of an idea of the passion and hard work of a few volunteers. Since then, they have demonstrated leadership, making this tournament larger year by year.

This year, we will be able to rely on close to 120 volunteers and 1,800 soccer players to gather funds for a good cause. All profits are given to the Sainte-Justine Hospital and the Montreal Children's Hospital foundations.

[*Translation*]

This tournament is an opportunity for kids to play their sport outside the regular season. It also gets kids and coaches involved in a major fundraising campaign for sick kids. This year alone, the organizers expect to raise over $50,000. Good luck.

As this year's honorary chair, I thank everyone who is participating and I congratulate the organizing committee for undertaking this major project.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL CONSERVATION PLAN

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's new national conservation plan has been welcomed by farmers, landowners, hunters, anglers, and conservation groups.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation said, "The Federal Government's...investment in conservation is a positive step forward...".

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is pleased to see $50 million allocated to stewardship activity and wetland restoration.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters said that the NCP is a "robust commitment to enhancing conservation efforts across Canada".

The national conservation plan is a $252-million program that will deliver real on-the-ground results for conservation. The NCP will mobilize action across all regions and sectors for stewardship and conservation in our urban and natural areas as well as working landscapes. The NCP targets the protection of ecologically sensitive lands, restoring wetlands, voluntary stewardship of species and habitats, and strengthening marine and coastal conservation.

The NCP builds on the actions and efforts of Canadians who have a record of conservation results in Canada, including hunters, anglers, farmers, stream keepers, and Canada's youth.

* * *

MATERNAL, NEWBORN, AND CHILD HEALTH

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 6.6 million young children die of preventable causes and nearly 300,000 women die from preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth each year. These unacceptable deaths must be avoided by ensuring all women and children get the prevention, treatment, and care they need. They must have access to family planning, vaccines, proper nutrition, and prevention of and treatment for diarrhea, HIV-AIDS, malaria, pneumonia, and tuberculosis.

Together let us all ask what action the government is taking to support improving health and nutrition outcomes for women, newborns, and children in the post-2015 agenda. Is the government undertaking Muskoka two, and will it increase funding beyond 2015 to specifically target the hardest to reach? Will it make a signature Canadian contribution to the post-2015 development agenda?

Every woman and child lost is a tragedy to the family, community, and country, and a reminder that we still have work to do.

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ABBOTSFORD INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an event that has been thrilling crowds in B.C.'s beautiful Lower Mainland since 1962. The Abbotsford International Airshow is acknowledged as one of the top 10 air shows in the entire world, and it will take place this year on August 8, 9, and 10.

Hundreds of flight crews and hundreds of thousands of spectators converge on Abbotsford every year to witness fantastic acts of aerial daring and to attend the Aerospace, Defence and Security Expo, which serves as a platform to highlight the fifth-largest aerospace industry in the world. Over 700 companies from every province employ 170,000 Canadians while annually generating $42 billion in revenues and contributing $27 billion to Canada's GDP.

The aerospace industry is a priority sector under our government's global markets action plan, which is supporting Canadian businesses as they compete and succeed in the global marketplace.

I have had the pleasure of joining in the fun many times over the years, as both a performer and spectator, and I urge all of my colleagues to visit Abbotsford in August for the international air show and the adjoining Aerospace, Defence and Security Expo.

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● (1405)

HEALTH

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before the expiry of the Canada health accord this spring, I organized a public meeting on Hamilton Mountain about the future of our health care system. The room was packed. We were joined by my colleague, the NDP health critic, as well as Drs. Gordon Guyatt and Tim O'Shea and nursing professor Leanne Siracusa. Together, the four panellists inspired us to fight for reforms that ensure all Canadians have access to sustainable, affordable, and high-quality public health care.

Unfortunately, that goal is not shared by the Conservative government here in Ottawa. On the contrary, the Prime Minister has always wanted to replace public health care with an American-style for-profit system. However, here is the thing. He knows that 94% of Canadians support national public health care. That is why he is trying to sabotage the system quietly by cutting $36 billion over 10 years and breaking the health accord.

New Democrats are not going to stand idly by as the Conservatives deliver nothing but longer wait times, reduced front-line services, and lack of access to home care and long-term care. Canadians have been telling us that public health care is a top priority for them. It is time that we had a government in Ottawa that made health care its priority too.

Statements by Members

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Bill of Rights was enacted by Parliament on August 10, 1960. At the time Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, upon signing the bill, stated:

> I am a Canadian, a free Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship God in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

The Canadian Bill of Rights states "freedom of religion", not "freedom from religion". I am concerned that there is evidence that this freedom for Canadian citizens of Christian faith is being compromised by institutions that should be protecting their religious freedom. The Ontario government's attack on the independence of the Catholic educational institutions in its Education Act, The Law Society of Upper Canada and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society's recent attack on Trinity Western University's student faith covenant, and the consistent marginalizing of Christian views by human rights commissions are evidence that my concerns are justified.

As former prime minister John Diefenbaker confirmed, I also pledge to uphold Canada's—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton—Leduc.

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EDMONTON OIL KINGS

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Edmonton Oil Kings on their victory as the 2014 Memorial Cup champions, the third national championship in franchise history. This team defined courage, strength, and resilience as it overcame adversity all season, and especially through the playoffs.

In the Memorial Cup tournament, it played two monumental games against Val-d'Or, losing the first in double overtime and then winning the second in triple overtime to advance to the final. This set up a matchup against the powerful Guelph Storm, a team that had a record-setting year in the Ontario Hockey League. The Oil Kings were down a goal at the end of the first period, but their resilience showed once again, as they skated, checked, and scored to a decisive 6-3 win over their OHL counterparts.

At the end of the game, the players hoisted the cup, but also the sweater of their friend and teammate Kristians Pelss, who passed away following last season. The emotions were evident as each player celebrated his victory but mourned the loss of the teammate to whom the team dedicated this year and this title.

Congratulations to all of the players, their coaches, and the entire Edmonton Oil Kings organization on an inspirational season and an amazing Memorial Cup victory.

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RUSSELL JOHN COLLIER

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to pay tribute to the life of Russell John Collier, artist and poet, awarding-winning academic, farmer, environmentalist, and a loyal and loving friend, father, and husband.

Russell was one of British Columbia's foremost aboriginal land use planners, a cultural translator between his ancient Gitxsan heritage and his knowledge of modern science. His writings on language and the land are internationally recognized.

Russell was a kind and loving man whose respect for life and nature permeated his every action with the people and the world around him. He dedicated himself to building a more sustainable, loving, and respecting world. His wife Lori and children Khyrin Alexander and Nicholas Aubrey will continue to make these dreams a reality.

Russell passed away suddenly as he was dancing, and his last words were "Give my love to my family and friends. I had a great time tonight." Russell made bright the lives of those he touched. It is now our turn to carry on his work and his hope to leave the world a better place than we found it.

* * *

● (1410)

GREEK DAY ON THE HILL

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to let the House know that we are hosting leaders from the Hellenic-Canadian community from Quebec for a Greek Day on the Hill.

Greek Day on the Hill is a chance to listen to the concerns and aspirations of these dynamic Canadians and to thank them for their community's contribution to the political, economic, and social development of our country. We will also be enjoying the musical rendition of *Time for Flowers, Time for Snow*, to be performed by 80 children from four Montreal schools under the supervision of two beloved artists, Dimitris Ilias and Maria Diamantis. These important Greek—Canadian leaders have not only contributed to Canada's continued economic growth, but have also had a tremendous impact on Canada's cultural growth.

Today I am thankful to pay tribute to the Hellenic-Canadian community, which, like many other immigrant communities, has worked hard to help shape this great country that we call Canada. As a member of the community myself, it is truly an honour to recognize my community for all that it has accomplished.

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[*Translation*]

WINERY IN NEUVILLE

Ms. Élaine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to pay tribute to Domaine des 3 Moulins, a winery in Neuville, in my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, for its success at the recent All Canadian Wine Championships.

At the 34th anniversary of the event, which concluded on May 16, Domaine de 3 Moulins was competing against nearly 200 wine producers from seven Canadian provinces. The winery brought home gold in the Single White Hybrids category with its 2012 Le Moulin à grain, and it won silver in the Grape Fortifieds & Other Dessert category with Aube du Moulin, one of my personal favourites.

I extend my warmest congratulations to the winery's owners, Monick Valois and Pio Bégin, and their entire team, for their well-deserved success after more than a decade of work. I would also like to thank them for their hard work, tenacity, and perseverance in this major undertaking.

Congratulations. The fruits of your investment and your passion have put the region of Portneuf on the map right across the country.

* * *

[*English*]

CONSERVATION

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Fredericton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently the Prime Minister launched the national conservation plan while he was in my riding of Fredericton. This plan will help to secure ecologically sensitive lands, support voluntary conservation and restoration actions, and strengthen marine and coastal conservation. The plan will also expand opportunities for partners to improve the land and water around them. We also have programs already in place that help support these initiatives.

For example, in Fredericton last week we announced we were making further investments through a program that would help post-secondary students gain work experience while conserving the environment.

Our government will continue to build on these conservation programs and announce new initiatives as we focus and coordinate our efforts far into the future.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EUGENIE BOUCHARD

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate one of the most talented people in my riding on her exceptional achievement.

Eugenie Bouchard, from Westmount, defeated Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic to win the Nuremberg Cup. Eugenie is the first Canadian to win a World Tennis Association tournament since Aleksandra Wozniak, another Quebecker, in Stanford in 2008.

[*English*]

This triumph comes on the heels of a thrilling run to the semi-finals of the Australian Open when Eugenie earned many thousands of new "Genie's Army" fans through the quality of her play, her steely determination, and her warm and approachable demeanour off the court.

Now ranked 19th in the world, Eugenie's next challenge is the French Open. We wish her the very best. She is an example for Canadians, especially for young girls dreaming of their own careers in tennis.

[*Translation*]

Eugenie, we are proud of you. You have a promising future that all Canadians will be following with great interest.

* * *

[*English*]

MATERNAL, NEWBORN, AND CHILD HEALTH

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two days from now, Canada will be hosting a summit on maternal, newborn, and child health in Toronto. This summit will provide civil society, the private sector, and global and Canadian leaders in health the opportunity to galvanize consensus on where to focus efforts to maximize results for those in need.

I look forward to attending this summit, along with the Right Hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Minister of International Development, and high-profile guests, such as His Highness the Aga Khan, Melinda Gates, Ban Ki-moon, the President of Tanzania, and many others, who will discuss how to save the lives of more mothers, children, and newborns.

This summit will see Canada continuing in our leadership role, addressing the health challenges faced by women, children, and newborns in developing countries.

Canadians can be very proud of our government's strong track record in saving the lives of women, children, and newborns all over the world.

* * *

● (1415)

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, from Comox to Port Alberni, Nanaimo to Parksville and throughout the Lower Mainland, British Columbians came out to hear the Leader of the Opposition.

In our communities, Canadians do not care about Liberal and Conservative mudslinging from inside the Ottawa bubble. They want to hear about what matters to them.

Last week, that is what our leader was doing. He was talking about jobs, about making life more affordable, supporting veterans, protecting our environment, and fixing Ottawa.

From farmers' markets to town halls to meeting folks in coffee shops, everywhere it was clear: British Columbians want change.

From the island to the north, support for the Leader of the Opposition continues to grow, and in 2015, British Columbians will vote for the NDP in record numbers, because they know it is New Democrats who take on and defeat Conservatives.

Canadians know that with the NDP, they can vote for the change they want and actually get it.

Oral Questions

UKRAINE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to congratulate the people of Ukraine on their election yesterday.

Initial reports indicate that the election was peaceful and transparent. This election is an example of Ukrainian people exercising their inherent democratic rights during this critical time in Ukraine's history.

Our government is proud to have helped at this pivotal time in Ukraine by sending a contingent of election observers that monitored and reported on these critical elections.

I would also like to reaffirm our government's support for a democratic and sovereign Ukraine.

Canada will continue to work with the Ukrainian government to help restore the country's economic and political stability. We will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainians who aspire for a better and brighter future for Ukraine.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, why has the Prime Minister changed his version of events surrounding the putative attempt to have a phone call with the Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have no idea of what that question was about. What I can say, simply, as I have said all along, is my position was that there was an issue I was aware of that I thought it likely to come before the court. Therefore, I did not consult a sitting judge; I consulted legal experts outside the court.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for someone who did not understand the question, he sure understood the question.

Early on the Prime Minister was affirming that he had talked to legal experts and that it was entirely theoretical that anyone could challenge the appointment of a Federal Court judge to the Supreme Court to be one of the three reserve judges from the province of Quebec. Then we had a version from his office that it was inappropriate and inadvisable that he take the call.

He changed his version the last time he was in the House and we would like to know why.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I do not know what the change of version is. What I know is that the government consulted outside legal experts as well as inside legal experts. All opinions we received indicated that Federal Court judges were eligible for appointment to the Supreme Court, as had always been considered the case in the past, including when vacancies were being filled from Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that he completely changed his version the last time he spoke in the House.

Early on, the Prime Minister tried to lead us to believe that the situation was so theoretical that it was not even worth talking about. Then he came up with a new version where he said that he would not take the Chief Justice's call because he knew that the appointment would end up before the Supreme Court, given its controversial nature.

Since the Prime Minister does not even realize that he changed his version, can we—

● (1420)

The Speaker: Order.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said multiple times, we consulted inside and outside legal experts as to whether Federal Court judges were eligible for appointment to the Supreme Court. Traditionally, these judges, including those sitting in Quebec, were considered. Our experts confirmed that such was the case, and I acted in accordance with the opinions we received from constitutional experts.

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has now been exposed that four of six candidates on the short list of Quebec nominees for the Supreme Court proposed by the Prime Minister were Federal Court judges. Conservatives rigged the process to make sure that at least one of the three final candidates would be from the Federal Court. Why?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, the reason Federal Court judges were considered in this appointment was that Federal Court judges had always been considered eligible for these appointments up to and including the process that chose Justice Wagner.

Obviously the Supreme Court has now ruled otherwise and, as I said before, the government will respect that ruling and act accordingly.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister promise, from his seat, that the Conservatives will not try to appoint another Federal Court judge to be one of the three judges from Quebec who sit on the Supreme Court of Canada, yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have said multiple times that the government must respect that ruling. I have also noted that the reality is that doing so will limit the opportunities of Quebec judges on the Federal Court and weaken an important federal institution. However, since that is the ruling, the government will take the necessary steps.

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives do not seem to know if temporary foreign workers are getting paid too much or too little.

Under this government, nearly 10,000 foreign workers were paid less than the prevailing wage for the work they were doing. In many cases, that was illegal, and it certainly lowered Canadian wages.

Why did the government break the law?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is difficult to understand the Liberals' position. One day they are calling for an end to the moratorium and an expansion of the temporary foreign worker program. The next day, they change their position.

Under the rules we put in, employers are required to pay temporary foreign workers the prevailing wage.

[*English*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position that is hard to understand is the government's position. On the one hand it illegally pays less than the going wage to workers, some 10,000. On the other hand, the minister now is open to a system where a foreign worker, working beside a Canadian and doing identical work, will get paid more per hour. On the one hand it wants to pay less. On the other hand it wants to pay more. All in all, this is a grossly self-contradictory, incompetent government hopelessly flailing about in its own Conservative mess, so why does it not just adopt the Liberal five-point plan?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the contradictions of the Liberal Party on this are really too numerous for me to document in 35 seconds. What I will say is the following. Employers are, under changes we have put in, required to pay a prevailing wage. I think it has also been observed that if there are genuine labour shortages that should indicate upward pressure on wages, and of course that would be a good thing for Canadian workers as well.

● (1425)

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the number of long-term unemployed Canadians has more than doubled since 2008. It is so bad that 39% of jobless Canadians have stopped looking for work altogether. Will the Conservatives listen to these Canadians who are giving up hope of ever finding a job? Will they listen to BMO economist, Doug Porter, who says, “That headline jobless rate doesn't necessarily capture how weak the jobless picture really is”.

Will the Conservatives face reality and provide Canadians with a real jobs plan, not just Conservative talking points?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is of course that Canada has the best job creation record among all of the G8 member economies. Nearly 1.1 million net new jobs have been created since the recession.

Is the member right to observe that there are still challenges in the workforce? Of course there are, but the kinds of policies advocated by the Liberal Party and the other opposition parties, to raise taxes and to raise debt, would kill jobs not create them.

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for more than a year now, Quebec has not had a voice on the Supreme Court because of the Conservatives' mismanagement, ideological stubbornness and contempt for the rules and the Constitution.

Documents obtained by *The Globe and Mail* depict the Conservative disaster. In addition to replacing Justice Nadon, the government will also soon have to appoint someone to replace Justice LeBel.

Will the Prime Minister respect the letter and spirit of the Supreme Court decision on the eligibility of Federal Court judges?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course I reject the entire rambling preamble of inaccuracies in the member's question. She would know that we did have a process that involved consultation with the Barreau du Québec. She was part of the consultation with respect to the formation of a list. We sought outside expert advice as well in this process. As a result of a Supreme Court decision we are now in a position where we will move forward and have a name that will result in the appointment of a new Supreme Court justice for Quebec very soon.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, consulting is one thing, listening to the consultation results is another.

[*Translation*]

The secret list of candidates obtained by *The Globe and Mail* shows that the appointment process was mismanaged by the PMO from start to finish. The process seems biased. The government ignored countless warnings, including that from the Chief Justice, and ran headlong into a legal battle that it knew it could not win, instead of looking for the best eligible judge possible.

Is the Prime Minister committed to selecting the next Supreme Court justices from Quebec from a pool of candidates on which Quebec agrees?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, the preamble of the question from my honourable colleague is incorrect. It is completely false.

We followed a process that she herself took part in. In fact, she had good things to say about Justice Nadon.

[*English*]

The hon. member, who was part of the process in fact, called Mr. Justice Nadon a very able jurist. She said he was a great judge, so it is a bit rich for her to stand up now and somehow leave the impression she was not supportive of the name going forward.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will gladly repeat. Yes, very competent but not eligible.

The Globe and Mail article describes the nomination process from the PMO as poorly managed. It was driven by an ideological agenda and was designed to get around the Supreme Court Act and the Constitution. It resulted in a vacancy for Quebec on the Supreme Court for almost a year, which is soon to become two vacancies.

Can the Minister of Justice still tell us if he believes that this was a fair process? Will the government pursue the same agenda for the next nomination, except adding my name always to the process?

The Speaker: I am just going to let the Minister of Foreign Affairs know that I am going to recognize the Minister of Justice to answer the question.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would invite the hon. member to look deep inside herself and ask herself about that process and its fairness because, might I remind her and the House, she was a part of it. I can guarantee her we will be coming forward with the name of a very qualified appointment based on legal expertise, based on ability and merit. If she plays her cards right, she might even be considered.

* * *

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the temporary foreign worker program saga, the government has been justifying its laissez-faire attitude with claims that there is a shortage of skilled workers.

For example, the Minister of Employment talked about scientists with such cutting-edge skills that they had to be brought in from halfway around the world. Fine, but if we look at the numbers from 2010 to 2014, 15,000 work permits were issued for minimum-wage jobs.

How can the government say that the program is for finding skilled workers when it is really for recruiting minimum-wage workers?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the hon. member is wrong. She is referring to faulty research about the live-in caregiver program, which used to be based on minimum wage. However, we changed the rules two years ago to establish a higher wage for people in that program. We make sure that the average wage is paid to all temporary foreign workers.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government does not even follow its own rules.

According to the rule of the industry's median pay rule, foreign workers paid minimum wage should be the exception rather than the rule. According to some studies, in 97% of the cases, temporary foreign workers should have been paid more than minimum wage.

This clearly shows that the program primarily drives down wages.

How could the minister let this program get so out of control? Why did he tolerate all these abuses before taking action?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the honourable member is wrong. She is confusing two different things. In fact, she is referring to the seasonal agriculture worker program and the live-in caregiver program. Previously caregivers could be paid the minimum wage, but that was increased to the median wage. Of course temporary agricultural workers are paid the minimum wage. That has always been the case and is in keeping with the rules and the fact that we want to ensure that Canadians always get first crack at jobs.

[*English*]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps promising new rules, but his department is not even following the existing ones. Documents obtained by the Alberta Federation of Labour show thousands of businesses were permitted to hire temporary foreign workers for minimum wage jobs even though most of them failed to comply with the rules. The result is higher unemployment, lower wages for Canadians, and the exploitation of foreign workers.

Will the minister now agree to an independent review of this very broken program?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unsurprisingly, the union bosses' research to which she refers is entirely wrong. It is based almost completely on the live-in caregiver program and the seasonal agricultural worker program.

The New Democrats, interestingly, were saying that we should ensure continued access to the seasonal agricultural worker program. I would like them to go on the record if it is now their view that we should massively increase wages for that program. Will they tell the farmers of Canada that, or will they just say one thing to us here and another thing to the farmers out in the rest of Canada?

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even when abuses are reported, the Conservatives do not do anything. The minister is refusing to take responsibility for his own mismanagement. From cooks in B.C. to fish plant workers in P.E.I., hairdressers in Ontario, and hotel clerks in Alberta, they are all minimum wage workers all granted by the Conservatives.

If the government is letting companies import cheap labour, why hire a Canadian? Why did the minister allow his department to repeatedly disregard the rules?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the false research upon which this study is predicated refers to data from several years ago, based primarily on the live-in caregiver program. At the time, it was within the rules to pay at minimum. We have since raised the requirement to a prevailing median wage rate for that program. It was also based on the seasonal agricultural worker program and, yes, the pay levels there are closer to minimum wage rates, because that is the market price.

However, we do require that employers seeking to hire people from abroad pay the prevailing median wage rate, which is typically higher than the starting wage rate in a particular occupation.

* * *

● (1435)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every day, five individuals in the Canadian military become victims of sexual assault. The shocking extent of this abuse broke last month, and the minister promised a review, but only of policy and procedures. However, he has nothing to show for it.

When faced with a similar crisis in Australia, the army chief came out swinging against sexual harassment. He simply demanded that those who cannot respect their colleagues in uniform leave.

When will the minister take the same approach and finally address this crisis?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these matters, in fact, are being investigated. Just recently the Ontario Provincial Police have been investigating, and it is getting the co-operation of the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service.

This is exactly what we can expect. No government has done more for victims in this country than this government. That is what it will continue to do.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Élaine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is really too bad that the minister will not even be in committee tomorrow to testify about sexual assault in our armed forces. I do, however, look forward to hearing what the Chief of the Defence Staff has to say to us.

Every day, five members of the Canadian Forces—mostly women—are victims of sexual assault. Instead of addressing this problem head-on, as they are doing in the United States and Australia, the government is trying to sweep this issue under the rug by reducing the number of women in uniform.

When will the Conservatives take a tough-on-crime approach to sexual offences in the army?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is completely untrue. I have to point out to her that when the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake, my parliamentary secretary, introduced legislation that would toughen the sentencing for sexual assault, kidnapping, and murder, the New Democrats were the first ones on their feet opposing that. They should be ashamed of themselves.

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have squandered over $600 million to promote themselves rather than services to the public. Surveys that show that the ads are ineffective have been scrapped by the Conservatives, proving that they are nothing more than a partisan self-promotion ad paid for by the taxpayer at the expense of many programs.

Canadians are no fools, and struggling taxpayers want to know why Conservatives are wasting millions on phoney ads, while very important programs for Canadians are being scrapped.

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course it is the responsibility of any government in Canada to communicate with the public on the excellent programs that will help citizens in their daily lives, and we are no exception to that. Of course, when we spend money on advertising, it actually goes to advertising, unlike the former Liberals.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems clear that the Prime Minister and the justice minister politicized the selection process in order to appoint the judge they thought to be aligned with their Conservative ideology. Frustrated that it did not work, they shamefully blamed the Chief Justice for this debacle, which they themselves caused.

Canada's Supreme Court has been attacked by Canada's executive branch for the first time in Canadian history. Will the Prime Minister finally apologize to the Chief Justice?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is more inaccurate editorialization by the member opposite.

The reality is that we appoint judges based on judicial excellence and merit. The member would know, having previously been in government, that the Federal Court eligibility question had always been open, had always, in fact, been available to governments. The hon. member was a part of a government that appointed a judge from the Federal Court, albeit not from Quebec.

We will move forward and ensure that the Supreme Court complement is full, including judges from Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the minister broke the silence and the secrecy of the process that he himself has a duty to protect.

The Prime Minister politicized the selection process in order to appoint the judge he felt was most ideologically Conservative. Frustrated when that did not work, he shamefully blamed the Chief Justice. One sad result of this debacle is that Canada, and Quebec in particular, has been without a justice for nine months.

Will Justice Fish be replaced by the end of June? What process will the government follow? Will he be replaced with an eligible candidate this time?

● (1440)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we plan on appointing a candidate to the Supreme Court soon.

[*English*]

Again, with respect to the eligibility criteria and with respect to the process itself, it was not until members of the opposition began raising this issue on the floor of the House of Commons that we spoke about it at all.

We will respect the process. We will respect the needs of Quebec. We will respect the decision of the Supreme Court, as the Prime Minister has indicated. It is very much our intention to ensure that Quebec has full representation on the Supreme Court of Canada.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, international leaders and experts are meeting in Toronto to talk about maternal health; however, gender equality and women's autonomy, health, and rights must also be part of the discussion. Women who have access to the full range of reproductive health services are healthier and better educated and contribute more to their economies.

Will the summit address women's equality and reproductive choice as a key part of reducing the deaths of women and girls around the world?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the summit that will be held in Toronto from May 28 to 30 under the leadership of the Prime Minister will be vital to ensuring that we stay on track. A total of 80% of the funds committed as part of the Muskoka initiative have been distributed, and we have seen results. However, we can do more.

Under the Prime Minister's leadership, Canada will again say loud and clear that maternal, newborn, and children's health is a top priority.

[*English*]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that too many women are dying around the world from easily preventable causes of death. Every year, 47,000 women die from and five million more are permanently damaged by unsafe abortions. Women who have access to the full range of reproductive services are healthier, better educated, and contribute more to their economies.

Will the upcoming summit address women's equality and reproductive choice as a key part of reducing the deaths of women and girls around the world?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there will be a very important summit in Toronto from May 28-30 under the leadership of the Prime Minister. We can be proud of this, because our G8 Muskoka initiative on maternal, newborn, and child health will save the lives of 1.3 million children and newborns as well as more than 60,000 young mothers.

We have to continue to keep on track. With this summit, we will make sure that Canada says loud and clear that this is a top, main priority for years to come.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization has identified five solutions needed to save more lives, including access to safe abortion services. Experts say that unsafe abortion is the most easily preventable and treatable cause of maternal death.

Will Canada ensure that the next phase of the maternal health initiative is based on sound scientific evidence and not ideology? Will it include reducing the number of unsafe abortions that are putting women's lives at risk around the world?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each Canadian can be proud, because we have reached a lot of good results. Globally, over 700,000 more children lived to their fifth birthdays in 2011 than in 2010. In over 125 countries, maternal death rates have declined sharply in the past five years. Between 2010 and 2013, an estimated two million deaths from disease were prevented and five million children were treated with vitamin A. Thousands of women have received antenatal care.

We can be proud of this, and under the leadership of the Prime Minister, we will keep on track on this.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nine LGBTQ activists from Uganda want to participate in the WorldPride Human Rights Conference being co-hosted by the University of Toronto and Pride Toronto, but so far they have been denied visas.

Would the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration confirm that assessments of new applications will be expedited so that these brave human rights advocates can share their experience and their knowledge at the world conference?

● (1445)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of our record of standing up for those facing oppression around the world. We have resettled refugees from countries like Uganda, from Russia, from Iran, and many other countries around the world.

We have also spoken out when there has been state-sponsored oppression of LGBT communities in Russia and many countries of Africa. We have worked tirelessly with the organizers of this conference from the beginning. We are grateful to the member for Toronto—Danforth for his collaboration on this issue, and we will do everything we can to make this conference a success under Canada's immigration laws.

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AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have all been in situations when we have been told to shut off our electronic devices while travelling. We all know that the use of these devices has not been allowed during critical phases of flight. This has caused a major inconvenience to travellers.

Our government has listened to Canadians, and today our government announced the exciting change to air travel that is coming.

Can the Minister of Transport please update this House on the announcement she made today with respect to the use of portable electronic devices on aircraft?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Don Valley East for a very pertinent question because—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I cannot tell who is calling out from across the way, but I am going to ask members to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Transport has the floor.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I think I have something everybody in the House is going to want to hear, and I think they are going to like it, too.

I was able to announce today that we have lifted the exemption for the use of personal electronic devices from gate to gate using Canadian airlines. This is very similar to what is happening in the U. S. and in Europe right now. It is great for Canadian families. It is great for Canadian business. I am very pleased to be able to announce it today.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Charbonneau commission revealed that the McGill University Health Centre was secretly paying for Arthur Porter's Bentley. Mr. Porter is still a member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada. His pay was inflated and he even received a $500,000 loan for his residence. All of this was approved by the chairman of the board of directors, none other than Conservative Senator David Angus, who, at the time, was in charge of ethics at the Senate.

Is the Conservative government aware of these questionable transactions?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, none of these problems concern the federal government. This question concerns contracts at the municipal and provincial level. What is more, it is very important for the commission to continue its work. Anyone found guilty should face the full force of the law.

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Arthur Porter, who, again, is still a member of the Privy Council, and former Senator Angus were wearing two hats: director of the MUHC and lobbyist for SNC-Lavalin. Both were lobbying for SNC-Lavalin. The senator was even harassing the Premier of Quebec to ensure that the contract was awarded to SNC-Lavalin, while Arthur Porter was working on torpedoing the candidacy of the other bidder.

Can the Minister of Public Works and Government Services tell us whether the former senator or the former chair of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, Arthur Porter, ever lobbied for SNC-Lavalin to obtain federal contracts?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, this question concerns contracts at the municipal and provincial level.

As members know, one of the first things we did when taking power in 2006 was eliminate big money and big unions from the political process by banning contributions. At the same time, we also know that, of course, the Leader of the Opposition held back information for 17 years, which would have really been of assistance to the commission.

We will continue to support Canadian taxpayers moving forward with good policies that tackle corruption.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VETERANS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are eliminating health care services for our veterans across Canada. The Conservatives are now refusing to cover costs for veterans who served after the Korean War. That is why there are fewer and fewer long-term care beds available. All veterans, whether they served in World War II or Afghanistan, deserve the same treatment.

Why do the Conservatives not give all veterans the respect they deserve?

● (1450)

[*English*]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all veterans, whether modern day or those who served before Korea, have access to long-term care facilities if their service condition indicates that they need one. Canadians expect that a veteran who is injured while in service to Canada and who is in need of long-term care as a result should have this benefit available.

While I am on my feet, will that member commit to voting for veterans' long-term care funding at the next opportunity?

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Well, Mr. Speaker, as long as he makes long-term veteran care funding an independent government bill, we may look at that, but the reality is that what is going to happen when the last Korean overseas veteran dies is that all those modern-day veterans, from '54 onwards, an awful lot of them, will be downloaded to the provinces.

The Perley, Camp Hill, the Parkwood, in which beds are already closed, the Ste. Anne's transfer, and many other contract beds across the country will not be available for modern-day veterans, which means a massive financial download to the provinces for the long-term care of veterans.

Will the government reverse its policy and ensure that every single veteran gets the long-term care they desperately need?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can be confident that some 8,000 veterans currently reside in long-term care facilities across Canada. All veterans, whether modern-day or those who served before Korea, have in fact access to a long-term care facility if their service condition indicates that they need one.

This is what Canadians expect, and I am proud that we are in fact delivering on that commitment.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner's investigation into ECBC's John Lynn is complete, and the verdict reads "guilty". He found that Mr. Lynn committed serious wrongdoing in making four blatant patronage appointments of people with strong Conservative ties. ECBC is being wound down, and Mr. Lynn, who has not been to work in a year, is in line to receive an embarrassingly large severance.

In light of this damning report, will the minister ensure that Mr. Lynn is not rewarded with taxpayers' dollars for committing "... a serious breach of a code of conduct...."

Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course our government's expectation is that ECBC conduct its business with integrity, accountability, and respect for Canadian taxpayers. I can confirm that the CEO of ECBC is presently on a personal leave.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the commissioner found that Mr. Lynn seriously breached the code of conduct when he hired Nancy Baker, Allan Murphy, Ken Langley, and Robert MacLean based solely on political ties to the Conservative Party. All were hired to executive positions and all were appointed without a competitive, merit-based process. These tainted political appointments will become permanent in a matter of weeks when Bill C-31 makes them part of the public service.

In 2012, the Public Service Commissioner revoked two rigged appointments at ACOA P.E.I. Will the minister show leadership and do the same with these rigged appointments at Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation?

Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is referring to a report that has not been tabled yet.

I do find it ironic that the member for Cape Breton—Canso claims to take a great deal of pride in having a professional, independent, non-partisan public service, given that in 2006, the Public Service Commission reported that the Liberals gave ministerial aides free rides into the public service.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORT

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a major defect in GM vehicles has been—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hochelaga.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, a major defect in GM vehicles has been linked to the deaths of 13 people, one of them in Quebec last June.

In the United States, heavy fines have been imposed and an inquiry has been launched to determine why these vehicles were not recalled when GM discovered the problem. In Canada, we are still waiting to see what the minister is going to do.

Why does she not bring in measures similar to those introduced in the United States in order to provide Canadians with answers and protect their safety?

● (1455)

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the safety of Canadians is Transport Canada's top priority. Indeed, car companies are required by law to inform Transport Canada when they know of a defect and a recall that has to happen.

There is no evidence that GM Canada knew anytime prior to the actual recall of the problem associated with this device. However, should information come out from the investigations, which are ongoing, that this is not the case, we will ensure that GM Canada is held to full accountability.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is about the safety of Canadians, Canadian drivers. Telling them to wait is unacceptable.

U.S. automakers are required to report safety problems within five days of discovering them. GM knew of ignition problems more than 10 years ago, but the minister claims that she only found out this February.

It has been over a decade, and 13 lives have been lost. Will the minister come to committee and testify about why there is still no investigation in Canada?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, on May 7, before we rose for recess, I was in committee of the whole for four hours, where I answered questions on this precise topic. The answer is exactly the same.

My officials were asked to ask GM Canada officials when they knew of the defect. They told them they knew of the defect just prior to the recall that they announced in Canada. If we find out that is not the case through the ongoing investigations, they will be held accountable under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people in my riding of Winnipeg South Centre are concerned with the health of those living in developing countries, especially mothers and their newborn babies. Our government has been clear that saving the lives of mothers and children is our leading development priority.

I understand we have played a leading role in paying what we pledge, meeting our development commitments and drawing attention in a meaningful way to this very serious issue.

Could the minister please update the House on the upcoming summit?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, as I said, later this week the Prime Minister will host a number of the world's most respected and influential humanitarians in order to draw the world's focus to this issue of the health of mothers, newborns, and children.

[*Translation*]

His Highness the Aga Khan, Tanzania's President Kikwete, Melinda Gates, and Ban Ki-moon are just some of the people taking part in this historic summit.

[*English*]

All Canadians and all parliamentarians can surely agree that all children and women deserve a healthy and productive life. The solution to this problem is within arm's reach, and Canada will be a driving force to this achievement.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next month 400 delegates from 40 countries will come together at the University of Toronto WorldPride Human Rights Conference. Sadly, nine men and women working to support Uganda's LGBTQ community, who were to speak at the conference, have been denied visas by Canada.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs says that he is opposed to Uganda's blatant attack on same-sex human rights. Instead of vague rhetoric, will the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration personally commit today to intervene to allow these essential delegates into Canada?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will personally commit to use Canada's immigration system to make this conference a success, as we have used it to help settle gay refugees from Iran, as we have used it to speak out against the oppression of the LGBT community in many countries the world, things that party never did.

Every time we get up to talk about it, the Liberals shout us down and heckle, because they are not really interested in the fate of repressed LGBT community members around the world. They are interested in listening to themselves, and that is unacceptable.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 82 years ago today, Canada passed an act to create a Canadian broadcaster. What should be a happy anniversary has taken a sad turn in the wake of the Conservatives' cuts. The Minister of Canadian Heritage can try to wash her hands of the matter as much as she wants, but Radio-Canada has made cuts to its audience relations department because it has less money to provide services. This means that 40,000 complaints and comments from French speakers across the country will go unanswered.

Does the minister understand that the services the corporation provides depend on the budget it receives? Is it the government that decides on the budget, yes or no?

● (1500)

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, the government has nothing to do with the decisions made by CBC/Radio-Canada. We recognize that CBC/Radio-Canada plays an important role in remote communities, aboriginal communities, and official language minority communities. We encourage the corporation to continue to fulfill its mandate under the Broadcasting Act by serving all Canadians in French and English.

* * *

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government has introduced the longest and largest infrastructure plan in Canada's history.

We are ready to work with the provinces, municipalities, and territories in order to deliver on their priorities.

In light of today's announcement, could the Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs update the House on the crucial contribution our government is making to public transit in the home of the 2014 Memorial Cup champions, Edmonton?

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, the new Building Canada fund is open for business. I am pleased our Conservative government has announced today that we are supporting a fantastic new transit project in Edmonton, the Valley Line LRT expansion.

I would like to thank the mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson, for his strong partnership and collaboration.

Our government has been a strong partner of communities across Canada, and we will continue to be.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the worst floods in a century have inundated large sections of the Balkans, leading to at least 40 deaths and more than 80,000 people evacuated. Many thousands of people have lost their homes and much of what they worked for all their lives. Early estimates put the cost of recovery at three billion euros.

Although Canada has the capacity to help those suffering, to date the Canadians government has offered a meagre $60,000. This is clearly insufficient.

Will the government commit to providing substantially more support to the victims of this flood?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we obviously extend our sympathies to all those affected by the terrible torrential rains, flooding, and landslides in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia.

[*English*]

On May 19, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies launched an emergency disaster assistance fund to respond to the massive flooding and mudslides.

Through an ongoing DFATD-funded project with the Canadian Red Cross, which allows Canada to immediately respond to disasters around the world, the Canadian Red Cross automatically allocated a maximum contribution to these relief operations on behalf of the Government of Canada.

We will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of the parties in the National Assembly agreed to reintroduce the dying with dignity bill in order to speed its adoption. Unfortunately, all of the federalist parties in the House of Commons seem to want the federal government to use the Criminal Code to oppose the choice that society has made, that Quebeckers have reached consensus on.

During its convention last weekend, Bloc Québécois delegates gave the party a very clear mandate to fight for Quebec's right to make its own choices for society and specifically to give people at the end of their lives the right to die with dignity.

Will the government promise not to challenge Quebec's law?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a large majority of parliamentarians voted in favour of not amending the law. As I said, we will review the legislation. The government has no plans to debate this matter during this session.

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister put in place the Cohen commission to look into missing sockeye salmon in the Fraser River. Three years and $26 million later, Mr. Justice Cohen gave 75 recommendations, which so far have been ignored, and some policy decisions are going in the opposite direction.

My question is for the Prime Minister this. Was the $26 million well spent? If so, will he implement the recommendations? If not, why not? Was it only short-term public relations in announcing the commission, or are we serious about Fraser River sockeye salmon?

● (1505)

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to long-term support of the salmon fishery in British Columbia, which is why we established the commission in the first place.

We have introduced several measures that are consistent with recommendations from the commission, which include the moratorium on aquaculture developed in the Discovery Islands.

We are investing $25 million in the recreational fisheries conservation partnership fund. All of the revenues from the salmon conservation stamp will now be provided directly to the Pacific Salmon Foundation for use in its projects. We are providing $54 million to enhance the regulatory certainty for the aquaculture sector to provide greater support to science directed at aquaculture.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government's moratorium on the use of the temporary foreign worker program in the food services sector punishes all for the abuses of a few. The moratorium threatens not only businesses dependent on temporary foreign workers, but also Canadian jobs should those restaurants be forced to close.

Now the minister's overreaction to some admittedly serious abuses inside the program includes musing about mandating wages for temporary foreign workers in the restaurant industry be higher than wages for similarly employed Canadian workers.

Does the minister not understand that this policy proposal would be discriminatory toward Canadian workers, and should a temporary foreign worker ever become a Canadian citizen, his or her reward will be a reduction in wages?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have heard some bizarre things in this debate, but that takes the cake. It could not be further from the truth.

As it is, temporary foreign workers have to be paid the prevailing median wage, which is more than the starting wage. In other countries there are higher wage floors for all employees, both domestic and those coming from abroad.

The one thing we want to ensure is that we do not allow abuse, that we punish those who do abuse the program, and that we do not allow distortions of the labour market. If there are shortages in particular areas of the labour market, employers should be paying more to get Canadians to do the work.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Dr. Rufus Washington Ewing, Premier of Turks and Caicos Islands.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 84 petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in relation to our study of the main estimates 2014-15,

specifically vote 1 under the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada; vote 2 under the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner; votes 1 and 5 under the offices of the information and privacy commissioners of Canada; and vote 1 under the Office of the Senate Ethics Officer.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in relation to its study on Bill C-520, An Act supporting non-partisan agents of Parliament.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to the study of the main estimates for 2014-15 and all of the votes that were assigned to our committee.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 97(1), the committee is requesting an extension of 30 sitting days to consider Bill C-518, An Act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (withdrawal allowance), referred to the committee on Wednesday, February 26.

● (1510)

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put, and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Wednesday, May 28, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT (HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITIES)

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-600, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act (homosexual activities).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that is long overdue.

[*English*]

This bill, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act in relation to homosexual activities, is meant to expunge the mention of decriminalized lesbian and gay-identified sexual acts from criminal records. Such acts should have never been the basis of criminal prosecution and conviction. It is time to redress this matter.

[*Translation*]

Canada decriminalized homosexual activities many years ago. However, people are still left to cope with the burden and the shame of having a criminal record for these activities.

[*English*]

Society has evolved. We no longer consider consensual sexual expression to be matters for the Criminal Code, yet the consequences of past criminal accusations and convictions continue to haunt certain individuals. When seeking employment, one must often declare if one has a criminal record. Employment can be, and likely has been, refused on the basis of an individual's sexual expression.

[*Translation*]

A great deal of progress has been made in recent years in the area of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

Unfortunately, politicians have too often refrained from doing anything and have passed the buck to the courts.

[*English*]

Before us is a case the courts would have difficulty redressing. This is a collective harm imposed on a discriminated group. To offer redress, we owe it to those who are found guilty by the terms of discriminatory anti-sexual laws no longer in place to be granted more than just a pardon. This bill would expunge their records. Never again would these individuals need to fear that their unwarranted criminal record could cost them their jobs, bar them from travel, or cause them shame.

[*Translation*]

This issue has been pending for far too long. It is time to take action.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights that, during its consideration of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, the Committee be granted the power to divide the Bill into two bills: the first consisting of clauses 2 to 7 and 27, related to cyberbullying; and the second bill containing all the other provisions of Bill C-13.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Châteauguay—Saint-Constant for seconding the motion.

As the saying goes, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

After second reading stage of Bill C-13, it seemed clear to me that it would be best to divide the bill because the bill had strayed from what it was meant to address, which is cyberbullying. It does much more than that. This bill has some 50 clauses, but barely seven or eight clauses on cyberbullying. The issues it addresses vary.

Members must understand why it is important to remove clauses 2 to 7 and 27 from the bill so that we can finish studying them right away. The rest of the clauses need to be studied much more carefully, as many people are telling us.

I made the request subsequent to a motion that did not receive the required unanimous consent of the House. I am trying again because we are now studying different parts in committee and have additional information.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that we will be able to keep working much longer because the government has indicated that it wants the bill passed before the end of this session. That concerns me because there are not many meetings left. There are still many, many people who want to testify. I would hate to hear that the process is going to be fast-tracked for the most contentious clauses on terrorist activities, telemarketing and theft of a communication service. That is what I suspect will happen so that clauses 2 to 7 and 27 get passed. The bill also includes some of the provisions from Bill C-30.

There is also the issue of privacy and the fact that Canadians have already overwhelmingly rejected the provisions contained in Bill C-30. There is also a series of concerns about which of the provisions where included in Bill C-13, which ones were set aside, which ones were put back in with slight changes, and what kinds of changes are needed.

These are very specialized provisions. They are so specialized that it is rather odd in committee. Parents of victims are there on certain days. At those times we are truly reminded of why Bill C-13 was supposedly introduced. It completely changes how the committee works. The next day, the witnesses might be cyber experts or police representatives.

I do not think this request is crazy or illogical. It makes sense. I have a hard time understanding the government's insistence on passing a bill that contains provisions that are not necessarily widely accepted or that have not been approved by even a small segment of the Canadian public.

The mother of one victim, Amanda Todd, made statements to the committee that some found incredible. If anyone could have been expected to support Bill C-13 100%, it would have been one of the victims in this huge file, but this mother herself recognized that we should not have to choose between security and privacy. These two concepts are extremely important.

I am not saying that we should reject the provisions in Bill C-13 that deal with access to the private data of some individuals in this context.

● (1515)

We have to recognize just how important this is and give it the thorough study it merits, the way it should be done. We have not done that kind of analysis in a long time.

The committee received a letter, and I would like to read parts of it that I find particularly persuasive. I am not the only one calling for the bill to be divided in two, as we have asked in the motion. The letter was addressed to the committee chair, the very competent member for Burlington, and came from Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, whose stance is echoed by many of her counterparts. I would like to read parts of the letter because she puts a fine point on why we are making this request:

> As the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, I am writing you to assist the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in fulfilling its duty to ensure that Canadians have both effective law enforcement and rigorous privacy protections. To find the most compelling testimony on this point, you need look no further than to the statement made before your committee on May 13, 2014:
>
> "We should not have to choose between our privacy and our safety. We should not have to sacrifice our children's privacy rights to make them safe from cyberbullying, 'sextortion' and revenge pornography".
>
> As you know, these are the words of Carol Todd, whose daughter Amanda took her own life after being shamelessly bullied and abused by a person yet to be brought to justice. The federal government, this Committee, and Parliament as a whole each owe families like the Todd's, as well as all Canadians, their best thinking about both privacy and safety. The fact that over the last decade, the government has repeatedly failed to pass legislation updating police surveillance powers is a sad testimony to the government's failure to honour Canadians' reasonable expectation that they deserve and can have both.
>
> The time for dressing up overreaching surveillance powers in the sheep-like clothing of sanctimony about the serious harms caused by child pornography and cyberbullying is long past. In my view, the government should immediately split Bill C-13 and move ahead quickly to deal with those provisions of the bill that directly address the proposed new offence of non-consensual distribution of intimate images...In the future, further consideration may need to be given to how best to respond to other forms of cyberbullying, for example, of the most unfortunate kind, recently seen on an Instagram account called "IF_U_ON_THIS_KILL_URSELF" (as reported on by Global News). In the meantime, the remaining surveillance-oriented provisions of Bill C-13—some 46 of its 53 pages—should be withdrawn and redrafted.

This work should be approached with reasoned thought and without imposing a time constraint—as this government so often does with everything it introduces in the House—so that we can arrive at and draft good provisions. This is not a trivial matter. We are dealing with people's privacy.

The goal here is to stop crimes, but that does not mean giving carte blanche to the government and police forces to do whatever they want, however they want, whenever they want. There are rules. However, in Bill C-13, those rules are not very clear, and experts do not seem to agree on them. The rules need to be studied and possibly amended, and that will not happen with Bill C-13 as presented in the House and in committee, or with the deadlines imposed on us, or with the commitments by the minister and his government to have this bill passed before the summer break.

● (1520)

It is absolutely cruel, when I see the list of all those who asked to be heard, including experts from across the country. They wanted to be heard on the issue so that we can give our law enforcement agencies the best tools to do their work properly, while respecting Canadians's right to privacy.

Canadians also have the right to be protected by the government. They are already protected by the charter. It has already been noted that Bill C-13 does not include anything on wiretapping. Under the Criminal Code, a person must be notified that they were wiretapped. What is more, there is absolutely nothing in Bill C-13 to indicate that the person concerned has to be notified that some of their information and data has been shared. There needs to be some sort of mechanism to inform a person that their data has been shared. There is the issue of immunity that was given to the telecommunications companies.

The real goal of Bill C-13 was to penalize behaviours that have to do with the distribution of intimate images. That is all. Clauses 2 to 7 and 27 have to do with crime related to the distribution of intimate images. That is not the only form of cyberbullying. It is the rest that shows what is really behind Bill C-13.

Our motion calls for an instruction to be given to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights that, during its consideration of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, the Committee be granted the power to divide the bill into two bills: the first consisting of clauses 2 to 7 and 27, related to cyberbullying; and the second bill containing all the other provisions of Bill C-13. It is not only experts who are calling for this action to be taken, but also the mother of one of the victims, a woman whom the government likes to quote regularly.

I think that she was very wise in making this recommendation. The government would not be showing weakness by supporting this motion. Rather, it would be showing that, for once, it is listening to people's recommendations. Our intention is not to reject everything in the second part of the bill, and I would not want to hear the members opposite saying that we do not want to give the police the tools they need. That is not at all the case.

What we want to do is to make sure that the tools that we give them are legal and that the application of Bill C-13, if it is passed without amendment, will not eventually lead to a case before the Supreme Court where another bill has to be rejected. Such an approach will just keep bringing us back to square one. That is not a good way to show serious concern for smart justice in Canada.

Give us some time. That does not mean giving us time to stall for nothing. It means giving us time to hear what experts have to say on the subject. Give us the time to analyze each clause without feeling like we have a gun to our heads because the work needs to be done in the next few hours, the bill needs to come back before the House by June 10 or the bill needs to be passed before the House breaks for the summer. That is not an intelligent way to pass a bill that is so important and that will have such a great impact. Many people are still not sure what the consequences of this bill will be.

We are not rejecting the bill. It simply needs to be examined more intelligently.

● (1525)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the excellent member for Gatineau for raising this important point.

Earlier we spoke about the number of bills that have been rejected by the Supreme Court because this government always tries to ram through legislation instead of putting in place a solid legislative framework that is not problematic. Consequently, the Conservatives either have to introduce another bill to correct the flaws of previous bills or the courts are obliged to reject the bills.

Today the member for Gatineau suggested a way to move forward more quickly, and in a more meaningful and solid manner, precisely so that the positive aspects of the bill dealing with cyberbullying are not rejected just because other aspects require more work.

According to my colleague from Gatineau, would her proposal result in a more effective approach to fighting cyberbullying?

● (1530)

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I believe that it is indeed much more effective. We have been saying so from the beginning. Clauses 2 to 7 and 27 would probably already have been passed here, would be in the process of being studied in the Senate in order to be passed, even before the summer, and would already be part of the Criminal Code.

With respect to tools, a number of police officers who appeared before the committee told us that they have the tools. We are creating a new offence concerning the distribution of intimate images and it is important that it be added to the Criminal Code quickly.

Then, we could perhaps start advising police forces that they must start speeding things up. They can obtain warrants. Many things already exist. They have many tools. That would allow us to determine whether the more sophisticated tools that the government wants to give law enforcement agencies meet legal tests, are appropriate and functional, and are not likely to be rejected by the courts in future, which would be unfortunate.

For a police officer who is conducting an investigation involving a plaintiff and a victim, there is nothing more frustrating than having the courts reject a case in the end, after an arrest has been made, because the evidence was obtained illegally. That is what we are trying to help the government avoid. We are not trying to protect criminals. We are trying to ensure that the Supreme Court will not have to tell the government, yet again, that the evidence was obtained illegally.

My colleague was right in saying that Supreme Court of Canada has rejected many of the government's bills. Under the circumstances, we are just trying to keep that from happening again by studying this extremely important bill in a measured and responsible way.

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech and the motion she has moved. I am certain, as are many of our colleagues in the House, that she could talk to us about the young people who told us about being bullied. People close to them were asking themselves questions. How can we recognize bullying? How can we come up with a solution? How can we help? Bullying comes from all directions. People feel somewhat powerless in that type of situation, which will affect the victims for the rest of their lives.

Could my colleague talk a bit about the testimony that she heard regarding the situation in our ridings? I would like to hear her ideas about how we could do a better job of studying this bill and ensure that our young people, and others, are protected.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, that wonderfully compassionate question is at the heart of the subject and affects everyone here in the House. Who here has not heard a constituent or a close friend talk about a child of theirs who is being bullied?

We now know that bullying is changing. That is because technology is changing. We should not be surprised. Bullying is happening faster and can cause much more damage. Before, people were teased in schoolyards, and things stayed in the schoolyard, for the most part. Now, with a single click, things go viral around the world. Bullying is on a much larger scale now.

When victims tell me that they think it is too bad the people studying the bill are not talking about them very much, that makes me think it is even more important to adopt this motion. This bill is 48 pages long, but fewer than 10 of the clauses are about victims.

Victims tell us that they do not really feel included in Bill C-13. They feel like this is actually two separate bills. That is why I said that I sometimes felt like I was taking part in a meeting of cyber-whatever experts. For example, law enforcement experts talked to us about lurking, which they do in Internet chat rooms. Then a victim told us that she had been bullied, and so on.

That is why I think that victims were kind of buried in the process. I know that the government wanted to make sure all of the side stuff went through, but all of that stuff got to be bigger than the main event. This is the unfortunate result.

● (1535)

[*English*]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Gatineau will know that the people in my province of Nova Scotia have been very concerned about this issue of cyberbullying after the events that have happened there, involving, for instance, the Rehtaeh Parsons case. There is a strong desire, of course, for action to deal with that.

With any bill before us, it is important to look at the details. I want to ask her about the proposal in the bill that not only police officers can make information requests of telecommunications companies about who has what email address and so forth, but what is called public officers can do that. From her study of this bill, what does she take “public officers” to mean?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I gave the definition when I gave my speech at second reading.

[*Translation*]

Since we are living in a world of cyberinformation, I encourage everyone to get on the Internet and type in the words "criminal code peace officer". We get a list of people including mayors and all sorts of officers. When the legislation refers to that term, it means that a whole host of people have access to the information.

My colleague from Halifax West is right to mention this. In fact, this is one of the aspects that needs to be studied. We must determine who has access to certain information in order to prevent certain people, like Mayor Rob Ford, an example my colleague from Timmins—James Bay really likes to use, from having access to it. Technically, it is true that Mayor Ford has access to this information, since his position is included in the Criminal Code definition. Certain things might need to be amended.

If I started reading the definition, I could probably go on until 4 o'clock. When I started last time, I stopped partway through and that took five minutes of the wonderful 20 minutes I was given.

Since I am running out of time, I will just sit down.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate and I listened carefully to my friend opposite. First of all, I want to state unequivocally that this government is very concerned and takes the privacy issues of Canadians very seriously. That is the very impetus to this legislation, Bill C-13 and others. The government should also indicate that all government agencies comply at all times with Canadian law. It is surprising in some ways that I have to state that, but that appears to be the backdrop to some of the concerns raised by my friend opposite.

The activities of the government's law enforcement and security agencies in particular are all subject to independent agencies and oversight. Again, this is not as if law enforcement or the definition of peace officer enables individuals to, without jurisdiction, without proper oversight, simply access privacy and the private information of Canadians. They have to seek judicial authorization. That is embedded in the bill before the House and now before the committee.

I should note that we have worked closely with the interim Privacy Commissioner, as with her predecessor, in developing provisions within the bill that we think strengthen privacy protection for Canadians, including increasing the investigative powers of the Privacy Commissioner.

In regard to the issue of examination by experts, we now have the bill at committee. We now have a multi-party committee that is looking at the bill in detail as it would in the normal course of parliamentary procedure. It has the ability to call before the committee experts, more than just one expert. Committees are masters of their destiny. The committee can hear from experts with a specialized knowledge and I submit that there are certainly more than one, to speak to these issues and to bring to the forefront in a very public way, and answer in a very public way, concerns that my friend and others may have raised.

I want to come back to the substance of the member's argument with respect to splitting the bill. She would know and others would know that within the bill is an attempt to modernize our efforts to enable law enforcement to now police the Internet. To use the vernacular, it is giving the police the ability in the virtual world to enforce and protect Canadians the way that we see in the normal course of events in the real world in the law enforcement community.

Sadly, many of the provisions of the Criminal Code as they pertain to intimidation, to what we call bullying, the type of intimidation that very tragically led to the death of a number of young Canadians including Rehtaeh Parsons, Amanda Todd, whose parents we had before committee. This is all about enabling the police to in some cases, pre-empt and prevent the type of very insidious activity that takes place online that caused these young people to feel so despondent that they took their own lives.

To pass a bill that has within its text the words that will create a new criminal offence that would prohibit the non-consensual distribution of intimate images and criminalize that type of activity that might have saved the lives of Parsons, Todd, and others, but not then enable the police to gather and present before the courts the evidence necessary to obtain a conviction, the necessary ability for law enforcement to uphold the law, would be an empty vessel. It would be a shell of a bill if we did not modernize those provisions of the Criminal Code that allow law enforcement to do their important work.

It pertains to more than just this new provision of the Criminal Code. It pertains to acts of terrorism. It pertains to acts of fraud, all of which and other acts can occur online, as the Speaker and others would know. To separate the bill, I would suggest, would be perverse. It would run counter to the intent of the government to allow police and law enforcement to do their good work.

● (1540)

Speaking of perverse, I find it somewhat contradictory that the hon. member would argue such a point and would suggest that we simply pass this law preventing cyberbullying from occurring, but not allow the police to actually enforce it.

The current sections of the code were put in place during the time of rotary telephones and prior to the Internet. This is very much an overall modernization attempt by the government. It does not pertain to just this new section of the Criminal Code.

What I also find somewhat contradictory in my friend's argument is that she says there is an urgency. She spoke, rightly, with real and genuine passion about the harm being done on the Internet. She was asked a question by a colleague from the NDP about the necessity, in fact I would call it a moral obligation on the part of the government and all members of Parliament, to act to protect young people from this type of activity.

Yet, almost within the same breath, the member suggests we slow down and not act with haste. I think the member used the word "stall". We are not stalling just for the sake of stalling. That is in fact what would happen. This bill would not advance, it would not come into being, and it would not become law.

I believe there is urgency. I believe there are exigent circumstances, as the Supreme Court would say, that require this bill to become law and that necessitate action on the part of the government. That is why we are bringing this bill forward, holistically, in a way that not only puts new provisions in the Criminal Code but also gives the police the ability to enforce the law.

Bill C-13 specifically would not create new protection from criminal or civil liability for those who voluntarily assist law enforcement. It simply clarifies existing provisions. Further, the provisions would provide protection for those who voluntarily assist police where such assistance is not otherwise prohibited by law. Bill C-13 would not protect or propose to protect a mechanism that bypasses the necessary judicial oversight, as some might have suggested.

I want to come back to one of the witnesses, Carol Todd, mother of Amanda Todd, who was referenced by my friend. I, as a new father, personally cannot imagine the pain and suffering that she has endured, losing her beloved daughter. Clearly this is a subject that is very deep, very emotional for her. I reviewed her testimony. I heard her concerns. As a result, that very day, I reached out to her. I spoke with her in person. The very next day, she came to my office and we had a very detailed discussion about the concerns she had raised at committee. I am not going to go further than that, other than to suggest that I believe she came away with a much better sense of comfort and confidence in what the government was attempting to do.

I do note, and I think it bears repeating, that at the end of the day, and I know my friend will confirm this because she was there, Mrs. Todd and all family members who testified, all said in their testimony that they wanted to see the bill passed as quickly as possible.

That runs completely contrary to the impression that my friend has left, that somehow Mrs. Todd or other family members wanted this bill delayed, wanted this bill split, wanted this bill somehow put into a side track that would prevent it from becoming law. That is a complete mischaracterization of what was said. All family members said they want this bill to become law.

I felt it was incumbent upon me to correct the record on a number of those statements by my friend. I repeat again that this bill is central to our government's commitment to contributing further to addressing the issue of cyberbullying across this country. It is a key element of the government's agenda to support victims and punish criminals.

Again, I find it passing strange that my friend would suggest that somehow victims were being overlooked in this bill, that there was not specific reference or perhaps there was insufficient reference to victims. We have an entire bill dedicated to enhancing victims rights, a bill that was the result of extensive cross-country consultation with justice stakeholders, most importantly the victims and those who work with victims.

● (1545)

That bill is completely in keeping with the very premise and underpinnings of this legislation to enhance the rights of victims, to enhance their involvement in the criminal justice system, the respect they deserve, the information flow. The very critical epicentre of a role that they play in our justice system is contained in commensurate legislation known as the victims bill of rights. Therefore, somehow suggesting that this bill may be lacking in reference to victims I find disingenuous at best.

The issue of cyberbullying, I agree with my friend, is an age-old problem. Technology has irrevocably changed the nature and the scope of bullying. There is no denying that. Bullying is now conducted via the Internet. It is no longer simply happening in schoolyards with pushing, shoving, and fights. This now follows a victim home. It is carried with them in their pocket or on their hip with their handheld device. It is with them in the classroom. It is omnipresent because of the Internet. That necessitates action. It necessitates legislation empowering police to do more in terms of tracking, identifying, arresting, and charging those who are responsible for crimes on the Internet.

This problem, as was referenced, is not going away. It is in fact becoming worse. It is more prolific. It is more broadly spread than ever before. It does not respect borders. It does not respect jurisdictions. Many of these images are permanently in place. Therefore, this legislation, in addition to other things, provides action to remove offending images. It provides the types of pre-emptive acts that we hope might prevent the despondency that was felt by some of the victims, like Rehtaeh Parsons, Amanda Todd, and others.

Over the past number of years this issue has become prolific. That is what I view as a clarion call for government action, not further study, not delaying it, not allowing experts who may have some other agenda in mind, but simply moving the bill into law. There are suggestions that somehow this is against police wishes because in some obscure way this could possibly necessitate a constitutional challenge. As sure as night follows day there will be challenges in the court, but the member opposite is well aware of the fact that the Department of Justice regularly, as a matter of routine, examines legislation for charter compliance. Will this prevent a charter challenge? Of course not. Are we to be reticent to pass laws because a lawyer, an interest group, or an individual may decide to launch a charter challenge? I would respectfully submit that that would be irresponsible, particularly knowing what is at stake. There are literally lives at stake. That is not rhetoric. That is not an overstatement because we know the result of inaction here. We have seen it far too often, and it is going on as we gather here.

We know that this type of action is also going to require much more than simply passing bills. It will require a very progressive and aggressive public education effort. It will require having teachers, parents, police, counsellors, public servants, and I respectfully submit, everyone we possibly can bring to this cause, talking to young people, talking to everyone, about the necessity for responsible action when using the Internet because it is a powerful instrument to have that information in the palm of one's hand but it also requires responsibility and responsible action.

That is what this legislation is about. That is what the bill intends to do. If it is irresponsible, illegal, and dangerous action, we want the police and public law enforcement to have the means to act and to call people to account who have defrauded the elderly of their money, who have perpetrated or attempted to perpetrate acts of terrorism, bullying, or other illegal activity.

The stories themselves, the personal tragedies, are there. They are heartbreaking. I have heard time and time again during consultations that I have been involved with, "What is the government going to do? When is the government going to do it?"

● (1550)

This is what parents are most concerned about. I have not had one parent say to me, "I wish you could just study this more. I wish you could somehow slow this process down so that we could hear from more experts". They are telling us to do something about it. That is what we are attempting to do, not somehow derail the effort, which I would submit has thus far been quite a non-partisan effort. It has been one that has garnered attention, but only because the stakes are so high, I would suggest.

In fact, I would remind the chamber that we are acting on recommendations that came from federal, provincial and territorial working groups on cybercrime. The working group already studied it extensively, considered whether cyberbullying was adequately being addressed under the Criminal Code, and found it lacking. It found there was a need that had to be filled.

In July of last year, the Department of Justice, on behalf of all federal, provincial, and territorial partners, publicly released an extensive report that was available to the committee. It is entitled "Cyberbullying and the Non-consensual Distribution of Intimate Images". All of that and more consultation led to this point, and the working group made nine unanimous recommendations with respect to the criminal law response. It is significant to note that the very first recommendation in that report calls for a multi-pronged, multi-sectoral approach to the issue of cyberbullying. It calls upon all levels of government to continue to build on the initiatives to address, in a comprehensive manner, this serious issue of cyberbullying.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly endorse and support that recommendation. It recognizes that the current situation is intolerable and inadequate. I think most experts agree that something had to be done, and that is where we are. We are now at a point where criminal law reform represents part of this larger multi-sectoral approach that is required.

Returning to the bill before us today, I am pleased to note that all of the proposals contained in the bill were in fact recommended by the provincial, territorial, and federal working group, and supported by provincial and territorial attorneys general, I am quick to add. The bill has two main goals: create the new Criminal Code offence, as I have referred to it already; and, importantly, modernize the investigative powers of the Criminal Code to enable police to effectively and efficiently investigate cyberbullying and other crimes committed via the Internet, or that involve electronic evidence.

The preservation of evidence is a very important part of this. Specifically, the modernization portion of the bill contains amendments to the Criminal Code, the Competition Act, the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act to ensure that the laws are suitable for the technologically advanced world that we now live in. There is a common thread in these amendments, in this effort, and that is to provide law enforcement agencies with the tools they need in the 21st century to fight crime, and continue, I am quick to add, to respect the civil liberties of all Canadians.

Let me conclude by saying that the proposed new offence and the complementary amendments that would fill an existing gap in the Criminal Code are aimed at providing broader protection for all victims and deterring criminal behaviour. This legislation is not a complete answer, and it would be untrue if I were to suggest that this was the final answer to all of the concerns expressed throughout this process, yet it is a key piece of the broader response that is necessary to address this complex issue.

I strongly urge members to support the continued examination of the bill at the committee in its current form, and not to interfere in that process, not to derail that process, not to in any way slow up the passing of this bill. The last thing that parents, particularly those who have children who have experienced this, want to see is any sort of delay or derailment of the process. I am quoting Glen Canning when I say he was of the belief that had this law been in place, perhaps his daughter, Rehtaeh Parsons, would still be with us today.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech. I get the impression that something was lost in translation.

[*English*]

I think we were lost in translation on many points.

[*Translation*]

Nothing in our motion indicates that we want to indefinitely postpone the second part of the bill, which has to do with giving tools to law enforcement officials and everything other than cyberbullying. That is not what we are saying. We simply want the first part to be passed quickly and sent to the Senate. The bill should not go further than necessary.

The people who appeared before the committee told us that they want this bill to be passed quickly. I obviously do not want to put words in their mouths, but they were talking about the cyberbullying part. They pointed out that they were not experts on the other part. They only hoped that the other part would not delay the part that they were most interested in.

The minister is talking about a report from his provincial and territorial partners, and I find it interesting that everyone agrees that this kind of legislation is necessary. However, I do not think the report says that the current bill is necessarily what all the provinces and territories want. I do not think this should be put on them.

I am trying to understand something. I would like the minister to explain why the government thinks that studying a bill means blocking, delaying and impeding, even though the study is conducted in good faith with good witnesses. I have a hard time understanding this attitude, which seems to come out of nowhere.

I would like to know what the minister's deadline is for his bill to come out of committee.

● (1600)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I understand my dear colleagues' speeches just fine. There is no problem with the interpretation; I understand.

I repeat that we need to take action. We do not need more time to examine the details. We have the opportunity to do so in committee.

[*English*]

It is happening, and it has happened. It happened at the provincial–territorial–federal level. It has happened, and over an extended period of time, I would suggest. The time is now before us to act and to do something substantive to respond to the technological advances that have occurred, that have created this dangerous situation, where there are gaps in the Criminal Code, blind spots, if you will, when it comes to the ability of the police to investigate and hold people accountable for acts that are tantamount to criminality.

We want to move forward expeditiously. We want to protect people. We want to ensure that the police, acting with judicial oversight, have those necessary investigative powers and tools before them.

I would move, seconded by the member for West Nova, that the debate now be adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker: I have to advise the minister that the motion cannot be put during question and comment period. It has to be done during the speech.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put on the record that I support the NDP motion on this matter, and agree with the position that we should split the bill, as other speakers have pointed out. I thank the hon. member, the justice critic for the official opposition, for bringing this forward.

The motion to split the bill is supported by no less than the interim Privacy Commissioner for the federal government, the Ontario Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian, and the British Columbia Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham. All of these experts are noting that what is happening here is more than a response, which we all support, to protect the vulnerable from cyberbullying. We all support that. However, in the guise of protecting the victims of potential cyberbullying, we are opening the floodgates to quite a Draconian invasion of privacy of Canadians from coast to coast.

That is why today's *Globe and Mail* had the cartoon of an RCMP officer, with one hand with a cute little puppet, talking about how we are going to protect children, and on the other a stethoscope to listen to everything that is going on within that house. Privacy rights are essential. I would ask the hon. minister if he would not reconsider at this point, not trying to end debate, not trying to push this through without proper review, but actually listening to those impartial public servants who are mandated to protect privacy. Would he not take a moment, listen, and reconsider support for splitting the bill?

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands actually putting before this House as part of her argument that editorial cartoonist? Not prone to any sort of exaggeration or mischaracterization, is that somehow part of her argument to slow up and derail the efforts to amend the Criminal Code and enhance the ability of law enforcement to protect young people? I find it stunning that she would suggest so in such a way.

As far as the interim Privacy Commissioner's concerns, she had the opportunity and would have the opportunity to publicly comment, as she has. We have heard from other experts, and we continue to hear from experts at the committee.

Now is not the time to slow down, go back, or re-examine what we know is obvious. Suggesting that the government, via this cartoon, is putting a stethoscope to every Canadian's private information is of course perverse. It is the height of exaggeration.

The answer is, no, I am not going to follow the advice or criticism of editorial cartoonists. We are going to act with haste to protect children, protect those who are vulnerable, including seniors, to fraud online. Protecting the interests of Canadians is what is at the very core of this effort and the core of this bill.

We do not agree with the NDP motion to split the bill. We think it is time to move forward, and that is the government's intent.

● (1605)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice, but I think he has a problem of selective hearing if he thought my entire argument boiled down to *The Globe and Mail* editorial cartoon.

I think that sometimes satire is the best way of piercing the veil of increasingly draconian policies. However, it happens that I also referenced the privacy commissioners from Ontario, British Columbia, and federally, all of whom have pointed to serious problems, as well as many other critics who are looking at this.

As a matter of fact, in the language used by Ann Cavoukian, this is very clearly a wolf in sheep's clothing. What could be clearer in saying that in the guise of doing one thing, this particular administration is willing to open the floodgates so that we will have private information from cellphone companies turned over to the RCMP?

I do think that satire often crystallizes an issue quite well. I encourage the Minister of Justice to pay attention when his legislation becomes the stuff of clear satire and the skewering of draconian polices by those, whether privacy commissioners, lawyers, or advocates for our civil liberties in this country, of which I consider myself one.

Before Bill C-13 gets rushed through this place, we should look at it and split the bill.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I encourage the hon. member to listen to the answer, because I did not simply respond to the issue of political satire found in a cartoon, although I suggest that she did before and, once again, spent a disproportionate amount of time attributing great value to this cartoon that she saw in *The Globe and Mail*.

I would refer the member again to my answer. She can find it in *Hansard*, where I spoke of the fact that the interim Privacy Commissioner has made recommendations and has already publicly commented. I would remind her, as I did previously, that in the development of this bill and in the development of the proposals contained in the legislation, we consulted extensively with the Privacy Commissioner and others. Their views formulated part of the government's legislation that is before the committee currently.

I note with great interest that this legislation would in fact strengthen and increase the investigative powers of the Privacy Commissioner, and I am sure she would find some great comfort in that fact.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for allowing me the time to do this. I also want to thank my colleague, the Liberal member of Parliament for Charlottetown, who did an extensive amount of work on this, as well as the member of Parliament for Malpeque and the member of Parliament for Mount Royal.

The enactment would amend the Criminal Code to provide most notably for a new offence of non-consensual distribution of intimate images. As well, there would complementary amendments to authorize the removal of such images from the Internet and the recovery of the expenses incurred to obtain the removal of images, the forfeiture of property used in the commission of the offence, a recognizance order to be issued to prevent the distribution of such images, and restriction of the use of a computer or the Internet by a convicted offender.

We are talking about the power to make preservation demands and orders to compel the preservation of electronic evidence, new production orders to compel the production of data relating to the transmission of communications and the location of transactions, individuals or things.

A warrant that would extend the current investigative power for data associated with telephones to transmission data relating to all means of telecommunications, or warrants that would be associated with telephones and the like, as I mentioned, a streamlined process of obtaining warrants and orders related to an authorization to intercept private communications by ensuring that those warrants and orders could be issued by a judge who would issue the authorization and by specifying that all documents relating to a request for a related warrant or order would be automatically subject to the same rules respecting confidentiality as the request for authorization.

Last, it would also amend the Competition Act to make applicable for the purpose of enforcing certain provisions of the act the new provisions being added to the Criminal Code respecting demands and orders for the preservation of computer data and orders for the production of documents related to the transmission or communications of financial data.

It would also amend the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act to make some of the new investigative powers being added to the Criminal Code available to Canadian authorities executing incoming requests for assistance and to allow the Commissioner of Competition to execute search warrants under the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act that I spoke of earlier.

There are some messages that we would like to put out there regarding this. This has been a long time coming. It was first introduced in the House on November 20, 2013. Cyberbullying is a scourge upon our society, as we all know, and has been evidenced certainly in the last two or three years. This is a problem not just in Canada but around the world. The party is supportive, in principle, of legislative measures that would provide law enforcement with additional tools to combat cyberbullying.

This is an area where the Criminal Code urgently needs to be updated to reflect the realities of modern technologies.

We believe, however, that legislative measures alone are insufficient to combat cyberbullying and we urge the government to commit to a broader, more holistic strategy to deal with cyberbullying that would also include public awareness resources for both parents and kids to allow them to see the signs of cyberbullying which they probably would not recognize under normal circumstances.

We introduced cyberbullying legislation last session that would have modified some Criminal Code offences to cover modern technology, as is done in C-13, which the Conservatives and the NDP voted down. The Liberals introduced legislation that would have addressed new technologies back in 2005.

The Conservative government is only figuring out now that police forces need these tools to keep up with technologies that are increasingly a part of today's crime.

We believe that a balance must be struck between civil liberties and public safety, particularly when it comes to warrants that may be intrusive and overboard. We do not support the measures that were in Bill C-30, which even the government had to withdraw because of the outrage some time ago.

Some of the bill would duplicate the rejected Bill C-30, such as word for word reproductions of the changes, subsection 487.3(1) of the Criminal Code and all but one word changes to subsection 492.1 and subsection 492 regarding warrants.

● (1610)

We are very concerned about efforts to reintroduce lawful access, which the Conservatives promised was dead at the time. That is not necessarily the case now.

Though the title is the protecting Canadians from online crime act, nobody is actually protected under this act. In typical fashion, this is all about punishment rather than prevention. Complex problems like cyberbullying require more than blunt editions to the Criminal Code. This omnibus bill touches everything from terrorism to telemarketing, cable stealing to hate speech, and is an affront to both democracy and the legislative process in the omnibus form that has been in going on in for quite some time.

We have seen that through the budget bills and a lot of the legislation that has passed through the House, so we can only assume that this type of pattern will continue with this legislation. Therefore, we support the motion to have the bill split and the provisions relating to cyberbullying be contained in a stand-alone bill at committee.

We are proposing two amendments.

The first is an amendment that would provide for a statutory review of elements of the bill, including the voluntary disclosure provisions. The sunset clause is a part of a law statute and we can repeal the law part over a specified time period.

The second is an amendment that would require an actual basis a report by telecoms detailing the volume of information being disclosed without a warrant.

As we mentioned earlier, we talked about the splitting of this bill, and we certainly feel this is a way to go. This would be the most responsible thing to do in light of the omnibus nature of this legislation. I believe that by doing this, we would be taking a principled and responsible approach.

Again, I go back to our original message of cyberbullying, which is a scourge on our society. What we can do in the House is reflect by looking at stand-alone legislation dealing with that. Basically, by making this a stand-alone provision, it would go a long way in enhancing the debate. Given the fact that we have had so much debate in the past, so much opposition and that there has been so much talk in the public realm about this legislation, this is something we can support.

● (1615)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor for his support for splitting the bill.

In the previous exchange, the Minister of Justice suggested that I or the opposition members as a group were trying to delay action to protect children and young people from cyberbullying. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is a very interesting procedural motion that the official opposition is using, a motion of instruction to the committee to split the bill. The point of splitting the bill is for the very purpose of making sure that those provisions that are about cyberbullying and protecting people, potential victims and the vulnerable from cyberbullying are removed and moved through quickly and that the other parts of the bill enhancing sweeping new powers for snooping be subjected to longer hearings.

I noticed that the Minister of Justice did not like my reference to a *Globe and Mail* cartoon. I wonder if my hon. colleague from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor noticed today's editorial in the *National Post*, a newspaper with a closer alignment to the current Conservative administration. It has also called Bill C-13 an unacceptable attack on our privacy.

Would my hon. colleague comment on that?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I apologize that I did not see the editorial in question, but I believe what the member is saying is that we need to be responsible. A responsible way of dealing with the bill is to take out the part that can be passed very quickly, which will achieve the consent within the House, given the issue and the timeliness of it.

I remember back in 2005 when the Conservatives were in opposition. It begged, pleaded and demanded in the House that we remove provisions of the budget dealing with the Atlantic accord because it had received unanimous consent in the House. Therefore, let us put that forward.

The Conservatives also argued for issues dealing with the veterans back when the accord was put out. They wanted to peel that part out and put it through as well. I can only assume that they would probably want to do this again. I feel that by supporting this motion to have the cyberbullying aspect removed from the legislation and pushed through very quickly would certainly be a responsible thing for the entire House to do.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that there is such a rush by the government to bring forward this bill without careful thought. The Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, has said clearly that the first part of the bill, the first seven pages, is fine, so let us move on that and take great care with the second half of the bill because it violates the privacy rights of Canadians.

Does my hon. colleague think that perhaps the government is using a back door attempt, hiding behind tragic victims of cyberbullying, in order to bring forward its failed cybersnooping bill, the one that public so vehemently pushed back a couple of years ago?

● (1620)

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I remember that episode quite well. We have seen backlash before. I have been here 10 years now and I have seen protests against certain measures, but not against bills before they are passed or while they are being debated in the House.

That one certainly caused a ruckus, and it did so electronically. I remember the campaign that was waged through social media at the time about snooping into people's private information. It was absolutely incredible. I had not seen anything like that in the House, and at that point I had been here for nine years.

I recall my colleague asked the question about how to handle situations in the House when the first part of bill looked at necessary matters that needed to be done very quickly and which would receive, if not unanimous, near unanimous consent of the House.

This is something for which they have argued. I remember that when I came here, we were in government and the Conservatives were in opposition. This is something that they pushed toward as a responsible way of creating legislation. They pushed toward taking out parts of the bill that could be passed quickly and could receive consent, things that had to be done in a timely fashion such as this, then go back and look at elements of the bill regarding privacy and the like. That way, we could engage in that and go clause by clause very quickly over elements of cyberbullying that we felt were necessary.

I find it very irresponsible for the Conservatives to behave this way when this is the type of legislation making that they professed to want before they became government.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for asking what I suppose might be a rhetorical question.

In a majority government, the Conservative Party has repudiated most of the positions of principle that it used to adopt in terms of opposing omnibus legislation or opposing the use of closure because it was anti-democratic. It has used closure and pushed through bills more than any administration in the history of Canada.

In this very critical issue of protecting private property, private information and privacy rights, would my hon. colleague not agree with me that, at this point, it is clear the Conservative administration in power has repudiated just about everything it ever stood for in opposition?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, where does one begin?

The hon. member has brought up a valid point, as we discussed earlier. As a matter of fact, my colleague from Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel made a good point. He said he was surprised this is not in the budget implementation bill as well.

It is a valid point, because we are seeing everything here being encapsulated. There were omnibus bills in the years before the Conservatives took power in 2006, but there was a general theme around this omnibus legislation. Now there seems to be the bill currently known as "madly off in all directions", because it is everything that the Conservatives see and most of it was not even in their campaign promises.

My colleague is right in that sense, because at what point do they practise what they used to preach, especially for the period from 2000 to 2005? When I arrived here in 2004, there were some solid arguments as to why bills should be split and dealt with on an individual basis as stand-alone legislation.

Being from Atlantic Canada, the Minister of Justice argued vehemently to take the provisions and changes in the Atlantic accord out of the budget bill because they deserved to be in stand-alone legislation. All of his colleagues in Atlantic Canada mentioned that, but at least that provision in the Atlantic accord shared thematically with the budget, because it was about equalization.

Now we find things sandwiched into this legislation. It is the Neapolitan ice cream of legislation-making. Every flavour is in there. Every little element is in here, and for some reason we have to accept one part and then deny the other, even though they are vehemently opposed to each other.

There is a very important issue in the first part of the motion, so I support the motion simply because it is the responsible and right thing to do. It could be handled very quickly given the situation, the headlines, the editorials that we have witnessed over the past two years. If this is not responsible legislation-making, then I really do not know what is.

The right thing to do is split this legislation. The right thing to do is deal with this very important issue up front, right now, before we get to other matters, including privacy.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, Natural Resources; and the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, Pensions.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1705)

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

(Division No. 143)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra

Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Saxton	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Zimmer– — 136

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélanger	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Cleary
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault	Eyking
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Giguère	Goodale
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lapointe
Larose	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathyssen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Nantel
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Pilon	Quach
Rafferty	Rathgeber
Regan	Rousseau
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	Stoffer
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valeriote– — 98

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1710)

PETITIONS

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport in the great city of Toronto to table a few petitions.

The first petition is from people in my riding and right across the city. The petitioners are calling on the government and on the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to grant ministerial relief to Oscar Vigil.

Mr. Vigil came to Canada from El Salvador in 2001. His wife and three children are now Canadian citizens, and we believe the government can do the right thing and keep this family together.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition pertains to the fact that just about half of all workers in Toronto cannot access a full-time, stable job. They need a national urban worker strategy. This petition speaks to that need.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is in regard to the government saying it would end pay-to-pay fees. Those are the fees people are charged when they get their bills in the mail. There has been a move to eliminate this fee on some bills, but not on all.

The petitioners from my riding, most of them seniors living on Connolly, Symington, and Russett, want to see real action from the government on these pay-to-pay fees.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I know we have been away for a week and you want to resume long-term friendships, but would you do that outside the chamber so I can hear the petitions as they are presented.

The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a number of petitions signed by people from the riding of Kitchener—Conestoga and the surrounding area in the region of Waterloo. The petitioners call on the government to introduce a new volunteer service medal to be known as the Governor General's volunteer medal to acknowledge and recognize volunteerism by Canadian troops.

DEMENTIA

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today with hundreds of signatures calling on the government to urgently implement a national dementia strategy. The petitioners know that Canada has a crisis looming in the number of people afflicted with dementia illnesses. It is a huge cost for health care budgets and a big challenge for caregivers. In fact, according to a new study commissioned by the Alzheimer Society of Canada, the number of Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia now stands at 747,000 and will double to 1.4 million by 2031.

As the petitioners point out, Canada's health care system is ill-equipped to deal with the staggering costs, which will skyrocket from $33 billion per year today to $293 billion per year by 2040. Additionally, the pressures on family caregivers are mounting. In 2011, family caregivers spent 444 million unpaid hours per year looking after someone with dementia, representing $11 billion in lost income and 222,760 lost full-time equivalent employees in the workforce. By 2040, they will be devoting a staggering 1.2 billion unpaid hours per year. It is clear that Canada needs a dementia plan now. Let me say that I share the petitioners' hope that our NDP Bill C-356 will be passed expeditiously.

JERICHO GARRISON LANDS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first is signed by hundreds of residents on the west side of Vancouver, drawing the attention of the House to the issue of the Jericho Garrison Lands, which consist of 21 hectares of federally owned land with a mix of trees, green space, and historic buildings that are significant to the heritage and quality of life of the residents on the west side of Vancouver and the broader community.

The petitioners point out that there is a planned divestment of these lands as a "strategic disposal", and they point out that the residents have not been adequately consulted about this, despite the fact that a court case has been launched asking that the residents be consulted about the use of these important lands. They call on the government to commit to a complete consultation and accommodation, particularly with the Francophone Education Authority.

● (1715)

CANADA POST

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, signed by hundreds of residents, is about the possibility of Canada Post ending home delivery. The petitioners point out that the plan for reduced services includes the elimination of home delivery for five million households; that by agreeing to reduced services, the government is breaking its promise to better protect consumers; that some 8,000 Canada Post workers would stand to lose their jobs; and that this reduction in service could lead to the privatization of Canada Post, which is an essential public service.

FIREARMS RECLASSIFICATION

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy today to rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents who note that the classifications of firearms are made without adequate public consultation or public notice, and this erodes public confidence in the process. The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to enforce the Firearms Act and regulations in an open, transparent, and fair manner that respects private property and full and adequate public consultation, including fair financial compensation and not confiscation, and that reflects our shared commitment to smaller government, lower taxes, and the enforcement of existing laws with enhanced freedom and individual responsibility.

CONFLICT MINERALS

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by Canadians from right across the country who want the government to pass Bill C-486, known as the conflict minerals act. They note that since 1988, over five million people have died in the conflict in eastern Congo and that by bringing in supervision and supply chain regulations for conflict minerals, this could help end the conflict. They want to see the government adopt Bill C-486.

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Brome—Missisquoi is a riding with many agricultural products. Some 40 people from Brome—Missisquoi signed this petition calling for the government to host a conference with the provincial and territorial agricultural ministers to come up with a Canada-wide strategy on local food.

The petition also calls on the government to develop a policy for purchasing locally grown food for all federal institutions. By promoting local food initiatives, we support Canadian farmers, we create jobs and we reduce the pollution associated with transportation.

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three sets of petitions. The first petition calls on the government to restore funding and to reopen Veterans Affairs Canada offices. It is signed by my constituents from Fort Frances.

CANADA POST

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to reverse the cuts and services announced by Canada Post and to instead look for ways to innovate in areas such as postal banking. It is signed by constituents from the riding of Kenora.

PUBLIC TRANSIT OPERATORS

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is from the province of Quebec, Montreal in particular. Petitioners are calling on the government to change the law regarding assault on bus drivers to move any assault charges from assault to aggravated assault.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table six petitions with respect to the Algoma Central Railway passenger rail. It is with respect to the government's decision to remove funding for the rail. Although the government has temporarily put another year of funding in based on the interventions I have made in the House and on the stakeholder groups, it is about the impact this has on the economy and the fact that the government chose not to talk to the stakeholders about this. Petitioners are extremely concerned about the future of this rail. Petitioners are from Garden River, Wawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Hawk Junction, Bright, Elmira, Goulais River, Dubreuilville, Prince Township, and Desbarats. Yes, a lot of these are from the Conservative riding.

● (1720)

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the other petition I have is with respect to unfair fees and consumer rip-offs. It is signed by people from Massey, Spanish, Chapleau, White River, Hornepayne, Mindemoya, and Little Current. They certainly want action with respect to ATM fees, credit cards fees, and the pay-to-pay fees.

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by literally tens of thousands of Canadians who call upon the House of Commons and Parliament here assembled to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known and that more Canadians now die from asbestos than from all other industrial and occupational causes combined. They call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all its forms and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed primarily by petitioners from the Toronto and Richmond Hill area. It is on behalf of the Hungarian community in Canada. Petitioners are very concerned about the abuse of the human rights of the Hungarian community within the nation of Romania. They ask the House assembled to speak up for human rights for the Hungarian community.

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of many provinces in Canada, from Saskatchewan, Ontario, Alberta, and many places within British Columbia, particularly within Saanich, Gulf Islands, Salt Spring Island and a few others. Petitioners are calling on the House to reject Bill C-18 as currently drafted and to take steps to ensure that farmers have the right to save their seed and to select, exchange, and sell seeds.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. One is on behalf of the residents predominantly of Kamloops, British Columbia, and some other communities around Prince George, Quesnel, and down the highway. Petitioners are raising serious concerns about the potential development of Ajax mine, a development that would place an open-pit mine within a kilometre of a local school, and about requiring the government to make even the most cursory attempts to have a proper environmental assessment of this project.

BLOOD AND ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I present today is from many hundreds of Canadians right across the country, predominantly from Windsor and London. It asks that the government change the policy with regard to blood donations and to end discrimination against people who are in same-sex marriages. They call this as it is, an unconstitutional infringement of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Petitioners ask the government to bring up its policies to fall in line with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by people from my riding calling for the creation of a legal mechanism to establish an ombudsman for the extractive sector.

This petition is also supported by hundreds of people in my riding who sent me letters in this regard through Development and Peace. This is a very important human rights issue.

I am asking all my colleagues in the House to support the bill introduced by my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île, which does exactly that.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I have the honour to present petitions from my riding and neighbouring ridings in northern New Brunswick on the drastic cuts that were recently made to VIA Rail services. VIA Rail reduced the frequency of its trains by 50% in northern New Brunswick and by 100% in the Gaspé. The train does not run in the Gaspé at all any more. VIA Rail has been bragging that it has lost only 40% of its customers as a result of all of these cuts.

People in my region do not believe that a 40% loss in customers is anything to brag about. We believe that this is an attack on the regions and we hope that the government will restore those rail services. We need them in our region because we live in a remote area.

[*English*]

BLOOD AND ORGAN DONATION

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first is from residents who call upon the Government of Canada to review thoroughly and change the policy on blood and organ donation in Canada. The petitioners understand that people should be pre-tested for disease, and if they fail, they cannot donate. However, they want the Government of Canada to return the rights of healthy Canadians to give the gift of blood, bone marrow, and organs to those in need, no matter the race, religion, or sexual preference of a person, so that the rights of healthy Canadians to give blood, bone marrow, and organs to those in need are respected.

● (1725)

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from Canadians who want the Parliament of Canada to ensure that Canadians have access to the same high-quality health services, no matter where they live.

The petitioners urge strong federal leadership to establish a pan-Canadian prescription drug strategy that reduces the amount Canadians pay for their medications; to transfer enough funding to provinces and territories to enable them to consistently ensure high-quality home and long-term care services; to have a pan-Canadian human-health-resources strategy to improve access to primary care in urban and rural communities; and to improve living conditions to include access to food, housing, a living wage, and social and mental health services, especially to allow better living conditions for aboriginal people.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 436, 443, 445, 453, 462, 464; as well as a revised response to Question No. 444, initially tabled on May 15, 2014.

[*Text*]

Question No. 436—**Hon. Irwin Cotler**:

With regard to costs and expenses related to appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada: (*a*) what accounts for the difference in costs between appointment processes; (*b*) who and what entities submit costs for reimbursement; (*c*) are any costs rejected for reimbursement and, if so, (i) on what basis, (ii) who makes the determination, (iii) what criteria are used in making the determination; (*d*) what reimbursement requests were rejected for the appointment processes of (i) Justice M. Rothstein, (ii) Justice T. Cromwell, (iii) Justice M. Moldaver and Justice A. Karakatsanis, (iv) Justice R. Wager, (v) Justice M. Nadon; (*e*) in the breakdown of appointment process costs provided in the answer to Q-239, how are the following categories defined (i) Travel and Telecommunications, (ii) Information and Printing Services, (iii) Legal Services, (iv) Translation and Professional Services, (v) Rentals, (vi) Miscellaneous Supplies, (vii) Acquisition of Machinery and Equipment; (*f*) what types of costs are included under the headings (i) Travel and Telecommunications, (ii) Information and Printing Services, (iii) Legal Services, (iv) Translation and Professional Services, (v) Rentals, (vi) Miscellaneous Supplies, (vii) Acquisition of Machinery and Equipment; (*g*) who bears the costs incurred in the following categories and, if costs are shared, with which entity or entities are they shared: (i) Travel and Telecommunications, (ii) Information and Printing Services, (iii) Legal Services, (iv) Translation and Professional Services, (v) Rentals, (vi) Miscellaneous Supplies, (vii) Acquisition of Machinery and Equipment; (*h*) why are there no "Information and Printing" costs associated with Justice Cromwell's appointment; (*i*) what was the maximum budget set for the appointment processes reported in the government's answer to written question Q-239; (*j*) what accounts for the greater costs of "Translation and Professional Services" for the appointment of Justice Wagner relative to the reported costs provided in the government's answer to written question Q-239 for other Justices; (*k*) what accounts for the great increase in rentals costs for "Rentals" associated with the appointment of Mr. Justice Wagner compared to other Justices reported in the answer to Q-239; (*l*) what ensures transparency with respect to the costs incurred in judicial appointments; (*m*) who assess the reasonableness of costs incurred, and how; (*n*) who assesses the legitimacy of expenses, and how; (*o*) are receipts that are related to the appointments process consultable and, if so, (i) by whom, (ii) how, (iii) under what circumstances; (*p*) who ultimately approves the expenses and what is the role of Treasury Board in this regard, if any; and (*q*) is there a maximum budget set for an appointment process and, if so, (i) what is it, (ii) how and when was it determined?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the administrative support services were provided by the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs. The costs and expenses in 2011, 2012, and 2013 were within a similar range with variations due to a multitude of factors, including the location of meetings, the need for rental accommodations, the volume of translation services, the urgency of the requests for translations, et cetera. For the appointment of Judge Thomas Cromwell, costs and expenses were lower, since the Supreme Court of Canada selection committee had fewer meetings and there was no ad hoc Parliamentary committee. We are unable to comment on the costs associated with the appointment of Judge Marshall Rothstein, since most of the expenses incurred predate the election of this government.

With regard to (b), entities that submit costs for reimbursement include translators and interpreters, the executive director for the Supreme Court of Canada selection process, the directors of research, the constitutional expert appearing before the ad hoc Parliamentary committee to introduce the nominee, and legal researchers.

With regard to (c) and (d), to the best of our knowledge no costs were rejected. The Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs ensures costs reimbursed are reasonable and within market rates.

With regard to (e)(i) to (e)(vii), the categories listed are in keeping with accounting expenditure classifications established by the Receiver General of Canada and defined using government-wide object codes. Members may refer to the following link: http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/pceaf-gwcoa/1415/7-eng.html#sec7.2.

With regard to (f)(i), they are defined as travel costs, taxis, and courier services. With regard to (f)(ii), they are defined as printing costs, audio-visual services, and electronic subscriptions. With regard to (f)(iii), they are defined as legal research fees. With regard to (f)(iv), they are defined as translation costs, temporary help services, and management fees. With regard to (f)(v), they are defined as photocopier rental and copy usage fees. With regard to (f)(vi), they are defined as office supplies. With regard to (e)(vii), they are defined as purchase of a multi-functional printer/scanner/fax machine.

With regard to (g), the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs was tasked with providing administrative support to the Supreme Court of Canada selection committee by the Minister of Justice, relying on paragraph 74(1)(d) of the Judges Act, and was asked to provide such services within its existing budget.

With regard to (h), there were no information and printing costs associated with the appointment of Judge Thomas Cromwell, since there were few meetings of the Supreme Court of Canada selection committee and there was no ad hoc Parliamentary committee meeting to review his nomination.

With regard to (i) and (q), the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs was asked to submit a budget for the selection process and was then asked to absorb same within its overall operating budget. The budget submitted for the 2013 appointment process was $325,000.

With regard to (j), the translation and professional services for the Judge Richard Wagner appointment were higher since more decisions had to be translated from French to English, whereas for other appointments decisions submitted by candidates were already available in both French and English.

With regard to (k), the increase in rental costs for rentals associated with the appointment of Judge Richard Wagner compared to other justices is the rental of photocopier/multi-functional equipment for one year versus using external printing services or purchasing the equipment.

With regard to (l), general information regarding judicial appointment is published on the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs' web site in its quarterly financial reports and the departmental performance report.

With regard to (m) and (n), the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs is responsible for the assessment of the reasonableness of the costs incurred and legitimacy of expenses.

With regard to (o), receipts that are related to the appointments processes are consultable for audit purposes and records are maintained in keeping with retention guidelines established by Library and Archives Canada.

With regard to (p), the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs approves expenses within its existing authorities and appropriations.

Question No. 443—**Mr. Justin Trudeau**:

> With regard to the Youth Employment Strategy: (*a*) what are the sub-program and sub-sub-program activities within the program architecture; (*b*) how much was expended annually by each sub-program and sub-sub-program since 2006-2007; (*c*) how many clients were served annually by each sub-program and sub-sub-program since 2006-2007; and (*d*) how many applications were not approved in each fiscal year since 2006-2007 (i) due to lack of funding, (ii) due to applicant not meeting the eligibility criteria?

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the Youth Employment Strategy, or YES, offers three programs. The Skills Link program helps young people who face more barriers to employment than others develop basic employability skills and gain valuable job experience to assist them in making a successful transition into the labour market or to return to school. They could be youth who have not completed high school, single parents, aboriginal youth, young persons with disabilities, youth living in rural or remote areas, or newcomers. The Career Focus program helps post-secondary graduates transition to the labour market through paid internships and helps to provide youth with the information and experience they need to make informed career decisions, find a job, and/or pursue advanced studies. The summer work experience program provides wage subsidies to employers to create summer employment for secondary and post-secondary students. The summer work experience program includes Canada Summer Jobs, or CSJ. The CSJ provides funding for not-for-profit organizations, public sector employers, and small businesses with 50 or fewer employees to create summer job opportunities for students.

The following federal departments and agencies are also part of the YES: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Canadian Heritage; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; Environment Canada; Industry Canada; the National Research Council; Natural Resources Canada; and Parks Canada.

With regard to (b) and (c), this information can be found at the following link: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/publications/dpr/index.shtml.

With regard to (d), the department does not track the number of rejected applications based on the reasons mentioned in the question.

Question No. 444—**Mr. Scott Andrews**:

> With regard to Finance Canada: during the period from fiscal year 2005-2006 to fiscal year 2012-2013 inclusively, what was the average interest rate paid each year on total government borrowing, including but not limited to the issuance of bonds and treasury bills, and any borrowing from financial institutions?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, The government publishes annually, in the Public Accounts of Canada, the average interest rate for each major category of outstanding market debt, including marketable bonds, treasury bills, retail debt, Canada bills, and foreign currency notes, along with the average rate on total market debt.

This information is available in PDF format from Library and Archives Canada through the following links:

For 2005-06, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2006/v1pa06-e.pdf, table 6.10, page 6.10.

For 2006-07, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2007/P51-1-2007-1E.pdf, table 6.10, page 6.10.

For 2007-08, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2008/49-eng.pdf, table 6.10, page 6.9.

For 2008-09, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2009/49-eng.pdf, table 6.10, page 6.9.

For 2009-10, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2010/v1pa2010e_revised.pdf, table 6.9, page 6.9.

For 2010-11, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2011/Vol1pa2011e_revised.pdf, table 6.8, page 6.9.

For 2011-12, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2012/49-eng.pdf, table 6.8, page 6.9.

And for 2012-13, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2013/2013-vol1-eng.pdf, table 6.8, page 6.9.

Question No. 445—**Mr. Scott Andrews**:

> With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and more specifically the decision to extend the cod fishery in NAFO division 3Ps: (*a*) what requests were received by DFO from industry, including but not limited to processors, unions, licensed harvesters and provincial governments, to support an extension to the 2014 closing date including (i) name, (ii) how the support was communicated, (iii) date the support was received, (iv) rationale provided to support an extension; and (*b*) what advice was requested and received to support or argue the extension from within DFO, including (i) name, (ii) position, (iii) rationale to support or oppose?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the requests ranged from permitting a certain percentage of overall fleet quota to be harvested during the closure through permitting certain gear types to continue to fish through the closure to permitting certain areas to continue to be allowed to be fished and varying the closure period depending on fish quality. With regard to (a)(i), the fleets were represented by the following groups: the Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council, or GEAC; the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union, or FFAW; and the Fixed Gear Offshore Harvesters association, or FGOH. The following individual licence-holders were in attendance: Miawpukek First Nation, from Conne River; Icewater fisheries; and Ocean Choice International, or OCI. With regard to (a)(ii) and (a)(iii), the requests were presented at a meeting chaired by DFO officials held on February 19, 2014, in St. John's, at which all fleet sectors engaged in the 3Ps cod fishery were in attendance. With regard to (a)(iv), all fleet sectors requested some form of flexibility on the existing closed period in support of efforts that would increase market opportunities for the industry and in light of the fact that less than one-half the total quota has been taken in recent years.

With regard to (b), DFO's science branch advised that the latest 3Ps cod science assessment has indicated the stock may have recovered to its upper stock reference point. This latest advice indicates significant strength in the recovering stock, which may warrant additional flexibility in the closure in the interest of further market development for the industry. Science is engaging in co-operative science work with France in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the efficacy of closures and conducting additional scientific research into the reproductive behaviour of the stock throughout the season.

Question No. 453—**Mr. Jean-François Fortin**:

> With regard to page 255 of the English version of the Economic Action Plan 2014: what are the specific items and costs totalling $3.1 billion in deferred spending under the National Defence Capital Funding?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, the government has put our men and women in uniform first by significantly increasing the budget for national defence. This is the single largest investment in our armed forces in a century.

The strategic shifting of funds in question is not unique to this year's budget. The government is simply realigning the funds with the new expected delivery timeframes of our major purchases. Since the Department of National Defence did not spend the money this year, the economic action plan will ensure that all this money will remain available to the Canadian Armed Forces in future years. Defence retains sufficient funding to proceed with all of its procurement plans in the future.

Over the period 2014 through 2017, the Department of National Defence has experienced variances from earlier forecasts, including aircraft requirements, $1.7 billion; Canadian surface combatant, $0.2 billion; joint support ship, $0.3 billion; Arctic offshore patrol ship, $0.3 billion; and the family of land combat vehicles, $0.5 billion.

Question No. 462—**Mr. Ryan Cleary**:

> With regard to Treasury Board and the $280 million allocated to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador as part of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement: (*a*) why is the money being allocated; (*b*) what is the purpose of the money; and (*c*) are there any stipulations on the funding?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and information has been withheld on the grounds that it is a confidence of cabinet.

Question No. 464—**Mr. Charlie Angus**:

With regard to unauthorized attempts to access government networks, for each year from 2003 to 2013: (*a*) how many incidents occurred in total, broken down by (i) department, institution, or agency, (ii) how many were successful, (iii) whether sensitive, classified, private, or proprietary information was stolen, (iv) the number of occasions where departments were forced offline, (v) the number of occasions on which it was determined where the attempt originated and, of those determined, what was the country of origin; (*b*) of those hacks identified in (*a*), how many have been reported to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, broken down by (i) department, institution or agency, (ii) the number of individuals affected by the breach; and (*c*) how many breaches are known to have led to criminal activity such as fraud or identity theft, broken down by department, institution or agency?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is continuously working to enhance cybersecurity in Canada by identifying cyberthreats and vulnerabilities and by preparing for and responding to all kinds of cyberincidents to better protect Canada and Canadians.

SSC does not discuss or share information related to security incidents.

SSC is accountable and responsible for ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the information processed and the information technology infrastructure, systems, and services under its purview. SSC does not publish information that, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to be used in a malicious nature against Government of Canada IT Infrastructures, such as information relating to successful attacks, current tactics, techniques, and processes used to secure and defend Government of Canada IT infrastructures.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if Questions Nos. 437-440, 448-451, 455, 461, 463, 465-467 and 469 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 437—**Hon. Irwin Cotler**:

With regard to the appointment of Justice Marc Nadon: (*a*) who did what and when prior to the Selection Panel being convened; (*b*) who determined the process to be followed with respect to the most recent appointment process to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC); (*c*) was the process for Justice Wagner designed with the departure of Justice Fish a year later in mind; (*d*) was the process for Justice Nadon designed with the forthcoming departure of Justice LeBel in mind; (*e*) in the breakdown of appointment process costs provided in the answer to Q-239, what accounts for the "Acquisition of Machinery and Equipment" cost associated with the appointment of Justice Marc Nadon; (*f*) was there a competitive bidding process with respect to the goods and services in (*a*); (*g*) what accounts for the greater cost of "Legal Services" for the appointment of Justice Marc Nadon relative to the reported costs provided in the answer to Q-239 for other Justices; (*h*) are the costs for the legal opinions of Justices Binnie and Charron included in the "Legal Services" heading for the appointment process of Justice Marc Nadon reported in the answer to Q-239; (*i*) if the answer to (*f*) is no, under what heading are these opinion costs found and, if not reported in the answer to Q-239, where are they reported; (*j*) were the legal opinions of any Quebec jurists explicitly sought with respect to the eligibility of Justice Marc Nadon and, if so, (i) whose opinions were sought, (ii) on what date, (iii) at what cost; (*k*) were the legal opinions of any Quebec jurists explicitly sought with respect to the eligibility of a federal judge to assume a Quebec seat on the SCC and, if so, (i) whose opinions were sought, (ii) on what date, (iii) at what cost; (*l*) how long will the materials relative to Justice Nadon's appointment remain on the website for the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada;

(*m*) when were these materials first posted; (*n*) under what guidelines will they be removed; (*o*) how was the decision to seek outside legal advice relative to Justice Nadon's eligibility made, (i) by whom, (ii) on what dates, (iii) why; (*p*) did the Department of Justice render an internal opinion as to the eligibility of Justice Nadon to assume a Quebec seat on the SCC; (*q*) what assessment or evaluation of the Nadon nomination has the government undertaken to improve the process for the next appointment; (*r*) what assessment, evaluation, or review of the Nadon nomination will the government undertake so as to learn from it; (*s*) with respect to the statement of the Minister reported by CBC on March 24, 2014, that "we'll examine our options as we ensure that the Supreme Court has its full complement" what specific options were considered by the government; (*t*) did the government consider re-naming Justice Nadon after the decision in Reference re Supreme Court Act, ss. 5 and 6 and, if not, why did the Minister not rule this out when asked subsequent to the ruling's release; (*u*) on what specific dates did the Selection Panel engage in consultations relative to the process that resulted in the nomination of Justice Nadon; (*v*) did any consultations or meetings of the Selection Panel occur after July 15, 2013; (*w*) were any outside lawyers consulted on the amendments made to the Supreme Court Act during the nomination of Justice Marc Nadon; (*x*) was Quebec consulted on the amendments made to the Supreme Court Act during the nomination of Justice Marc Nadon; (*y*) was the Barreau du Quebec consulted on the amendments made to the Supreme Court Act during the nomination of Justice Marc Nadon; (*z*) were any documents, presentations, or memos prepared for ministers or their staff, from April 1, 2013 to present regarding Justice Marc Nadon and, if so, what are (i) the dates, (ii) the titles or subject-matters, (iii) the department, commission, or agency's internal tracking number;

(*aa*) with respect to the Minister's appearance before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on Thursday, November 21, 2013, wherein he deferred to Ms. Laurie Wright (Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Law Sector, Department of Justice) on a question regarding consultations in the matter of changes to the Supreme Court Act and wherein she said "In this particular case, I'm not aware that there were any consultations with the Barreau du Québec. It's not unusual for the government to consult in circumstances such as this, though", (i) were there any consultations with the Barreau du Quebec and, if so, on what dates, (ii) was the Minister aware personally of consultations, (iii) what role would the Minister personally play in such consultations in 'usual' circumstances, (iv) if there were no consultations, why were none held, (v) were any consultations requested by the government in this regard; (*bb*) with respect to the various costs reported in the response to Q-74 related to Ms. Louise Charron, Mr. Ian Binnie and Professor Peter Hogg, what accounts for the difference in these costs; (*cc*) were the three named individuals asked the same total number of questions and with the same exact wording; (*dd*) in addition to these individuals referenced in part (*z*), who else was asked and on what date with respect to the question of the eligibility of a federal judge to assume a Quebec seat on the SCC; (*ee*) with respect to the statement of the Minister of Justice in the House on October 17, 2013, "The eligibility and the opinion that we have received from Mr. Justice Ian Binnie, which has also been endorsed by Supreme Court Justice Louise Charron, as well as a noted constitutional expert Peter Hogg, is very clear", (i) when were Justice Charron and Professor Hogg provided the opinion for Justice Binnie, (ii) how long did they have to review it before reporting to the government; (*ff*) with respect to the statement of the Minister of Justice before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on November 21, 2013, that "legal opinion prepared by respected former Supreme Court Justice Ian Binnie which [...] was supported by his former colleague, the Honourable Louise Charron, as well as by noted constitutional expert, Professor Peter Hogg", (i) did the Minister use "supported" to mean "endorsed", (ii) did the Minister mean that all conclusions were agreed in wholeheartedly by those cited; (*gg*) with respect to the Minister's comments before the Ad Hoc Committee on the Appointment of SCC Justices that "I would add that this opinion was reviewed by several eminently qualified individuals, including the Honourable Louise Charron as a former judge of the Supreme Court of Canada herself. The opinion was also reviewed by Professor Peter Hogg, a recognized constitutional expert and author. Both of them expressed unequivocal support for Mr. Justice Binnie's conclusions", is "several" used to mean "more than two but not many" as defined by the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2 ed.) and (i) if so, who other than Justice Charron and Prof. Hogg is included in the class of "eminently qualified individuals" who reviewed this opinion, (ii) if not, in what sense was the word "several" used in this context and to convey what; (*hh*) was Justice Binnie informed that his opinion would be made public and, if so, was this part of the arrangement the government made with him; (*ii*) can Justice Charron publicly release her opinion that was rendered to the government and, if not, why not; (*jj*) can Professor Hogg publicly release his opinion that was rendered to the government and, if not, why not; (*kk*) will the government release the opinions of Justice Charron and Prof. Hogg and, if not, why not; (*ll*) how did the government decide from whom to seek opinions; (*mm*) how did the government determine whose opinions to release; (*nn*) other than the Minister of Justice, who in the Department of Justice, in the Prime Minister's Office, and in the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada reviewed the Charron and Hogg opinions; (*oo*) where are the Charron and Hogg opinions currently stored, who has access to them, and what is the plan for retention; (*pp*) concerning the Selection Panel that considered Justice Marc Nadon's candidacy, (i) how were members of the Panel chosen, (ii) what qualifications were sought, (iii) how did each of the members of the Panel meet the qualifications in (ii), (iv) what measures are in place to ensure that Aboriginal candidates are considered in the work of the Panel; (*qq*) who was the Executive Director of the SCC Selection Committee for this process and how was this person selected;

(*rr*) what protections were in place to ensure that members of the Panel elevated mid-summer to Cabinet were not influenced by their Cabinet role in the work of the Panel; (*ss*) with respect to the Prime Minister's statement regarding Justice Nadon in the House on April 1, 2014, that "pendant les consultations, tous les partis de la Chambre étaient d'accord avec l'idée qu'on pouvait nommer un Québécois de la Cour fédérale à la Cour suprême", (i) to what consultations is the Prime Minister referring, (ii) was the Prime Minister part of these consultations and if so in what capacity, (iii) if the Prime Minister was not part of these consultations, by what means was he informed of their contents, (iv) to what extent are these consultations public, (v) if these consultations were public, in what manner can records of them be accessed, (vi) if these consultations were not public, are their contents protected by any privilege or confidentiality agreement and if so, what are the consequences for any individual breaking consultation confidentiality, if any, (vii) on what basis was this statement made, (viii) how can a party involved in these consultations express its disagreement "avec l'idée qu'on pouvait nommer un Québécois de la Cour fédérale à la Cour supreme", (ix) how can a disagreement, such as the Prime Minister suggests did not occur, be made public within the ordinary course of consultations; and (*tt*) with respect to the Prime Minister's statement in the House on April 1, 2014, that "Évidemment, c'est une grande surprise de découvrir qu'il y a une règle tout à fait différente pour le Québec que pour le reste du Canada", (i) when was the Prime Minister first informed that there exists a different rule for the appointment of judges from Quebec vis-a-vis the rest of Canada to the Supreme Court of Canada, (ii) did the Prime Minister personally solicit, receive, and review legal advice on this point within the context of the Marc Nadon appointment, (iii) what steps were taken to mitigate any such surprises that might arise during the appointment process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 438—**Ms. Manon Perreault**:

With regard to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Disability benefit appeals: (*a*) how many appeals were made to the CPP Review Tribunal between 2004 and 2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) appeals granted by the Department before a hearing was held, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (x) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 3 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 12 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which took more than 12 months to be heard; (*b*) how many hearings were held by the CPP Review Tribunal each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (*c*) how many appeals were made to the Pension Appeals Board between 2004 and 2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals made by clients, (v) appeals made by the Department, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the CPP Review Tribunal's decision, (vii) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the CPP Review Tribunal's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were heard within 3 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which were heard within 12 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 18 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which took more than 18 months after receipt of appeal notice to be heard; (*d*) how many hearings were held by the Pension Appeals Board in each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (*e*) how many requests for reconsideration were made to the Department in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) requests resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) requests not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) reviews which took place within 30 days of receipt of the request, (vii) reviews which took place within 60 days of receipt of the request, (viii) reviews which took more than 60 days to complete; (*f*) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the Department and requesting their case file from the Department received their case file (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (*g*) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the Department and requesting their case file from the Department were refused their case file, broken down by province; (*h*) how many applicants requesting a reconsideration by the Department were notified by phone of the outcome of their request and how many were notified by letter; (*i*) how many appeals were made to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal regarding CPPD Benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in a summary dismissal, (v) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were decided on the record, (x) appeals which were heard in writing, (xi) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xii) appeals which were heard in person, (xiii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which were heard within 4 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xviii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xix) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xx) appeals which took more than 9 months to be heard; (*j*) in how many cases was the Department informed by the Social Security Tribunal of a notice of appeal (i) within 7 days of receiving the notice, (ii) within 14 days of receiving the notice, (iii) within 21 days of receiving the notice, (iv) within 30 days of receiving the notice, (v) more than 30 days after receiving the notice;

(*k*) how many hearings were held by the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (*l*) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal; (*m*) how many legacy cases originally filed with the CPP Review Tribunal are still waiting to be heard; (*n*) how many hearings regarding legacy cases originally filed with the CPP Review Tribunal did the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal hold in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (*o*) how many Applications to Rescind or Amend have been made to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) applications that were successful, (iv) applications that were refused, (v) applications that resulted in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) applications that did not result in an overturn of the Department's original decision; (*p*) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal received their case file from the Department (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (*q*) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal were refused their case file by the Department, broken down by province; (*r*) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal were sent an acknowledgement of receipt of their notice of appeal (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after notice was sent; (*s*) how many appeals were made to the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding CPP Disability benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) cases where leave is not granted to appeal, (v) appeals filed by the Department, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Income Security Section's decision, (vii) cases not resulting in an overturn of the Income Security Section's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing is held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were decided on the record, (xi) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xii) appeals which were heard in person, (xiii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xviii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which took more than 9 months to be heard; (*t*) how many hearings were held by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding CPP Disability benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (*u*) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal; (*v*) how many hearings regarding legacy cases originally filed with the CPP Review Tribunal did the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal hear, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (*w*) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about communications sent to an appellant rather than to a third-party where requested; (*x*) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about logistic problems with hearings held by teleconference; (*y*) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about the Notice of Readiness system; and (*z*) how many requests for postponement has the Social Security Tribunal received after a Notice of Readiness has been filed by the appellant?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 439—**Mr. Sean Casey**:

With regard to contracts under $10,000 granted by Justice 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. 440—**Mr. Marc Garneau**:

With regard to contracts under $10,000 granted by Foreign Affairs, Trade and 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. 448—**Hon. Stéphane Dion**:

With regard to judicial appointments from the province of Quebec: (*a*) what steps is the government taking to ensure Quebec has full representation on the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC); (*b*) by when will a Justice to replace Justice Fish assume his or her seat on the SCC and by what process will this vacancy be filled; (*c*) in what ways is the decision in Reference re Supreme Court Act, ss. 5 and 6 being studied and analyzed by the government, and what impact is it expected to have on future judicial appointments from Quebec; (*d*) will the government seek constitutional amendment to allow for the appointment of judges from the federal courts to the Quebec seats on the SCC and, if so, how does the government plan to proceed; (*e*) does the government anticipate that the decision in Reference re Supreme Court Act, ss. 5 and 6 will have any impact on its ability to fill vacancies from Quebec in the federal courts and, if so, how; (*f*) in what ways will the government seek (i) to ensure civil law expertise and the representation of Quebec's legal traditions and social values on the Court, (ii) to enhance the confidence of Quebec in the Court in the context of future appointments; (*g*) since the decision in Reference re Supreme Court Act, ss. 5 and 6, what discussions or meetings on judicial appointments have occurred with the Government of Quebec and the Barreau du Quebec; (*h*) in what ways has the question in (e) been studied or will be studied, if any; (*i*) in what ways has the pool of eligible persons for appointment to Quebec seats on the SCC been defined and identified, broken down by (i) gender, (ii), Aboriginal status, (iii) visible minority status; (*j*) what qualifications and merit criteria have been identified as necessary and desirable for an appointment to a Quebec seat on the SCC; (*k*) what steps have been undertaken to identify potential successors to Justice Lebel upon his anticipated retirement from the SCC; (*l*) if the process in (k) has not begun, when is it anticipated to begin and what will the first steps be; (*m*) what regard is given, if any, to the linguistic proficiencies of candidates for Quebec seats at the SCC, in both official languages, (i) at what point in the process is such proficiency assessed, (ii) by whom, (iii) to what standard; (*n*) does the answer in (m) vary if the vacancy were to arise from another province; (*o*) in what ways will Quebecers, their government, and their professional orders be consulted and involved in the process to fill present and future vacancies arising from the province at the SCC; (*p*) in what ways have Supreme Court justices from Quebec been consulted by the government, in the past and present, relative to the appointments process and credentials and will they be consulted in the future; and (*q*) for judges appointed to Quebec seats on SCC whose appointment and swearing in is subsequently deemed void ab inito, (i) are taxpayers reimbursed in any way for the appointment process by the government, (ii) is the salary of such a judge returned to the government for the period in which it was collected in error, (iii) who makes the determinations in (i) and (ii) and by what process, (iv) what impact does such a determination have on the retirement and pensionable allowances of such a judge if he or she were a federal judge prior to and post appointment to the SCC, (v) are nominees from Quebec informed of the possibility of their appointment and swearing in being deemed void ab initio and, if so, at what point in the process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 449—**Mr. Mike Sullivan**:

With regard to applications for Canadian citizenship by landed immigrants since 2006: what is the number of applications (by country of origin) and the average time of processing these applications, broken down by (i) federal riding, (ii) census metropolitan area (municipality), (iii) province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 450—**Mr. Mike Sullivan**:

With regard to visitor visas to Canada since 2006: (*a*) what is the number of visitor visa denials by the visa-processing office, broken down by country of origin; and (*b*) for the visitor visa denials in (*a*), what is the number of denials by visitor visa destination, broken down by (i) federal riding, (ii) census metropolitan area (municipality), (iii) province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 451—**Mr. Mike Sullivan**:

With regard to government spending in the constituency of York South—Weston: what is the total amount of such spending since fiscal year 2010-2011 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative, (iii) amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 455—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière**:

With regard to project number A033879-001, the construction of the National Police Academy in Ganthier, Haiti, by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD): (*a*) why was the project undertaken; (*b*) on what date was the project started; (*c*) which Government of Canada employees were involved in starting the project; (*d*) were external organizations or external experts consulted when the project was designed, and if so, what (i) people were involved, (ii) businesses were involved; (*e*) what were the skills of the people and businesses in (d) respecting (i) the design of construction projects, (ii) the design of projects in Haiti, (iii) the tendering process, (iv) the awarding of contracts, (v) the amount of the contract, (vi) the length of the contract, (vii) the services or products delivered; (*f*) which international partners proposed or promoted the undertaking of this project to Canada; (*g*) who ordered the Environmental Assessment Screening Report of July 20, 2007, and what were the conclusions of this report; (*h*) how many government employees and which departments were involved in the decision of May 30, 2008, regarding the continuation of the project; (*i*) on what date was this project approved by (i) the former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), (ii) the Minister of International Cooperation, (iii) the Treasury Board; (*j*) how long, in months, and how much money has the project designer budgeted for completion of the project; (*k*) how many tenders were planned for completion of the project; (*l*) how many tenders have there been for this project between 2007 and now, and for each tender, what were (i) the dates for the opening of tenders, (ii) the dates for the closing of tenders, (iii) the number of people involved in administering them, (iv) regarding the people in (iii), the skills respecting managing tenders, (v) the associated costs, (vi) the number of bids, (vii) the names of the companies or consortiums who bid; (*m*) for each tender, including those held from November 3, 2008, to January 6, 2008, and from April 28, 2010, to July 8, 2010, the prequalification process from October 5, 2011, to October 26, 2011, and the tender ending on June 21, 2012, (i) was there a prequalification process, and if not, why not; (*n*) did this tender and the standards of the construction contract meet the grants and contribution standards or Treasury Board standards, and if not, why not; (*o*) was it necessary to award a service contract to a person or business for the design of the tender or the project contract; (*p*) why was there a need to engage consulting services to formulate the tender and the construction contract; (*q*) how many selection files were received; (*r*) how many selection files predicted that costs would exceed the project budget; (*s*) was this tender open to international bidders; (*t*) what were the names of the bidders for this tender; (*u*) why were some bids rejected; (*v*) why was a bidder not selected at the end of the tendering process; (*w*) in each process following the closing of the tender, including those of January 6, 2008, July 8, 2010, and October 26, 2011, (i) what were the dates of the bid evaluation committee meeting, (ii) how many people and which departments were involved in this process; (*x*) of the people and departments in (w) (ii), what were their skills respecting (i) the design of construction projects, (ii) the design of projects in Haiti, (iii) the tendering process, (iv) the awarding of contracts; (*y*) was a person or business needed as a consulting services contractor during the bid evaluation process; (*z*) why were such consulting services used;

(*aa*) did bidders respect the project budget; (*bb*) how many bidders forecast cost overruns; (*cc*) for each bid, by what percentage did the amounts exceed the project budget; (*dd*) what was the final decision following this tender; (*ee*) what selection criteria were modified for the subsequent tender; (*ff*) during the bidders' conference of January 2010 in Port-au-Prince, who was present among (i) CIDA employees or any other Government of Canada employees, (ii) CIDA contractors, (iii) bidders, (iv) the Haitian government; (*gg*) how much money was spent on travel and accommodations for the people in (*ff*); (*hh*) what was the purpose of this conference; (*ii*) why were consulting services engaged to prepare for and hold the conference; (*jj*) who is responsible for this initiative; (*kk*) did the Department or the Agency ask bidders to travel to the project's construction site, and if so, which ones did so; (*ll*) who was involved in the consulting services between the first and second tenders and what were the recommendations; (*mm*) why did a tendering process not start up again until October 5, 2011; (*nn*) why did Minister Oda make a new announcement of funding for the project while visiting Haiti on April 8, 2010, in a news release that granted additional funding; (*oo*) why did the project contribution amount increase from $18 million to $35 million between Minister Oda's announcement of April 10, 2010, and today; (*pp*) did cost overruns in previous tenders have an impact on this increase; (*qq*) when was this decision made; (*rr*) did Minister Fantino's statement of April 19, 2013, that Canada was currently reviewing its long-term strategy for Haiti impact the project deadline and, if so, what were these impacts; (*ss*) what information did Isabelle Bérard have on the progress of the project that allowed her to state in the meeting of October 8, 2011, of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade that construction would begin in spring 2012; (*tt*) what options were considered for the construction of the Haitian National Police Academy on page 3 of the Memorandum to the Minister No. T-24106 of November 21, 2012; (*uu*) why does the Memorandum to the Minister No. T-24036 entitled "Canada's Public Commitments to Haiti" make no mention of Canada's commitments and progress in the project; (*vv*) when did construction start; (*ww*) what was the role and contribution of Mario Robillard in the construction project, (i) what were his qualifications, (ii) what was his salary, (iii) what was the length of his contract, (iv) did Mr. Robillard travel to the construction site in Haiti and, if so, when; (*xx*) to date, how many short-term jobs for Haitians have been created by this project;

(*yy*) how many individuals responsible for operation and maintenance were hired for the project among the 30 requested individuals in the Canadian Commercial Corporation project brief; (*zz*) did DFATD sign a contract with a bidder for the project and, if not, what is the reason for the delay; (*aaa*) is it standard procedure to issue three tenders before awarding a construction contract; (*bbb*) does DFATD believe that delaying the awarding of a construction contract respects the management principle based on the results of the "Aid Effectiveness Agenda"; (*ccc*) what was the impact of the amalgamation of CIDA and DFATD on the project timeline; (*ddd*) did Canada meet the hospitality objective of training 350 students at a time as part of this project, with a proportion of approximately 70% men and 30% women; (*eee*) is DFATD legally bound to complete construction of this project; (*fff*) does DFATD expect to achieve all of the project's expected results by December 19, 2014, and, if not, will the project completion date be postponed; (*ggg*) what will the new deadline be; (*hhh*) when will the decision to postpone the deadline be made; (*iii*) will the decision in (hhh) be made public; (*jjj*) will there be a new tender; (*kkk*) have contribution disbursements for the project begun and, if so, (i) who are the recipients, (ii) when were these disbursements made; (*lll*) from what fund and constituent program was funding from the project withdrawn; (*mmm*) is the fund in (*lll*) still active; and (*nnn*) are there still projects funded by this fund and, if so, what are they?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 461—**Mr. Ryan Cleary**:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (*a*) have there been any reports produced on the health of shrimp stocks off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador since 2001 and, if so, what are their titles; and (*b*) who holds the rights to shrimp quotes in both the inshore and offshore sectors and what is the individual quota allocation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 463—**Mr. Charlie Angus**:

With regard to the use of the government-owned fleet of Challenger jets since September 2009: 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. 465—**Ms. Elizabeth May**:

With regard to the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act enacted as part of Bill C-22, with particular reference to the government's decision to increase the absolute liability amount and mandatory insurance coverage for nuclear operators to $1 billion: (*a*) has the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) asked Ontario Power Generation whether removing the cap on operator liability, while maintaining the level of absolute liability and mandatory insurance coverage required under the Act at $1 billion, would increase its generation costs and, if so, what were the details of the response, including the estimated increased cost-per-kWh; (*b*) has the DNR asked Bruce Power whether removing the cap on operator liability, while maintaining the level of absolute liability and mandatory insurance coverage required under the Act at $1 billion, would increase its generation costs and, if so, what were the details of the response, including the estimated increased cost-per-kWh; (*c*) has the DNR asked New Brunswick Power whether removing the cap on operator liability, while maintaining the level of absolute liability and mandatory insurance coverage, would increase its generation costs and, if so, what were the details of the response, including the estimated increased cost-per-kWh; (*d*) in the scenario in which the limit on reactor liability is removed while the mandatory insurance coverage and absolute liability of the operator remain at $1 billion, what is the DNR's estimate of the impacts that removing the cap on liability would have on provincial electricity rates, (i) what additional impacts would there be if the mandatory insurance coverage and absolute liability of the operator were increased to $1.5 billion, all other things being equal, (ii) what would the additional impacts be if the mandatory insurance coverage and absolute liability of the operator were increased to $2 billion, all other things being equal; (*e*) does the government determine the amount of liability required of nuclear operators by estimating whether it will be within the capacity of insurers to provide insurance at reasonable costs and, if so, (i) did the government use the same criterion for determining the absolute liability and insurance requirement for offshore operators, (ii) how does the government define "reasonable costs" for insurance, (iii) what is the limit in cost-per-kWh for what the DNR considers "reasonable costs" for insurance, (iv) did the government use the same definition of "reasonable costs" for insurance for the nuclear and oil industries; (*f*) what are the insurance costs-per-kWh for the $1 billion in insurance that is currently required for nuclear operators under C-22, (i) what would these insurance costs-per-kWh be for the insurance requirement of $1.5 billion, (ii) what would these insurance costs be for the insurance requirement of $2 billion; (*g*) does the DNR determine the amount of liability required of nuclear operators by estimating its commensurability with the consequences of controlled releases of radiation and, if so, (i) what studies has the DNR undertaken regarding the consequences of accidents involving controlled releases of radiation, (ii) what is the estimated likelihood of such accidents, (iii) how has the DNR determined that the current amount of liability for nuclear operators under C-22 is commensurate with the risk of such accidents; and (*h*) has the DNR commissioned any studies to estimate the implicit subsidy per kWh that would be created by imposing a cap on liability since the time it commissioned an empirical analysis of the Nuclear Liability Act (Heyes, Anthony, and Catherine Heyes. 2000. An Empirical Analysis of the Nuclear Liability Act (1970) in Canada. Resource & Energy Economics 22 (1):91-101) and, if so, what were the results of any such study?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 466—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière**:

With regard to Canadian international development assistance for each fiscal year 2007-2008 to 2013-2014: (*a*) what was Canada's Official Development Assistance as a percentage of gross national income, using the same criteria used in Table A-2 "Canadian Historical ODA" of the 2006-2007 Statistical Report on International Assistance; and (*b*) is this information publically available in the same format?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 467—**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia**:

With respect to federal grant programs to assist small-business entrepreneurs commercialize and market their products: (*a*) what federal programs exist for this purpose; (*b*) for each year since 2006, how much has been spent on each of these programs, broken down by province; (*c*) for each figure in (*b*), what percentages of the amounts were reserved for marketing activities; and (*d*) for each year since 2006, how much has been spent on youth marketing positions or activities through the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program's Science and Technology Internship Program, broken down by province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 469—**Ms. Kirsty Duncan**:

With regard to maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH): (*a*) in the answer provided to written question Q-208, (i) what services, key health and nutrition interventions are included in "scale-up integrated productive, maternal, newborn, and child health services", (ii) what specific services and interventions are included in "family planning services", (iii) what are the specific "commodities" referenced, (iv) what does "we are prepared to do more" mean, (v) what diplomatic and financial efforts has the government made or is considering, "to do more", and in what Canadian and global forums, beyond the announced summit Canada will host on MNCH in Toronto at the end of May; (*b*) what consideration has the government given to a signature Canadian contribution to the post-2015 development agenda; (*c*) what consideration and diplomatic efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to support the inclusion of a specific high-level goal in the post-2015 agenda to improve health and nutrition outcomes for women, newborns, and children; (*d*) what financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to improve the health outcomes for (i) women, (ii) newborns, (iii) children, broken down by initiative; (*e*) regarding the Muskoka Initiative, what consideration and diplomatic and financial efforts, and in what forums, has the government given to (i) recommit to the investments made, (ii) extend and increase this Initiative or a similar one, beyond 2015 and beyond the $2.85 billion envelope, (iii) targeting the efforts of this Initiative to more effectively reach and provide health care to the most vulnerable mothers, newborns, and children, (iv) recommit to the vaccine investments made in this Initiative and to extend and increase the commitments made; (*f*) what diplomatic and financial efforts has the government made, or is it considering, and in what forums, to increase investments aimed at (i) strengthening local health systems, (ii) reducing the burden of infectious disease, (iii) improving maternal and child nutrition; (*g*) what diplomatic and financial efforts has the government made, or is it considering, and in what forums, to increase investments aimed at (i) prevention and treatment of neo-natal morbidity and prevention of neo-natal mortality, (ii) increased access to emergency obstetric care, (iii) prevention and treatment of childhood infectious disease; (*h*) what diplomatic and financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to increase investment in reproductive and sexual health interventions, particularly regarding adolescent girls; (*i*) what consideration, and diplomatic and financial efforts has the government given to (i) broadening, strengthening and harmonizing the MNCH Accountability Frameworks, (ii) prioritizing universal birth registration, civil registration, and vital statistics, (iii) increasing investment in the collection, processing, and dissemination of data, especially at the local level; and (*j*) what consideration has the government given to the Lancet Global Investment Framework for Women's (LGIFW) and Children's Health, and the Lancet Commission for Investing in Health (LCIH), (i) to the Framework's proposed two percent increase in spending, (ii) what diplomatic and financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to start a discussion regarding the LGIFW?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning we saw the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster speak for over half an hour on Government Motion No. 10 and yet not actually tell us anything about the NDP's position on it. To his credit, the hon. member for Markham—Unionville showed the way by speaking only as long as necessary to indicate that the Liberal Party will join with the Conservatives in working hard this spring. Then he resumed his seat, to the consternation of my friend from Burnaby—New Westminster.

Therefore, I must give notice that with respect to the consideration of Government Business No. 10, at the next sitting a minister of the crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURAL GROWTH ACT

The House resumed from March 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after a long wait, I am rising to speak. I was prepared to speak at 3:15 p.m. It is now 5:30 p.m. I apologize for my nervousness and confusion. I have been thinking about this constantly, and I still have many questions about Bill C-18.

Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food is yet another one of these omnibus bills. The Conservatives have practically admitted that it is intended to dazzle us while straying from the real objectives that should have been the focus of an overhaul of the agriculture and agri-food sector.

Of course, our legislation needs to be modernized and updated, but we also need to look at the resources we have and consider the environment and the economy. I will talk about the environment and climate change a bit later.

This bill is proposing changes to nine different laws, seven of which fall under the responsibility of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The other two are under the purview of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. We are talking about nine different laws in a sector that is absolutely vital to our economy. It was once the pride of our economy from coast to coast. It is a critical part of the mix of prosperous activities that feed millions of people, not just in Canada, but also around the world.

This is a complex sector that generates hundreds of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic benefits. It is the lifeblood of regions across Canada. Even the most knowledgeable are confounded by this bill. All the issues addressed in Bill C-18, from plant breeders' rights to the consolidation of border security mechanisms, as well as increased access to the advance payments program—the famous APP—certainly deserve debate and a very thorough analysis. We shall see what twists and turns the bill will take. It does deserve special attention.

With respect to plant breeders' rights, the NDP believes that a more orderly and balanced approach is required. We all want to protect our Canadian farmers and public researchers. This sector of activity generates what is known in economic jargon as value-added, as well as hundreds of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars.

Although we understand the vital role of intellectual property rights in encouraging innovation—and Canada has always been a leader in innovation—we want to ensure that Canadians have access to their extremely important agricultural heritage and that they can

benefit from it. Various stakeholders across the country will be affected by the proposed changes in Bill C-18. For that reason it is important to consider its repercussions and to follow the normal process for studying this bill.

We must not let our farmers and researchers become ensnared in a bureaucratic maze that is already too cumbersome for them.

What is the purpose of the bill? It would amend the Plant Breeders' Rights Act in order to change various aspects of the plant breeders' rights granted under the act, including the duration and scope of those rights and conditions for the protection of those rights.

In many countries, such as the United States, and even in Europe, the term of the grant of rights may be up to 25 or 30 years. This bill proposes to make it 18 to 20 years. We shall see what impact that will have.

Let us move on to the Feeds Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Seeds Act, the Health of Animals Act and the Plant Protection Act.

● (1730)

The bill would amend the Feeds Act to authorize inspectors to order that certain unlawful imports be removed from Canada or destroyed, authorize the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food to take into account information available from a review conducted by the government of a foreign state when he or she considers certain applications, and authorize the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to issue certificates setting out any information that he or she considers necessary to facilitate certain exports.

Farmers just want to prosper and develop in a healthy environment.

I talked about climate change. In some regions of Canada and elsewhere in the world, but particularly in Canada, these changes are making livestock and crop production more and more difficult. We might have to start importing livestock and wheat and canola, which we have had in Canada for decades. I have not even mentioned floods or drought.

I also talked about the economic environment. At the beginning of the tough winter that Quebec went through, when the temperature started to drop, the price of propane, which is essential to the pork industry and for quick backup heating, went from 39¢ a litre to 72¢ a litre. Up to a certain point, propane was inexpensive. Overnight, heating costs doubled on hog farms throughout Quebec and Ontario. The pork industry is already very fragile. Producers need a prosperous, healthy and economical environment. They need new money.

There is talk of advance payment programs. That is nice. It is certainly useful, but the pork producers in my riding are deep in debt. Their parents and grandparents earned their living raising pigs on ancestral lands. Their families have been there for 100 or 150 years. Now, they no longer have this healthy environment in which to prosper and adequately support their family. They are so deep in debt that they can pay only the interest. They cannot pay down the principal. What are they going to do? They need new money. Bill C-18 makes no mention of new money.

The government says it wants to facilitate free trade. That is nice, but pork producers still need to be able to successfully bring their pigs to market. The same goes for cattle farmers.

For farmers, the cornerstone of the food system is earning a decent living by producing quality food. Above all though, they have to own the means of production.

Seeds are now infertile and sterile. Genetically modified organisms are a serious problem. For large-scale production, that might be a solution. In Quebec, particularly in the Eastern Townships, hundreds of farmers are now farming organically. That segment has seen the strongest growth and has the greatest export potential. However, the government is not doing anything to help them or make their lives easier. There is plenty of demand but not enough supply.

● (1735)

In conclusion, I would say that the bill is not good enough and needs our attention. It is a step in the right direction, but there are serious problems, such as the Monsantos of this world. We absolutely have to take the time to protect our food supply. It used to be 100% Canadian. Today, our farmers own only about 15% of it. That is unacceptable. We have to save our agriculture.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with my hon. colleague's speech. He has done good work and did a great job explaining the situation our farmers are dealing with.

This is also about the difficulties that family farms are facing. I have met quite a few farm families lately, including some that are part of the new expansion at Ferme des Poiriers, which I visited last week while we were in our ridings. They told me about how hard it is for family farms to survive, which is a serious problem.

This is an omnibus bill that makes a lot of changes, some of them good and others pretty troubling in some ways. I can talk about that in my speech.

My hon. colleague has worked very hard on the survival of family farms and their importance to Canada, Quebec and our ridings. Can he tell us about why family farms are so important and why it is important to keep supporting them?

Unfortunately, as I said, this omnibus bill covers nine different laws. Why is the Conservative government not interested in supporting family farms across Canada?

● (1740)

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Drummond, who does remarkable work for his riding and our party.

Family farms are the backbone of so many regions, which is why they are so important. Our ancestors left us fertile land all over Quebec and Canada that they began working over 100 years ago. Generations have worked this land. Now, young people are saying that family farms are not an ideal environment for their personal and professional development.

What is more, family farms mean the organic market, traditional agriculture and the diversity and survival of our regions. In my riding, there are areas where 60% of the economic spinoffs come from agriculture and family farms. Those farmers are proud of that.

For example, in the Coaticook region, over half of the economic spinoffs come from the agricultural sector. The family farms there survive because they banded together. These people still believe in their land and assets, and they want to protect them.

We need to have a little more debate on all the ins and outs of Bill C-18, and above all, we need to inject new funds into our family farms to help them survive.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Compton—Stanstead for his extremely personal and interesting speech. I know that this issue is very dear to his heart and that there are many farmers in his riding.

He spoke a little about the environment in his speech. I come from a Montreal suburb on the island of Laval, and 80% of the area that I represent is agricultural. We have some of the most beautiful arable land in the St. Lawrence area. We have farms such as the Vaillancourt, Turcot and Ouimet farms. All of these people really want to keep their land, to keep this greenbelt around Montreal intact and to make sure that Quebec has rich and fertile farmland.

What kind of standards and regulations does my colleague think we should implement in order to ensure that our agriculture is more sustainable and healthy and that the industry is fairer and greener?

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Alfred-Pellan, who also does a fantastic job.

There are environmental measures, such as removing phosphorus from fertilizers. This extremely important measure has been a big help to Quebec and other areas of Canada.

We also need to adapt to climate change, particularly by buying local and modernizing transportation and equipment. This also requires dedicated people, such as my colleagues from Alfred-Pellan and Drummond, who are prepared to do anything to save agriculture in Quebec and Canada.

[*English*]

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the great member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris.

I am pleased to speak today in support of the agricultural growth act. This legislation would modernize and streamline nine different statutes, seven that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency uses to regulate Canada's agricultural sector, and two that are administered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. I will list the nine statutes quickly: the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, the Feeds Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Seeds Act, the Health of Animals Act, the Plant Protection Act, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act, the Agricultural Marketing Program Act, and the Farm Debt Mediation Act. Together, these acts and regulations are critical to the strength of our farming economy and the growth and safety of our agricultural products.

Some of the acts we are proposing to amend date back to 1950. I do not think you were even born at that time, Mr. Speaker, though the member for Brandon—Souris definitely was. The acts have served us well, but it is time for change.

As new agricultural production techniques and new developments in science arrive, the legislative tools for agricultural products must keep pace. This is especially true since some of our international trading partners have already innovated and modernized their approaches.

The agricultural growth act proposes amendments that would reduce the regulatory burden for industry, promote trade in agricultural products, and strengthen the safety of agricultural products, which are the first link in the food chain.

With this act, we would be building a more effective, innovative, and nimble legislative framework that reflects what is needed in the 21st century. We are bringing these laws up to speed with modern science and technology, innovation, and international practice in the agricultural industry on an international basis. We need to keep pace with the modern world, and we need to help our farmers grow their businesses.

On December 10 of last year, in a news release praising our government's efforts to bring in this legislation, Doug Robertson, president of the Western Barley Growers Association, summarized the bill as follows:

> This Bill is good news for farmers. It encompasses many changes that farmers have been asking for, and will help modernize our grains and regulatory system. It will help create an environment that fosters innovation which our farmers need.

By doing this, we will enhance the competitiveness of Canadian business and ensure consistent regulatory approaches while aligning our legislation with that of our international trading partners. Updated, streamlined, and harmonized legislation will benefit Canadian farmers and industry while supporting the government's modernization initiatives.

The agricultural sector depends on a nimble legislative framework that is able to adapt to a changing industry landscape while providing a constant and effective approach. If Canadian farmers, along with the agriculture and food sector, are to keep their competitive edge on the global stage, they need 21st century tools to do so. We want to help these entrepreneurs harness innovation, add value, and create jobs and growth right across Canada. The agricultural growth act would do just that.

● (1745)

To illustrate, I would like to focus on the Feeds Act and the Fertilizers Act.

The agricultural growth act would propose new and broader controls on the safety of Canada's agricultural inputs through the licensing and registration of feeds and fertilizing manufacturers.

The proposed amendments would provide the CFIA with the ability to license or to register fertilizer and animal feed operators and facilities that import or sell products across provincial or international boundaries. This would be in addition to the current system, where feed and fertilizer products are registered product by product.

Licensing or registering facilities and operators would provide a more effective and timely approach to verify that agricultural products meet Canada's stringent safety standards. For this approach to work, we need to allow for better tracking and oversight of production processes and products being produced, a more efficient system to identify any issues that may come up, and a faster response if and when a product recall is required.

Licensing or registering feed and fertilizer facilities and operators would require regulations. Prior to any new requirements, the government would work closely with stakeholders to design an effective licensing or registration regime.

This amendment would not apply to farmers who make these products for use on their own farms. It would only apply to businesses that sell their animal feed and fertilizer products across provincial and international boundaries.

This amendment would also align Canadian legislation with international trading partners and help our feed and fertilizer industries maintain their export markets, especially in the United States.

The agricultural growth act was written to provide for new and stronger border controls for agricultural products.

CFIA inspectors will be able to order imported shipments of feeds, fertilizers and seeds out of Canada if they do not meet legal requirements. This is similar to the way in which imported plants and animals may be ordered removed from Canada if they do not meet legal requirements. The CFIA already takes action now, and does seize illegal products related to animal feed, seeds, and fertilizers. However, the act would propose updates on the way that we do it.

Under the current process, CFIA negotiates a solution, or there may be a court proceeding after the seizure of illegal products relating to animal feed, seeds, or fertilizers. This process works, but at times Canada must pay to dispose of illegal products that are seized.

The Speaker has given me the one-minute signal, which means that I have less than one minute to end my remarks. Though I could go on about how wonderful this act would be, the Speaker is shaking his head, suggesting that I do not.

Although what I have to say is very profound, I will leave the Canadian population with bated breath.

However, I will say that the legislation would be an improvement. It would bring Canada into the 21st century.

Just think, some of these bills have not been changed since 1950. That was before rock and roll.

● (1750)

The Deputy Speaker: I must say to the hon. member that 1950 does not seem that far away.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

● (1755)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the member a chance to elaborate a bit on what he was about to end on with a flourish before the Speaker so abruptly cut him off.

Hon. Steven Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, that is very generous of the member, but I think it has lost its flow. I can say that plant breeding will be improved, safety rules will be improved, and CFIA will have the opportunity to increase its powers.

It is important that CFIA has the ability to prevent or remove product that is not legal in Canada, like we do with plants and animals. I am glad that change will be made. In fact, I am surprised that it was not done in the 1950s.

We are creating amendments to nine acts, and it will help farmers, entrepreneurs, producers, and Canadians, and it will help to grow the economy, so it is all good.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions to ask my hon. colleague, but I will stick to one. A number of changes will take place in the Plant Breeders' Rights Act itself, and there are proposed changes that I will ask him to speak to.

The Plant Breeders' Rights Act is administered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and plant breeders' rights offices as well, and provides legal protection to plant breeders for new plant varieties.

I wonder if my hon. colleague could expand a bit on some of the proposed changes in the Plant Breeders' Rights Act and how they would strengthen the act.

Hon. Steven Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, the member for Brandon—Souris comes from a very agriculturally based riding and has been a farmer since the 1950s.

The proposed changes would strengthen the rights of breeders and improve accessibility to protect in a number of ways. It would extend plant breeder rights to include reproduction, import, export, conditioning, stocking for commercial purposes of propagating, in addition to the current system that already allows for the sale of propagating material and production that is intended for sale. It would allow breeders to sell a variety of plants in Canada, up to one year before applying for PBR protection, in order to test the market, advertise, or to increase stock.

One last one is that it will extend the protection period from the current 18 years to 25 years, for trees, vines, and other specified categories, and 20 years for all other crops, unless the breeder terminates them earlier.

I think that is a pretty good deal, and I thank the member for the question.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today in support of the agricultural growth act because this proposed legislation is good for Canada and for all Canadians.

Its aim is to provide Canada's farmers and food processors with the tools they need to drive new economic growth and to compete in the global economy. The bill also strengthens the safety of agricultural products, which is the first link in the food chain. That is good news for consumers.

Some of the acts that we propose to amend, as has been indicated by my hon. colleague from Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, date back to the 1950s. They have served us well to be sure, but we are in the year 2014 now.

We need the agricultural growth act because, as has been pointed out, the act before us will modernize and streamline nine different statutes, seven of those in the area of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which is used to regulate Canada's agriculture sector, and two that are administered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Together, these acts and their regulations are critical to the strength of our farmgate, the growth of our economy, and the safety of agricultural products. As new agricultural production techniques and new developments in science arise, the legislative tools for agriculture products must keep pace, especially since other international trading partners have innovated and modernized their approaches.

Throughout my farming career, it was modernization and research that helped move our industry forward to the point where it is today, as a world leader.

What we are doing with this act is building a more effective, innovative, and nimble legislative framework, one that reflects 21st century realities. It is vital that we get behind this proposed legislation now, as it will dovetail with recent initiatives undertaken by the CFIA.

Through its transformation agenda, the agency is both modernizing its inspection regime and supporting the modernization of its regulatory framework. This agenda has been supported by the Safe Food for Canadians Act, passed by our government in 2012.

Those initiatives are highly complementary to the proposed legislation before us. Obtaining royal assent on this act will assist the CFIA in meeting its overall goals for modernization, both in the activities that it carries out and the regulations that govern those activities.

One way that the proposed legislation will achieve this is that the agricultural growth act proposes new broader controls on the safety of Canada's agriculture products through licensing and registration of feed and fertilizer manufacturers. The act provides the ability for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to licence and register fertilizer, and animal feed operators and facilities that import or sell products across provincial and international borders. This is in addition to the current system, where feed and fertilizer products are registered by product as well.

Licensing or registering facilities and operators provides a more effective and timely approach to verify that agriculture products meet Canada's stringent safety and other standards. The approach allows for better tracking and oversight of production processes and products being produced, a more efficient system to identify issues early, and a faster response if and when a product recall is required.

Any licensing regime would require regulations before it would operate. These would be developed in thorough consultations with stakeholders, which gives Canadians an advantage in these areas. This amendment will not apply to farmers who make these products for use on their own farms. It will only apply to businesses that sell their animal feed and fertilizer products across provincial and international borders, as has been mentioned.

This act will also give the CFIA another tool to do its job even better, and it will align Canadian legislation with international trading partners. This will help our feed and fertilizer industries maintain their export markets, especially the United States. The feed and fertilizer industries themselves agree with us.

Clyde Graham, vice-president of the Canadian Fertilizer Institute, told the *Western Producer* on December 13th of last year:

> ...the changes allow the CFIA to validate the quality of fertilizer.
>
> If I'm an exporter of fertilizer, I can ask the agency to say it meets the regulatory requirements in Canada and therefore it's a good product.

● (1800)

There is another way the proposed legislation will help serve Canadians better. The agricultural growth act proposes to increase the maximum penalty amounts that the CFIA can issue under the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act.

Members may have heard of these administrative monetary penalties, AMPs, which are an enforcement measure used by the CFIA to encourage compliance with Canada's Health of Animals Act, the Plant Protection Act and their associated regulations among others. An AMP can be either a notice of violation with a warning or a notice of violation with a penalty. Members can think of it as kind of a ticket that can be issued by CFIA inspectors.

By increasing the maximum amounts of the AMPs, these monetary penalties continue to be an effective tool to strongly encourage compliance. The legislation proposes to increase the maximum amount of AMPs for businesses, from $2,000 to $5,000 for minor violations; for serious violations, from $10,000 to $15,000; and for very serious violations, from $15,000 up to $25,000. Upping the AMPs would give the CFIA an important tool, a tool with more teeth to do its job even better.

The agricultural growth act is yet another way to help protect Canadians. The act is written to provide for new, stronger border controls for agricultural products. Canadian Food Inspection Agency inspectors would be able to order imported shipments of feeds, fertilizers and seeds out of Canada if they did not meet legal requirements, similar to the way in which imported plants and animals may be ordered to be removed if they do not meet the legal requirements today.

The CFIA already takes action now and does seize illegal products related to animal feeds, seeds and fertilizers. The act proposes to update the way we do it.

Let me explain further.

Under the current process, the CFIA negotiates a solution where there may be court proceedings after the seizure of illegal products related to animal feeds, seeds or fertilizer. This process works, but right now, at times, Canada must pay to dispose of illegal products that are seized. Members can see how being able to order the products out of the country would be more efficient.

At the same time, the act would also give CFIA inspectors the ability to allow the importer to fix the problem in Canada if it is not a matter of safety and if they can be sure that the issue will be addressed. The proposed amendment will provide the agency with even stronger tools to fulfill its mandate to protect Canada's plant-animal resource base. This change will provide additional reassurance that imported agricultural products meet Canadian strict requirements.

For Canada's farmers, this means they can compete on a level playing field. For consumers, this is the first line of protection along our food safety chain.

Updated, streamlined and harmonized legislation would benefit Canadian farmers and industry, while supporting the Government of Canada's modernization initiatives and boosting consumer confidence.

I ask all parliamentarians to give this act their careful attention and move it forward.

● (1805)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are broadly supportive of many of the measures in the bill. We have some concerns because the proposed legislation is complicated as it attempts to balance the interests of producers and folks who develop seeds.

I welcome my friend to the House. I do not think we have had an exchange before.

The question I have is around who would have the power to change the provisions in future if the bill were enacted. One of the arguments and concerns we have is that the legislation, as it is now written, would offer an inordinate amount of discretion and power to senior level bureaucrats and the minister himself alone to change that balance between producers and those who produce seeds.

Would my friend across the way be amenable or open to the conversation at least of ensuring that if we are to make fundamental changes, Parliament is engaged in that conversation in the future as opposed to being done through regulations and some of the powers that are offered up in the bill?

This is a question about accountability. These changes can be broad and can affect our entire food system. It seems to me that would bear scrutiny. However, as the bill is designed right now, we worry and question the power balance as being too much given over to senior members of the government and to the minister in whatever government, this government or future governments.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his welcome to Parliament.

As he has indicated, under the agricultural growth act there are a number of acts impacted. As I said earlier, there are seven under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and two more under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

In my comments earlier I remarked that when some of the changes that might be coming forward are dealt with, if there were future regulatory changes they would be dealt with publicly in a forum for groups, organizations, and individual farmers themselves, as well as some of the fertilizer and chemical dealers, and on the food inspection side this would be some of the processors and packers. They would be able to have input into any of those regulatory changes that would take place as a result of the changes in this bill.

The goal, which I believe the member would applaud, is that Canada maintain the safest food distribution mechanism and the safest processing of anywhere in the world. In spite of the fact that there are problems once in a while, we have certainly seen that these are some of the safest measures in the world.

● (1810)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome the member here.

There is no doubt that we need a new act, one modernized for agriculture and the department. However, as this member has already stated here, there is a lot of Big Brother stuff in here as far as plant breeders' rights where it is a privilege now to have these seeds. Then there are a lot of penalties that would be put in place on the people who are processing food.

My question has to do with the advance payment of $400,000 to farms. As the member knows, the farms are big now and it sometimes takes $1 million to put a crop in again before harvest. A lot of farms are saying these advance payments of $400,000 are not enough and they recommend $800,000. We are hoping that when this goes to committee that amendments will be made.

Is the member saying that his party will look at some of the amendments and make changes to the amendments according to what the farm community wants at the agriculture committee?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, the advanced payments number of $400,000 was there back in the years when I was farming as well. It has been there for a good long time. With the interest rates where they are today, the advanced payments act only a complement to the other kinds of financing that are out there today and available to the farm community.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior. I would just advise the member that we will end this debate today at 6:30 p.m., so he will have about 17 or 18 minutes as opposed to his full 20 minutes.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-18, the agriculture omnibus bill. Let me say at the outset that I am extremely disappointed that we have yet another omnibus bill. The democratic process would have been much better served had this bill been split, especially the section dealing with plant breeders' rights.

[*Translation*]

This omnibus bill would amend nine different laws. The NDP believes we must take a balanced approach to plant breeders' rights. We must protect Canadian public researchers and farmers.

Although we understand the role of intellectual property rights, to encourage innovation, we want to ensure that Canadians have access to and can benefit from our agricultural heritage. The safety measures proposed with regard to seeds, plants, and animals should result in additional resources for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

[*English*]

It is very likely that Bill C-18 will go to committee. It is therefore important for all farmers to carefully examine its contents. Hopefully, there will be ample opportunity for them to make their voices heard.

[*Translation*]

The most contentious provisions of Bill C-18 are without a doubt those regarding the Plant Breeders' Rights Act and the implementation of UPOV '91, the international convention on plant protection. Canada is a signatory to UPOV '91, but it has not yet ratified the convention and has not yet implemented its provisions.

● (1815)

[*English*]

When I was first elected in 2006 and became agriculture critic, I began to hear about UPOV '91 from many concerned with food sovereignty, especially farmers in the National Farmers Union. In fact, it is my understanding that after a groundswell of farmer-led opposition to UPOV '91 in 2005, the Liberal government of the day let it die quietly as it became clear that farmers would be drastically restricted in their ability to save, reuse, exchange, and sell seed.

According to the NFU, before reintroducing UPOV '91 through Bill C-18, the minister had been actually actively spreading the myth and managing to convince many farmer organizations and commodity groups that saving seed is enshrined in this bill. It is obvious that UPOV '91 gives plant breeders significantly more rights and tools for royalty collection while the farmers' seed-saving right is reduced merely to privilege.

A closer look at the text of Bill C-18 reveals that, indeed, it talks about a farmer's ability to save seed. When storing that saved seed, however, the farmer needs the permission of the holder of the plant breeders' rights, which may or may not be given. Of course, the breeder has the right to charge royalties as well. Bill C-18 also empowers government to remove, restrict, or limit the farmer's seed-saving privilege by passing regulations, a process that can happen quickly and without public debate. UPOV '91 has made provisions for royalty collection after a crop has been harvested, when seed is cleaned in seed-cleaning plants, or when a crop is moved off the farm for sale at elevators and other points of transaction, in the year the crop was harvested or in any year after that.

Under Bill C-18, plant breeders' rights will not apply to private, non-commercial growers, experimental use of seed, and seed used for the purpose of breeding other plant varieties, which is also the case under our current legislation. However, plant breeders' rights do apply to newly bred varieties that are essentially derived from plant breeders' right-protected varieties, allowing plant breeders to exercise control over the results of future plant breeding.

Adopting UPOV '91 would immediately reduce the freedom and independence of Canadian farmers by making it much more difficult to save and reuse seed, forcing them to pay more for seed. It would also impinge on the autonomy of independent seed cleaners, transfer millions of dollars every year from farmers to plant breeders' rights holders, and consolidate the power and control of the world's largest agribusiness corporations over seed and, thus, over the Canadian farming and food system.

As well, if Canada adopts UPOV '91, farmers will not be allowed to save, store, or clean seed for replanting without the express permission of the PBR holder. If granted, such permission is dependent on the government adopting, on a crop-by-crop basis, an exemption called the farmer's privilege, which may be time limited and would likely entail payment of royalties to the PBR holder.

Companies would have a cascading right, allowing them to demand payment of end-point royalties on the whole crop, including each cut of hay on foraged crops, instead of just on newly purchased seed or when the company has been unable to collect adequate royalties on seed alone. Companies would be entitled to royalties for at least 20 years on each variety for which they hold PBRs, up from the current 18 years under Canada's UPOV '78 regime.

Seed cleaners would require permission from PBR holders to clean seed, which, if granted, may be subject to conditions such as payment of fees to the PBR holder. Mills and processors that buy crops would require assurance that the farmer-seller has paid PBR royalties to avoid the risk of litigation by the PBR holder.

Farmer's privilege to save a small amount of seed from designated crops may be granted by governments through legislation, but this privilege could be rendered useless, because seed companies would be able to restrict seed cleaning and storage.

What are the long-term implications for Canadian agriculture if UPOV '91 is adopted? According to the analysis by the National Farmers Union, some of the likely changes include:

> ...higher per-acre cost of production due to higher seed prices;
>
> lower margins because end-use royalties will reduce potential gross income at sale;
>
> fewer and larger farms because reduced profitability will drive larger scales of production;
>
> loss of independent seed cleaning businesses as farmers are forced to buy seed directly from PBR holders or their licensees instead of cleaning a portion of their harvested crops for use as seed;
>
> increased litigation within the value chain as PBR holders seek to maximize royalty revenues; ...

Having said all of this, the obvious question is what is the alternative if we do not adopt UPOV '91? Pending the adoption of a truly farmer-friendly seed law, we could maintain Canada's current UPOV '78 plant breeders' rights regime, which balances the interests of the public, the farmers, and the plant breeders.

We could restore funding to public plant breeding. Canada's public plant breeders are internationally respected and have contributed greatly to Canadian agriculture. For example, nearly all of our wheat varieties have been developed by AAFC in collaboration with several Canadian universities. None of these varieties would have been part of Canadian agriculture without the government's long-term support for public breeding.

We could take plant breeding to variety level. The federal government has stopped funding public plant breeding beyond the development of germplasm, which must then be sold to private breeders to develop varieties for commercialization. The new varieties so developed are privately owned and subject to plant breeders’ rights.

Farmers, whose check-off dollars support this research, would pay yet again through the increased royalties that would be granted under UPOV ’91. This system of private interests benefiting twice, first by using public research funding and then by collecting royalties on seed and production, is unjust and against the public interest.

We could also protect farmers from expensive court litigation regarding plant variety and patent disputes.

Finally, I would like to say that we, as parliamentarians, need to look very carefully before rejecting a system that has worked well for farmers. I would once again like to thank the National Farmers Union for their efforts in analyzing what is at stake here with Bill C-18. It is my hope that all farmers and farming organizations will give this research careful consideration prior to making a final decision on this bill.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Five years ago I toured Canada to see what Canadians had to say about a national food policy. These consultations gave civil society groups, agricultural organizations and ordinary citizens the opportunity to express their concerns about vulnerabilities within the existing food production system.

I visited more than 28 communities on this tour. All across the country, participants almost unanimously agreed that Canada should protect its food security and food sovereignty.

They feel that Canada should develop a comprehensive food policy so that every Canadian can have access to healthy food, so that local producers can maintain their agricultural operations and so that we can protect the agriculture sector for future generations.

Participants also proposed that the federal government support local producers by enforcing mandatory local procurement for state institutions and that it encourage other governments to do the same.

[*English*]

What this implies is that Canadians, especially farmers, need to have more control over their food supply. This ability to control a country's food supply is the fundamental principle of food sovereignty. Since we are a trading nation, our goal has to be to somehow find what I call a delicate balance between trade and food sovereignty. As was pointed out to me during my food for thought tour, and as many Canadians are saying today, the balance is quickly tipping away from our ability to have control over our food supply. Bill C-18 is just another step in this direction. If we concentrate the power in the hands of multinational corporations, we as a nation become vulnerable and lose the ability to feed ourselves.

I have taken a lot of criticism from the other side when I have questioned the benefits of our so-called free trade agreements. I have often said that many of our fruit and vegetable producers have been put out of business because of the free trade agreement with the United States and NAFTA. Prior to these agreements, we had in-season tariffs that protected our farmers. Now they have to compete with a free flow of produce into Canada that is often dumped at below the cost of production.

In its report, "The Farm Crisis and the Cattle Sector: Toward a New Analysis and New Solutions", the National Farmers Union has made a correlation between the drop in cattle prices at the time of the report and the implementation of the Canada–U.S. free trade agreement in 1989. Since then we have seen our exports drop due to BSE and trade initiatives. Now we are being hit by U.S. country-of-origin labelling, or COOL.

Many people who took part in my cross-Canada consultations questioned the wisdom of including agriculture in free trade agreements. Let us look at our supply managed sector. It is a system that works, receives no government subsidies, and provides Canadians with excellent milk, eggs, and poultry products. It works because we do not allow the free flow of these goods into our country. Now with the proposed Canada–Europe trade agreement, or CETA, this farmer-run system is under threat. Canada will allow an additional 17,000 tons of artisan cheese from Europe, which will hit our cheese producers hard, especially those in Quebec. Now there is talk, of course, of government subsidies to help these farmers. The whole thing does not make any sense at all. Our cheese producers will now be competing with farmers from the E.U. who are being propped up by government tax dollars. There is pressure to further erode our efficient supply managed system as we prepare to sign on to the trans-Pacific partnership agreement, a further loss of control.

Many of us stood in this House as we tried to convince the Conservatives not to dismantle the farmer-operated Canadian Wheat Board. With a stroke of a pen, and no vote from farmers, the CWB lost its single-desk capacity to sell wheat and barley. There is some justification to say that the current backlog and crisis in the rail industry could be an indirect result of the change in roles of the CWB, which used to coordinate rail shipments of grains under the single-desk system. What we saw over the winter was a lack of coordination and railway companies not responding to the needs of farmers.

This gradual loss of food sovereignty extends to the whole area of genetic modification. For example, if the GMO Arctic apple is planted in B.C., it will contaminate non-GMO varieties, and farmers will lose their markets. If GMO alfalfa is released into the environment in Ontario, it will also contaminate and cripple, especially the organic industry.

In British Columbia we are fortunate to have the agricultural land reserve, introduced by the provincial NDP government in 1973. No succeeding provincial government has tampered with this protection of our arable land, which is less than 5% of our total land surface, until now that is.

● (1825)

The current B.C. Liberal government is leading a core review which could result in land being taken out of the ALR for development purposes. The current B.C. agriculture minister, Norm Letnick, to his credit, has opened the consultation and I thank him for this. I know that the provincial NDP agriculture critic, Nicholas Simons, as well as MLAs Katrine Conroy and Michelle Mungall in my riding also have been very vocal in their support of the ALR.

We only have to look at the recent drought in California to see the effect this has on us. If this is a trend in the future due to climate change, it is imperative that we put more land into production rather than taking it out.

One of the largest broccoli producers in Ontario once told me that he only made money when there was a drought in Florida. It appears there will be more droughts, which means we need to put more land into production. I was told that the city of Toronto only had enough food supply for three days.

What role could the federal government be playing to ensure that our food supply is based on conservancy? I leave my hon. colleagues in suspense because I will tell them the answer the next time I have a chance.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have 3 minutes and 30 seconds when debate on this bill resumes.

* * *

● (1830)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CBC/RADIO-CANADA

The House resumed from May 15 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1855)

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

(Division No. 144)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Andrews
Angus
Ashton
Atamanenko
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Benskin
Bevington
Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi
Brison
Brosseau
Cash
Charlton
Chicoine
Chisholm
Choquette
Cleary
Cullen
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)
Day
Dewar
Dion
Dionne Labelle
Donnelly

Doré Lefebvre
Dubé
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Freeman
Fry
Garneau
Garrison
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu
Hughes
Hyer
Jacob
Jones
Julian
Kellway
Lapointe
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie
Liu
MacAulay
Marston
Martin
Masse
Mathyssen
May
McCallum
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Nunez-Melo
Pacetti
Papillon
Péclet
Pilon
Plamondon
Quach
Rafferty
Ravignat
Raynault
Regan
Rousseau
Scarpaleggia
Scott
Sellah
Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Tremblay
Turmel
Valeriote– — 104

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Aglukkaq
Albas
Albrecht
Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Ashfield
Aspin
Baird
Bateman
Benoit
Bergen
Blaney
Block
Boughen
Braid
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge
Butt
Calandra
Calkins
Cannan
Carmichael
Carrie
Chisu
Chong
Clarke
Clement
Crockatt
Daniel
Davidson
Dechert
Devolin
Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Falk
Fantino
Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher
Galipeau
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)
Lake
Lauzon
Lebel
Leef
Leitch
Lemieux
Leung
Lobb
Lukiwski
Lunney

MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saxton	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	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 Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, two of the biggest problems in the world are increasing global climate disasters and growing gaps of income. The right energy policies could help solve both of those things, but Canada has no national energy strategy, or any real job strategy, other than the temporary foreign worker program.

Meanwhile, Communist China is eating our lunch on green technologies and green jobs.

By refusing binding greenhouse gas targets, Red China has successfully trapped our Conservatives, all while Red China's national bank is pouring capital into sustainable future energy technologies like solar and wind. China is the world leader in clean energy investment. It set aside $54 billion last year for the sector, dwarfing Canada's paltry contributions.

Endlessly pumping oil is not even doing our economy that much good in the short term. It is becoming clear that over half of all of the oil and gas reserves in the ground will have to stay in the ground as monstrous stranded assets.

Let us look at some of the facts of life under the current government since it took power in 2006. Unemployment is up by 9%, and youth employment is far worse than that. Real economic growth per capita is the lowest since the Great Depression, and personal debt and the national debt are both up by over 25%.

As a businessperson myself, I find it fascinating that the party that claims to be the party of free markets, instead picks winners and losers, mostly losers in the longer run.

The IMF reports that Canadian government subsidies to oil are a whopping $34 billion each and every year. We Canadians are addicted to oil. Raised on the car culture, I am a bit guilty myself.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, I cannot hear myself talk.

● (1900)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Could I ask all members who are not part of this debate, and that is almost all of you, to please move outside the chamber? I am having a hard time hearing the member as well.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The IMF reports that Canadian government subsidies to oil are a whopping $34 billion each and every year. We Canadians are addicted to oil. Raised on the car culture, I am a bit guilty myself. We have built a huge and wealthy, but unsustainable western economy, built upon cars and oil.

What kind of technologies should we be switching to? Wind? Solar? Tidal? Geothermal? Mass transit? Electric vehicles? Super-insulated homes and businesses? Super-efficient TVs, computers, washers, driers, furnaces, and light bulbs? It should be all of the above, and more.

Currently over 60% of Canada's electricity comes from hydro-electric power, and that could be doubled. Canada captures just 1% of the green tech market, worth $1 trillion globally. With the right investment, Canada could increase its share of the clean tech market to $60 billion by 2020.

How do we free the awesome power of the marketplace to discourage CO_2?

Four out of five of our national party leaders acknowledge the need to price carbon.

The Prime Minister has refused to price carbon and has instead promised regulations, which never arrive. The NDP is stuck on carbon cap and trade, which is expensive, bureaucratic, complicated, and ineffective, truly a job killer. The NDP does not really understand business, large or small. The leader of the Liberals has sometimes called for a price on carbon to justify his supporting the XL pipeline. There are no details, of course, and likely no real commitment.

The simple answer is carbon fee and dividend, supported by the leader of the Green Party.

My question is, do the Conservatives really believe in letting the market decide? Will they consider carbon fee and dividend, which could solve the CO_2 problem in a predictable and effective way?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting the environment while keeping the Canadian economy strong.

We have made significant investments to assist Canada's transition to a clean energy economy and have been achieving real results.

I am surprised to hear the member opposite cite China's energy policy as a model for Canada to follow. Let us look at some of the facts.

In terms of China's energy consumption, 91% is currently coming from carbon-emitting sources and 69% of that is from coal. Less than 8% of China's energy is currently being generated from renewable sources.

Let us compare that to Canada and what our government has been achieving.

First, Canada is a global leader in the generation of clean and renewable energy. We are the world's third-largest producer of hydroelectricity, and more than three-quarters of the electricity we generate produces no greenhouse gas emissions.

Since 2006, our government has invested more than $10 billion to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build a more sustainable environment. This includes investment in green infrastructure, energy efficiency, clean energy technologies, and the production of cleaner fuels. We are also the first major coal user to ban construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation units.

The first 21 years of our new coal regulations are expected to result in a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 214 megatons. This is equivalent of removing roughly 2.6 million personal vehicles from the road per year.

In addition, since 2008, Canada experienced a 24% growth in clean energy investment, ranking it eighth in the world, and Canada ranks fifth worldwide in green investment intensity—that is, clean energy investment per dollar of GDP.

Our record speaks for itself, and it is safe to say that we will not be taking any lessons from China or the member opposite.

● (1905)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, the member failed to mention that those coal bans do not come into effect until 2015. They also allow new plants; they just tinker with it a bit.

Again, the solution to economic and conservation issues is carbon fee and dividend.

Carbon fee and dividend almost does it all. It prices carbon fairly and scientifically, uses only free market forces to foster CO_2 reductions, costs virtually nothing to administer, benefits lower-income Canadians, and, what should appeal to that side, no money goes to the government at all.

NASA genius James Hansen supports the Citizens Climate Lobby on carbon fee and dividend. So does venture capitalist Tom Rand, brilliant author of the book *Waking the Frog*, with great ideas on how we can reduce CO_2 and create jobs and wealth.

By the way, tomorrow night Mr. Rand is speaking at 5:00 p.m. at the University of Ottawa.

With a national energy strategy with carbon fee and dividend at its centrepiece, Canada could reach our economic potential in the new and growing green economy.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the leadership role that Canada is taking.

Canada is currently active in the international negotiations for a post-2020 climate change agreement under the United Nations framework convention on climate change. The negotiations have established a clear timetable and process for all countries to develop post-2020 mitigation commitments well in advance of the December 2015 Paris meeting where a new climate change agreement will be concluded.

Canada supports a new agreement that is fair and ambitious, while applicable to all major emitters, including China.

PENSIONS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Employment and Social Development what the government was planning to do about the excessive delays in the Conservatives' new restructured appeal system for CPP hearings.

Since the restructuring system has completely collapsed under the overwhelming workload, it has been reported that caseworkers have no idea when their client cases might be heard. Some people have waited for over three years for the chance for a hearing. A social worker from my riding came to me with the news that she had only four new hearings booked in the year since the Conservatives' restructuring. This is completely unacceptable. Canadians deserve better. The restructuring of this system has caused the elderly and people with low incomes to suffer. People are not being helped, and an inevitable crisis is brewing.

The minister has argued that changes were made to the appeal system so that a retirement program would be there when Canada's seniors retire. This is the Conservatives' so-called support for seniors. However, it is very clear that the Conservatives are far more dedicated to ensuring that our seniors are unable to retire with security and dignity.

This restructured appeal process is another example of Conservatives creating an untenable situation for Canadians. The minister failed to give definite answers as to when more staff would be hired to the tribunal to deal with the massive workload and backlog. However, what is clear is that the restructured system is inadequate. More staff positions are desperately needed now to sufficiently manage the number of appeals that still need to be heard.

The minister also failed to give acceptable or even plausible answers when asked about the length of appeals notices. Many of the wait times for appellants are not measured in any way. It is clear that appellants and those suffering from this sorely inadequate process are not a first priority. In fact, when asked what the tribunal was doing to incorporate feedback from appellants and stakeholders, the minister merely focused on stakeholders. There was no mention of the feedback from appellants. Conservatives have made it clear that they are too busy looking out for their well-connected friends to put Canadians first.

This lack of acknowledgement of the needs of Canadians is absolutely disgraceful. When will the proper changes to the appeals process be made so that Canadians are not longer made to suffer by the government?

● (1910)

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first let me give some background on the SST. Until last year, there were four separate tribunals to deal with appeals related to three programs: old age security, also known as OAS; the Canada pension plan, known as CPP; and employment insurance, known as EI. Each of them had its own management and reporting structure. The old appeal process was expensive and slow, and fewer than one in three claims were heard within 30 days. That is why our government replaced these tribunals with a single decision-making body, the new Social Security Tribunal, or SST.

When a client of the EI program, CPP, or OAS is unhappy with a decision made about their case, they may ask Service Canada to review their file and reconsider the decision. If the client is then not satisfied with the reconsideration of the decision, they can appeal to the SST.

The new tribunal has full-time dedicated members. It also has a single case management system and centralized administrative support. With the creation of the SST, we have done more than just create a streamlined structure; we have brought the appeals process into the 21st century.

The new tribunal will work smarter, using technology such as document imaging, electronic filing, and video conferencing to reduce the paper burden and travel time and make the appeals process easier and faster. Additional measures in both the department and the SST are being implemented to further improve efficiencies as we move forward.

The SST began operating on April 1, 2013. Its first year was a transition period to allow all appeals in the old four-tribunal system to be finalized, while all new appeals were handled through the SST.

The SST received higher-than-anticipated caseloads from the legacy tribunals, especially from the income security division. These cases were all deemed ready to proceed as of April 1, 2014, and the SST is giving top priority to these legacy cases.

The SST is an independent administrative tribunal that operates at arm's length from the department. It is committed to providing fair, credible, and impartial appeal processes in a timely manner.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' so-called streamlining has caused huge backlogs. This is not the first Conservative attack on the welfare of our citizens, and now we are compelled to add this poorly restructured appeal process to the list.

Unlike the minister's supposed claim for protecting retirement security, the New Democrats are actually dedicated to this process. This is the reason we launched a national campaign to expand the CPP-QPP. Experts agree that a phased-in CPP-QPP increase is the most effective way to help ensure retirement security for all Canadians.

When are the Conservatives going to realize they are instilling changes that not only place Canadians at a great disadvantage but also undermine any security that they might have felt in the appeals process?

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, one of the worst things we can do as we emerge from the largest global recession since the Great Depression is increase payroll taxes upon contributors and employers across this country. That would leave fewer jobs and fewer contributors to the retirement program, damaging the ability of the retirement program to be there when retiring Canadians needed it.

I want to assure my hon. colleague that the Social Security Tribunal will continue to provide a fair and accessible appeal system for all Canadians. The SST members are appointed by the Governor in Council following a publicly advertised selection process. The tribunal is an independent body that ensures Canadians can get an impartial review of government decisions that affect their social benefits.

As I said earlier, the first year of the SST was a transition period, and it is committed to continuing to look at better ways to provide fair, credible, and impartial appeal processes in a timely manner for Canadians.

● (1915)

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:15 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, May 26, 2014

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

ORAL QUESTIONS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS