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Monday, February 16, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, February 16, 2015

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

ASSAULTS AGAINST PUBLIC TRANSIT OPERATORS

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-221, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against public transit operators), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate today at third reading, and to speak in support of Bill S-221, a bill that seeks to address, through explicit sentencing principles, the harm caused when public operators acting in the course of their duties are the target of violence.

At present, there is no specific offence or aggravating factor in the Criminal Code that uniquely targets acts of violence committed against public transit operators.

The proposed bill would amend the Criminal Code to create a new aggravating factor for the sentencing of offenders convicted of uttering threats, any of the three assault offences, and unlawfully causing bodily harm to transit operators.

I would first like to thank Senator Runciman and his staff for their hard work on this file, as well as all those in the transit community, such as the Canadian Urban Transit Association and the Amalgamated Transit Union, amongst others, who have spent countless hours educating both the public and government about the danger that violence against our transit operators presents, not only to themselves but to the general public. This is a very serious issue that must be addressed.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the other side of the aisle, to the members of the opposition parties who have done their part in making sure that Bill S-221 becomes law, and in particular to the member from Wascana. I know he has been working diligently on this matter for years. Hopefully today all of that hard work will finally be realized and result in meaningful and effective legislation.

I think I can say without any hesitation that everything we have heard in debates in both Houses during the recent months has absolutely confirmed our belief that Bill S-221 is both justified and necessary.

The proposed Bill S-221 would amend the Criminal Code to create a new aggravating factor for the sentencing of offenders convicted of uttering threats, any of the three assault offences, and unlawfully causing bodily harm to transit operators.

Transit operators play an absolutely critical role in the lives of our citizens and communities all over Canada. Nowhere is this more apparent than in our major cities, where public transit is relied upon to transport millions of passengers every day.

It would be no exaggeration to say that without the people who drive our buses, subways, trams, and taxis every day, our economy and our communities would be in peril. A 2010 report prepared by the Canadian Urban Transit Association, entitled "The Economic Impact of Transit Investment: A National Survey", offers the following key findings: transit reduces vehicle operating costs for Canadian households by approximately \$5 billion annually, and it reduces vehicle accident costs by \$2.4 billion annually.

While these statistics and figures are certainly fantastic, they come at a price, specifically to the well-being of our public transit operators. An analysis conducted by the Toronto Transit Commission showed that transit operators face daily violence. According to their analysis, during 2013, 39% of attacks were related to fare enforcement. Alarmingly, one in five attacks was recorded as being unprovoked, with no real rhyme or reason given. The motive was nothing more than pure malice, an attempt to harm the public transit operator just for the sake of it.

Unfortunately, these sorts of attacks run the risk of becoming more and more common, unless we as legislators take action to ensure these assaults are sanctioned adequately. The report is broken down as follows: expectorate, around 45%; physical—hands, feet—33%; foreign objects, 15%; liquid, 5%.

Private Members' Business

According to the Canadian Urban Transit Association, there were 2,061 reported assaults in 2011. That is over five reported instances of assault a day across this country. This is shameful.

Transit operators, due to the nature of their work and their inherent inability to defend themselves against aggressive acts while carrying out their duties, face a number of unusual and unpredictable threats in their workplace that most Canadians do not.

Transit workers are at a higher risk for violence than workers in many other occupations. Statistics Canada has reported that public transit operators are more than four and a half times more likely to be assaulted in the conduct of their duty than an average person is when walking down the street. While this in and of itself is a shocking statistic, there are other consequences that may not be immediately clear.

The most troubling of these is that a public transit operator is in charge of operating an incredibly large vehicle, which, more often than not, is in motion on crowded streets and highways. Any minute, a distraction may cause an immediate and very real danger, not only to the passengers charged in the operator's care, but to other drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. This danger naturally increases when we have someone physically beating or spitting on the operator.

The issue of assaulting a public transit operator is not only being noticed here in Ottawa, but in other municipalities as well. A little over two weeks ago, Tom Hann, a councillor in St. John's, Newfoundland, had the following to say regarding tougher sentencing legislation:

[Public transit operators] should not have to put up with that kind of stuff, and I'm hoping legislation that will deal with stronger sentencing will make people think twice.

It pleases me to no end to see that Bill S-221 has garnered support from municipalities as far away as St. John's.

On the other side of the nation, bus drivers in Vancouver have opted to begin a six-month, fleet-wide experiment with plexiglass barriers to protect themselves from would-be attackers. Last year, Hamilton saw a five-year high in assaults on their buses, which has prompted the transit director of the Hamilton Street Railway company to make a budget request for cameras to be installed in the fleet, and possibly even barriers. Grand River Transit of Kitchener and Waterloo has made a similar move.

It is a sad state of affairs when bus drivers feel so unsafe at work that they feel their only recourse is to attempt to remove and segregate themselves from the people they serve.

To echo Councillor Hann's sentiments, we need to make sure that these thugs think twice before assaulting a public transit operator, and we need to make bus drivers feel safe in their place of work. We need to ensure that the transit system operates effectively, that people feel safe when they use the transit system, and that those operating our public transit feel assured that if they are victimized on the job through acts of violence, the criminal justice system will effectively respond to such violence.

Attacks on transit operators can leave lasting physical and mental scars. With more than 300,000 members, Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector. At a 2014 gathering at Unifor's Canadian

Council, transit drivers shared personal stories of assault, harassment, and degradation that left lasting trauma, and, in certain cases, permanent disability. Transit drivers should not have to go to work fearing that they will be hit, sexually assaulted, threatened with death, punched, kicked, spat on, or have a weapon pulled on them.

While much of the focus thus far has been on bus drivers, we must not forget another vulnerable and often forgotten group of individuals: taxi drivers. From 1997 to 2011, the homicide rate for taxi drivers was 3.2 per population of 100,000. This is nearly three times the murder rate among the general population. In that 15-year period, 23 taxi drivers were murdered in cold blood.

We do not have statistics available to us on assaults, but one does not have to jump to conclusions to suggest that they would be as horrifically high as their counterparts in public transit.

Support for this bill extends far and wide. Transit unions, transit police, bus and taxi drivers, the Ottawa Transit Commission, the Toronto Transit Commission, and many others have spoken in strong support of this bill. We now have the opportunity with Bill S-221 to work together and unanimously pass into law meaningful changes that would appropriately address the violence committed against transit operators.

I strongly support this bill, and I hope that the sentiment is echoed on all sides of the House. Let us finally put an end to this wrong and pass Bill S-221 today.

• (1110)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure my colleague immediately that we feel exactly the same way.

I would like to point out that members of my party have introduced a number of similar bills, and as I recall, though I was not here, during the previous Parliament, Bill C-333 dealt with exactly this problem.

My question is this: why has the government been dragging its feet on this issue since 2006? Can the sponsor tell me what happened to make this measure, which we will support, a priority?

• (1115)

[English]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is a very good question.

I know that several bills on this subject have been introduced in the House. This bill has a specific provision that would also include taxi drivers, who were not included in the other bills.

I think this is a novelty, and it shows that our government would take care of a larger range of public transit operators, as the bill also includes taxi drivers.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in support of Bill S-221. In fact, the deputy leader of the Liberal Party had a similar private member's bill. Our caucus, and I am sure all members, recognizes the valuable role of transit drivers in all regions of our country.

I had the good fortune, through John Callahan of the Amalgamated Transit Union in Winnipeg, to have a tour of the facility and the opportunity to participate in a bus ride-along, which I would highly recommend to members. One can learn a lot when riding on a bus and talking to some of the drivers. One gets a better sense of some of the things they have to go through day in and day out. When that door opens, transit drivers do not know what is coming in.

There is a need for this legislation. The number of verbal and physical assaults is very high. I think the public would be quite surprised by how many occurrences there are every year.

My question is fairly specific. Would the member not agree that as parliamentarians we can also work with municipalities to see how we can make the working environment of our transit drivers better, such as by potentially having patrols on buses and so forth?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, to work with municipalities, we need to have legislation in place. This bill would give the opportunity to municipalities to move forward in the deterrence of violence and to take action against violence against public operators and taxi drivers.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my follow-up question is in regard to the taxi drivers the member made reference to. Again, this is a very important industry.

When they allow people in, it is not like taxi drivers will say no. They feel vulnerable. There is a need for safety shields and cameras. There is a higher sense of need for security in our taxis than there ever has been over the last decade plus.

Could the member provide some comment on our role in terms of making sure that there is a safe working environment?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, it is important that, through this legislation, we provide the tools to educate the users of public transit and taxis not to resort to violent acts and so on, and if they do resort to these acts, they will be punished accordingly, with the force of the law.

This is not necessarily punitive legislation; it would provide the tools to have deterrence and not just a reaction to violence. This is in line with the Canadian way of thinking.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of this long overdue legislation.

I would like to start off by praising our public transportation workers across the country. Every day, thousands of women and men across this country basically ensure the safety and security of our loved ones in getting to work, to school, or to a wide variety of places. Their job is to ensure that our loved ones make it to work, school, shopping, and any other circumstance as safely as possible. Tragically, we are seeing that increasingly, their safety and security is in jeopardy because of an epidemic of attacks, and there is no other

way to put it, against public transit operators and public transportation workers.

Today we are seeing across the country thousands of transit workers who are making sure, even in adverse weather conditions, that our loved ones get to work or school safely. Yet today, an average day in Canada, four, five, or six of those transit operators and public transportation workers may be assaulted in the line of duty. As they are doing their work of ensuring the safety and security of our loved ones, their safety and security is often put into question because of a growing number of tragic assaults against these workers.

This did not start happening yesterday. It has developed over a number of years. That is why the NDP over the past number of years has put forward legislation to combat this epidemic of attacks on public transportation workers and drivers across this country.

Judy Wasylycia-Leis, who members will remember, first put forward a bill. I myself put forward a bill a number of years ago. We encouraged the government at the time to put in place these measures. My colleague from Thunder Bay—Rainy River also put forward legislation.

Bill S-221 is currently on the docket in the House of Commons. It would increase penalties for anyone who assaults or abuses a public transportation worker. By putting this legislation in place, we would be sending a message to people right across the country that this is unacceptable. The safety and security of our public transportation workers should not be put into question because of the growing likelihood that they may be assaulted in the line of duty.

Imagine driving a bus and trying to maintain the safety and security of perhaps dozens of passengers, and someone gets on the bus who feels that he or she has free rein to assault the driver. While the driver is trying to protect members of the travelling public, his or her own safety is in question.

That is why it is important to send an inescapable message to all Canadians that assault or abuse is simply not acceptable. That is why we support the bill. That is why we have called for tougher penalties, as well.

Part of the reason this is an important step and the reason the NDP has put forward legislation over the past few years a number of times is the public education that can come from it. Saying that it is a case of aggravated assault, as we have said in the NDP bill, or an aggravating circumstance, as in the bill before us today, is something the public transportation companies and private taxi companies can use to ensure that the public is aware that when they try to abuse or assault a taxi driver or transit operator, it is a serious crime.

● (1120)

There is no doubt that this is something that would help to address this tragic epidemic of attacks on transit workers. In many cases, we are talking about serious assaults. These are assaults that have resulted in serious, permanent disability. We are talking about situations where the bus driver or transit operator has been unable to return to work. We are not talking about minor assaults here. In many cases, we are talking about tragic, serious assaults.

Private Members' Business

That is why we have been bringing this forward in the House of Commons for so many years. We need to change the public perception that somehow it is okay to attack a transit operator, a bus driver, or a taxi driver.

The bill today is long overdue. We would have liked the government to have adopted the NDP legislation we have been pushing forward in the House years ago. It will nonetheless make a difference, particularly when the public transportation companies are able to put forward the very clear message that this is unacceptable.

The bus drivers and transit operators in my riding are represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees and Unifor, as well, formerly the CAW transit operators. We also have the Amalgamated Transit Union, which has also been a phenomenal force in campaigning for this change.

● (1125)

[Translation]

The Société de transport de Montréal drivers' association also played a major role.

[English]

With Unifor, CUPE, ATU, and the STM we have a real consensus among bus drivers and transit operators across the country that it is time for a change. It is time to send an unmistakable message to all Canadians that to assault a transit operator or a bus driver is a serious offence. Those bus drivers and transit drivers get up every day in the morning with one thought in mind, which is to make sure that our loved ones get to their workplaces, their schools, or wherever they are going safely. We have a responsibility as parliamentarians to ensure their safety, to ensure that they go to a safe workplace and can come home and know that they have provided that service to Canadians, that there are no scars to show for it, and that they have been able to work in a safe environment.

I would like to conclude by saying that this is long overdue legislation. We support it. In fact, the NDP has been the impetus behind the legislation, and we are happy to see that it is finally coming forward on the floor of the House of Commons.

[Translation]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the Liberal Party will vote in favour of this bill.

My colleague from Wascana once introduced a similar bill, though his was a little more vigorous than the one we are talking about today. We are therefore very happy to support this bill.

[English]

Far be it from me to predict the voting decisions of hon. members on a private member's bill, but I will not be surprised if this bill receives the unanimous support of the House. We shall see later if this is the case.

In effect, it would be difficult to oppose this proposition. Bus drivers and other public transit operators provide a valuable service for all Canadians every day. The statistics show that they are subject to much more abuse than one might expect, and certainly much more abuse than they deserve. Therefore, it is incumbent on Parliament to

take measures to help protect them. It is true that all three major parties of the House have, at one time or another, presented similar legislation in this regard. Therefore, I would be astounded if the bill did not receive overwhelming, if not unanimous, support.

To provide a few of the statistics, 2,061 bus drivers were assaulted in 2011, with attacks ranging from being spit on and punched in the head to knife attacks and sexual assault. It is partly because of the nature of their work that they are at greater risk than most because they are subject, willy-nilly, to whoever should enter their buses, taxis, ferries, or whatever means of transit. They have no control over who enters and are much more susceptible than most to this kind of attack. This is why they deserve a level of protection that is higher than that provided for most Canadians in other walks of life.

It is important to indicate what exactly the bill would do. I know the member has done so, but it would make the nature of a victim's employment as a public transit operator an aggravating circumstance which must be taken into account when a judge sentences an accused after conviction on specific Criminal Code charges. These include bodily harm, assault, aggravated assault and causing bodily harm. The definition of "public transit operator" includes not only bus drivers but also those operating taxis, trains, subways, trams and ferries.

We are happy to support this proposed law. As I indicated, the bill put forward by my colleague, the member for Wascana, was a little stronger in the sense that the fact of being a bus driver was to be an aggravating circumstance in sentencing for any crime against a bus driver no matter what the specific charge. However, that, in a sense, is a fairly small detail and the two laws are in the same spirit. We therefore are very happy to support it.

As my colleague from Winnipeg North pointed out, passing this law should not be the end of our pursuit of greater fairness for bus drivers and other public transit operators. There is scope for further actions, and a lot of those actions would probably involve more of the provincial and municipal governments than they would the federal government. At the federal level, we clearly have jurisdiction in the area of criminal law and can take this action, but also in the future the federal government could, and should, work with other levels of government to produce other measures and policy initiatives to enhance the safety and security of bus drivers.

I do not think there is controversy on this, so I will not go on any longer. The Liberal Party will enthusiastically support the bill.

● (1130)

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill S-221, an act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against public transit operators).

I would like to note that the bill was introduced in the other place by Senator Bob Runciman, the senator for Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes who happens to be from my area of Ontario.

Private Members' Business

The bill aims to protect transit workers who play a critical role in serving the public at large. Public transit is differentiated from other occupations by the fact that those who play a role in providing this service work with a broad spectrum of customers and are often alone with them late at night. Due to this, they are vulnerable and, by virtue of the fact that they are operating a vehicle, will often be defenceless against attacks.

The statistics on assaults have been mentioned in previous debates and in committee by numerous people. I would like to emphasize two particular statistics that summarize the unsafe work environment that these transit workers have to work in.

According to the Amalgamated Transit Union, 40%, or four out of ten, of all public transit operators are assaulted on the job at some point in their career. The Canadian Urban Transit Association reports approximately 2,000 assaults per year, which is an average of around 5 assaults per day.

In addition to the detrimental effects on the victim, such attacks also threaten the safety of the general public as transit operators have responsibility for the safety of their passengers and, of course, others who are on the road. Further, these attacks have a negative impact on the transit industry financially in terms of compensation for victims and employees missing days at work. The attacks also make it difficult to recruit and retain qualified operators.

This bill would affirm the preventative purpose of criminal law through the threat of enhanced punishment and would contribute to enhanced public safety, while also having a favourable impact on the transit industry generally.

Bill S-221 would create a new aggravating factor for the purposes of sentencing. The aggravating factor would only apply in respect of the following offences in the Criminal Code: uttering threats, section 264.1; assault, section 266; assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm, section 267; aggravated assault, section 268; and, unlawfully causing bodily harm, section 269.

If the victim of any one of these offences is a public transit operator engaged in the execution of his or her duties, the court must consider this an aggravating factor at sentencing.

The bill includes a definition of "public transit operator". A "public transit operator" is an individual who operates a vehicle used in the provision of passenger transportation services to the public and also includes an individual who operates a school bus. This definition, coupled with the definition of "vehicle" will capture a wide variety of circumstances.

The bill advances two fundamental sentencing objectives: deterrence and denunciation. It sends a strong message by requiring the courts to consider increased sentencing consequences for those convicted of crimes of violence committed against public transit operators while engaged in the execution of their duties. The bill states that we as a society do not tolerate such violence and that those who choose to engage in such crime will be punished in a way that properly reflects the harm they have caused.

During its study of the bill, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights examined the impact it would have in practice. Two particular issues arose are worth mentioning.

The first issue is related to the proposed definition of vehicle. The bill proposes a non-exhaustive definition of "vehicle", for the purpose of the proposed aggravating factor, as including "a bus, paratransit vehicle, licensed taxi cab, train, subway, tram and ferry". One committee member questioned why not simply amend the definition of "motor vehicle" in section 2 of the Criminal Code to avoid the potential confusion that may be caused by having two definitions, one for "vehicle" and one for "motor vehicle".

The evidence given before the committee confirmed that there should be no confusion created by the proposed definition of "vehicle" found in the bill. First, the definition would only apply to the proposed section 269.01. Second, the provision would be clear and unambiguous. It would not cause any difficulty for the courts to interpret "vehicle" as including devices that were not propelled by a motor, such as a bike-taxi or rickshaw operator. If the intent of the sponsor was to limit the application of this section to motor powered vehicles, I believe he would have said it.

• (1135)

The second issue that was raised during the committee's study of the bill concerned the meaning of "engaged in the performance of his or her duty". Let us recall that the proposed aggravating factor would apply where the victim was a public transit operator who, at the time of the commission of the offence, was engaged in the performance of his or her duty. The notion of being engaged in one's duties exists in other parts of the Criminal Code though the exact words can vary. For example, the murder of a police officer acting in the course of his or her duties is automatically first degree murder. Similarly, it is an offence to assault a peace officer engaged in the execution of his or her duty.

Existing jurisprudence interpreting these phrases would likely inform how the courts would interpret this new aggravating factor. This jurisprudence tells us that the individual must be lawfully engaged in his or her duties. In addition, one cannot simply be on duty, such that transit operators who are assaulted after signing in for their shifts prior to commencing their duties would not likely receive the benefit of the new aggravating factor. However, it is also likely that the new factor would not be limited to situations involving the driving of the vehicle. For example, it would likely apply to situations where drivers were inspecting their vehicles prior to bringing them into service.

At the end of the day, these questions of interpretation would be addressed by the courts. Regardless of how the new provision would be interpreted, it is important to remember that the courts will retain broad discretion to determine whether any particular fact aggravates or mitigates the sentence imposed in any given case.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the importance of protecting public transit workers. Operators who encounter these harmful attacks during the performance of their duties are simply trying to do their job of delivering an essential mobility service to the public. This bill is intended to deter violent attacks on public transit operators and to increase overall safety for persons using transit services.

Private Members' Business

Due to the critical importance of public transit to our communities from coast to coast to coast, as well as to our economy, I encourage all members to support Bill S-221. I am encouraged that members from all sides of the House have risen to show their support. I encourage members to pass the bill as quickly as possible into law in order to protect transit operators.

• (1140)

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of Bill S-221, a bill to amend the Criminal Code to require a court to consider as an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing the fact that the victim of an assault is a public transit operator.

Public transit operators play a significant role in our daily life. Their contribution might go unnoticed, but their service is surely invaluable. In small and big cities, Canadians count on the service of all those men and women who strive to provide the best service possible, while ensuring the well-being of passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists.

[*Translation*]

Because of the nature of the work they do, public transit operators are easy targets for acts of violence that can take many forms, including everything from verbal intimidation to physical abuse.

Stéphane Lachance of the Syndicat des chauffeurs, opérateurs et employés des services connexes, which is part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, said and I quote, “Unfortunately, being a bus driver also means being a victim of violence.”

I have some facts to present that clearly illustrate the scope of the problem and the need to take concrete, effective measures to contain it.

In 2010, within the organizations that form the Association du transport urbain du Québec, 14.2% of workplace accidents covered by the CSST were the result of assault and acts of violence. Also in 2010, 65 drivers from the Réseau de transport de la Capitale and 56 from the Société de transport de Laval were attacked, and in Vancouver, 150 assaults on bus drivers were reported.

In 2011, 2,061 operators were assaulted in Canada. Assaults included everything from getting spit on, being hit over the head and having boiling water thrown at them to being threatened with a knife and even sexually assaulted. In July 2014 in Cambridge, a driver was even threatened by a young man carrying a samurai sword. That speaks volumes about the kind of problem we are dealing with.

In Ottawa in 2012, OC Transpo reported 62 incidents of violence committed against its operators. Also in 2012, 66 acts of violence against bus drivers were reported in Montreal. According to health and safety experts, only 25% of violent acts are reported. In 2013 in Kelowna, a woman stabbed an operator with a syringe, so now that driver will have to be tested for hepatitis C for the rest of his life.

I could list of all the attempted murders and assaults with a weapon, which unfortunately have become all too common for bus drivers. Furthermore, subway and taxi operators also face the same risks. I am glad that the member opposite included taxi drivers in this bill.

Marc-André Coulombe, president of Taxi Québec, said:

Not a week goes by that I do not hear about an attack or a scuffle. However, most drivers do not report it.

This is a big problem. As a Liberal member was saying, taxi and bus drivers confirm that this is a reality of their job. This is what Robin West, International Vice President of the Amalgamated Transit Union, said during his testimony to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs:

It is a sad reality that most public transit operators have experienced the indignity of being spat on, have been punched in the head, or they know a colleague who has been subjected to a knife attack, been stomped upon or sexually assaulted...many suffer physical and emotional injuries that are life-threatening and career-ending.

That was the case for Mr. Bouzid, an Algerian engineer, Montreal taxi driver and father of three, who was killed in cold blood while on the job.

I would like to take a moment to note that many taxi drivers in my riding and elsewhere are from an immigrant minority and have excellent qualifications from their homelands, but cannot pursue a career in their field because they cannot get their credentials recognized here.

These highly qualified, university-trained immigrants have a very hard time integrating into the labour market. I would like to take this opportunity to call on the appropriate authorities to correct this problem, which affects a large part of the immigrant population and remains a major hindrance to their emancipation. These taxi and bus drivers are facing problems on the job.

Mr. Bouzid's murder may be an extreme case, but attacks in taxis are not so rare. This is a recurring problem. To deal with this type of appalling crime, it is essential that judges be equipped with the right tools so that they can hand down appropriate sentences and deterrents are strengthened.

Unions and associations that represent bus and taxi drivers have been calling for better protection for their members for many years. The government needs to always be listening to the professionals in this sector and has a duty to ensure the safety of everyone employed in this area and to protect them when they are working.

By making the assault on a public transit operator an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing, we will be sending a strong and unequivocal message that such crimes are not tolerated. These measures will help reduce the number of assaults on public transit operators and will curb the increase in this very disturbing phenomenon, which is of particular concern to transit professionals.

Government Orders

•(1145)

[English]

New Democrats believe that Canada must invest in the well-being of all public transit operators, and this will only be possible if we can ensure a safe and secure environment in their workplace. Indeed, protecting mass transit operators has always been a priority for the NDP, a duty that is incumbent upon us to uphold as much as possible.

In this regard, the NDP has already tabled many private members' bills that sought to extend further protections to public transit operators by imposing greater punishment for the offence of aggravated assault when public transportation workers were the victims.

Even though the bill under examination was tabled by another political party, we are ready to take a constructive approach to allow for the necessary changes to be implemented in order to help these workers significantly. This is because the NDP has the public transit operators' interests at heart.

[Translation]

I would like to point out that these new provisions have been favourably received by a number of unions in this sector, including the Syndicat de la STM, which represents bus drivers. I would just like to quote Stéphane Lachance, the union spokesperson:

We applaud the initiative and will work with partners who want...increased protection for transit workers. We hope that the deterrent effect of such a law will be felt quickly and that we will see a significant decrease in assaults in our network.

NDP members are proud to support the demands of the associations and unions that represent public transit workers because the NDP has made the needs and interests of public transit workers one of its top priorities. Therefore, I join my colleagues in supporting this bill, and I hope that it will be passed and written into law as soon as possible.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I invite the hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East to exercise his right of reply. He has up to five minutes.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many people have put countless hours of hard work into this file. I cannot possibly convey my thanks to them all in a short five minutes; however, there are a few I would like to mention in the time I have.

Once again I would like to thank Senator Runciman and his staff for all their hard work on Bill S-221. I want to express thanks as well for the support that we have received from not only the opposition across the way but also from the various transit organizations across the country, some of whom are looking on here today. They have been very supportive and integral in getting this piece of sound legislation passed.

Bill S-221 would amend the Criminal Code to create a new aggravating factor for the sentencing of offenders convicted of uttering threats, any of the three assault offences, or unlawfully causing bodily harm to transit operators.

This would cause those who would do harm to our public transit operators to think twice before they engage in the reckless and dangerous assault of our bus drivers, subway conductors, taxi drivers, et cetera.

Ensuring these PTOs are safe is the first step in ensuring that the public using these methods of transport are also safe, as well as those on our streets, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage all hon. members to pass the bill as soon as possible, and if possible today.

•(1150)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 11:52 a.m., the House will stand suspended until noon. We will pick up government orders at that time.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:52 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1200)

[English]

RAIL SERVICE RESUMPTION ACT, 2015

Hon. Chris Alexander (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, a bill in the name of the Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, entitled An Act to provide for the resumption of rail service operations, shall be disposed of as follows:

- (a) the said bill may be read twice or thrice in one sitting;
- (b) not more than two hours shall be allotted for the consideration of the second reading stage of the said bill, following the adoption of this Order;
- (c) when the bill has been read a second time, it shall be referred to a Committee of the Whole;
- (d) any division requested in the Committee shall be deferred until the end of the Committee's consideration of the bill;
- (e) not more than one hour shall be allotted for the consideration of the Committee of the Whole stage of the said bill;
- (f) not more than one half-hour shall be allotted for the consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill, provided that no Member shall speak for more than ten minutes at a time during the said stage and that no period for questions and comments be permitted following each Member's speech;
- (g) at the expiry of the time provided for in this Order, any proceedings before the House or the Committee of the Whole shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the stage then under consideration, of the said bill shall be put and disposed of forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment, and no division shall be deferred;

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(h) when the Speaker has, for the purposes of this Order, interrupted any proceeding for the purpose of putting forthwith the question on any business then before the House, the bells to call in the Members shall be sounded for not more than thirty minutes;

(i) commencing when the said bill is read a first time and concluding when the said bill is read a third time, the House shall not adjourn except pursuant to a motion proposed by a Minister of the Crown;

(j) no motion to adjourn the debate at any stage of the said bill may be proposed except by a Minister of the Crown; and

(k) during the consideration of the said bill in the Committee of the Whole, no motion that the Committee rise or that the Committee report progress may be proposed except by a Minister of the Crown.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask members of the House to expedite the passage of an act to provide for the resumption of rail service operations.

Today, we are experiencing a work stoppage at Canadian Pacific Railway that will have a significant impact on our Canadian economy. Canadian employees, members of the public, international trade, and our national economy will suffer.

Our economy has faced challenging times since the recession. However, we have stood out among leading industrial countries. Our government is proud of its record of protecting Canadians from the worst effects of the economic downturn and of laying the foundation for recovery.

The Canadian economy still faces risks from global factors that we cannot control. A disruption of rail services could lead to job losses and poses a great risk to the Canadian economy. A work stoppage will only further exacerbate the uncertainty of our economic state and further complicate an already complex situation.

In Canada, we have a large and well developed rail system that carries freight to all parts of the country. Rail is a vital part of the Canadian economy. It is an extension of our communities and their links to industry and resources, and it is part of our link to the world.

Our rail system is complex. It interconnects a wide range of businesses, including shippers, terminal operators, transloaders, port operators, shipping lines, and trucking, all of which are part of a very complex and complicated supply chain. Railway transportation is a backbone of an integrated supply chain that moves Canada's resources all over the globe. Problems occurring in one part of the chain can affect all stakeholders. There is a domino effect. Something that happens on the ground in British Columbia can have an impact on someone living in Ontario, and this can have an impact on tens of thousands of Canadian jobs.

CP plays a critical role in our economy, with its network spanning Canada and the United States. As the second largest rail freight service provider in Canada, CP has nearly 15,500 employees. CP Rail's network spans approximately 22,000 kilometres from Port Metro Vancouver to the Port of Montreal, and to parts of the U.S. northwest and midwest. In 2013, CP generated \$6.1 billion in revenue, an increase of about 8% and a company record. CP transports seven commodity groups: industrial and consumer products, containers, grain, coal, fertilizer, sulphur, and automotive products. CP provides its customers, Canadians, the ability to trade with many partners across the country and around the globe. This allows us to employ thousands of Canadians.

Maintaining an effective supply chain is critical to meeting the government's objectives related to strategic gateways and trade corridors, such as the Asia-Pacific gateway. The 21 members economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group account for almost 2.8 billion people, over half of the world's GDP, and in excess of 80% of Canada's total merchandise trade.

Canada is a trading nation and CP plays a critical role in North America's supply chain for moving goods to and from Canadian, U.S., and international markets. This strike could have a detrimental effect on Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner. It could have lasting effects on an already uncertain economy and, most importantly, on Canadian businesses and jobs. It could have an impact on communities who rely on rail services for certain goods.

I have received letters from many people, such as Spectra Energy, urging the federal government not to hesitate to take action to ensure a quick resolution to this dispute. Spectra Energy provides a number of natural gas liquids, such as propane, butane, and ethane, all of which are supplied by rail to key markets in Canada and the U.S. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians rely on their products for heat and power. Without the ability to transport the product to residential and commercial customers, including hospitals, I can tell members that it would be catastrophic. Standing on the ground without heat in a hospital is something I cannot imagine.

The Propane Gas Association of Canada has urged that rail delivery of propane gas should be declared an essential service, since rail is the only effective means of transportation and propane is essential for heating homes and businesses.

Teck, Canada's largest diversified mining company has sent me a letter, stating that "...if a strike at CP or CN occurs, we urge that the Government take early action by exercising the legislative measures available to you, including the imposition of back-to-work legislation and binding arbitration."

● (1205)

Teck's products represent one-third of our bulk exports going through the Port of Vancouver. Teck is the single largest Canadian exporter to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Brazil. On a global scale, the implications of a rail disruption are grave. Teck further states that "...rail disruptions can cause serious harm to the Canadian economy and reputation and hurt our competitiveness as international customers are forced to look elsewhere to import goods."

A work stoppage by CP could also have an adverse impact on the movement of grain, which is only now returning to normal conditions following last year's backlog. As members may recall, last March our government introduced an order in council to ensure that the supply chain operated effectively to deliver Canadian grain to market. The strike is causing a setback and it could take months to recover the lost business and lost investments.

Government Orders

Without CP Rail operating, our ability to move freight is more limited. This strike in rail transportation in Canada will have such an important impact on so many individuals and industries that the cumulative effects could be immense. However, it is not just the industries that use railways. The railways also provide the tracks for commuters in our cities, particularly Montreal in this case. A strike creates slowdowns and congestion, decreasing productivity and impacting hundreds of Canadians.

Over the past few years our government has been taking all necessary steps to protect Canadians from the worst effects of the economic downturn, but the work stoppage at CP, especially in our current economic reality, will have devastating effects on many workers and their families: those directly involved in the railway, and the tens of thousands of Canadians who rely on rail not only for product but also to get to work. We are not just talking just about the CP employees but the hundreds of thousands of Canadians whose livelihoods depend on the goods carried by rail.

It is clear that we parliamentarians have an important role to play in putting an end to a situation that could negatively impact our economy and the well-being of Canadians. Our economy must be protected. Our products must reach markets. Canadian jobs must be preserved.

As we can see, rail transportation is key to maintaining our country's economic growth. Canadians and businesses count on us to make tough decisions like this one. We are doing this for the good of our country and the good of Canadian citizens.

I am happy to report that the Canadian National Railway and the TCRC, and CP and Unifor were able to reach agreements to renew their collective agreements. I am optimistic that these agreements will be ratified.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

It is true that it would be preferable for the parties to resolve their differences on their own.

[*English*]

Our government would like nothing more than to see these parties, the CP and TCRC, reach an agreement on their own, because the best solution is the one the parties reach themselves. We have offered dispute resolution assistance to the parties, provided through the Canada Labour Code, but to no avail. The services and mediators of the Federal Mediation and Conciliatory Service are still available to help CP and the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference in their negotiations. In fact, I know they have been continuing to work with them, even today.

On several occasions, I too have met in person and talked by phone with the former and current presidents of the union and the CEO of CP. As early as November and December last year, I was expressing my expectations for the current round of bargaining. More recently, in Montreal over the course of Friday and Saturday, I have been encouraging these individuals to reach a negotiated settlement, because the best solution is always the one the parties reach themselves.

If they cannot reach an agreement, I have asked them to go to voluntary arbitration to resolve their outstanding issues. Indeed, last Friday, I went to Montreal and continued to work with them, this time actually at the bargaining table. I continued to express my desire for them to reach a negotiated settlement, and failing that, agreeing to voluntary arbitration. Thus far they have not.

We feel that the parties have had ample time to reach a negotiated agreement. At this point, I have to be honest, the parties are not close to a deal.

For every day of a work stoppage, our economy and trade relationships will be further undermined. The cost to our economy will be enormous, an estimated \$205 million decline in GDP per week.

Therefore, I ask my fellow members to stand up for Canadians and Canadian businesses and pass this bill to resume operations at CP Rail.

I can assure the House that our government will continue to focus on the growth and sustainability of our economy. Rail services must continue so that Canadian businesses and, more importantly, Canadian families can continue to be safe and prosper.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am appalled that we are once again debating a bill that violates the rights of this country's workers.

Could the Minister of Labour explain why the Conservatives are once again taking a sledgehammer to unions and workers and taking away their ability to exert pressure?

My question is simple: does the right to strike still exist in Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, our government has been very clear. The economy is extremely important. It is in fact our top priority.

These parties have been given ample opportunity. As I mentioned in my speech, starting as early as November and December of last year, both parties were provided assistance, conciliators and mediators through the Federal Mediation and Conciliatory Service, to come to a negotiated agreement that both parties could live with on their job sites.

As recently as this weekend, I was in Montreal working with the parties to try to reach an agreement. As I said, because CN and the Teamsters and CP and Unifor worked hard with the Federal Mediation and Conciliatory Service, they came to an agreement. The best agreement is one they reach themselves. In this case, we have not been able to resolve the disputes and in the best interest of the Canadian public and the Canadian economy, we will be moving forward to make sure that CP Rail is back in action.

Government Orders

•(1215)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is missing a large element here: this is about security and safety. For two years the government has been warned repeatedly by the Auditor General, the Transportation Safety Board, and other voices, including the Teamsters and other union groups, that there are problems with the safety and security of rail in Canada.

We know on this side of the House that the government has spent more money on advertising its economic action plan than on rail safety for the past five years. We know that. The government cannot deny it because the numbers do not lie. It is the government's responsibility to address the serious safety issue of adequate rest for railway operators. That would have prevented this CP Rail strike. It is its responsibility to establish rest periods for railway workers to ensure the safety of Canada's railways and the communities that our railways travel through.

Railway employees have been asking the Minister of Labour, the government, as well as the transport minister, for safe working conditions. It is the government's obligation. It has been warned, forewarned, and warned again, and the result of the failure to take serious action on rail safety is the two parties with seemingly irreconcilable differences.

Can the minister explain to Canadians who are watching and following this debate why her government has not taken measures to prevent this draconian legislation being brought forward?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, having spent a significant amount of time with both parties, I can say that there are a number of issues still on the table, as both parties would state. There are numerous issues on the table.

With respect to rail safety, our government has taken action. In fact, we have moved forward with putting in place a number of legislated and regulatory directions to ensure that rail transportation in this country is safe. We take that exceptionally seriously. I encourage the opposition to support those initiatives so that individuals working with and impacted by the railway are safe.

Speaking about the public interest, another significant part of the public interest is the economy and making sure that Canadians have an opportunity to work. The shutdown of rail services by Canadian Pacific will have a \$205 million impact on our GDP per week. In addition to that, it is not just about the jobs that are impacted directly at CP but also the individuals working in other industries who now cannot ship their goods. Individuals who work in tech industries or otherwise might be out of work. Quite frankly, commuters in Montreal, I can tell members, are not pleased they will not be able to get to work, and this will affect productivity.

There are a number of issues on the table, as both parties would admit. I am hopeful that they will come to a resolution, because the best option is always when the parties reach an agreement together.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, has said very eloquently, the issue of the right for collective negotiations is something we on this side of the House believe is fundamental. The Supreme Court, in its admonishment to the government a couple of weeks ago on the right to strike, has agreed

with the idea that in a free democracy there should be the right to collective negotiations.

This is a problem of the government's own making. We have seen steadily increasing incidences and accidents in rail safety. A number of organized men and women have come forward and said that one of the main aspects they have to tackle is the issue of crew fatigue. The incredibly archaic way that the crew schedules are sometimes put together means that they have to deal with crew fatigue.

As we saw last night on the news, there are crews, who after working a shift for a number of hours are called back to work early in the morning after an hour's sleep. The issue of crew fatigue is something that most Canadians are aware of, and most Canadians understand that we need to have the utmost standards of rail safety. However, the government has done nothing to bring in regulations to govern working hours so that we can diminish crew fatigue, and it has done no review of the Rail Safety Act.

Why has the government not acted on regulation, not acted on the Rail Safety Act, not acted to put in place the kind of regulation that would bring about a lower rate of accidents in a rail system, rather than a higher level?

•(1220)

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: First, Mr. Speaker, let me correct the record. We are reviewing the decision taken at the Supreme Court, but it had to deal with the Government of Saskatchewan. It was about essential services, and that is not what we are discussing today. We are discussing making sure that CP Rail continues to function so that Canadians are protected. I want to be very clear that the decision dealt with the Province of Saskatchewan, not the Government of Canada.

With respect to the issues, as I just mentioned in response to a previous question, these parties have numerous issues on the table. We have been working with them since November 2014, providing mediation, conciliatory services, and making sure they were supported as best they could be to deal with the numerous issues on the table.

Some progress was made on some issues; progress was not made on many issues. Having sat with these parties through several days of bargaining recently, it is my opinion they would not resolve their differences. In the interests of the Canadian public, the Canadian economy, I think it is now time for the Government of Canada to act in the best interests of Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister made reference to the fact that the government has been in negotiations, attempting to try to assist in mediation, since November 2014.

Can the minister give an indication as to when she would have informed either party, or one particular party, as to the government's intentions with regard to back-to-work legislation? When was that issue first raised with either CP management or the union side?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, we have been working with these parties, both CP as well as the Teamsters, since November, providing conciliation and mediation services.

Government Orders

I was sitting with the parties up until the deadline of when the strike action could be taken. We were very clear: If they were unable to get to an agreement themselves, would they consider voluntary arbitration or mediated arbitration?

Those offers were provided to the parties. One of the parties was willing to do that; another party was not willing and decided to strike. I worked with them up until the very last minute, quite frankly, including yesterday and continuing today.

As I said, the best agreement is one that the parties come to themselves. I have encouraged them, even in this period of time when the TCRC is on strike, to continue to speak to each other to see if they can come to an agreement. That is in their best interests, and I think the very best result.

That being said, if these parties are unable to come to that negotiated agreement that is in their best interests, working together with the help of Canadian mediators from Labour Canada, we will act, and we will act swiftly this afternoon, in the interests of the Canadian public and the Canadian economy.

A hit of \$205 million per week to the Canadian GDP is simply too much. Canadians losing their jobs is too much. We will act.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it saddens me once again today to rise in the House, in the Parliament of Canada, to oppose a bill. I rise as a member of the official opposition to represent the values of the NDP, which is opposing a back-to-work bill for the seventh time since the Conservatives took power in 2006. This government is certainly a repeat offender when it comes to attacking workers, violating their legitimate rights and preventing them from exerting pressure, which includes going on strike.

In 2007 we had Bill C-46 for the continuation of railway operations, so this is not the first time. In 2009 we had Bill C-61 for the continuation of railway operations once again. In 2011 it was Bill C-6 to restore mail delivery. That bill targeted postal workers and letter carriers. Also in 2011 was Bill C-5 to continue air service for passengers. Then we had Bill C-39 and Bill C-33 in 2012, when the Conservatives once again created a power imbalance between the parties. They systematically took the employer's side and took away fundamental rights from unionized workers, who are well within their rights to exert pressure.

I asked the minister a question earlier that I believe is the key issue we are concerned about: do people still have the right to strike and use pressure tactics in Canada today? Does this Conservative government recognize that striking is a legitimate way of expressing the right of association and freedom of collective bargaining? The Conservatives seem to be completely ignoring that aspect, and I will come back to that later. The Supreme Court's recent decision has once again upheld this right that the Conservatives have been flouting, year after year, in Canada.

We have reached a point where workers have to ask themselves whether they will be bothering anyone if they exercise their right to strike. Will the government systematically intervene and break the rules to give the employer more power and additional arguments? The situation is always the same. If the employer knows for sure that

it does not really have to reach an agreement because its friends in the Conservative government will intervene, violate rights and prevent its workers from striking, then what incentive does the employer have to negotiate in good faith and try to find a solution? That is the major problem.

• (1225)

[English]

They should give negotiation a chance.

We have a Conservative government that is always on the side of the employers and never on the side of the workers of this country. Workers have a fundamental right to exert economic pressure and strike if they need to in order to force employers to recognize problems and find solutions.

The minister just said that a negotiated deal is always better than an imposition of anything. Why is she imposing back-to-work legislation again and again? It is the seventh time that the Conservatives would do that since they were elected in 2006. It is a bad habit that they have; they take a side every time and break the balance of power between the two parties. We are saying to give the workers a chance to negotiate and to exert their rights.

The Minister of Labour just said that the recent decision of the Supreme Court had nothing to do with the right to strike. I contradict that. I have a quote from a Supreme Court judge in that decision from a few weeks ago. Judge Abella wrote the following:

Where good faith negotiations break down, the ability to engage in the collective withdrawal of services is a necessary component of the process through which workers can continue to participate meaningfully in the pursuit of their collective workplace goals. In this case, the suppression of the right to strike amounts to a substantial interference with the right to a meaningful process of collective bargaining.

This is exactly what the decision of the Supreme Court is about. It is about the fundamental right of workers to exert some pressure on an employer to improve their working conditions.

If those workers are refused the right to strike, that is an interference of their fundamental rights. This is exactly what the Conservative government is doing, again and again.

It is a sad day. The right to strike in this country is under attack. Unions were considered illegal organizations before 1872. We are asking whether the government wants to go back to that point in time. Every time that it can crush workers and their unions, the government does it systematically. It has done it with Bill C-525, Bill C-377, and Bill C-4, other attacks on health and safety issues.

It is a sad day for democracy. It is a sad day for the workers of this country. It is a sad day for the labour movement. Workers can count on the NDP to defend their rights because we will protect the freedom of negotiation and collective bargaining. This is a value that we on this side of the House cherish and care about. Workers know that in a few months they will have the opportunity to have the first social democrat, pro-union, pro-worker, government in this country. It is coming.

Government Orders

●(1230)

[*Translation*]

I would like to reiterate that the labour minister told us that the Supreme Court's recent decision had nothing to do with exerting economic pressure or the right to strike. However, Justice Abella indicated in the ruling given a few weeks ago that the suppression of the right to strike interferes with the right to a meaningful process of collective bargaining, a process that provides an opportunity to get results.

In this case, it is extremely dangerous for the entire labour movement and for all workers to have a government that systematically takes the employer's side and tramples on workers' rights.

[*English*]

It is critical with the CP issue, and when there is a threat of back-to-work legislation hanging over their heads, to ask why the employer would negotiate in good faith. The employer knows it has good friends in power in Ottawa. The government will be on the employer's side and will force workers to go back to work. There is no reason for the employer to negotiate and look for a compromise.

Our concern is also the safety issue that is on the table for Canadian Pacific workers. It is a safety issue for everybody in this country: for the workers, first and foremost, of course, but also for everybody else. It is a question of the hours of work being too long, and extreme fatigue. We are talking about conductors who are driving freight trains that can be four kilometres long. We can imagine the consequences if the conductor is too tired to be aware of the dangers or everything that is going on.

This is not only the vision of the union. It is a problem that has been recognized by Transport Canada, and even by the companies. Transport Canada's own analysis of CP and CN employee scheduling records, from six different rail terminals across Canada, concluded that on the timing and length of each shift, assigned through an unpredictable on-call system, extreme fatigue was rampant.

In 4% of cases, employees were already extremely fatigued at the start of their shift because they did not have enough hours to sleep. It is a shame.

The government is not acting to correct that situation. Canadians should know that their safety is being put at risk by the government. We want that to change.

Forty-five percent of employees became extremely exhausted during work, and nearly all, 99%, were fatigued at least once during a month.

It was the same problem, the same issue, three years ago when employees of CP went on strike for a couple of days. After that, of course the Conservative government came here to vote on back-to-work legislation. The workers at that time were promised that the situation would be fixed: "Do not go on strike, we will negotiate and fix it."

However, three years later, it is the same story. The same problems are still there. Extreme fatigue is still a problem for members of the Teamsters who are working for CP. Nothing has changed. We are

back here again in the House of Commons, talking about back-to-work legislation.

My guess is that in three years we will be back again, because the issue will still not have been solved. There is no incentive for CP to solve the problem. The Conservatives are not helping. The Minister of Labour is not helping.

●(1235)

[*Translation*]

I think it is worth repeating, because the main issue in dispute here is not that workers want higher pay or want to extort more money from their employer. This is not about money. Incidentally, Canadian Pacific is an extremely profitable company. It has nothing to complain about; business is good. The discussions and debates are really about a matter of public safety. People need to be aware of that, because this is about the problem of too much overtime and the fatigue this causes. Canadian Pacific workers, the train operators, are not getting the rest they need, which leads to extreme fatigue.

What do the workers want? To be able to stop working and go home after 10 hours of work. All they are asking for is to not work more than 10 hours. What is this, the 19th century? Right now, train conductors have to work up to 12 hours straight before they can get a real rest. This is 2015; this is shameful. This Conservative government is doing nothing. In fact, it is actually helping rail companies perpetuate this practice.

Consider the potential consequences if a conductor driving a four-kilometre-long train is tired, does not have the necessary reflexes, and is unable to read the terrain or the dangers up ahead. Recent tragedies have shown us how important rail safety is. Everyone needs to know that this is a public safety issue and that the Conservatives are doing nothing about it.

A few minutes ago, I said that three years ago, CP workers, Teamsters members, went on strike for a few days on the issue of fatigue on the job and lack of breaks. The Conservative government forced them back to work. They were told not to worry, that this would be resolved, that there would be negotiations and recommendations would be made. Nothing was done. Today, in 2015, three years later, these same workers are going back on strike on the same issue of fatigue at work because nothing has been resolved. Now, we have another bill that is going to force them back to work again.

Government Orders

Should we allow the Conservatives to remain in power, I would not be surprised if people have to deal with a CP strike in three years. Unfortunately, if the Conservatives are still in power, they will again force them to go back to work. However, even Transport Canada recognized the issue of workplace fatigue for train conductors. It is not the Teamsters, the union, the CLC, but Transport Canada that is talking about this. Investigations of six different train terminals across the country led Transport Canada to conclude that the problem of extreme fatigue was rampant across Canada. In 4% of cases, employees are even extremely fatigued at the start of their shift, at the start of their work day, because they often do not get enough rest between two shifts. Fully 45% of employees are extremely tired or even exhausted while on the job. Forty-five per cent. Almost everyone, 99% according to Transport Canada, is tired at least once a month.

That has an impact on the workers. Obviously, it is bad for their health, their family life and their work. It puts everyone at risk.

The NDP does not want train conductors to experience fatigue at work. That is basic and straightforward. We do not understand why the Conservatives are still refusing to resolve this issue.

Even our neighbours to the south, the United States, where private enterprise is king and people despise regulations, have more regulations governing hours of work for rail company employees than we do. That is bizarre.

Why have the Conservatives never managed to fix this problem? We do not understand, but it puts huge swaths of our communities at risk.

Over the past five years, there have been at least seven accidents that, thankfully, did not cost any lives, but that happened because train conductors were tired at work. This is a real problem.

We have to find a solution, but we will not find a solution by preventing workers from exercising their right to take job action or go on strike. We know that because this is like groundhog day: it is the same old story over and over again.

●(1240)

[*English*]

I want to emphasize the fact that it is a real problem. The extreme fatigue of CP workers is real. Transport Canada has revealed that in the last five years, at least seven accidents or incidents were caused by fatigue of drivers or conductors of those trains. It is a real problem, but the government has no solution. Its only way to act is always ideological, always against unions, always against workers and against the safety of Canadians.

It is really sad. It is another case of the Conservatives going against international law. There is a labour organization in Switzerland that recognized that the right to strike is a fundamental right in modern societies. Once again, the government is going against the last decision of the Supreme Court and against international law.

On this side of the House, we think that workers can organize, defend their rights, and improve their working conditions. It is not the job of the government to oppose that, because it helps to build better communities. We always hear the Conservatives talk about the middle class and how they will defend the little guys of the middle

class, but the middle class is, for the most part, a creation of the labour movement in this country and in all countries. Without the labour movement we would have no middle class.

If we want to defend the middle class, we must give the workers the tools to negotiate, to gain something in collective agreements, and to make sure that they are working in safe places. We must make sure that we do not put the safety of citizens of this country at risk.

[*Translation*]

Not only is the current federal government going against the Supreme Court's recent decision in the Saskatchewan case, but it is also going against regulations of the Geneva-based International Labour Organization, which considers the right to strike and the right to free collective bargaining to be fundamental.

However, this is not surprising coming from an extremely ideological Conservative government that always responds in the same way when Canadian workers try to exercise their rights and improve their working conditions. This government pulls out the big guns and beats them back, telling them to shut up and get back to work. It does not want to listen to them; they are annoying.

What is important to this government is that companies continue to rake in profits, regardless of how or why and regardless of the rules, even if it makes people sick.

The Conservatives often like to say they are standing up for the middle class. However, the middle class is mainly a creation and a consequence of union struggles by workers who got organized, defended themselves at their workplace and negotiated better collective agreements.

If we are talking about the middle class, we must also talk about the tools that workers created to improve their situation. The NDP will always be there to stand up for workers and their families, for workplace health and safety and for public safety.

Unfortunately, again today, we see that the Conservative government is violating workers' rights and putting public safety at risk. I hope that all of us in the House will oppose this back-to-work bill—yet another one—and stand up not only for workers, but also for the middle class and public safety.

●(1245)

[*English*]

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting discussion we are having today, particularly the one that we just heard.

I noticed a lot of focus on rights. One thing I never heard, though, was a reference to rights in conjunction with responsibilities.

The other focus was on 10 hours of work. It is interesting that nurses in Ontario work 12-hour shifts saving lives, and we do not hear about these issues from our nurses. Their standard hours are 12-hour shifts, although they do not work every day of the week.

Government Orders

With respect to the time, the discussions and negotiations started back in November, about three and a half months ago.

Where I come from in Ontario, agriculture and the auto industry are the largest industries. The rail system is used to move grain out west and to bring in fertilizers and potash. The auto industry hires tens of thousands of workers. How do those members feel when those plants shut down and union workers do not have work?

Hospitals in most places up north require the rail system to deliver propane and fuel to run them. How does the member feel knowing that the north does not have the energy to run them, especially on a day like today when it is so cold? I wonder how the member feels about those union workers who do not have a job but likely do have health concerns. How does the NDP plan on telling all these—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, there are very many misconceptions on the Conservative side. It is terrific. Only someone who knows almost nothing about labour relations and collective negotiations could say things like that. Oh, my God. The member said that the workers have negotiated for three months and that is long enough. No, it is not. It takes time, and we have to give them time. The two sides at the table need a balanced position of power, and right now the Conservative government is taking one side. It is breaking the balance of labour relations in this country.

The workers have not even been on strike for 48 hours, yet the Conservatives claim it is too long. The workers have some rights and should be able to exert pressure on their employer, and the reason is public safety.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. I really appreciated his comments.

He just said that this is about employees exerting pressure on their employer. However, is the real issue that we are debating in the House today not the role that the federal government plays as the regulatory authority in Canada, with responsibility for the safety of our rail industry?

Is this really about pressure between two parties? Is that not exactly what the Conservative government would have us believe? Does it not want us to see these differences as just disputes between two parties? The government is trying to distract us so that it does not have to justify the fact that for nearly five years now, it has not invested as it should have in the inspectors, inspections, controls and staff required by the Department of Transport.

That is the major challenge we are facing today.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I see where my colleague from the second opposition party is going with his question. However, the issue today is that the Conservative government is taking a stance against the rights of workers to negotiate and engage in free collective bargaining.

That said, he raised an interesting point, which is that the Conservative government could have been proactive and ensured that there were good working conditions in the rail network. That is true. That does not prevent us from rising today and doing our job to

defend workers and their fundamental rights, which were recognized in the Supreme Court's recent ruling.

However, if the Conservatives had wanted to help CP and CN train conductors, they could have taken action years ago and looked at what is being done in the United States to give these workers decent hours to avoid extreme fatigue, which puts everyone in danger.

● (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that a number of years ago the rail system brought in the safety management system, which is self-reporting. The Lewis report, an independent study commissioned by the Conservative government, outlined how members of CP and CN rail felt the culture of fear to report safety and hazardous conditions that they and their colleagues faced on the job.

Could my colleague address the issue of the culture of a self-regulatory system?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Windsor West for his excellent question.

This Conservative government really deregulated a huge number of sectors. Companies now have to inspect themselves and send their own reports about how nice they are and how well they treat everyone to the federal government. This is a real problem because it is completely biased.

My colleague was right when he said that the people who work for these companies now feel completely abandoned because there is no independent third party to visit the workplace and see if the company's claims are true.

We need a tougher regulatory system with real inspections. We need people who do not work for the company to be the ones writing the reports. Otherwise, of course they are going to make themselves look good.

This culture of fear and bullying in the workplace is a direct consequence of the Conservatives' bad decisions.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his excellent speech. He is doing a great job as the NDP labour critic.

We just had a derailment in Nickel Belt, on Saturday night if I am not mistaken. I cannot say exactly what caused it at this point, because we do not know yet.

Government Orders

However, there was also a derailment in western Canada just a few days ago. The young woman who was in charge of the train has been subjected to disciplinary measures. She said she did not receive any training. This is happening more and more. Companies like CN and CP are not required to train their employees because the government will protect those companies. Training comes with contract negotiations, which take a really long time.

Right now in my riding, Nickel Belt, negotiations are under way with Vale. They began three months ago and will continue for another three or four months. However, the Conservatives are not giving the two parties a chance to negotiate.

In his role as the NDP labour critic, I wonder if the member could talk about what we could do better, besides getting rid of the Conservatives in 2015.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nickel Belt for that great question. Indeed, getting rid of the Conservatives is a good place to start. After that, we have to have an NDP government that will be able to respect the unions.

The 4 million people in the country who are members of a union make unions the greatest strength of civil society and the largest democratic movement in the country right now. We must respect that and avoid upsetting the balance of power during collective agreement negotiations. We have to allow them to come to an agreement. The government must not attack the workers yet again.

My colleague from Nickel Belt mentioned the train derailment that occurred in his region on the weekend. Fortunately, no one was hurt. Extremely heavy and very long trains and locomotives cross through all of our communities, towns and villages. We need to have the strictest rail safety measures, because this is very dangerous.

The Conservative government is twiddling its thumbs and letting the companies do what they want so that they can make us much profit as possible. This jeopardizes the safety of Canadians. An NDP government would take the necessary measures to enhance rail safety and to provide good working conditions to the employees.

• (1255)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent of the House to split the time with the member for Ottawa Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of a bias in the sense of my family background and history in the CN yards in the Transcona area. Today I represent an area just north of the CP tracks. The railway lines have played a very important role, not only in my life but in all our lives, either directly or indirectly. The government needs to be held accountable for its lack of attention to our rail lines as a whole.

What we are debating today is most unfortunate. We in the Liberal Party do not support the government's proposed initiative for good reason.

It is very critical to acknowledge this. When we think of strikes and the important role unions play in today's society, we cannot underestimate how important it is that there is a sense of fairness when it comes to negotiations. However, that has been absent with the government, which is why I asked the minister when she first raised the issue of back-to-work legislation.

The minister talked about the federal government being involved back in November 2014. There is no doubt in my mind that the government's intention from the get-go was that it would bring in back-to-work legislation virtually at the beck and call of one side over another.

If we were to canvass the thousands of CP workers, I do not think they would respond that they thought the government was approaching this issue in a fair fashion. We see this today with the legislation that is to be brought forward.

There was reference made to the labour issues a few years ago with CP. I had the opportunity to walk with some of the workers three years ago in Winnipeg North. Many of the concerns they expressed to me back then are still there today. I have heard this spoken of in some of the debate that has already taken place today, whether from my colleague for Ottawa Centre, who talked about the issue of fatigue, regulations and safety, as well as other members who also emphasized the importance of fatigue.

When we talk about labour negotiations, it is not all about money. There is a genuine concern that many CP workers have with respect to safety, and they want the Government of Canada to step up and take its responsibility more seriously.

There are certain industries in Canada where there is a need for government, at different levels, to be more directly involved. A good example of that is long-haul truck driving. Regulations are put in place to not only to protect the industry, but to protect the community as a whole and to assist the Canadian economy. There is a need for government to recognize that fact.

The Prime Minister does not seem to understand the importance of Ottawa having a role to play. A good example of that was back in January or February of last year. During question period I stood in my place and was critical of the government because it had dropped the ball in getting prairie wheat to the market.

We had piles of wheat in our prairie fields, and we had empty ships in the Pacific Ocean waiting to be filled with that wheat. What did the government ultimately do? It took months for the Conservatives to realize that they needed to take some action, and then they came up with some sort of a penalty, which was virtually ineffective. They were unable to get the grain to the market.

• (1300)

That is why I find it interesting today that when the minister stood up, she said that this is all for the sake of the Canadian economy. The members of the Liberal Party of Canada understand the Canadian economy. We understand the importance of getting our products to market. However, we also understand that the Conservatives have not been doing their job. That is something on which we want to take the government to task.

Government Orders

I use wheat as just one example. We understand, for the manufacturing industry in Ontario and in other jurisdictions, how important it is for the manufacturers to get their products to market. We understand the importance of the raw materials, whether they are in the ground, above the ground, or being produced, needing to get to market. We understand the important role CP Rail and CN Rail play in Canada's economy in providing valuable middle-class jobs and many more. We understand all of that, but we also understand the importance of our unions in modern society.

I do not believe for a moment that the thousands of workers who work for CP believe that there was an even playing field when it came to the negotiations that were taking place. For many of those workers, they understood that they had a government that was biased, and that bias is now starting to show in a tangible way.

I understand the importance of that issue. When I was first elected to the Manitoba legislature, the Meech Lake accord, I would argue, was the number one issue, but following that was likely the issue of final offer selection. There was heated debate in the province of Manitoba. If there was a lesson to be learned from that, it was that when talking about collective bargaining, there has to be a sense of fair play. If there is not a sense that both parties are coming to the table on an equal playing field, arguing for their positions, then there is a significant advantage to one side over the other.

Based on listening to the minister and her inability to directly answer my question, I do not believe that CP officials for a moment felt that they were going to be threatened in any fashion with any substantial work stoppage. The Conservative Party would be there to protect their interests, not necessarily the Canadian economy. The minister stands in her place and tries to justify the action. I would rather have seen a minister who was more enthusiastic in November 2014 in ensuring that there was a sense of fairness in the negotiations that were taking place. I do not believe that it had to get to the point where we are today.

That is why I question to what degree the government is moving forward in the best interest of not only the management and the employees but in terms of the whole process in which we find ourselves today. I would suggest that based on their previous attempts, the Conservatives will be found wanting in terms of addressing important labour issues in Canada.

Let us look at what is happening at Canada Post, for example. I wish I had time to expand on that. We could look at what the Conservatives could have been doing on this issue three years ago, when the strike was there on the issue of fatigue and railway safety.

● (1305)

Just this last weekend, there was a tragedy 80 kilometres outside of Timmins.

There is so much more the government could be doing, whether it is through regulation or bringing people together, to ensure that a number of the issues the employees are trying to address could be addressed in a different format. That has been my experience when I have had the opportunity to talk to employees but also, on occasion, to people in management.

With those words, as I have indicated, I will be voting against the back-to-work legislation.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague to expand on a couple of points he made in his speech.

One was the question of lingering safety concerns with respect to rail safety as a whole in Canada. He is aware, as members of the House should be aware, that the Minister of Transport, and each one who has come before her, has had detailed meetings, briefings, and exchanges with labour groups, safety groups, and the railways themselves. Each in their turn has raised profound and important security and safety concerns with the minister directly.

To what extent has the government been negligent in not taking the action required, which has now led to strike action?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member for Ottawa South is right. This is one of the reasons I indicated that the government has dropped the ball. We know that safe working conditions has been raised with the ministry for the last number of years, and the government has virtually turned a deaf ear to those concerns. The most compelling example, and I have heard it right from the CP Rail workers, is the issue of fatigue. The impact that is having is significant and serious, yet the government has not addressed that issue whatsoever.

There is no way to convince me, and I suspect many others, that the government has been doing its job in protecting the industry by ensuring that there is a safe working atmosphere and that the communities our trains drive through are becoming safer, either through regulations or other actions. The government has been turning a deaf ear and has done a minimum in terms of trying to improve overall conditions.

That is, in good part, why I am not surprised that we find ourselves in a situation that would have been completely avoidable if the government had acted on the issue of railway safety and other concerns that have been brought to its attention over the years.

● (1310)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to follow my colleague and some of the very important and profound comments he made about where we are with respect to this back-to-work legislation and why the Liberal Party of Canada cannot support it.

It is important to step back for a second so that Canadians can see the repeat pattern of crisis and back-to-work legislation.

Let us remind Canadians, from the perspective of the Liberal Party of Canada, that the federal government has an obligation to get the very big things right. One of the things a federal government has to get right is rail safety.

Rail safety in this country today is in a state of flux. We have had a 1,500% increase in the transportation of oil by rail in the last three years. Even if every single contemplated pipeline is built in Canada to transport fossil fuels south, east, and west and is used at maximum capacity, present projections suggest that by the year 2024, there will be one million barrels of excess oil capacity per day that will have to be transported by rail.

Government Orders

When a government minister stands up and says that this is exclusively about the economy, our international reputation, and the movement of our citizens, she is only partly telling the truth. Much more is below the surface.

Of course, this is in large part about collective bargaining and the right to collectively bargain. We all know that. However, as the vice-chair of the standing committee on transport, who has been active now for over two years in all of the details around rail safety post-Lac Mégantic, I believe that the government is trying to project a different series of concerns to mask a fundamental and lingering problem in Canadian society today, and that is rail safety. The government would have us look over here as the minister distracts from the government's failure to take serious action on safety and security.

Canadians are not going to be surprised to learn that at committee, we have had the heads of CN, CP, the Teamsters, Unifor, and other unions and stakeholders all come forward and say the same thing. They want more safety and security in the rail system. They have all agreed on this. They have all called for enhanced safety. In fact, they have been unanimous about it.

Part of the challenge we face as a country is that we have had five ministers of transport in eight years. That is not serious. How is the minister of the crown seized with one of the most important and foundational responsibilities in Canada, which is transport, supposed to do the job if he or she is being shipped out, shipped down, or shipped up through the department of transport in 16 to 18 months?

This is one of the challenges we face. We have had a succession of ministers transiting through the department of transport on their way elsewhere. The safety and security they are supposed to uphold are undermined.

By failing to address the serious issue of adequate rest for railway operators, the government has failed to prevent this CP Rail strike. It is not management. It is not labour. That simplistic, sometimes antiquated notion, often put forward by my colleagues in the NDP, is, in my view, *dépassé*.

All parties want to see the requisite investments in safety and security, and they know that they are not getting it from the government. That is why the government is rushing through this back-to-work legislation. It is an attempt to masquerade and to cover the fact that it has not addressed the foundations of some of the challenges we have going forward. This puts our railway employees, Canadians, and our communities at risk.

• (1315)

It is the government's responsibility—not the railway company's responsibility, not the union's responsibility—to establish rest periods for railway workers to ensure that railway employees, Canadians, and communities are safe. It cannot be fobbed off or sloughed off. We cannot simply pretend this is a dispute.

“Irreconcilable differences”, says the minister. “We have been there, trying to help broker a deal”, says the minister. Really?

The Minister of Labour should talk to the Minister of Transport and find out why it is that for over six years, the government has been meeting with union representatives, the railways, and advisory

groups in backroom meetings. They have been seized with these foundational security concerns for all that time.

The Conservatives knew this was coming. It was no surprise. Now the minister comes out and says that it is merely a negotiation of differences between two parties.

She is right that several unions have settled. Unifor and 1,800 employees have settled. The Teamsters and its 3,000 members on strike have not, but this is not reducible to mere union-management or labour-management differences.

Do not take my word for it; take the report of the Auditor General. It is a scathing indictment of the government's failure to address the foundational issues around rail safety for almost nine years.

The government does not like to hear it, but I like to remind Canadians that Conservatives have spent more money each and every year for the past five years on economic action plan advertising during the NFL or hockey games. These spots cost \$37,000, \$67,000, and even \$300,000 for 30-second advertisements.

It is interesting that not one of those Conservative MPs can look their constituents in the eye and say that they can defend that spending, because they know they cannot, not with the real needs out there in Canadian society and certainly not with the real needs of rail safety.

The Auditor General pointed out many times and in many places that there are huge problems. Here is one to remember. In the three fiscal years that the Auditor General audited, the government's Department of Transport audited only 25% of the safety management systems it said had to be audited to keep the railways safe. In the same three-year period, VIA Rail, carrying four million passengers a year, was not audited once. Those facts are indisputable.

In conclusion, we cannot support this back-to-work knee-jerk legislative response. It is a masquerade. It is hiding the foundational issues around safety and security that Conservatives have refused to address. That takes money. It takes inspectors. It takes investment. The government has an obligation to get the big things right; rail safety is one of those things, and it is not doing it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Ottawa South. His speech was very interesting.

The Conservatives are clearly causing a crisis when we should be negotiating an agreement.

Government Orders

We have a real problem with today's motion. I completely agree with my colleague that the Conservatives seem more interested in advertising than in solving the problems we are facing in the area of rail safety, for example. We are all too aware of this danger in Canada. Canadians, and especially Quebeckers, are very concerned about this issue given the accident that occurred in Lac-Mégantic.

We want workers to be proud of what they do, we want their working conditions to allow them to do their jobs effectively and we want them to be willing to report any problems with rail safety, as there were in Lac-Mégantic.

I would like my colleague to comment on the recent decision rendered by the Supreme Court, which found that collective bargaining is a fundamental right in Canada, and I would like him to explain how that relates to rail safety. Do agreements that are negotiated between employers and workers lead to a better workplace and can they improve the safety of Canadians?

• (1320)

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right.

I respect the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. Our party does not have a history of attacking the Supreme Court of Canada or its Chief Justice. We will leave that to the current Prime Minister of Canada.

The hon. member is absolutely right in saying that employees on the front lines of our rail system have a lot to contribute and want to improve the safety, the efficiency and even the profitability of the railway they work for. The Conservatives' outdated belief that the unions are just there to get as much as they can from the employer is false.

The employees of an organization are essential to that organization's success and are thus deserving of a much more respectful approach. I therefore agree with my colleague that this type of negotiation can enhance safety.

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the remarks from my colleague from Ottawa South.

It seems to me that when we look at the history of the government, we see a certain mentality in the corporate sector now that they really do not need to negotiate with the unions, whether it was Canada Post or the railways in the past or others the government has a certain mandate for. The corporate sector knows that if it negotiates poorly, the government will eventually order employees back to work. That is part of the problem we have.

The member talked about the safety and security of Canadians and the Canadian workforce and about our need for this transportation sector. I wonder if the member could expand a little on why we got to this stage. Is it, as I suggested, that there is a mentality out there that the government will take the side of corporations and order people back to work? Are there other things that the government should have done to prevent this strike so that we would not have had the effect of this two-day loss to our economy?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, the member for Malpeque is again correct. The government could have done many things. It was

forewarned over and over again, through testimony, witnesses, overtures, meetings, advisory groups, and councils. The situation has been going on now for almost nine years.

The government should have invested far more in inspection and audit capacity inside Transport Canada. The government should have invested far more resources in enhancing the safety management systems that our railways, airlines, and shipping companies rely on. They are the central place where regulator and regulated meet to make sure things are safe, and the government should have invested far more in enhancing that capacity.

The old idea that a group in Canadian society can be picked out and blamed is Republican Conservative tactic 101. The idea is to find a bad guy, and in this case it must be the unions, and blame them. That is nonsensical, not efficient, and not economic.

The railways have never been more profitable, and we are for that. Why would they not reach out, work with the front-line workers, and ensure that the legitimate concerns they have with safety and security, such as sleep, are addressed?

These things could have been defused months ago, if not years ago. This was a predictable strike, and the government knows it. Shame on the government for allowing this to happen.

• (1325)

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to rise today to discuss the issue of the work stoppage at Canadian Pacific Railway.

The failure to resolve the labour dispute between CP and the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, or the TCRC, is having an extremely negative impact on our economy. We heard that earlier from our Minister of Labour.

Knowing that today one in five Canadian jobs depends on exports, it is clear that our prosperity hinges on opening new markets for Canadian goods, services, and investments. Canada is a trading nation, and trading countries must be able to count on a reliable and effective transportation system, including a railway system. This work stoppage at CP could have negative repercussions on Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner.

CP is one of our two largest railways and plays a pivotal role in North America's supply chain for getting goods to and from Canadian and international markets. CP's rail network spans 22,000 kilometres from the port of Metro Vancouver to the port of Montreal and into parts of the U.S. northeast and the Midwest. CP plays a significant role in moving the majority of Canada's forest products, agriculture and agri-food products, petroleum products, cereal grains, coal, and consumer and manufactured goods, including automobiles.

Government Orders

Here we are today with a disrupted railway system. We have to take the situation very seriously. This is about keeping the Canadian economy healthy and prosperous. It is about making sure Canadian jobs are protected. It is about ensuring that Canadians are able to distribute their products across Canada and the United States. A responsible government must show leadership and act in the interests of all Canadians. That is exactly why we are doing everything we can to help the parties arrive at an agreement.

Let me give an idea of how badly the work stoppage at CP is affecting our economy. A work stoppage in rail transportation in Canada has such an important impact on so many people and industries that the cumulative effects are significant. For example, a railway stoppage could cause layoffs in manufacturing and automobile production. The work stoppage at CP will have other major impacts on workers and their families. I am talking not just about job losses, but also about the broader impact for the hundreds of thousands of people who depend on the goods carried by rail.

A work stoppage at CP would also have an adverse impact on the movement of grain, which is only now returning to normal conditions following last year's backlog. As members may recall, in March of last year our government introduced an order in council to ensure that the supply chain operates effectively in delivering Canadian grain to market.

It is not just the industries that rely on freight that will be affected. The railways also provide the tracks for commuters in our country's three largest cities of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. A strike will create slowdowns and congestion in these vital cities.

The economic cost of a work stoppage at CP is profound and will cost our economy an estimated decline of \$205 million in GDP per week. We just cannot afford such a loss of productivity and revenue. The world economy is more interdependent than ever before, and a work stoppage like this one will affect both inbound and outbound goods and merchandise in Canada. Our industries could take years to recover from lost business and lost investments caused by this work stoppage. The strike will only further exacerbate the uncertain state of our fragile global economy.

It is clear that we as parliamentarians have an important role to play in helping the parties to resolve this situation. Our economy must be protected. Our products must reach their markets, and Canadian jobs must be preserved.

• (1330)

Canada offers some of the best working conditions in the world and we have a solid reputation for having safe, fair, and productive workplaces.

The Canada Labour Code establishes a framework for collective bargaining so that representatives of both employees and employers have an opportunity to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment.

Our government is doing everything possible to help the parties find a resolution.

Let me explain how we got to this point in the dispute. The collective agreement for CP running trades employees expired on

December 31, 2014. In mid-November 2014, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service received a notice of dispute from CP.

Of course, since that time, we have continued to make every effort to help both parties reach an agreement. We offered the parties every resource and support set out in the Canada Labour Code, including the appointment of conciliation officers and mediators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, to help them reach a resolution. There have been numerous meetings between the employer, the union, and FMCS officials, with the aim of resolving the dispute. Moreover, the Minister of Labour has encouraged representatives from CP and the TCRC to continue working together to reach an agreement.

On February 15, a work stoppage began.

A negotiated agreement is always the best solution to any labour dispute. We are still hoping that CP and the TCRC will find a way to resolve their differences. However, we must also be prepared to act to ensure the resumption of rail services at CP.

The entire Canadian population will feel the impact of this work stoppage, not only Canadian businesses. We need to do everything we can to keep our economy rolling. To do that, we have to ensure that CP resumes its operations. We must do what is necessary to protect our economy, our workers, and our businesses. All members of this House must act in the best interest of all Canadians.

For this reason, I stand here today to urge all hon. members to quickly pass this act to provide for the resumption of rail service operations. I strongly encourage each of my colleagues to support the bill so that we can continue creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, listening to all this, I wonder if a single member on the other side of the House understands what it is like to drive a convoy of 250 rail cars.

The train conductor is constantly under stress; he cannot afford to be distracted for even a split second. Given the length of the train, something can happen one kilometre behind the conductor and he will only find out when the train derails.

If the government were the least bit responsible, it would not be passing a bill to force conductors to be on duty. Instead, it would pass a bill to prohibit people who are overtired or exhausted from going to work because it is not safe.

I would like to thank these workers for bringing a serious threat to our attention.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that this government takes the issue of rail safety extremely seriously. Our Minister of Labour and Minister of Transport have been focused squarely upon this issue for the last number of months. In the area of rail safety, numerous enhancements to Transport Canada regulations have been made to improve rail safety in this country.

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However, this issue is about ensuring that significant adverse impacts to our economy do not take place. This legislation would ensure that CP continues to operate so that those negative consequences to the economy do not occur. It would not preclude a settlement from taking place. What it would do is to allow for the continued important operations of CP, so that those other important labour-related issues could continue to be discussed in a parallel forum.

• (1335)

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague touched on this a bit but I think it is important to assure Canadians and the great people at the rail company about the following.

Would this legislation propose imposing a settlement; in other words, would it finalize all of the terms of any grievances that exist and force the parties into an actual settlement, or is it just back-to-work legislation to keep the services to Canadians and our economy strong?

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that excellent question is that it does not impose a settlement. The purpose of this legislation is to keep the operations of CP continuing to ensure that there are not significant and extreme consequences for our nation's economy. It is not just about the goods and the services that are transported by rail, but also about all of the jobs in our manufacturing and automotive sectors and the farmer's out west who rely on rail and need grain moved to market.

As a government, we have a wider scope of interest and concern than the opposition has. Our concern is the continued health of our economy and the continued protection of jobs in this country. That is exactly what this legislation would contribute to.

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while I disagree with most of the parliamentary secretary's points, I certainly agree with him that we need to be looking at the Canadian economy with great regard. We have to make sure that we defend it in the ways we can.

However, the Supreme Court has said very clearly that the right to strike is a fundamental right in this country and that curtailing it can only be done only in circumstances that are justifiable in a free and democratic society. With a strike that is not even 24-hours old, it seems a little precipitous to send people back to work in response.

If we are to talk about rail safety I certainly would like to see more attention placed on it by the government than it has until this point. If it were serious about rail safety, it would try to work in partnership with the workers of the rail industry to ensure they are partners in this endeavour. Legislating them back to work will not lead to better rail safety. If anything it would result in working conditions that led to the rail tragedies we saw recently in northern Ontario and western Canada, and in Lac-Mégantic.

The government seems precipitously inclined to attack workers, but it does not seem to take rail safety anywhere near as seriously as it should. I would like to hear from the minister exactly how the municipalities are supposed to work with the recent regulations that say that dangerous goods passing through their communities will only be divulged to them six months after the fact. How does that help rail safety?

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, I would begin by making it absolutely clear that the government clearly wishes to have a negotiated settlement in this case, but in order for that to happen, both parties need to have the will to work toward that common goal and the gap between the two sides needs to be bridgeable.

What this legislation clearly does is to ensure the continued operations of CP while those other important labour issues continue to be resolved and our economy and jobs in Canada are protected in the meantime. For the last number of months, the Minister of Labour and the federal Department of Labour have been providing every tool in the toolbox to help the parties toward the objective of a negotiated settlement, but we have not seen enough progress in that regard.

Finally, with respect to rail safety, in the last number of months the Minister of Transport has made numerous enhancements to the Railway Safety Act regulations to accelerate the phasing out of DOT-111 cars. These regulations improve railway safety oversight and grade crossings. There are also enhanced regulations with respect to the transportation of dangerous goods, with new administrative monetary penalties in place for violations of these regulations. Furthermore, there was a negotiated arrangement with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities with respect to the disclosure of information on the transportation of dangerous goods.

• (1340)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary and carry on with the discussion we just had.

I have heard from municipalities in my riding that while the recent regulations are an improvement, they are far from satisfactory. The government tends to look upon its proposals with a very positive attitude, but when it actually seeks consultation with the greater community, it finds there is an awful lot lacking.

I, for one, have not heard a single municipality in my riding say that being told six months after the fact that a dangerous good is passing through the community is in any way adequate. Certainly when it comes to the DOT-111 cars that will be retrofitted, it is really not happening anywhere near as fast as it could, according to Canadian manufacturing capacity. I would like to see improvements there.

Getting back to the motion at hand, the strike is of incredibly short duration and we have not seen any consequential effects on the Canadian economy. When the government says it is trying to avoid extreme effects on the Canadian economy, I challenge the minister to show me some numbers where the Canadian economy is actually in extreme peril due to the current strike.

It is laudable that we are looking to make sure that negotiations have been fluid and continuous, but to force workers back to work, taking away their greatest tool in negotiations, the right to strike, I think is a terrible mistake. I think it contravenes the recent ruling of the Supreme Court.

Would the parliamentary secretary please comment on the recent ruling of the Supreme Court regarding the right to strike?

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, to address my hon. colleague's last point first, if the strike continues and we as a government do not do the responsible thing by ensure a restoration of CP operations, it will have an estimated impact on our GDP, on our economy, of over \$200 million per week. That is significant.

With respect to the arrangement with the FCM, the Minister of Transport consulted extensively with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Municipalities across this country are extremely satisfied with the information exchanged under that agreement.

With respect to the transportation of dangerous goods, we also have to be aware that there are safety and security issues at stake. Municipalities know there is essentially no change in the type of goods that are transported through their communities; so that information is absolutely critically important, valuable, and relevant.

● (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today despite the disagreeable nature of what we are discussing.

Once again, the government wants to impose its way of doing things and seeing things. As everyone knows, CP and its employees are conducting negotiations on a safety issue that affects the public in a very broad sense.

As the transport critic for the official opposition, I have seen all the government's failures with respect to rail safety. Take Lac-Mégantic, for example. That tragedy affected many people. There were many failures on the government's part. I am not the one saying so; the Transportation Safety Board of Canada and the Auditor General are. Not only does Transport Canada not have enough resources, but the department was also singled out by the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, which is quite rare, for its lax approach and failure to enforce laws and regulations. Furthermore, the transport minister at the time, who is now the Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs, granted MMA an exception permitting it to have only one conductor on the train.

His notion of rail safety and the system he put in place are very worrisome. This is a matter of safety. For those who do not know, we are debating the fact that CP workers want to address how fatigue is managed in their negotiations. At meetings of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, we learned that fatigue is a huge problem. Who is ultimately responsible for conductor fatigue? The government has singled out a few individuals in the case of MMA, but it was an entire system that failed, the system that the Conservative government put in place and is continuing to put in place. Workers are negotiating safety issues and, once again, the government wants them to get back to work, so it is flexing its muscles and interfering with the negotiation process.

We are debating a motion today, even though we have not yet seen the bill and its content. This is yet another example of the Conservatives' wanting to impose their own views. We are used to this since we unfortunately have a majority government. However, since we are talking about public safety, it is beyond comprehension that the government is acting in such a cavalier fashion, without

Government Orders

considering all aspects of the problem. For example, in the United States they looked at how to manage fatigue. Other companies, such as VIA Rail, have also looked at the possibilities and negotiated with their own employees. In this case, we are talking about CP, the Canadian Pacific Railway, and even though negotiations are not even complete, the company seems to have the blind support of the government to force workers back to work.

I cannot stress enough the importance of public safety. The government's primary role is to protect Canadians. Not only has the government failed to take action with respect to rail safety—it lets rail companies regulate and inspect themselves—but it is also making cuts to the budget for rail safety. This is having a major impact on the number of inspectors. Transport Canada is supposed to fulfill this role, but the Auditor General and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada both stated that this was a problem.

● (1350)

[*English*]

I want to emphasize why it is important to talk about rail safety today. Rail safety is what the employees of CPR are negotiating with the employer. We are talking about making sure that conductors or engineers, people who work on the trains, are not overfatigued. This is why there are negotiations right now.

Unfortunately, we have a government that says that regardless of what the parties are doing, it is going to impose back-to-work legislation. Again, as I mentioned, we are debating before we see that whole process, which shows how quickly the government wants to act on this front, without looking at the issue of safety for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

This is not the first time the government has imposed its view of things. It is going against the principle of freedom of negotiation, which was upheld in a Supreme Court of Canada decision at the end of January.

The Supreme Court of Canada has reprimanded the government a few times, but the government continues to ignore the law and show no concern for safety even though it is important to people. This makes absolutely no sense. Unlike the government, I believe in the rule of law and the protection of our rights and freedoms.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of safety because we are talking about fatigue among train conductors. The employer and the employees—the unions—will have to negotiate the best approach to protecting train conductors even though they are not the only ones operating the trains.

It is important to protect workers' right to negotiate and their right to safety so they can work under appropriate conditions. The government should consider the terrible consequences in the many countries where workers' rights have been ignored. For example, in Bangladesh, where those rights were ignored, many people died following an unfortunate incident. Our situation is different, but this shows that the government is heading in the wrong direction.

Statements by Members

By imposing its way of looking at things and refusing to listen and by forcing the workers back to work, the government is taking away their right to negotiate in good faith and find common ground. The government is therefore favouring the employer without even taking the issues being negotiated into account.

The parliamentary secretary talked about economic impact. In my riding of Brossard—La Prairie, this will affect people who take the train in Candiac, for example. I agree that it is unfortunate, but we have to focus on the objective, which is keeping people safe. People will not be well served if the problem of fatigue among conductors is not resolved. The government is imposing its views without proposing any solutions. Will Canadians really be any safer?

The government needs to examine whether safety really is one of its priorities. The minister says it is important, but the government's concrete actions say otherwise. The Lac-Mégantic tragedy really opened our eyes to the importance of safety when it comes to transporting dangerous goods and to unsafe practices, including what MMA was doing, for example.

• (1355)

Again, those are not my words. The TSB clearly said that safety was not a priority for this company. It had financial concerns to tend to and it made its finances a priority over safety. We saw what happened.

The government is doing the same thing now. It is making the economy a priority. I realize this has an impact. I agree. However, safety has an even bigger impact. How much is the life of a train employee or the aftermath of a disaster worth to the government?

Again, we heard about the derailments near Nickel Belt and in Alberta. Derailments continue to happen. What is the government doing instead of finding solutions to increase public safety and rail safety? It just rejected what the employees are saying, in other words that there needs to be a system in place that protects the safety of both the employees and the public. Unfortunately, the government is turning a deaf ear yet again.

When we really look at the facts, what is rather shocking is that all the relevant questions were raised in the aftermath of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. We know that there is a problem with inspections. I am not the only one who is saying it. As vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, I know that many witnesses spoke about how important it is to have thorough inspections and how important it is that the government provide the resources necessary to protect the public.

The employees are negotiating to ensure that the public is protected. Meanwhile, the government did not even really look at the facts or the scientific evidence before saying that the things being negotiated are not serious and that the employees need to return to work, regardless of whether the fatigue problem has been resolved.

I would like to give an example that people can relate to. Think about how you would feel after driving your car on a highway for 10 or 12 hours. You would be tired and it would be dangerous. Some people fall asleep. In this case, we are not talking about just one day but perhaps two or three days in a row. Fatigue accumulates. People are negotiating and trying to fight for that protection, but the government is telling them that what they are saying is not serious

and forcing them to return to work, regardless of what they have to do. That is totally unacceptable.

This is not the first time the government has done this. The same thing happened with Canada Post and in several other situations. This government does not listen. Who pays for that, unfortunately? The public does.

The Conservative government needs to remember what happened in Lac-Mégantic. It needs to learn from its mistakes and make public safety a priority.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie will have six and a half minutes for his speech when the House resumes debate on this motion.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

STATEHOOD DAY OF SERBIA

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute today to Canadians of Serbian descent on the 211th anniversary of the Statehood Day of Serbia. It is a day that commemorates the struggle of the Serbian people to regain independence and sovereignty, as well as the first constitution proclaimed on the same day in 1835.

Serbia, Canada's great ally in World War I and World II in the Balkans, is today a dynamic democratic society firmly engaged on its path to a full European Union membership and undivided commitment to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

A sizeable Serbian community lives in Canada today and it is now successfully integrated into the Canadian way of life. One has to do with a respectable and outstanding group within the Canadian society, noteworthy for its prosperity and contribution to Canadian society. The community is also a very important bridge between Canada and Serbia.

Today I invite all hon. members to join me in congratulating Serbia for its statehood day. God bless Canada and Serbia.

* * *

• (1400)

LOUIS RIEL

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is Louis Riel Day, and I call upon this 41st Parliament to finally set the history books straight and exonerate Louis Riel, reverse his conviction for high treason, and instead honour and commemorate his role as the founder of Manitoba, a father of Confederation and the champion of minority rights and the rights of the Métis people.

Louis Riel was a hero, not a traitor. It is now generally accepted that he was wrongly convicted and executed for high treason, murdered by the crown in a sham trial in a case of both justice and mercy denied.

Statements by Members

I am sure all of my colleagues in the House today will agree that it is consistent with history, justice and respect for the Métis people that this Parliament use its authority to reverse the conviction of Louis Riel and to formally recognize, honour and celebrate his true role in the building of this great nation.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents of Don Valley East, and for all of the members of St. George & St. Rueiss Coptic Orthodox Church in my riding, I was horrified to learn about the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya by ISIL.

This massacre adds to a list of atrocities and shows us and the world how genocidal ISIL is. From sexual enslavement of the Yazidi women to the burning alive of the Jordanian pilot, beheading of foreign hostages and the persecution of many other minority groups, these acts are simply unacceptable to civilized people. The savage acts in different geographic locations show us that this ideology and its threats are spreading like a cancer. This is a group who has no human decency and no regard for human life.

As the Prime Minister has stated:

Canada is proud to stand with its coalition partners in the fight against ISIL. We will continue to stand firmly together against these terrorists who threaten the peace and freedom we hold so dear at home and that we wish for those abroad.

Barbaric acts such as this do not shake our resolve but, rather, confirm the rightness—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 48 years ago today, Liberal Prime Minister Lester Pearson officially established the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, based on the concept of equal opportunity for women and men. The royal commission played a major role in defining the status of women as a legitimate and important social and economic issue, and gave a platform for women's voices.

The commission's groundbreaking recommendations on child care, pay equity, prohibiting gender as grounds for discrimination and other matters sadly remain relevant today. Women's equality has taken a step back under the Conservative government's regressive policies, which have put the brakes on the important momentum to close the gap in Canada.

[*Translation*]

As we mark this historic anniversary and the progress made by women over the decades, we must remember that there still remains much work to do in order to achieve true equality.

[*English*]

Let us all celebrate how far we have come, but also commit to equality of opportunity for all Canadians.

VACCINATIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, health officials in Ontario confirmed three new cases of measles, bringing the total number to 11 in Ontario alone. These outbreaks are a direct result of parents not vaccinating their children.

A 2013 United Nations report found Canada's immunization rate had dropped in recent decades to 84%, well below the 95% required for herd immunity, ranking 28th out of 29 industrialized nations. This drop in vaccinations is putting children and vulnerable persons at risk.

Older Canadians well remember the deaths and disabilities brought about by preventable diseases like polio, diphtheria, whooping cough and measles.

Vaccines are safe and effective. All three of my young children have been vaccinated, not just for their sake but for the sake of the young, the sick and the elderly in our community.

I encourage all parents to consult with their family doctors and to ensure their children's vaccinations are up to date.

* * *

CANADIAN FLAG

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in joining my fellow Canadians across the country to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the national flag of Canada.

Since its inception, the national flag has become a source of pride, a symbol of unity and a powerful emblem of the Canadian entity. This celebration is a unique occasion that should be used to reflect on the progress we have made throughout history, to understand our path and to renew our commitment to serve, the best way we can, our country and our people.

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

Our red and white flag has, at its centre, a white square adorned with a majestic maple leaf.

The flag was designed by distinguished Canadians to promote Canadian values: democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

Canada's flag became official by royal proclamation in 1965, and since then it has been recognized internationally as a strong symbol of those values.

On this occasion, I would like to salute the Canadians who participated yesterday in various celebrations across the country marking the 50th anniversary of the flag.

Statements by Members

[English]

NATIONAL POTATO LOVER'S MONTH

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems fitting as we celebrated Valentine's Day this past weekend that we also remember it is heart health month and, as luck would have it, National Potato Lover's Month. We should not forget the importance of the humble potato in our diet, and the significant levels of potassium in potatoes that are critical for our body and crucial for heart function.

Just this last week, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research stations in Fredericton and Lethbridge conducted their new variety release day. The research at these two locations is important as we develop new varieties that are not only resistant to pests, but also attempt to make the potato even healthier.

Canada has a great number of great agriculture producers and growing regions in the country, including a large area of my riding of Tobique—Mactaquac. We also have processors like McCain Foods, which produces one of every three french fries sold around the globe.

Everyone is working hard to produce high quality food for Canadians in addition to healthy choices for our diets. I want to thank all our researchers, our farmers and farm families and processors like McCain that continue their efforts to have a dynamic value chain for potatoes in Canada.

While we may not be able to give our hearts to the humble potato, it sure can give a lot to our hearts.

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CANADIAN COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently, I visited DFO's regional headquarters in Sarnia to recognize the men and women who serve in the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, a nationwide organization that helps to ensure the safety and security of our waterways through its vital work. I was very pleased to announce over \$5 million in funding to support this group.

The value of the work done by the CCGA across Canada cannot be overstated. Each year, its more than 5,000 members carry out over 2,000 rescue missions and save more than 200 lives.

It was an honour to acknowledge the tremendous work of Sarnia's 14 active members across the region. Regardless of weather conditions, members of the PointSAR unit brave the elements for the safety and well-being of mariners from Sombra to Kettle Point. That is why our government is proud to support them and provide them the funding they need to conduct their work.

On behalf of all Canadians, I thank the Coast Guard Auxiliary for its tremendous service.

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LABOUR

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and to thank Ontarians for their participation in Family Day today, where mothers, fathers, sons and daughters can

get together and celebrate a day that is important for the unity of the family.

Unfortunately in the House, the Conservatives chose to attack families by putting in back-to-work legislation that attacks families' safety, values and benefits. Unfortunately, we need to see those things improved in our country, because men and women who go to work every day have those conditions challenged. They deserve to go back home to spend the rest of their night and the next morning with their families.

Family Day should be celebrated with benefits to workers because it means benefits for Canadians.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our economy is still on the road to recovery. Bringing in higher taxes and higher debt is not the path on which we believe Canadians want to be.

Unfortunately, for the Liberal leader, not all members of his party support his carbon tax scheme. Last week, Yukon Liberal leader, Sandy Silver, said Yukon Liberals did not support a carbon tax for the territory. It is no surprise that northerners have been clear that they cannot afford higher taxes.

The Liberal leader has been clear, though, that he would bring back a carbon tax which would lead to higher taxes for Canadian families and raise the price of everything from heating bills to gas and groceries.

Unlike the Liberals, we will stand with the people of Yukon and the north. We believe that bringing in a job killing carbon tax is reckless. Unlike the leader of the Liberal Party, we will never punish Canadians with higher taxes and job killing schemes like a carbon tax.

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately respecting and protecting our official languages have never been priorities for the Conservatives.

Since 2006, the Conservatives have appointed unilingual people to key positions, such as Auditor General and Supreme Court justice.

The Prime Minister has now appointed a unilingual anglophone foreign affairs minister. Members heard me correctly; nothing was lost in translation. A minister of foreign affairs who does not speak French, the language of diplomacy.

Even the Americans have a secretary of state who speaks French. It is difficult to imagine anything more shameful for a country with French as an official language. Once again, this shows the Conservatives' lack of respect for our country's bilingualism, but especially for francophones.

The NDP will continue to promote respect for both our official languages, and I can assure the House that under a New Democratic government the next minister of foreign affairs will be bilingual.

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think I can speak for everyone in the House and across Canada when I say that we are outraged and deeply saddened by the ruthless beheading of Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Christians in Libya by groups linked to ISIL.

This is sadly yet another example of the very real threat that ISIL poses, and the barbaric extremes to which it will take their war against the values we proudly uphold, such as religious freedom.

We are proudly standing with our allies to combat the threat these jihadi terrorists pose to freedom. As the Prime Minister said:

Barbaric acts such as this do not shake our resolve but, rather, confirm the rightness of our cause and the vital necessity of our mission against ISIL. We will not be intimidated.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to express our deepest sympathy to the Coptic community in Canada and around the world for the senseless murder of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya over the weekend.

This is just the latest attack in a long series of horrific killings by Daesh, a genocidal group that perverts the very religion it purports to uphold and that has directed violence against other religious minorities living in the regions, such as the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriac and Armenian Christians, Yazidis, Druze, Shabaks and Mandeans as well as Shia Muslims.

[Translation]

As a religious minority, Coptic Christians have frequently been subject to persecution, but they have lived alongside their Muslim neighbours for centuries. They will survive these atrocities. Such acts will only strengthen the resolve of those combatting the Islamic State.

I want members of the Coptic community to know that we mourn with them and that we stand with them during this difficult time.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the NDP and Liberals want to impose a job-killing carbon tax, our Conservative government is delivering the largest tax break in Canadian history.

Under our plan, 100% of families with children will have more money in their pockets to spend on their priorities as a family.

Statements by Members

Through our new tax breaks, the average benefit for each of these families will be more than \$1,100.

We assured Canadians that we would lower taxes and put more of their hard-earned money back in their pockets. This is exactly what we are doing, and will continue to do.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a week ago, the Liberal leader proudly announced one of the most embarrassing floor crossings any of us have ever seen. He claimed that he was impressed with the member for Mississauga—Brampton South's "commitment to public service". Well, his caucus was not impressed.

Now we have the return of that famous source, Liberal MPs speaking on condition of anonymity. One Liberal MP said, "The larger population just got another message saying the Liberals are no different than the Conservatives". Another said that the leader of the Liberal Party just made the Prime Minister look principled.

What did the Liberal leader get in return for all this? Why none other than new Liberal strategist Dimitri Soudas. This Liberal leader once said, "when you start to compromise your principles, you're through". Indeed, without principles, what kind of leader is a person? Well, we just found out.

Fortunately, Canadians can count on the NDP leader for principled leadership, leadership that fights for the middle-class families of Canada.

* * *

• (1415)

TAXATION

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the strong and responsible leadership of our Prime Minister, our government will balance the budget and put money where it belongs, into the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

Our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will give 100% of families with kids an average of over \$1,100 per year, with parents receiving almost \$2,000 per child which they can put toward their priorities. However, the Liberal leader would reverse our tax cuts and will do exactly what the Liberal Party elites always do: raise taxes for ordinary Canadians while handing money over to bureaucrats.

Moms and Dads do not need to be told how to spend their money.

Despite the NDP and the Liberals who have positioned themselves against middle-class families, I am proud that our government is giving money back to each and every family with children in Canada.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***FOOD SAFETY**

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the new discovery of BSE in Canada is an isolated case. The disease once devastated our agriculture industry, and there is huge potential for serious economic problems. South Korea has already moved to close off beef imports.

Can the minister tell the House if the source of the illness has been found and what assistance has been offered to ranchers and farmers?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, another positive case of BSE was found in a cow in northern Alberta, in the Spruce Grove area I understand. The expectations of the farm and CFIA are that they will source this out. They are doing that right now, according to the international protocols that we all adhere to.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what producers want to know is that the government will have their backs in the case of a crisis. Maintaining the confidence of Canadians and our key trading partners is essential to the creation of economic opportunities for our beef producers. We all remember the slow reaction the first time that BSE hit Canada. Swift action is needed this time.

What is the government doing to reinforce consumer confidence?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, the glacial speed was the other party over there in the corner.

Having said that, we continue to work with CFIA and with the farm that is under quarantine at this point. We also put forward in our latest budget some \$200 million to enhance our BSE training, and that party voted against it.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if Conservatives had not rammed through back-to-work legislation in 2012, we might not be seeing a strike at CP today. Yet, Conservatives are again blindly moving toward a one-sided back-to-work law.

Current negotiations are focused on rail safety issues, things like extreme driver fatigue caused by scheduling practices. Now the American union is warning of U.S. engineers being forced to work in Canada, operating trains with hazardous materials on routes they are not familiar with, creating very real safety concerns.

Can the minister confirm if this is true?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm, of course, is that Transport Canada's role is to ensure that the qualification standards for locomotive engineers are consistently followed. Railway companies have to ensure that those who operate trains are fully trained. Transport Canada increases its field monitoring on locomotives during a strike to verify that crews are qualified to operate the equipment and can do so safely.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to the American president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, U.S. train conductors are apparently being forced to operate trains containing hazardous commodities on Canadian trips.

Could the minister tell us whether it is true that Canadian Pacific uses American replacement workers at the expense of Canadians' safety?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the same question different language, but the same answer.

What I can confirm is that Transport Canada's role is to ensure that the qualification standards for locomotive engineers are followed. Railway companies have to ensure that those who operate trains are in fact fully trained. Transport Canada increases its field monitoring on locomotives during a strike to verify that the crews are qualified to operate the equipment and can do so safely.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' shotgun approach to governing is preventing some important issues from being resolved. The safety of Canadians is at the heart of these negotiations. Conductors proposed solutions to deal with extreme fatigue among train operators. The Conservatives' shotgun bill sweeps this type of issue under the carpet.

Why does the government refuse to admit that the safety of Canadians is being negotiated in a contract?

● (1420)

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member should know that fatigue management plans must currently be submitted by railway companies to Transport Canada for its oversight. Transport Canada, of course, increases its inspections during labour strikes.

However, it is important to remember that the economy must be protected as well. Does the member opposite believe that we should be taking some important action to ensure that the economy keeps moving forward?

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, “throughout this country we have a very, very large infrastructure deficit...on things like public transit, water and wastewater, transportation and particularly in housing. We've got to fix these things.... With the federal government I'm not confident they'll make the right [decisions].”

I am quoting the mayor of Calgary, who was recently voted the best mayor in the world.

Will the Conservatives reverse their wrong decisions, like their 87% cut in the building Canada fund?

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, we know that statement is incorrect. Our Conservative government has introduced the largest and the longest infrastructure investments in Canadian history: \$75 billion over the next decade. This includes \$53 billion for municipalities, provinces, and territories.

Our new building Canada plan has been open for business since last March. In less than a year, numerous projects have already been approved, representing an estimated \$5 billion in infrastructure for our country.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Mayor of Calgary is not wrong, and my numbers are right.

[Translation]

Here are the official numbers. The building Canada fund was \$1.6 billion in 2013-14. For 2014-15, it is \$210 million. The budget went from \$1.6 billion to \$210 million. That is clearly an 87% cut. It is undeniable.

Will the government admit that it cannot deny these numbers? These are official numbers from the finance department. The building Canada fund was cut by 87%. The Conservatives have to admit it.

[English]

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Liberals have a hard time understanding the bottom line. Let me make clear what the bottom line is in terms of infrastructure investments in our country.

If they read just a bit lower on that page, they will clearly see that our government will be investing between \$5 billion and \$6 billion in infrastructure investment every year. These investments will enhance our economy. They will create jobs and improve the quality of life for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is pure rhetoric on the part of my colleague.

Here are the actual numbers. Not only was the building Canada fund cut by 87% in one year, but none of the money will be disbursed until 2019. The building Canada fund is \$14 billion for 2014 to 2023, but \$10.2 billion of that, or 73%, will be unavailable until 2019.

Oral Questions

Why is the government holding onto three-quarters of the funding until 2019 when we need that investment and those jobs now?

[English]

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government will take no lessons from the Liberals on infrastructure investments in the country. Our investments are three times greater for infrastructure than the previous Liberal government's.

Let me very clearly lay out the steps in this process, and I will speak slowly for my Liberal colleagues. Applications to the plan are submitted. When projects are approved, federal funds are earmarked. Then construction begins. Then the municipality submits its bill to the federal government. We reimburse the municipality as costs are incurred. Money flows over the course of the construction project.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, experts have raised serious concerns about the impacts that Bill C-51 could have on legitimate dissent and peaceful protests. The bill creates a new definition for activity that undermines the sovereignty, security, or territorial integrity of Canada. This includes terrorism, but it also includes interference with critical infrastructure and interference with government in relation to the “economic or financial stability of the country”.

Would the minister please explain what activities are targeted by this provision?

● (1425)

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to terrorism, clearly it is important to take action on all fronts, including prevention, whenever an individual seeks to become radicalized and get involved in terrorism.

That is why it is important to give information and tools to intelligence officers so they can intervene proactively and reduce the risk of terrorism from the very beginning.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Prime Minister has decided not to answer these important questions about the bill does not inspire any confidence. Canadians deserve to know all the details of what the Conservatives are proposing.

Bill C-51 would extend CSIS' powers beyond intelligence activities, to enable the agency to disrupt terrorist acts before they happen.

As we have asked repeatedly, can the minister give us a single example of activities that will be prohibited from now on?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 30 years, we need to give our intelligence agency a wider range of tools in order to protect Canadians, especially when it comes to reducing threats.

Oral Questions

However, we will do so in keeping with the laws of Canada and while ensuring that, if there are any legal implications, the intelligence agency will have to obtain a warrant and judicial authorization.

This is therefore another good reason to support the bill. I look forward to seeing the NDP's position on this.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, terrorist threats can take many forms and arise for many different reasons. The plot in Halifax, which was brilliantly foiled by RCMP officers over the weekend, is an excellent example.

However, many people were surprised to hear the minister say that it was not considered terrorism because it was not culturally motivated. Does the minister realize that the definition of terrorism in Canada includes political, religious and ideological motives, and not cultural motives?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and for underscoring the important work that was done by the Halifax and RCMP police forces and by the people who helped foil a terrorist attack on St. Valentine's day. They deserve all our gratitude.

That being said, on this side of the House, when Nathan Cirillo was shot for extremist reasons and one of our symbols was threatened, we did not nitpick over definitions. We recognized that it was a terrorist attack. Is the NDP prepared to accept the truth about this?

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Canadians were pleased to see that Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy was released on bail after more than 400 days in an Egyptian prison, but this is not the end of Mr. Fahmy's ordeal. Instead of coming home, he now faces a new trial.

Australia's prime minister personally, and repeatedly, spoke to the Egyptian president to secure the release of his citizen, Peter Greste.

Why has this Prime Minister not done the same thing for Mr. Fahmy?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while we welcome Mr. Fahmy's release on bail, we remain deeply concerned about this case. We continue to call for his immediate and full release. My colleague opposite knows that the Prime Minister has personally raised the issue of Mohamed Fahmy with the Egyptian president. The minister of consular affairs and the former minister of foreign affairs have raised the case as well, as have our officials. We will continue to do that. We are optimistic that this will be resolved.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's allies have issued new sanctions. It is time for Canada to send a stronger message and to do more than just tell Russia to get out of Ukraine.

Canadian sanctions still omit key members of Russia's business and political elite, despite the fact that our allies have listed them. I

have a simple question for the new minister. Why are Igor Sechin, Sergei Chemezov, and Vladimir Yakunin not being sanctioned by the Canadian government?

• (1430)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may have missed this, but Canada has been a leader in the global response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. In addition to our military NATO assurance measures, we placed sanctions on more than 210 individuals and entities. This is more than the United States or our European Union allies. We have announced over half a billion dollars in assistance to Ukraine.

We stand with Ukraine, and we will continue to do so, with or without the support of the NDP.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not about the number of people. It is about targeting the right people.

The truth is that this government keeps sparing those close to the Putin regime. The United States, for example, sanctioned three Russian oil, weapons and transportation barons. Nonetheless, the Conservatives keep sparing them.

Can this government explain to us the point of imposing sanctions if they are not imposed where it hurts?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what we are doing. Nobody has been tougher on the Putin regime than this government.

The hon. member wants action. Let her just examine what this country has done. Just a couple of weeks ago, I was in Munich, and President Poroshenko made a point of thanking me for Canada's contributions and said how much he appreciates what Canada has done for Ukraine. That will continue.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, considering that Canada is a bilingual country and that French is an important language in international diplomacy, we do not understand how the Prime Minister could have appointed someone who cannot communicate in French as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

How does the Prime Minister explain that he was unable to find a bilingual Minister of Foreign Affairs in his cabinet, when even the U.S. Secretary of State speaks French and speaks it very well?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister for my appointment. It is a great honour for me. We have two official languages in Canada. I speak English and as far as French is concerned, I do not speak it very well yet. However, I understand it quite well. I will keep trying to improve.

*Oral Questions***ETHICS**

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems that guests who attended the Minister of Justice's wedding had a much better chance of getting a job as a judge than of catching the bride's bouquet. His best man and his wife were appointed to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Since being appointed Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada in 2013, he has appointed nine judges in his province, and six of them are friends or Conservative organizers.

Will the Prime Minister finally put an end to this appalling patronage, which undermines the credibility of our courts?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is preposterous to accuse the Minister of Justice of appointing these eminently qualified individuals to the bench based on political affiliation. As the member opposite should know, candidates are vetted by the judicial advisory councils, and it is upon their recommendations that all appointments are made.

The Broadbent Institute's efforts would be better spent investigating the inappropriate use of tax money to fund NDP regional operations across Canada.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us look at this theme of the Nova Scotia judicial appointments. They tend to go to people who were invited to the justice minister's wedding. Joshua Arnold, the best man, was appointed to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court, and his wife was appointed too. Other nominees read like buddies of the minister and party donors.

Judicial appointments are supposed to go to the most eminently qualified. Why is it that at other weddings they toss the bouquet, but here they tossed around nominations to the court?

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, all members know that candidates are vetted by the independent judicial advisory councils, and it is upon their recommendations that all appointments are made.

Our judicial appointments are based on one criterion and one criterion only: whether that individual is qualified for the job, determined by merit and legal experience.

* * *

• (1435)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is clipping the wings of Canada's air force, compromising its ability to train and to protect Canadians.

Search and rescue helicopters and most aircraft are spending more and more time grounded in order to pinch pennies. Why? It is because the Conservatives are using defence budget cuts as a giant piggy bank to fund their election tax goodies, like the \$2-billion income splitting tax break for the wealthiest Canadians.

Will the minister restore DND funding and stop the broken promises to Canadians and to the women and men in uniform?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first let me say as I rise in this place for the first time as Minister of National Defence what an honour it is to serve our men and women in uniform.

I begin this mandate proud of this government's achievement of rebuilding the Canadian Forces, with a 28% increase in funding from the decade of darkness of the Liberals.

Just last Friday, I was at CFB Trenton. I saw some of our new C-17 Globemasters—we have acquired four, and a fifth is coming, allowing us to project Canada's reach around the world—17 new Hercules J-series tactical airlift craft, and 15 new Chinook helicopters.

We will not return to the decade of darkness.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government assured us many times that the Prime Minister had been in communication with the highest authorities in the Egyptian government regarding Mohamed Fahmy's case.

My question is very simple: did the Prime Minister communicate directly, in person, with President el-Sisi, and if so, when?

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I already answered that question.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Consular, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, our mission, our officials, have all raised the issue of Mr. Fahmy, and we will continue to do so. As I said earlier, we expect and look forward to the resolution of this case.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): I will take that as a no, Mr. Speaker.

The Australian prime minister spoke directly to President el-Sisi on three occasions in an effort to secure the release of Peter Grete, efforts which ultimately proved successful. Our own Prime Minister appears to have made no such effort in the case of Mr. Fahmy, arguing that Mr. Fahmy's dual citizenship complicated matters.

As far as we know, Mr. Fahmy is no longer an Egyptian citizen. Why is the Prime Minister not doing all he can to secure the release of Mr. Fahmy?

Oral Questions

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, we continue to call for his immediate and full release. The Prime Minister has personally raised the case with the Egyptian president. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Consular has raised this issue. The former minister of foreign affairs has raised this issue. Our officials have raised the issue. We are going to continue to do that, and we expect that there will be a resolution of this case.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as federal ministers prepare to sit down with provincial, territorial and aboriginal leaders to discuss the crisis we are facing, with more than 1,200 missing or murdered aboriginal women, we have learned that the Minister of Status of Women did not consult key groups, such as the Native Women's Association of Canada, before launching her so-called action plan last September.

Why does the minister refuse to listen to these groups and immediately launch a national inquiry?

[English]

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is simply not true. I met with the president of NWAC and with numerous organizations privately in my office, with Status of Women officials, and also with families across the country.

What is most important here is what families are looking for. Our government is taking action to make sure that women are safe and secure and that they are protected and supported in their time of need.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, families of the over 1,200 women and girls who have disappeared or been murdered in Canada deserve better than the current government. They deserve to see real action to get answers. They deserve a genuine consultation process, where their names will not be used without their knowledge or consent to shore up an action plan that offers nothing but the status quo.

Will the minister apologize to the individuals listed who were not consulted, and when will she finally listen and act on their ask for a national inquiry?

● (1440)

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, I spoke with numerous families across the country, and those families actually asked to be kept confidential. I spoke with numerous organizations across the country and was delighted to get their input so that we could move forward.

What families are looking for is action. They were very clear: make sure that we are supporting these individuals, make sure that we are protecting them, and make sure we prevent these actions from happening in the future. Now is the time for action.

Unlike the NDP, which wants to vote against initiatives we take to protect these women and make sure they are supported, we are acting to make sure that they are treated appropriately.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a CN freight train hauling 100 cars of crude oil derailed Sunday morning near Gogama. Reports indicate that seven cars caught fire and oil was spilling out. People in nearby communities are concerned and want answers.

Has the cause of the derailment been determined, is oil still leaking, and is the fire now under control?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are obviously relieved to hear that there were no injuries as a result of this particular incident.

For the benefit of the House, members should know that the minister's office has reached out to the local member of Parliament and will continue to provide updates on the incident in question. I understand, of course, that the Transportation Safety Board is on scene, and others. We will let the proper authorities determine the cause of this incident.

[Translation]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there was another train derailment last December in Alberta.

According to the young conductor herself, the few weeks of training she had received were insufficient. However, two weeks ago, the Minister of Transport said the following:

It is up to CP and CN to ensure that they are training to the acceptable standards... if they do not, we will...ensure that they do this in an appropriate manner.

Will the minister take responsibility and ensure that workers receive enough training to keep Canadians safe?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the member was when the government gave its response to the Transportation Safety Board's report on the tragedy at Lac-Mégantic. This was one of the action points the department, of course, committed to, including important blitzes to see if there are any gaps in the training competencies of railway companies.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned of more barbaric attacks against Coptic Christians by ISIL. Twenty-one Egyptians who had been held for weeks have reportedly been beheaded, in a video released yesterday.

Would the Minister of National Defence be able to update the House on Canada's continued mission to fight the savage ISIL death cult in Iraq?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Of course, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada condemns in the strongest possible terms this barbaric mass murder committed by the death cult, ISIL.

This morning I called the Coptic bishop in Canada, Bishop Mina, to express our condolences. This reinforces the reason why Canada is engaged in the fight against ISIL in the Middle East.

Last Thursday, Captain Forget from the joint operations command stated that ISIL has suffered a number of tactical setbacks and is pressed on a number of fronts and is struggling to sustain its military efforts, thanks in part to the air strikes of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the great work of our special operations troops, which we support.

* * *

[Translation]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Mont-Mégantic observatory was on the brink of closing. Fortunately, the public was able to get the government to change its mind at the last minute.

However, there is a deeper problem. Since the Conservatives made cuts to science programs, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain our research infrastructure.

Will the Minister of State for Science and Technology finally get involved in this issue, which is so important to the Lac-Mégantic region, and ensure that another crisis does not happen two years from now?

Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have made record investments in science, technology and innovation.

[English]

Let me add one other thing, if I might. We have great respect for the victims of Lac-Mégantic.

Our commitment to science, technology, and innovation is unprecedented in this country and it will remain so under this government.

• (1445)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not really understand the question.

Stars are not the only things the Mont-Mégantic observatory reveals. It has also revealed the incompetence of the Minister of International Development, who did not foresee the crisis precipitated by his own government two years ago. Rather than blaming scientists, the minister should recognize that his government was the one that changed the funding criteria for the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

Will the minister get to work immediately to find a definitive solution to the Mont-Mégantic observatory's funding problems?

[English]

Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the observatory at Lac-Mégantic as it relates to observatories across the country where we have made significant investments, we are committed to the importance of science and technology, both in Quebec and throughout the country.

We will take no lessons from that party when it comes to our commitment to science, technology, and innovation.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC BRIDGE

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Prime Minister was on tour in Quebec City. He put in a brief appearance at Carnaval, but once again, he did not have anything tangible to offer: nothing for the tall ships and no progress on the Quebec Bridge file. Seeing the Prime Minister sign a Valentine's day card for the Quebec Bridge was just pathetic. Sooner or later, in politics as in love, sweet-talking will only get you so far, then you have to put your money where your mouth is.

The Prime Minister promised the people of Quebec City that he would repaint the bridge. Will he finally keep that promise?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government promised \$75 million to repaint the Quebec Bridge. Together, all three levels of government committed to spending \$100 million on this major project. We want CN to come to the table with the rest of the money needed to make it happen.

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should stop hiding behind CN to justify his failure to act.

Does the Prime Minister understand that nobody is interested in his signature at the bottom of a Valentine's day card? We want his signature on a cheque to repaint the Quebec Bridge like he promised.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the owner of the bridge, Canadian National is responsible for maintaining it and keeping it safe.

As I said before, our government committed to spending \$75 million. Together with our partners, we have set aside \$100 million for this major project. Now it is important for CN to come to the table with the rest of the money for this project.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year the presidents of China and the United States personally agreed to 10-year visas for tourists and business travellers from both countries. Meanwhile, Canada is out in the cold at a great cost to Chinese Canadians, the tourist industry, and Canadian jobs.

Will the government immediately enter into discussions with China to get the same treatment as the United States, that is, 10-year reciprocal visas for visitors and business people?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, any questions about Chinese visa policy might well be addressed to the Chinese government.

For our part, we have been giving much better service to all Chinese citizens coming to Canada since we began to clean up the Liberal mess in this area. We have visa application centres across China. Chinese citizens received over a quarter of all the visas issued by Canada in the world last year, and the vast majority of those were 10-year multiple entry visas.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have pursued yo-yo diplomacy with China, hating China when it boycotted the Beijing Olympics then loving China when the former foreign affairs minister referred to China as an ally. Is it not this incompetent, erratic policy that explains why the U.S. gets 10-year visas and Canada gets nothing? At this time of good will, as we usher in the Year of the Sheep, will the government approach China on 10-year visas today?

• (1450)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in touch with the Government of China on this, as on many other issues, because we are making huge progress with it on immigration issues and trade issues. We have grown trade and investment well beyond the levels achieved under the Liberals. There is approved destination status for tourist groups coming to Canada. We have multiplied the number of direct flights from China. There is service without visas for Chinese citizens transiting to the United States. This is a huge record of achievement that all Canadians should celebrate.

* * *

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in light of the number of online petitions, the petitions that have been presented in the House with almost 2,000 signatures and the fact that almost as many people attended the event at the Métropolis yesterday, I am wondering whether the heritage minister really understands her responsibilities.

Does the minister know that yesterday, the public joined forces with a whole host of artists, including Michel Rivard, Klô Pelgag, Ariane Moffat and Radio Radio?

If not, does she at least understand the message being sent by the 125 celebrities who are opposing the dismantling of CBC/Radio-Canada and who contributed to the video entitled *Ensemble, Sauvons Radio-Canada*? Does she not see the warning light on her dashboard?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the member's little jokes, the truth is that the government is already giving CBC/Radio-Canada over a billion dollars a year.

I have already indicated a number of times what we expect from CBC/Radio-Canada, and that is that it promote programs that Canadians want to watch and listen to in English and in French. That is why it receives a billion dollars a year.

[English]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the joke is on our Prime Minister, who talks about the employees of Radio-Canada/CBC.

Canada is at the bottom of the OECD when it comes to spending on public broadcasting. The CBC's announcement that it is slashing its budget and cutting hundreds of jobs is raising concern about its survival. While the Conservatives are turning their backs on public broadcasting, people across Canada are rallying in support of the CBC. When will the minister finally listen to citizens?

The NDP leader has a practical plan to save the CBC. When will the government listen and correct—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I said in English. The member knows very well that we provide the CBC with over a billion dollars every year. We expect that it will honour its mandate under the Broadcasting Act to provide quality programming in French and English to Canadians.

I find it strangely odd that the NDP would suggest that we actually take money away from taxpayers, as we provide a universal child care benefit, to give to an organization that gets over a billion dollars a year. That is what I call irresponsible and we will not be going down that road.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada continues to stand stalwartly in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Our government has been very clear that Vladimir Putin must get out of Ukraine.

With today's reports that pro-Russian forces are not respecting the ceasefire and that the EU had imposed further sanctions, can the Minister of Foreign Affairs please update the House on the next steps that our government is taking to support Ukraine?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, reports do indicate that pro-Russian forces continue to shell Ukraine merely hours after the ceasefire has come into effect. This is clearly unacceptable and we will continue to judge Vladimir Putin by his actions and not his words. The fact is that this conflict will end only once Russia halts its invasion, withdraws Russian armed forces, and stops aiding those so-called rebels.

[Translation]

Let us be clear: we will never accept the Russian occupation of sovereign Ukrainian territory.

[English]

While we have imposed numerous sanctions, we are prepared to coordinate with our allies and to take additional steps. We will support Ukraine.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us come back to the Minister of Justice, who seems to believe that judicial appointments under his purview are to place friends into high placed, high-paying jobs. Nine judges were appointed and six are his friends: the best man at his wedding; his best man's wife; two past Conservative vice-presidents of riding associations; a former vice-president of the Nova Scotia PC association; a friend from law school. Why the ethical lapse? What happened to integrity in appointing judges, or is the minister just exercising patronage heaven for his friends?

• (1455)

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member does not know how the judicial appointments process works, so I will help him out. Every person who applies for judicial appointment must go through the judicial advisory committee in their area. It is only upon the recommendation of those independent committees that persons are appointed to the bench. Our judicial appointments are based on one criterion and one criterion only: whether the individual is qualified for the job, determined on merit and legal excellence.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will do whatever it takes to win an election.

In 2007, they promised an investment of \$300 million and 550 new soldiers for the Bagotville base. No new infrastructure has been announced to date, and the first 250 soldiers who were supposed to arrive on the base by the end of 2014 have not yet arrived.

When will the new Minister of National Defence honour the Conservatives' election promises and release the infrastructure funding for 2 Wing?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past three years, we have invested approximately \$7 million to help maintain the existing infrastructure portfolio.

What is more, the Royal Canadian Air Force just set up the core of an air expeditionary wing, which will bring in an additional 230 people. More personnel are expected to arrive in 2015 to assist command and the wing's support elements.

I must add that the NDP is against all of our additional investments in the armed forces.

* * *

[English]

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader does not understand the north or the needs of northerners. First, he went on what he called a "northern tour", but he forgot to go to Yukon. He also said that Yukon does not have party politics even though it has had politics like that for decades. He must have been

shocked then to hear that the Yukon Liberal leader actually exists and that he opposes the federal Liberal Party's carbon tax because it would be harmful to Yukoners.

Could the Minister of the Environment please tell the House what work our government is doing to help northerners keep more of their hard-earned dollars in their pockets?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Yukon for the hard work he has done in representing his constituents. We will continue to stand up for northerners and all Canadians. While a rich southerner with a trust fund may have no issues with implementing a new carbon tax, we oppose Liberals' reckless policies such as carbon taxes, which would raise the cost of living for northern families. Instead, we are taking concrete action to make life more affordable for northerners. Our tax relief measures include reducing the GST and raising the universal child care benefit, which will put cash directly in the pockets of parents. We will continue to oppose a job-killing carbon tax that would raise the price

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, our cities have crumbling infrastructure. We are the only G20 country with no national housing strategy. For decades the feds have downloaded onto the provinces, and the provinces onto the municipalities. So when will the Conservatives stop subsidizing undertaxed multinational corporations like big oil and start working with mayors to invest in critical infrastructure like public transit, municipal housing, and important projects like the proposed event centre in Thunder Bay?

[Translation]

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, that is exactly what we are doing.

We have introduced the largest and longest infrastructure plan in Canadian history in partnership with the provinces and municipalities. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities was involved at each stage of the plan.

I applaud our government, which is investing \$75 billion over 10 years in new infrastructure.

*Points of Order***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, various free trade agreements are currently being discussed, and the opening of international markets could have a serious impact on small and medium-sized businesses in Canada if they are not prepared for it. The global markets action plan does not include any concrete measures specifically for SMEs.

With several agreements about to be implemented, we are still wondering if the government plans to develop a strategy to help SMEs manage the risks associated with international trade.

Can the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism explain why he is leaving SMEs to fend for themselves?

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member actually did not mention which trade agreement he was referring to, but I would say this.

If he had followed our government's actions, he would know that about a year ago we released Canada's global markets action plan, which identifies the priority markets that matter to Canada, identifies the priority sectors of our economy that matter to Canadians, and puts a special focus on the small and medium-sized enterprises that the member referred to.

On this side of the House, we take our obligations to Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises seriously. That is why we have embarked upon the most ambitious trade plan Canada has ever seen.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers had the courage to hold a non-partisan debate on the right to die with dignity.

However, the federal government has always refused to recognize the law passed by the National Assembly. Ottawa has always responded by saying that the Criminal Code applies. This lame excuse no longer holds water, since the Supreme Court just struck down the section that banned patients from putting an end to their suffering.

Now that the Criminal Code excuse no longer holds water, will the Minister of Justice finally commit to recognizing and fully honouring the Quebec law?

[English]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, this is a very sensitive issue for many Canadians, with deeply held beliefs on both sides.

We will study the decision and ensure that all perspectives on this difficult issue are heard.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, instead of helping workers who lose their jobs and fall on tough times, the federal government is doing precisely the opposite and acting like a bully.

A survey released last week showed that instead of helping applicants get what they are entitled to, the federal government is making Service Canada staff use practices intended to discourage the unemployed from claiming employment insurance benefits. Then people are surprised when a record number of unemployed Canadians are not receiving employment insurance.

When will the government treat workers who lose their jobs as people who deserve respect and not as people to be fleeced?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the Prime Minister, my constituents, and all Canadians for the opportunity they have given me to serve the public in my new role.

Our system is very generous to the unemployed. We are working to provide them the benefits to which they are entitled. We are in the process of reducing the waiting period for receiving benefits, and we will continue to do so.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, February 6, the House leader of the official opposition raised a point of order against me. It can be found on page 11171 of Hansard.

In his intervention, the leader claims that during question period that very day I shouted disparaging and inappropriate remarks regarding the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. He is right to say that I know what is appropriate and what is not.

[English]

I thank the hon. opposition leader for raising this matter. When he did, I was in the public gallery above him with the hard-working president of the Convent Glen—Orléans Wood Community Association. I was not aware of what I might have said to so offend the sensibilities of the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster, so I looked in the blues and did not find my intervention.

Obviously, whatever I said caused so little fuss that the keepers of the official record ignored it.

[Translation]

However, I do recall reacting to the preamble to the question from the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. She said that the Government of Canada, which is so capably led by the current Prime Minister, had cut billions of dollars in health transfers. Since we have increased these transfers by 68%, \$14 billion, in nine years, I erupted, something I rarely do.

[English]

Since the opposition House leader drew my rare heckling to the Speaker's attention, it is now printed in the *Debates* of the House of Commons on page 11168.

I am unreservedly contrite for having used the Lord's name in vain. It was an unconsidered intervention. I had never done it before and I will not do it again. I seek your forgiveness, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House.

[Translation]

I have the deepest respect for the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry and for her professional training as a teacher. For that reason, I was surprised by the lack of rigour in the preamble to her question of February 6. She deserves the presumption of good faith. I have no doubt that when she asks her next question, she will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1505)

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member has made his point to the House.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster is rising on the same point.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you will recall that on the date in question, the Speaker himself said that he would follow up with the member for Ottawa—Orléans and make sure that he gave his excuse and his apologies to the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. That has not been the case.

Through you, again, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Ottawa—Orléans, he should be standing, he should be apologizing, he should be withdrawing his remarks, and that is all he should be doing.

The member for Beauharnois—Salaberry is owed an apology.

The Speaker: This is the first day back since the incident happened. I will look into it and come back to the House if necessary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ORDER PAPER

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that in accordance with a representation made by the government pursuant to Standing Order 55(1), I have caused to be published a special order paper giving notice of government bills and motions. I now lay upon the table the relevant document.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Public

Routine Proceedings

Safety and National Security, entitled “Social Finance as It Relates to Crime Prevention in Canada”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

PETITIONS

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first one is signed by hundreds of people in the city of Sudbury. It calls on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to adopt international aid policies that support small family farms.

As members know, the Conservative government has always supported corporate farms, and it is time for the government to pay attention to family farms.

DEMENTIA

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has been signed by petitioners from right across Ontario. It is from area codes 902, 613, 506, 516, 905, and 705. It calls on the government to adopt my private member's bill, Bill C-356, calling for a national strategy on dementia.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first petition is from folks around Saskatchewan who call upon members of Parliament to condemn discrimination against girls occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

PROTECTION OF SAGE GROUSE

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition addresses the issue of the amended recovery strategy for greater sage grouse in Canada. It petitions the House of Commons to rescind the strategy and replace it with one that is centred on landowners, land users, and all stakeholders, one that has good science to it that sets limits on research and monitoring and promotes the use of rural resources, existing infrastructure, and local employees to aid in the recovery of the species.

[Translation]

MIDDLE EAST

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I present a petition on behalf of many people in my own riding and nearby ridings. These people are calling on the Government of Canada to do more in the Middle East. They are calling on the government to provide emergency care and reconstruction assistance and to make it easier for refugees to come to Canada.

Routine Proceedings

• (1510)
[English]

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition that sadly informs the House that 22-year-old Cassandra Kaulius was tragically killed by a drunk driver who chose to drive while impaired. Cassandra's family was devastated.

Families for Justice is a group of Canadians who have also lost loved ones to impaired drivers. They believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They want the crime to be called what it is: vehicular homicide. It is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. Over 1,200 Canadians are killed every year by drunk drivers.

Families for Justice is also calling for mandatory sentencing for vehicular homicide and for this Parliament to support Bill C-652, Cassandra's law.

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The first petition deals with a local issue that is federally regulated within my riding. It is a call from petitioners to ensure that the Saanich Inlet be declared as a designated zone where the discharge of raw sewage is not allowed. This is primarily a problem caused by recreational boaters, and it is an enclosed area. The petitioners hope for action on this issue.

CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I also present a petition from residents throughout the Vancouver and Surrey area dealing with lost Canadians. These petitioners call on the government to recognize the citizenship of Canadian war dead who died before 1947 and ask that they be recognized as Canadian citizens who died in the service of their country.

[Translation]

GROS-CACOUNA OIL TERMINAL

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the fall 2014 session, the NDP moved a motion in the House calling for parliamentarians to reject the Port of Cacouna oil terminal project. A petition was circulated in that regard, stating that the project is not at all in keeping with the principles of sustainable development.

Therefore, I have a few hundred signatures to add to the tens of thousands of names already on the petition, which have been made public by a great many organizations across Quebec. This project is not socially acceptable.

I am pleased to present the views of many Quebecers.

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today signed by hundreds of my constituents regarding CBC/Radio-Canada. Budget cuts to CBC/Radio-Canada are undermining the strength of our public broadcaster. A self-respecting democracy needs a public broadcaster that is

independent from the government, so that it can conduct nuanced analyses of political, economic and social issues in the country.

The petitioners are calling on the government to stop making cuts and to provide adequate funding to ensure that all regions across the country receive quality service.

[English]

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from my constituents to the Government of Canada.

CBC Radio 2 is Canada's second-largest radio network. Radio 2 cannot be received in North Bay but is broadcast to other major urban centres all across Canada, including Sudbury and Huntsville. The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to extend CBC radio service coverage to the North Bay area.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that I am still receiving petitions from across Canada regarding the Canada-China FIPA. They are decrying it, and asking the government not to make it happen.

As we know, cabinet has already approved it, but I am still receiving petitions asking us not to do this silly thing.

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to present a list of 1,800 additional names of people who are very concerned about the future of CBC/Radio-Canada and who are calling for stable, predictable multi-year funding.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT SECURITY

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in relation to consideration of Government Business No. 14, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will be a 30-minute question period. I would ask members to keep their questions to around a minute, and responses to a similar length.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are now looking at the 87th time, nearly 100 times, that the government has imposed closure or time allocation. However, on this particular motion, we certainly understand why.

As the government surprised us with this motion a week and a half ago, not giving due consideration, not even allowing members of caucus to actually have a discussion prior to the motion being dumped in the House, we found out three things.

First of all, and this is extremely important, the heroes of October 22 are the Senate and House of Commons security guards who performed so bravely, and with such incredible courage, on the day when we had the incident of the man running into the House of Commons. At that time, as members know, the whole country was willing to call them heroes. What the Conservative government is doing with Motion No. 14 is actually demoting them, if members can believe that. They would be demoted for their bravery and courage.

The second thing that has come out in the brief debate of only a few hours that we have had on this issue is that the RCMP is far from ready to take over Hill security. It came out in the *The Globe and Mail*, which reported that the RCMP commissioner said that there is still so much work to do.

Third, of course, which is extremely important, comes from the Commons Protective Service, the women and men in uniform who protect us every day and have showed such courage and bravery, who said that the government's position is as follows:

an indefensible and dangerous interference of government into the independence of the legislative function, as well as a solid breach into one of the foundational pillars of our democratic system: the principle of separation of powers.

Is the real reason that the government is doing this because as the facts come out the public is opposed to this initiative that comes from the Prime Minister's Office?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual, we are once again watching the politics of division coming from the House leader of the official opposition.

This is a situation where we would have an integrated security unit, which would consist of both parliamentary security personnel and the RCMP. This is something that was called for as long ago as

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the Auditor General's report of 2009. It has been thoroughly discussed many times. The only reason we have not had it in place is because we did not have a catalytic moment. We certainly had a catalytic moment on October 22, 2014.

The Auditor General's report from June of 2012 expected this integrated security unit to be in place by 2015. It is 2015. It is long overdue.

The motion calls for the coordination of the new responsibilities and roles to be through the Speakers' offices. The Speakers are the ones who would ensure that the parliamentary separation of powers and so on would be maintained. It is not the RCMP who would be in charge. It will be the Speakers and Parliament.

With that, I think I have answered the questions more than once. The same questions keep coming up, but this is an absolutely essential thing to do.

• (1520)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I was on that side of the House as chief government whip and deputy House leader, we had requests from the official opposition and the third party not to introduce a motion to put time allocation on a debate until the respective caucuses had a chance to discuss the matter in their caucus meetings.

This came up on the last Friday that the House sat, and today we are asked to end the debate without the caucuses having had a chance to discuss this very important matter. My question for the chief government whip is, why would he not respect what they asked for when we were on the government side, to allow the different caucuses to have a chance to debate these matters within their own caucuses?

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the whips and the House leaders have been involved in discussions regarding the motion. The motion is a common sense motion that builds in everything needed to be consistent with the recommendations from the Auditor General's report, and other considerations, such as separation of powers.

Therefore, regarding the need for further consultation, based on the fact that we already debated it in the House prior to the one-week recess we just had, it has given everyone ample opportunity to weigh in on the matter, and that it is well in hand.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Chief Government Whip himself admitted that the deadline set out in the Auditor General's report was not respected.

It is rather strange to see the government attempt to limit debate on this topic. If the government had been even remotely thorough, we could have previously held a full debate on this coordination. We could have had a discussion on how the various security forces and the RCMP could be coordinated and have a unified command.

How can the whip claim, two years after the Auditor General's deadline, that we need to cut off debate on this?

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[English]

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the whole question of an integrated security force was recommended, and the recommended time, not a deadline, to have it in place, was 2015.

There has been no shortage of discussions between the security advisory committees on the House of Commons side and from the Senate side. We have had integration with the House of Commons and Senate security forces, which has been ongoing for some time now. We are moving to the next step.

I would remind the member that this all happened within 24 hours when they were presented with a clear and present danger in Australia. We need to exercise some sense of urgency about moving forward with an absolutely essential measure.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have to disagree with the hon. Chief Government Whip.

This House was presented with this motion on the last day that we were in session before the constituency break week. There have been no witnesses before this House. In an emergency, it is possible for the government to turn the House into a committee of the whole and bring forward security witnesses.

I am not the least bit comfortable with this motion. I want to know what our former sergeant-at-arms, Kevin Vickers, was saying about it at the time he was appointed away from Canada, in Ireland, and who has not participated in this debate.

The House of Commons security force is equipped, well trained, and has the constitutional and professional track record to be the unified force that takes over control of Parliament Hill. What is being proposed is rushed, potentially unconstitutional, and should not be done under the guise that we have had lots of discussions. We have not. We have not had one single security expert as a witness in this place where we are being asked to vote on something with closure on debate and a completely inadequate sham of a process.

• (1525)

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, well, I am not surprised that leader of the Green Party is not happy. However, I would like to say from the get-go that her attempt to continue to put words in the mouth of our former sergeant-at-arms is absolutely and totally inappropriate. It is political theatre and political opportunism on her part.

Second, this is not a rushed exercise. There have been discussions going on for a very long time.

Finally, this is not unconstitutional. The Speaker, in many ways, is the keeper of that very point. I am confident, as are others who have looked at this question, that the motion is absolutely consistent with our constitutional separation.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to understand that there is a world of difference between the government and Parliament.

We are talking about the security of Parliament, not the security that the government is responsible for. The fact that it would attempt to ram this through without agreement is unacceptable.

I think all of us here accept that we have to act with some urgency. This is not something that can sit on the back burner and have a review of it happen whenever it happens.

I want to add my voice to support the members for Ottawa—Vanier, and Saanich—Gulf Islands. The member for Ottawa—Vanier asked, at the very least, whether we could not stop for a moment to see if we cannot reach an agreement whereby all the members here are comfortable going forward.

This is not a matter of whether we should do something, whether we should combine the two services in terms of security, the other place and here. We all agree with that. That is the easy part. The hard part is who is in control. In this Parliament, and in all parliaments, the separation of government from parliament is superior. We need to ensure that no matter how this is structured that the government at the end of the day does not call the shots, pardon the pun, on what happens vis-à-vis security in Parliament. That is the problem with the government rushing it through.

There is ample time for the government to consult with all members in all caucuses, to ensure that for once something that they say is the right thing, we can actually say is the right thing. The government saying it is not good enough, and it does not address the important parliamentary principles that are stake. There is a separation between the government and the Parliament, and this motion crosses every line. It is unacceptable and fixable, if the government, for once, would just be reasonable and allow others to have their say.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we do have an integrated security unit and force in the mother Parliament in London, as well as in Australia. They were responding to events, modernizing and doing what is necessary when there is recognition that it could be a place that is targeted. We have a living example of that now. We did not have that in June of 2012.

In the latter part of the motion, it very clearly states:

—as recommended by the Auditor General in his 2012 report and as exists in other peer legislatures; and call on the Speaker, in coordination with his counterpart in the Senate, to invite, without delay, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to lead operational security throughout the Parliamentary precinct and the grounds of Parliament Hill, while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses, and ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected Parliamentary Security staff.

We are all aware of the concerns that have been expressed on this subject from all parties and various people, such as the experts who have looked at security on Parliament Hill. This motion respects all of those principles.

• (1530)

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the government side on this issue and the debate we are having, I thought the debate was on closure, not on the bill.

When we have repeated closures in this place on a variety of issues, we do not get the opportunity to offer due diligence. This has happened 87 times in this place. This bill is probably the most significant bill I have seen in the nine years I have been in this place. When we give consideration to the implications, King Charles I of England lost his head for things very similar to this. When that sovereign tried to enter Parliament, ultimately that was the end.

The reality is that we are looking at a position where the source of control of our Parliament, which is supposed to rest with the Speaker, is going to a national police force that is accountable to the government. Therefore, from the standpoint of not debating it, it is the simple fact that we have not had the opportunity to give it proper study. If there is ever a bill that comes before this place that needs proper study, proper airing, anything that could be potentially contrary to our Constitution, the government says that it is not. I am saying that we have not had the opportunity to prove or disprove that.

The government is going way too far on an issue that is of great importance to the House and to Canadians.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we are not debating a bill; we are debating a motion. This motion does not fetter the Speakers in any way, shape or form. The Speakers would have to negotiate or come up with a memorandum of understanding, a contractual agreement, some kind of agreement that deals with the details of how this is to be derived. That could all happen without this motion. However, this motion brings it to life and expedites it.

If anybody here wants to suggest that we do not have some sense of urgency about moving on, then they are out of step with where the Canadian public is. We have a responsibility in this place to protect much more than ourselves. It is all about the people we invite to this place. The Canadian public and all visitors who come to this place deserve a certain standard of care. That standard of care is something we need to improve. This integrated security exercise is all about that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start off by expressing how grateful I am, and I know other members of the chamber are, for all those people from last fall who were involved in ensuring we had secure premises. Our accolades go to them and in no way should any of the debate reflect on any sort of poor performance in any fashion because they are all heroes, as far as I am concerned. I know many members of my caucus look at them in that fashion too.

We are debating the issue of a time allocation motion, which is very important. We have had all sorts of other very important issues where the government, as opposed to allowing for debate, have made the decision to limit debate in bringing forward time allocation.

My question is not necessarily for the minister, but more so for the government House leader. Here we are once again using time allocation to limit debate on yet another important issue. Why has the government been unable to negotiate in good faith with the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party to try to have more harmony in getting the legislative agenda done.

• (1535)

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we have had a long Parliament, since 2011. We have 12 weeks left. We still have a parliamentary

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legislative agenda. The government has a parliamentary legislative agenda. It has now been three and a half months since October 22. We do not have infinite time to move forward on measures that are required. We have been able to do some things in terms of integrating the security around here, and we have made some definite positive improvements.

I would like to join the member from Winnipeg in saying how much we value the people who have looked after the security in the parliamentary precinct in every way. There is no attempt to divide or to suggest that there has been any weakness or any criticism. This is all positive. They are all heroes. However, we do need to make some changes.

The Speaker: I see several members rising. If we stay very strictly to the one minute per question rule, we might be able to get them all in with the members' co-operation.

The hon. member for Northwest Territories.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the parliamentarians' watch here right now on the future of this Parliament, so of course it is very serious what we are doing today, and the speed at which we are moving is not appropriate.

There has not been an official report that parliamentarians have had a chance to review over the incident that happened in October, so three and a half months have gone by without that. We have not seen any of the improvements that the Chief Government Whip has talked about to understand what those do to the situation in Parliament. Without that kind of technical information, for us to move ahead with any kind of change to the philosophy and structure of the House is really unfortunate.

Will the Chief Government Whip put forward the information that he does have? When will we see that information?

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to be uninformed, it is another thing to be naive.

Through the House leaders and whips, we have been aware of changes that have been made around this place since October 22. I have certainly conveyed them to my caucus. If those changes have not been conveyed to you as a caucus, then I am not the one to ask about that. However, they are not things that I am going to put in my newsletter. I am will not suggest the things that we have done that will improve security around here in a specific fashion because we would only be potentially telling the wrong people things that they would love to know.

All I can say is there have been dramatic changes around here and if you have not seen them over the last three months, I am very surprised.

The Speaker: I remind the government whip to address his comments to the Chair and not directly at other members.

The hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

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Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Chief Government Whip for his presentation. The problem I have with the motion in front of us is simply the House needs to debate it. It simply is not true that any committee that might have been sitting behind closed doors has had a fulsome opportunity to look at all the potential weaknesses and faults that the motion brings forward.

The House needs to have the opportunity to discuss this. The Chief Government Whip is not allowing that discussion to occur in the House.

We are talking about the House having precedence over government institutions. The purpose of this place is to have oversight over government institutions. We would now have a government institution imposed upon this place. We have turned this upside down.

The House needs to take its job seriously. I suggest the members from the other side take this job a lot more seriously than they are prepared to show today.

• (1540)

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it occurs to me that something such as this should actually be a no-brainer. We should actually have been able to get to where the motion suggests we should be, without the necessity of the motion.

However, perhaps the public has a taste already from the official opposition that anything we try to move forward on will be politicized and there will be an attempt to create division because it thinks that is politically advantageous.

I suggest the motion would have the vast support of the majority of Canadians. It is what we need to protect Canadians who wish to visit this place.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sad to see how full of contradictions the other side of the House is when it comes to House of Commons security. I believe that on both sides of the House, we agree that Parliament's security officers are doing an outstanding job. They are probably the best trained people in the world, certainly in Canada, to keep us safe.

The problem now is that the government is imposing time allocation on us for a bill that should have never come from the government. This violates the right of the Speaker of the House. House of Commons security should not come under the government; it should come under the Speaker of the House. The government is overstepping the Speaker's powers.

I have so many things to say. I hope to have the opportunity to talk about the bill, because I feel very strongly about it.

I must say that I am extremely disappointed to see that the government is imposing time allocation on an issue as important as this. We do not even know whether this motion is constitutional. We do not know why it is coming from the government or why the Speaker's powers are being overstepped.

I would also like to know why the government does not trust our security officers, who work for us every day and put their lives on the line to protect us. Why?

[*English*]

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the motion actually creates a situation exactly to address the concern expressed by the member, and that is that our safety and security will be up to the Speakers. The motion empowers the Speakers to do exactly that.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, it is important to note that this is a motion, not a bill. It has been repeatedly mentioned that it is some kind of bill that needs to be debated and sent to committee.

Second, when it was first introduced, I made it very clear, and all the opposition have said this as well, that it did not diminish our feeling of gratitude and pride for the security forces of this building who were heroic in ensuring that we were safe, not only on that day, but continuing right up to this day. This is about integrating a number of services.

My colleague from Yukon mentioned that with the Ontario Provincial Police there could possibly be at one point in time five law enforcement agencies or security services that have to be dealt with.

I wanted to make that clear and perhaps have the government whip speak to the issue that this does not diminish your capability, Mr. Speaker, but simply causes us to look at the necessary integration of security forces to work more efficiently together.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, yes, the RCMP will provide the operational lead for an integrated security force throughout the parliamentary precinct. The rationale is that the RCMP has access to extensive resources that other forces do not and has acquired extensive experience in security assessments and the information sharing essential to meeting the evolving threats of today.

There will be a detailed implementation plan developed over the coming months outlining a phased approach to deploying a fully integrated security model. All of that will be under the control of the Speakers.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I think about the events of October 22, two images come to my mind. I remember the shooting, which we have seen over and over again, probably too often, but I especially remember what happened the next day, which we probably have not seen often enough, when this Parliament spoke with one voice.

Now, just a few months later, we are again prepared to unite our voices in support of a security system, as long as the government accepts our amendment to its motion, which would unite all the voices in the House. Canadians expect Parliament—because that is what this is about—to speak with one voice on this issue. We expect the government to set partisanship aside on this issue.

Why not give ourselves the time and the means to do things properly?

[English]

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, once again, what the member is saying is that if we accept the partisan position of the NDP, everything will be fine, but we are not allowed to accept the position of the government. I think the member should listen to his own argument as to why we are not speaking with one voice on this issue.

The 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 Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1625)

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

(Division No. 330)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gill
Glover	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung

Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayer	McColeman
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	Oliver
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poillievre
Preston	Raït
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shipley
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Wilke	
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 132

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NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easter	Freeland
Freeman	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Gravelle	Groguhé
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Julian
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Toone
Turmel	Valeriote — 96

Government Orders

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

CONSIDERATION RESUMED OF MOTION

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament, I would rather rise in the House under different circumstances to discuss our safety and the incredible work that Parliament's security guards do. Nevertheless, I will do it because the government is once again—this is a record—using time allocation on an extremely important motion that affects all members of the House.

Before starting my speech, I would like to say a few words about the incredible work that all of the constables working in Parliament do, be it today, before October 22, or on October 22 in particular. I have never for a moment felt unsafe here. They do amazing work.

They have received incredible training. I doubt that anyone in the world is trained better than them for this kind of work, and I thank them. It is always a pleasure to see them do their work every day. They put their lives on the line, and they put our safety first, not theirs, so the least we can do is honour the work they do every day; today I would like to thank them.

At the same time, we are talking a lot about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, since this motion seeks to give the RCMP control over security on Parliament Hill. I do not want members to engage in demagoguery in this debate. RCMP officers also do a fantastic job on the ground, in places where they are supposed to do it. They protect the lives of Canadians in our country's communities and they do an incredible job.

I am fortunate to be a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security and to share responsibility for the public safety file for the official opposition with my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. We have had the opportunity to meet RCMP officers when examining bills or holding discussions on a variety of topics. I know that they have a very difficult job to do on the ground, but they do it well. We saw a good example of this last week in Halifax when they thwarted what could have been a serious attack in a Halifax shopping centre. By thwarting that attack, they really did a great job of making sure everyone was safe.

I want to thank our RCMP officers for the excellent work that they do, which is greatly appreciated by all Canadians. It is important to point that out here because we do not want to engage in demagoguery by saying that one is better than the other. The constables on Parliament Hill and the RCMP are two extremely different entities that do very different jobs. However, it is important to point out that they both do their jobs well. Why? Because the motion proposes that the RCMP take control of parliamentary security.

I understand that an extremely serious incident occurred on October 22. It is making us rethink how security works on Parliament Hill.

All parties in the House agree that our security needs to be modernized a little. One suggestion that has been made repeatedly is that we must ensure that security for the House of Commons and the Senate work together. We often hear that in the hallways, where we discuss it as parliamentarians. I think that makes sense.

The thing about this motion that does not make sense is that at present, our security service reports to Parliament as a whole. Security therefore reports to all parliamentarians. It goes through you, Mr. Speaker, and it also goes through our sergeant-at-arms. Those individuals have control over what happens and they ensure our safety. They also protect our privilege as parliamentarians, which is very important. That is how it works here, but not only here. That is also how it works in practically every country with a parliamentary system.

The government is trying to impose its decision. An article in *The Globe and Mail* said that the paper learned from a reliable source that the decision to concentrate all security powers within the RCMP is being driven by the Prime Minister himself. The fact is, the RCMP does not report to Parliament; it reports to the government.

● (1630)

Thus, the government is interfering in these powers in a way that is beyond all belief. Security within the House works very well at this time. All it needs is the right tools and a strong framework to run smoothly. What are the Conservatives doing? They are taking away the Speaker's powers and handing them over directly to the government across the way, which wants to control everything that happens on Parliament Hill. It makes no sense. No one even knows if the motion as moved is constitutional or what our rights are as parliamentarians in all of this.

As the official opposition, we decided to do our job, unlike the government. We examined the motion as moved and found that the way it was worded was not fair and that in order to ensure that the powers of the parliamentary security staff remain within the hands of the House of Commons, we had to modify it. We want to ensure that the motion is constitutional and that the powers are not all mixed up, which is what the Conservatives want. Thus, we want to amend the motion.

I would like to read the main motion with our proposed amendment. I think it makes perfect sense:

That this House recognize the necessity of fully integrated security throughout the Parliamentary precinct and the grounds of Parliament Hill, as recommended by the Auditor General in his 2012 report and as exists in other peer legislatures; and call on the Speaker, in coordination with his counterpart in the Senate, to prepare and execute, without delay, plans to fully integrate the work of all partners providing operational security throughout the Parliamentary precinct and the grounds of Parliament Hill, while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses, including the ultimate authority of the Speakers of the Senate and House of Commons over access and security of Parliament and ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected Parliamentary Security staff, whose exemplary work on October 22, 2014, quickly brought an end to the security threat on Parliament Hill.

I think that really captures what we are looking for as parliamentarians. This is really about studying a motion that the government just plain threw in our face. The motion has not been studied in a fair and equitable manner. It also has nothing to do with the recommendations made by the Auditor General in 2012, which was long before the attack on Parliament Hill.

Government Orders

The main motion with our amendment respects not only our privileges as parliamentarians, but also the work of the constables on Parliament Hill.

I hope the Conservatives will vote in favour of this amendment.

Before I continue, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the wonderful member for Louis-Hébert, my renowned colleague from the Quebec City region, who I am sure will give an excellent speech.

As I was saying, it is important to study this motion. I hope that the government will consider our amendment, because we have been asking the members on the other side of the House all kinds of questions, but we still do not know whether the government will vote for or against the amendment.

I sincerely hope that I will see hon. members from the other side of the House rise, not just to ask me questions, but also to tell me that they will support or oppose our amendment—which, in fact, provides the perfect opportunity for everyone to agree on the importance of keeping Canadians safe. Our safety is important, but let us entrust the security guards who are here with our safety. Let us trust in their abilities. They are the best people to ensure the safety of Parliament Hill, not just for us parliamentarians, but also for the people who come to visit us every day. It is extremely important for us to trust them and also to trust the Speaker—I say that for the benefit of the members across the way—because these are powers that are in his hands to protect the immunity of the House.

I see that I am running out of time. Time flies when we are talking about good things such as the amendment proposed by the official opposition.

I look forward to getting questions that I hope will come from the government side. I also hope that the Conservatives will realize that it is important for all of us to work together to ensure that we have the best possible motion and not put all our eggs in one basket.

• (1635)

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her eloquent speech that was respectful of all of the security forces that keep us safe.

It is essential to know who will decide. That is my question for the member. Consider a situation where a terrorist attack is under way in a number of foreign parliaments. As a security measure, an RCMP officer decides to shut down the Parliament of Canada. This decision is final, under the new law. Previously, all members of Parliament made the decision. We might have decided to shut down Parliament, but we also might have decided to keep Parliament going as a response to terrorism.

How will the new law change this situation?

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question from my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin. He raised some very interesting points.

I think that the government is completely confused about this issue. I do not think it knows exactly what it wants to do, and it is using a number of events for political gain, which is sad.

The day after the attacks on Parliament Hill, or even in the statements that were made after other attacks, when we came back to the House on October 23, it was clear that everyone wanted to work together to keep all Canadians safe. Together we all had the same ultimate goal.

The Conservatives are working and playing games on their own. They could not care less about what is going on and what kind of impact it could have. There is a lot of confusion. I do not think they have truly thought through everything that could be included in this motion.

When this motion was moved, the RCMP said that it was not prepared to take over security on Parliament Hill, which is twice as bad.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I would like to go back to one aspect of the motion that she focused on, specifically the part where she referred to one of the Auditor General's recommendations. Would she mind repeating that part and explaining what it is about?

I was a member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for two years. I tip my hat to the Auditor General's team—they do exceptional work. As a committee member, I was very often frustrated by how the government sometimes cared about the Auditor General's recommendations and sometimes did not.

I think it is interesting how that rigorous research was used to draft a motion. Can she tell me more about that?

• (1640)

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard for her question because this is key to the amendment that we want to make to the Conservatives' main motion about security on Parliament Hill.

In his 2012 report, the Auditor General said we should have better security. Canadians might not know this, but currently, we have House of Commons security and Senate security. To improve security on Parliament Hill, the Auditor General recommended merging the two or at least ensuring better communication between them.

That is what the official opposition's amendment to the motion is about today. We have to make sure that the entire parliamentary precinct is working together to ensure absolute security everywhere on Parliament Hill. I think this could solve a lot of problems instead of creating more problems by adding an external force that would report directly to the government instead of to you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that we can all work together. We work with very generous constables who work extremely well. Why not trust them and implement the Auditor General's recommendations?

Government Orders

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, hockey season is in full swing. In June, one team will win the Stanley Cup. Imagine if come September, all those players end up in the American league. No, my comment is not out of order; I will speak to the motion and you will see what I am getting at.

I am wondering what the hurry is. This motion is not the result of a recommendation by the joint advisory working group on security. In fact, the group was not even ready to make its recommendations. We know where it is heading and that is fine. However, the Conservative motion has been expedited and we should know where we are going with it. The motion states that this new system will be enforced without delay, although we have no idea how things will actually work. It is sort of a blank cheque. The members on the front benches have not told us where we are heading with this motion. The Lord only knows, but I sure do not.

There have been many speeches concerning security-related incidents on Parliament Hill. Each time, the NDP mentioned how important it is to co-ordinate the work of everyone involved. This is nothing new and we continue to believe that. Ultimately, what we are doing on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is defending your powers. We want the existing security services to continue to maintain order on the Hill. Despite the good work done by the RCMP on the ground, we do not want control over this work to be taken away from Parliament Hill's security services. It is not very complicated.

Some members on the other side have said that the changes are insignificant. There is nothing insignificant about directly changing how orders are managed, reported and given. The government is interfering with this Parliament's freedom to work independently. Some will say that I am paranoid. However, one day, Mr. Speaker, you may no longer have the right to say "Order", because that will be someone else's responsibility.

I said at the start that we support the integrated co-ordination of security. Evidently, our security services need better integration, better co-ordination, better communications, better equipment and better training. In short, they need resources, training and tools. We do not need to change everything. We have learned some lessons from the events that took place. We want to improve the processes and we want to do something worthwhile. Nevertheless, there is no need to change everything. We can do all of this without necessarily turning everything upside down, as the government wants to do with this motion.

Furthermore, this would be a lot to ask of the RCMP. On the one hand, we would be asking them to do their job on the ground, and on the other hand, we would be asking them to ensure the security of Parliament Hill. Who would the RCMP report to? To the Minister of Public Safety, of course. That is the hierarchy, and it is only natural for RCMP officers to think so. That is part of their training. Incidentally, our former sergeant-at-arms was a former RCMP officer, but he worked in the context of the House. There is no reason not to continue working in this fashion, only with better tools. The RCMP is not a security agency. It is much more than that. RCMP officers do an excellent job on the ground and they should continue to do the work they excel at. On this side of the House, we do not want officers to have to do things that they are not trained to do and

that they do not necessarily want to do either. With the kind of training they are given, they can do other things besides act as security guards.

• (1645)

The government's motion was based on the Governor General's report, but the report talked only about integrating, without saying how. What is more, the government has never said what it is trying to accomplish. Will handing the whole thing over to the RCMP improve things? I have yet to hear anyone across the way tell us what we stand to gain from this.

They say that the government will ensure that the staff currently assigned to parliamentary security will keep their jobs, but no one seems to know how that will work or whether all the jobs will be kept. When a security guard retires, will he be replaced by an RCMP officer?

The security guards are worried about their futures, and the future of their group. Let us not forget that. We have to think about the impact our actions will have on other people. The government wants to improve Parliament's security, and everyone in the House agrees on that. However, we cannot go about this in any old way and forget what was done in the past.

During the sad events of October 22, these guards gave us their all, and we recognized that here when we gave them a lengthy ovation. Despite that, a few months later, the government is now moving this motion. Let us put ourselves in their shoes. They must think that their actions have already been forgotten and are not worth very much. It is extremely unfortunate that the Conservatives seem to want to move on with something else to solve a problem.

Mr. Speaker, this calls to mind the expression, "you do your job and I'll do mine". It is very important for everyone to have a specific role in providing security to Parliament. We currently have different groups that provide security here and that provide security for all those who visit Parliament on a daily basis. We are talking about the security of not just parliamentarians, but also visitors. That is how Parliament can be open to visitors.

This motion represents an arbitrary decision. It is unfortunate that the government did not wait for the findings set out in the report of the joint security committee. The government ignored the separation of powers and used the tragic events of October 22 to advance its own agenda instead of trying to resolve the fundamental problems.

Our security officers are dedicated. They have proven their courage and bravery. They do not deserve what is happening to their profession. Their service won them the Stanley Cup. I do not think they should be sent down to an American league.

• (1650)

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Louis-Hébert for his very enlightening speech.

I cannot resist quoting from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to pages 121 and 122:

Government Orders

Police forces also may not enter the precinct to investigate the commission of an offence without permission from the Speaker. Cases have arisen where representatives of outside police forces have wanted to enter the precinct of Parliament for purposes of making an arrest, conducting an interrogation or executing a search warrant within the terms of the *Criminal Code*.

It states that the Speaker has the authority to grant or deny this, but that the Parliamentary precinct and the Parliament buildings are not a sanctuary or refuge for elected members. This privilege has been strictly defended by the Chair for decades.

I would like my colleague to comment on how the Chair has fiercely defended parliamentary privilege even against police powers of investigation.

Mr. Denis Blanchette: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoulo for his question.

He is obviously alluding to the separation of powers. Our current system is quite appropriate in that Parliament's security service is independent. The RCMP is responsible for security outside the building. Therefore, we already have a record of co-ordination and recognition as part of this Parliament's history and tradition.

By adopting this motion, the government is breaking with Canadian parliamentary tradition. Did the members of decades past really go down the wrong path by maintaining this distinction? I do not think so, and I prefer to rely on their wisdom rather than follow the government's new path.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question I would like to ask my colleague has to do with a concern I expressed to the government in a letter to the Minister of Public Safety, the Chief Government Whip, the Prime Minister and all party leaders.

This country has three branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. The separation of the three branches and the division of powers have always been respected. If people saw that the RCMP was responsible for our security but was reporting to the government, it could be interpreted as an infringement on the division of powers and parliamentary supremacy.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks of that.

•(1655)

Mr. Denis Blanchette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Once again, it is a question of the separation of powers, that is, the ability of each branch to act freely and independently in order to ensure the balance that is essential to our Parliament and our operations.

It is important to recognize that the people who ensure our safety play an important role not only because of what they do, but also because of what they represent. Those are your agents, Mr. Speaker. They work for you and they help ensure order and security within the precincts of Parliament. They do an extraordinary job.

Since I have been here, I have gotten to know them and like them. They deserve better than this government motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on behalf of this motion. I have listened to the

conversations across the aisle and I heard some equation to hockey. This is not about hockey. With all due respect, this is a very serious matter. It does not just address October 22. October 22 brought the matter to a very forceful light to us all.

On October 22, we were all very fortunate, the members in the House and Canadians who were also present here. We have an excellent security system with our security people inside the building and the RCMP on the outside, but that day we were faced with one individual with a lever action rifle. Had we been faced with more than one person with semi-automatic weapons, we would have been in a whole different situation.

The motion, with all due respect, would build upon some of the things that have already gone on. When I came here in 2004, our security people were not properly armed. I believe they have been far more armed and far more trained, and that is so appropriate. They do a superb job.

However, this is not about pitting our people in the security service in the House with the RCMP. This is about how we go forward to ensure the precinct stays safe, both inside and outside.

I forgot to mention, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to split my time with the member for Prince Edward—Hastings.

When we look at the motion, it is not about what my friends suggest on the other side, which is getting rid of the security people. It is not that at all. However, it would allow us to fulfill our duty as elected officials, to protect the safety of visitors, staff and members. As we go forward, it is important that we have that connection. As we are well aware, right now we have four different security agencies. We are trying to put two of them together right now, with the Senate and the House. However, on the outside, we have the RCMP and Ottawa city police. This is a vast area, so control is important.

On this side of the House, I believe we have 10 or 12 former police officers, members who have been connected with law enforcement. They understand the need to have some central control. That is certainly not to mean that every police agency, security agency and all of that would come under one. That is not it at all. It is so we would have some control and opportunities for people to have the communication that is so vital.

As the Auditor General indicated in his 2012 report on parliamentary precinct, our security forces would benefit from integration under a single command, allowing them to respond to situations much more efficiently and effectively. This is all about that.

As I said, if we had been faced with far more planning by the individual who came into the House, with different weapons and perhaps more of them, we would have been in hard times. This would have been a hard-pressed situation for the excellent security people we have here and for the RCMP on the outside.

It is time that we looked at this in a more modern vision to put these things together.

Government Orders

We have already said in our motion that our existing parliamentary security people are absolutely valued and respected. There is not a person in the House who is not grateful for the selfless work they do every day. That is why I am pleased the motion before us today states that their continued employment is assured.

I am also pleased the motion before us stresses that the rights and privileges of Parliament will remain respected as per our constitutional, conventional and historical practice. That is something I hear challenged on the other side. It is right in the motion that those things will continue. The rights and privileges of Parliament will remain unchanged, including privileges for the House of Commons and the Senate to control their own precincts and the rights of members to come and go unimpeded.

All of the discussions that come from the other side are all about us trying to minimize our current security personnel. That is not true. We respect our security people a great deal and we appreciate them. However, as we have found that in several other countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom, they have had to merge into a single system to provide security. They have gone through those things. As we saw just this weekend in Halifax, we do not know where those problems will come from. In the Halifax situation, it would be alleged that there was certainly more than one individual and maybe more than one firearm.

• (1700)

We need to think about that in the bigger picture and not only on October 22. Our people did an excellent job on October 22, but it is about October 22 next year and what we may face.

The integration of the House of Commons and Senate force is a great first step. This motion would build upon that as we go forward.

I also firmly believe this motion builds on the Auditor General's recommendations and would give us the kind of security we need. It would balance the desired level of access with sufficient security to ensure risks are mitigated.

The government is committed to making this a better and safer place. I urge all members to support this motion so that you, Mr. Speaker, can move forward expeditiously with the Speaker of the Senate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I must nevertheless say that I am astounded by both his tone and the substance of what he told us.

I am proud to wear the pin that I received when I was sworn in as an MP. As everyone knows, this pin represents our position, but it is also a pass that enables us to circulate freely. Randomly connecting attacks that may have taken place elsewhere in the country or in the world with our fundamental freedom of movement, and especially with our freedom of speech and expression to represent our constituents, seems totally out of line to me.

We are getting away from the substance of this debate, which actually goes against your own authority, Mr. Speaker. This House is the legislative branch, which is independent from the executive branch. Why is my colleague perpetuating this confusion?

[*English*]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, first, I am glad the member was also sworn in and received a pin that recognizes him as a member of Parliament. However, with all due respect, we are talking about the security of the precinct.

Life has changed in the last 10 years, life has changed in the last 148 years, and we must change with it. When we see what happens around the world with pressure-cooker bombs, shoe bombs, in addition to firearms, we know there is a need to enhance the security of this place.

Our people do a fantastic job, but we need to give them more tools and more opportunity to deal with outside agencies. This is not a closed circuit anymore. We all need to be involved in the whole area of security. It is so important we do this and move forward.

• (1705)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's motion does not specify that the RCMP would have to report to Parliament. Therefore, the interpretation could be that it would be reporting to the government, and that could be seen as undermining the authority of Parliament and not respecting the division of powers.

I have written to the government suggesting that the Conservatives perhaps consider amending their motion so that if the RCMP is chosen to do the united force security of the Hill, both inside and outside, it would do so through a contractual agreement, which would also specify that the RCMP would report to the parliamentary authorities, and they are the Speakers of both Houses.

Would the member for Oxford care to comment on that?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, the motion does not take anything away from the existing authority of the House. It would operate under the domain, for lack of a better word, of the Speakers of both the Senate and the House. When we set up straw dogs, such as what about this or that, we need to think in terms of the bigger picture and the security.

This motion does not take away any of the privileges from anybody in the House, and it leaves the security of the facilities with the Speakers of both Houses.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I find the motion before us unnecessarily vague. If it is as the government members would have us believe, as the hon. whip has put it to us, that this will not demote the House of Commons security team, then let that be clear in the motion.

The motion is so unclear. It says that the employment of the security guards is assured. Their employment where? Is it here in this place in their current roles and functions? That is not at all what the motion says, although that is the spin that has been given to media. I have talked to many reporters who have said that this will not change. They are being told by Conservatives that the RCMP will be in charge in some way, but the House of Commons security guards will still be the people present in the House.

Government Orders

Nothing about this is clear. It is deliberately vague and, in that sense, it is also unconstitutional. The way our rights and privileges are stated, this motion leaves it wide open, as other colleagues have suggested, to the abuse of our very constitutional principles and foundations.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend has not read it entirely. As the motion is written, we would end up with the same rights and privileges that we have always had.

It is interesting that she would specifically mention the security people who work in this place. We have security people who work in other buildings in the precinct. They are still there, and they will be there. It is very clear that those positions will be retained.

That is the role they fill, and they are doing a great job. I do not know why she would try to turn this around so that people would be out of work. That is not the case.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are all proud Canadians, and we all recognize that the House of Parliament is an important symbol of Canada's democracy. It really exemplifies who we are and what we are, and the history is an expression of what we stand for as humanity and as a beacon in the world.

We have visitors here. They are not just parliamentarians and the people who work here. Tens of thousands of people come to the parliamentary precinct every year. They tour the grounds freely and at any time, day or night. As such, the precinct is an obvious target for those who wish to hurt Canadians and impede our way of life.

It is our responsibility as elected officials to take the measures to ensure the safety of all Canadians, especially those who work to support this bastion of democracy. That is why we believe we must enhance security. Most of my colleagues in the House agree with that.

Where we do disagree, to a certain extent, is how we will do this, because we have to meet the evolving threats. Canadians and their elected representatives are safe when they are inside this precinct or, at least, they thought they were. Of course, October 22, 2014, changed that thought.

Regarding enhancing our parliamentary security, I was very fortunate to sit on public accounts committee, like my friend across the way. The Auditor General's 2012 report recommended a unified security force for the precinct under a single point of command, making it possible to respond to situations more effectively and more efficiently. Sadly, as parliamentarians what have we done about that? Obviously, we have not done enough.

The time for action is now. The integrated security model we are debating today is in keeping with that recommendation of the Auditor General, balancing the level of access to the public, while ensuring that the security threats and rifts are alleviated.

Security forces have always been present on Parliament Hill, but these threats did not really manifest until recently. We live in a different world from that of 30, 40, or 50 years ago, when the idea of terrorism did not really exist. As we, visiting delegations and others witnessed on October 22, 2014, either in our committee rooms or in

our respective offices on the Hill, that threat is very real. If it is taken lightly, innocent people will become victims.

Let me just speak for a second about our security forces of which we are so proud. On behalf of all parliamentarians and Canadians, I honestly thank each and every one of them. They did most of the right things on October 22, 2014. I say "most" and not "all" because there are lessons to be learned. However, our Hill security was absolutely incredible. We have witnessed that first hand as we have had the opportunity to work with it.

We are not saying that one is better than the other or that we have to pick and choose. This is a team approach. It is a team that works together here. We are a team of parliamentarians. Whether we agree or disagree a little bit now and then, we are a team going forward. We try to make the right decisions for the right reasons to help Canadians across the country.

However, we do need a seamless and integrated system, and that has to be led by one entity. That entity should have a national presence, with a connection to all of the other things beyond just security at the door here. Security is not just guarding the precinct. It is rapid response training. It is security assessments. It is intelligence. It is observation. It is surveillance. It is the whole ball of wax that encompasses what it means to keep people safe. It is also our armed forces. It is a coordination of everything. We cannot have more than one group or individual disseminating all of that information. It just does not happen and it cannot happen effectively.

That is why we have to come to the point where the silos of operation are one thing. The silos of management and command have to be totally eliminated so we have one integrated command in order to be effective.

Other countries, such as our allies, the United Kingdom and Australia, have pursued integrated security models at their locations. However, on the day of the attack here, there were four silos of authority with different jurisdictions, as all of my colleagues know.

● (1710)

There were our respected House of Commons security and our Senate security, all responsible for their respective bodies, and they did their work well. There was the RCMP in charge outside, between the front doors and the front gate, where there were a lot of things done well, but there were obviously errors and omissions there. As well, we had the Ottawa city police beyond that point.

The bureaucracy of these four silos stands in the way of bringing us proper security.

Government Orders

The motion we are debating today calls on the Speakers of the House and Senate to invite the RCMP to lead operational security. The RCMP would not run the security of this entire precinct lock, stock, and barrel, but simply operate as a point of command and take responsibility for ensuring that it builds a collective team to come up with the model that we need to make security work well here. This is the administrative starting point, in my mind. It is not the end run. This is the administrative starting point that is going to take us to where we need to go.

A unified approach is critical to ensuring security on the Hill. As a matter of fact, it is not only critical but essential. That is why this government is proposing to fully integrate security throughout the precinct under the operational leadership of the RCMP, thus providing one chain of command and one point of accountability.

Somebody has to be the bottom line that we can go to and ask what is being done and how it is being done. In this particular case, the RCMP will work with the Speakers and the various other levels of justice, administration, and security to come up with the best means to do this. This would allow for access to all types of resources.

The only administration that has the resources we need to encompass the entire range of security, including surveillance, communication, international relationships, terrorism, or cyberattacks, is the RCMP. That does not mean that the RCMP will manage and micromanage every department here to tell all the departments how to do their jobs. Members of the existing parliamentary security, as has been mentioned by all of my colleagues who spoke before me, are highly valued and respected. We respectfully honoured them and their bravery as they marched into the House and got a standing ovation from every person in this room because we were so thankful for the wonderful job they did on our behalf. They serve a variety of functions, not just in the House of Commons, and this will continue under the integrated security unit.

I want to stress that all decisions related to the integrated security unit will ensure continuous employment. This is not a question of just getting rid of a few people and bringing in others or saying they do not have responsibility for something anymore and that someone else will do it. There are going to be responsibilities, but there still has to be one chain of command. That is the point.

Over the coming months, a detailed implementation plan will be developed in consultation with all the people involved. It will outline a phased approach to the implementation of the fully integrated security model, while ensuring that the rights and privileges of Parliament and its members continue to be respected, as per the Constitution.

As I have said, that is explicitly in the motion. Were it not in the motion, quite frankly, as a member, I could have had some difficulty, because I want to respect what we have here. I want to respect the parliamentary tradition and the history, values, and principles that we have in civil society, but that does not mean we can operate without an integrated command.

It is our objective to implement this transition as soon as possible, in partnership with all the security partners. I really believe speed is critical. The need exists. We cannot just sit around and wait for

months or years, because we are absolutely sitting ducks in this place and in this precinct. That is a sad situation. We have to come to terms with that reality.

As a number of my colleagues said, if it had been a serious, planned attack by multiple people carrying automatic weapons, many of my colleagues might not be here today. That is the reality. We have to get off our butts and deal with this, and we have to deal with it now.

I know there will probably be questions from my colleagues. I respect them very much for their contributions today. I am expecting a colleague whom I work very well with to get up shortly. I will certainly wait for their questions and see if we can work together on this issue.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague opposite.

Let me just say that I find our government's response to this attack absolutely shocking. The government is going to put our security services in the hands of those who failed that day—I recognize the work of the RCMP, but that day, the RCMP failed in its duty. The government is going to give the RCMP jurisdiction over the security force that managed to stop the individual, our House of Commons security service.

I would also like to point out that the motion, which uses the October 22 attack as an exercise or an excuse to give the RCMP more power, is an insult to the brave men and women who protected us so well that day.

My question for my colleague is clear: does he not think that the purpose of this motion is to take control over security in this precinct away from our Speaker and our parliamentary security services and give that power to the RCMP, which, as we know, is controlled by the government?

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate that the member would make that assertion.

The member made the statement that the RCMP failed on this. That is absolutely incorrect. One of the problems we had was that there was no real level of accountability for who was in charge, so I think we as a nation have to accept that we have failed. We as parliamentarians were part of the problem here as well, in that we did not set forth a clear plan and a clear direction through which there would be an integrated command so that there would be levers of accountability. That is what we need. That is what this bill is all about. It is so that we actually have a proper plan.

Quite frankly, to suggest that we are doing this because we want to replace one of the security forces here is shameful.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have worked with the member for Prince Edward—Hastings and I have a lot of respect for him.

Government Orders

The question I have for the member is along the lines of the question I posed earlier. I do not have a problem with a unified force that would respect our guards, and I think that is what everyone in this House is saying. I do not have difficulty with it being the RCMP. My difficulty would be if the RCMP had to report to the government as opposed to reporting to Parliament.

What does my colleague think about the notion of including such a measure in the government's motion, so that it is clearly stated that once the RCMP becomes the unitary form of security to ensure the security of all of us on the Hill, including our staff and visitors both inside and outside, that it is also stipulated in the motion that it reports to parliamentary authorities and not the government?

That is not clear now. I would like to hear the member's comments on that notion.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, I likewise appreciate the contribution the member has made through the years and the manner in which he deals with an issue.

Quite frankly, I do not have a problem with the spirit of the amendment proposed by the member. I think it is honestly well intentioned, and quite frankly, if it were to be ignored, we would have a problem. However, it is my understanding on reading the motion that while it does not explicitly say it, it does say:

....while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses.

To my mind, that is pretty darn clear.

I would agree with the member if all a sudden this House of Commons became chief cook and bottle washer for the entire situation, but that is not the case. It is up to us to set the rules, and it is up to other people to administer those rules. I cannot see any situation in which we would be directing the authorities on safety.

Quite frankly, I understand the member's concern, but I am quite satisfied that the legislation does not take us down that road. However, I thank him for his work on that.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Trois-Rivières.

I am very pleased to stand in this House and debate the motion today on House security, and it does take me back to that day in October. I am sure that the time when this place was in lockdown is on all of our minds. I remember very vividly being quite near the shooter and being ushered into a room by House security. I was standing outside in a corridor. They ushered me into a room for my safety, and then, unarmed, the security personnel went back out into the hallway to confront we knew not what. None of us knew what was going on out there.

I want to add my voice to those of the others in this place who are thanking the brave men and women in the House and Senate security forces who risked their lives to keep us safe on that fateful day. I think we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

I want to say that when the shooter got into this place, he had made it past the RCMP, who guard the outside of the premises here, and it was House security, under the leadership of Kevin Vickers, that stopped the shooter and kept us safe that day.

If the intent of the motion should come to pass and all security for this House, the Senate, and the parliamentary precinct come under the purview of the RCMP, there is nothing in the motion that in any way proves that this place would be one bit safer than it was before or that it would have made any difference in stopping the shooter on that fateful day in October.

I must object to the word in the motion that the Conservatives use in saying that the shooter was a terrorist. There has been no evidence produced to us in this place or in the public to prove that this person was a terrorist. Was he just a lone person who, for whatever reason, got it into his mind that he would do this, or was he in fact connected to some terrorist group? The Conservatives have presented no proof of the latter.

As well, I want to say at the beginning of my remarks how strongly I oppose the government enacting yet again another debate-limiting closure motion on this motion.

This will be the 87th time that the government has enacted closure and limited debate. There has been a grand total of six hours of debate on this very important change. It is a fundamental change that goes back to a system we have had in place since Confederation, one whose roots lie deep in the history of parliamentary democracy. That is what the Conservatives want to change: the origin of the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of this place. This is what is impacted here.

I also want to make the point that we are not opposed to the integration of security forces. Several speakers—in fact, most speakers—have repeated that point. In fact, the integration of parliamentary security was already taking place. As this House well knows, the Speaker announced in a bulletin on November 25, 2014, that in fact the implementation of the integration of a unified security force was under way. That was happening.

I want to again reinforce that we support this integration. We are not opposed to the idea of having an integrated security force operating all over the parliamentary precinct. We think that does make a lot of sense.

• (1725)

We are, of course, in favour of improvements that work to keep parliamentarians, staff, and visitors safe in this place. What we are opposed to is that all of the security of both Houses and of the parliamentary precinct would ultimately be under the control of the RCMP, which does not report to this House, as security does today, through the Speaker. It would report to the government.

This House is not a creature of the government. It is in fact a creature of the people of Canada. Parliament is different from the government. Parliament is all of the representatives of the people of Canada, and that is a very important distinction. That is why security in this House has always been separate and independent and has reported to the Speaker and not to the RCMP, which reports directly to the government of the day. That is a very important distinction.

Government Orders

I also want to object to the wording of the motion, which says “as recommended by the Auditor General in his 2012 report”. It kind of implies that this motion is acting on the AG’s recommendation. I have read that AG’s report, and the Auditor General, while recommending a unified and integrated security force, never once suggested that this should all come under the RCMP. That did not happen.

I would put forward to this House that this motion is misleading. It is taking advantage of a situation that demands action. We agree with action. Everyone agrees with action. However, it would take this action in a direction that would come under the complete control of the government. That is wrong. It is against our parliamentary tradition. It is against the independence of the Speaker and this House.

For that reason, we are not only opposing this motion. We want to support the intention of better security, better training, and better integration. It is for that reason that we have proposed an amendment. The amendment would be a strong improvement, because it would respect the powers of the respective Houses: the House of Commons and the Senate. It would respect those two Houses and the ultimate authority of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons, who today have access and control over the security of Parliament, by ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected parliamentary security staff. It is about the maintenance of the independent security staff. It is about the independence of the Speaker and his or her control over what happens in this House and therefore the control of the people of Canada over what happens in this House. Certainly, that can happen along with better integration, training, and coordination of those security forces.

We frankly do not see how this particular motion would, first, keep parliamentarians, senators, and Canadians any safer. Nothing is proven. Second, it seems that with its changes, it would be doing nothing more than transferring greater power to the government, rather than improving security for this place.

For these reasons, we believe that the amendment is a much stronger and much improved approach to security in this place. We urge all parliamentarians to support the amendment so that we can get on with the work of better security here, ultimately with the goal we all share of better representation for the Canadian people.

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find what my colleague had to say to be quite interesting, especially when she said there is no evidence that the person who attacked us on October 22 was a terrorist. If he was not a terrorist, then I would like to know what the definition of one is.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the hon. member who just asked the question has evidence that the person who attacked Parliament was a terrorist. Let him prove it.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Parkdale—High Park for her speech.

In a speech he made previously, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster indicated that in the United States there was the example of an independent police force that was adopted more than a century ago by Congress, made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is a good example close by of a police force that has investigative authority comparable to that of other police forces, but reports strictly to the U.S. Congress.

If it is good enough for the United States to have a security service under the authority of the legislative branch and not the executive branch, then why would we in Canada allow the executive branch to stick its nose into the security of the legislative branch?

● (1735)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. That is indeed the question of the day. Why does the government want to take this power when other countries are satisfied with the independence of the legislative branch?

I do not understand this desire to consolidate this power. It makes no sense. It is a good question for the government. Once again, I encourage the government to support the amendment to its motion in order to preserve the independence of Parliament.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows that I wrote to the Minister of Public Safety and to the Chief Government Whip last week. I suggested that they consider an amendment to the government’s resolution to stipulate that the RCMP have a contractual agreement requiring it to report to parliamentary authorities.

I gave two examples: the agreement signed in 2012 between the Government of Canada and British Columbia, which stated that the RCMP commanding officer in British Columbia had to report to the provincial security minister; and the London police force, which provides security to the British Parliament, but must report to parliamentary authorities under a service agreement.

Does my colleague have any comments about that suggestion?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for the letter he sent.

Indeed, there are other measures we could take to keep Parliament safe and to retain the responsibility, power and independence of the speakers of the two chambers, instead of consolidating the power in the hands of the Prime Minister. That is the flaw in the government’s motion that we are trying to fix.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying a big thank you to the member for Parkdale—High Park. If she had not kindly agreed to share her time, I probably would not have had the opportunity to speak to this motion, since we are facing a gag order for the 87th time. That number in itself is huge. However, it is even more absurd that the government is muzzling us on a topic as important as the one we are debating today.

I also want to say that there are two clips that still stand out in my mind from the events of October 22, since the discussion we are having today is unfortunately related to the events of October 22.

Government Orders

First, there is the first clip that we have seen repeatedly, I would even say ad nauseam, of the shooting in the main hallway, but there is the second clip from the House showing us, the Parliament of Canada, speaking with one voice on October 23. On October 23, there were no Conservatives, Liberals or New Democrats; there was one Parliament sitting, aware of what had happened the day before. On an issue as vital as the security of Parliament, the house of the people, Canadians are expecting Parliament to be unanimous once again, without a government or partisan motion or bill. They really expect the entire House to be able to speak to the security measures it wants to take, because this is not just about the security of the parliamentarians and senators who work here; this is also the house of the people.

I remember spending the entire day of October 22 confined with Canadians who had come to visit us in caucus that morning. They sure knew how to pick their morning. They spent an entire day in one room in Parliament. I am therefore also concerned about the security of each and every Canadian who enters their house.

I do not think we are too far from being able to reach unanimity. I think there is already a consensus that response forces need to be consolidated. We just have a few differences of opinion on the approach: who should be given this consolidated power?

In the speeches that have been given over the past little while, I have heard some things that made my hair stand on end. One example is the hypotheses about what could have happened if there had been two, three or four shooters and if the weapons had been different. That makes the hair on my arms stand on end, because we have all imagined those horrific scenarios, but that is not what happened, thank goodness.

However, when the government defends a motion by claiming that there is a pressing need, it is as though the government is telling all Canadians that Parliament is still not a very secure place right now. However, that is not the case. Security measures have already been heightened since the events of October 22.

Do we have the leading-edge security we would like? Probably not, but I can say that I come to work here every day feeling safe, and I think that the visitors who come here also feel safe. Let us stop talking about the urgency of this matter and let us work together to find the solution that will allow Parliament to speak with one voice. The reason why I insist on talking about Parliament so much is that, if there is one common denominator that all democracies share, it is the principle of separation of powers. When we talk about Parliament, we are not talking about the government, but about all of the representatives of Canadians.

As I examine this motion, it is clear to me that the government is trampling on the backbone of our democracy by taking advantage of the tragic events that occurred in this very place on October 22, 2014.

• (1740)

This motion is essentially government interference in an area under Parliament's exclusive jurisdiction. If the Speaker of the House has one customary and deeply rooted responsibility with respect to the operations of this House, it is the privilege of ensuring the security of parliamentarians, visitors and staff. If there is one

institution that the current government ignores, it is certainly the House of Commons and the citizens whom we are privileged to represent in the House. Over time, our democratic tradition has grown stronger thanks to the House of Commons' participation in society's great debates. In many ways, it is this powerful instrument of representative democracy that the Conservative government is trying to undermine.

We firmly support the idea that an integrated security force should be present and operational within the parliamentary precinct. If it is to be effective, we must allocate more resources to that security force and ensure closer coordination among its teams while ensuring that it meets the highest standards in the field. These conditions are essential to our ability to carry out our parliamentary duties in absolute security.

I once again reiterate the critical importance we place on the security of our parliamentary institution. We think it is crucial to support the integration of the House of Commons and Senate security forces. However, our support is contingent on this integrated security force being accountable to the speakers of the House and the Senate, and not to the authority of the RCMP, which reports to the executive branch of government.

This is not to suggest in the least that I have any doubts whatsoever about the competence of that police force, but I must recognize that within Parliament, if we cannot keep the legislative branch separate from the executive branch there could be some question of whether justice is being done or seen to be done. Let me give a hypothetical example. Imagine that the RCMP is the body in charge of this integrated force and a member has the impression that the RCMP is reporting the actions of a member to the government. Clearly, even if there is not a conflict of interest, there is certainly the appearance of a conflict of interest. That is why, ever since the age of enlightenment, everyone understands the importance of the separation of powers.

The question, then, is this: have we dimmed the light of understanding in 2015? The question remains unanswered, but personally, I am 100% convinced that the separation of powers is necessary and that the executive branch cannot be left in charge of this unified force.

Consequently, it is unacceptable for a government to twist Parliament's arm in its bid to control internal security at all costs.

Time is flying by and, once again, I will not have enough time to present everything I had prepared. Therefore, I will instead stop now in order to have as much time as possible for our discussions. On such a crucial issue as this one, I would prefer to have exchanges among members of the different parties, rather than questions and answers that seek to corner members and to give this motion a political and partisan slant. This House truly represents all Canadians and requires the implementation of the best possible security system.

• (1745)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will basically continue with the same question that I asked all my other colleagues.

Government Orders

If the RCMP were responsible for security, would the member agree that it be on condition that, under a contractual agreement, it must ultimately report to the parliamentary authorities, namely the speakers of both chambers—the House of Commons and the Senate—and any mechanisms that they would establish? Personally, I believe that no matter who has this responsibility—whether it is the current guards or an outside organization or agency—they should not report to the government, because this could be seen as undermining the authority of Parliament and not respecting the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branches.

Therefore, would my colleague agree that even if it were the RCMP, it should be subject to a contractual agreement requiring it to report to the parliamentary authorities?

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and I commend him on his openness when he says that, regardless who is heading security, they must report to the government. That is where we are now. If it is a matter of choosing the most competent authority, then I would tend to trust those who are already here.

Unfortunately and oddly, they were not consulted in any way in the process leading up to the moving of this motion, even though they were the ones who have been ensuring our safety ever since I got here and long before that.

When I look at other Canadian models, including that of Ontario where they did exactly the opposite, or in other words they asked the RCMP to leave in order to make room for an internal and independent security force, I think this shows us the way and the direction we should be taking.

● (1750)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saenich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières. I absolutely agree with his comments and those of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

It is clear that this motion does not seek to support the Auditor General's recommendations. The Auditor General never said that it was important to put the RCMP in charge of security in the Parliamentary precinct.

It is clear that changes need to be made. Nonetheless, I think that the Conservative government wants to make drastic changes to the workings of Parliament in order to reduce the power of Parliament itself. I have come to the conclusion that this goes against the Constitution of Canada.

Once again I want to thank my colleague and all the members of his party for their leadership on this.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I would add that I am not a constitutional expert, but I do believe that common sense still has a place. During the age of Enlightenment we learned how important the separation of powers is. This should be the focus as we make decisions, as should the competence of those who defended us and who continue to defend us.

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I heard a comment from the other side that was both shocking and disappointing. The

member compared us in the House to sitting ducks, waiting to be killed by hunters.

This is related to my colleague's comments about how we need to stop seeing the House as a dangerous, unprotected place and how we need to stop exploiting this false panic.

Could my colleague talk more about the importance of not playing the game being played by this government? I would appreciate it.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, obviously that distracted me from my point, but when I hear comments like that, it really looks to me as though people are trying to take advantage of a situation to score political points because they think that, since security issues are sensitive issues in terms of public opinion and people pay attention to them, they might score a few points here and there by saying that danger is at our doorstep.

Danger is not really at our doorstep. Nevertheless, we have to improve our security forces. That is a fact.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because of committee work, unfortunately I was not here for the last part of the previous member's presentation to this House.

Also, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

Mr. Speaker, we hear from the other side that the government is trying to somehow let Canadians know that we members of Parliament feel unsafe. I feel quite safe in this place. As a matter of fact, I feel quite safe in any part of my dear country called Canada.

However, we have a responsibility in this place. That was brought to our attention in a very unfortunate way, when a person visited us on October 22, 2014. Every Canadian who viewed the events of that day through the media and saw what occurred, saw the person running across the parliamentary precinct and right up the steps, wonders how these things happen.

We know that for some time prior to October 22 there had been discussions of security in this day and age. There had been discussions of security in the world in which we live, having regard to so-called homegrown terrorists and homegrown difficulties, even just the things that are happening in our world that have changed the paradigm. We are no longer living in 1940; we are living in 2015. We need to look at security, as other nations have across the world. We need to look at nations that have a parliamentary tradition similar to ours, a Westminster-style governance, such as our sister legislatures in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain. We see what they are doing about their security, and we find they are very similar to what the motion states it would do.

Government Orders

The government is not trying to significantly change the way we do things in this House, or the way that security is presented in this House. We are guided by the realities of 2015. The realities are that we cannot break a chain of responsibility into four or five different pieces and expect there to be efficiency and effectiveness. There needs to be uniformity, a plain and simple order of authority that is ultimately responsible: what job is it for every level, just like in Canada's second-largest deployed police force, in which I worked. We have detachments that respond to regions which were responding to headquarters.

In this place, as a result of October 22, we found that there were four different jurisdictions affected on that date, each one operating somewhat in a silo, although there was communication. We had the Ottawa Police Service, the House of Commons security services, the Senate protective service, and, of course, the RCMP.

I think any Canadian viewing this would say that a uniform chain of command is needed, a responsible agency at the top that works in conjunction with the different levels of security.

I heard a mention of the Ontario legislature. In the Ontario legislature, the province that I come from, we have the Ontario Government protective service, OGPS. It works in conjunction with the Ontario Provincial Police, which has the same type of relationship with the Government of Ontario that the RCMP has with the federal government.

That is what the motion says. No one is going to lose their job. It makes a lot of sense. Why does it make sense? Any person who knows the connection with the RCMP, which is responsible for policing this great nation of ours, and the rest of the world, knows it has international relationships with other nations and a close relationship with CSIS.

• (1755)

Therefore, in this place, the seat of democracy for our nation, we the government are proposing that the RCMP be able to gather all of this information because it is the most responsible body.

We will still have the House of Commons and Senate security, which we are saying should be one security service. We were already moving toward that before October 22. However, we have parliamentarians who want to go back 200 to 300 years and cloud this whole issue of security.

The RCMP is independent of the government. It knows its responsibility. This motion would not change that.

There are those who are saying that they want to make sure that the RCMP reports to Parliament. However, the RCMP will report through security, through the Speakers of each of our individual Houses. Therefore, we will maintain the independence we already have.

It would make sense to have one security agency, although it would operate in different parts. It would be just like it is with a deployed police force, such as the RCMP, which has detachments reporting to provincial governments, but which in the end is our national police force. We would have a uniformed police service reporting here. Instead of several independent agencies working in silos having meetings and sharing information, we would have a

distinct chain of command. The RCMP would oversee security, but we would still have the great men and women who work in the House of Commons and Senate security and who keep us safe, and will continue to do so.

I look back on October 22 and see some of the things the average citizen sees and who asks how a person could have done the things he did. I respond that we are working on security. I inform my constituents that we continually improve security. We have those pylons for the green buses going by, which were not there a year and a half ago, and so we are increasing security. What the plan and this motion advance is the integration of these security forces. We need to continue that.

Time is of the essence and despite what members may have heard, this integrated approach is compliant with the Auditor General's report of 2012, which recommended unifying the security forces on Parliament Hill under a single point of command, making it possible to respond to situations more effectively and efficiently.

The RCMP, as I mentioned, has international as well as domestic relationships with other police forces. It would also have the ability to work in conjunction with the security forces on Parliament Hill to be able to make them into a stronger, more efficient and effective security service. That is what this motion would do. It actually goes further than the Auditor General's report.

I think the Auditor General would be very happy with that, because we would have the RCMP, which is able to correlate those additional resources from around the world with its connections with CSIS and the Five Eyes. Pursuant to this motion, having a completely integrated security service on Parliament Hill would bode well for all of the people who work and live in this precinct, including on days like this when we are here until nine or ten o'clock.

However, more important than the 308 of us here and 105 in the other place, Canadians would be able to come here and also feel safe. I care about everyone's safety, but it is the men, women, and children who come to this place whom we need to keep safe. They need to know that it is a safe place to visit. October 22 told them that bad things can happen, which we also see as we look around the world.

• (1800)

It is our responsibility to reassure our constituents that what we are doing in this place is making it safer not only for the men and women they send here, but also for their friends, their neighbours, and them and their children when they visit this great place of democracy where we are all so honoured and privileged to sit and represent our constituents.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is not at all opposed to the idea of an integrated security force operating within the parliamentary precinct to protect parliamentarians, staff and visitors.

However, we are opposed to the idea of that force being run by the RCMP and reporting to itself and the government. We strongly believe that the security force should report only to Parliament and to you, Mr. Speaker. That is our view.

Government Orders

Will the hon. member vote in favour of our amendment to the motion, which clarifies the separation of powers?

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, I do not mistrust the RCMP. It works independently of government. If someone in government goes offside, commits an offence, or breaks the law, does the RCMP ask someone for permission to charge that individual? No, it goes directly to the crown attorney.

What is sometimes wrong in this place is when everyone goes off on tangents and says that the RCMP cannot be trusted because it is made up of police officers, that they would much rather trust someone else. RCMP officers act in the best interests of the citizens of this country and would never permit themselves to be swayed by any Liberal, Conservative, socialist, or other party. I just bristle, unfortunately, when I hear the opposite. I try to keep calm, especially when members of this place tell the citizens of Canada that they cannot trust the RCMP, that somehow we have to make sure that we in the House of Commons can be trusted more than the RCMP. I trust the RCMP. I trust police officers in this country more than I trust some other folks.

● (1805)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have not said that I do not trust the RCMP. I have a great deal of respect for and trust in the RCMP, but there is an institutional and constitutional difference here. The RCMP ultimately reports through the Prime Minister, through representatives of government.

A fundamental principle of our Westminster system of government, a parliamentary democracy, is the supremacy of Parliament. That is why we have always had officers of Parliament report through the Speaker. This would be a fundamental change and it is being rushed. That is one of my main concerns. As a leader of a small party, I will not be able to give a 10 or 20 minute address on this issue.

I have been doing legal research and reaching out to lawyers to see if we could get an injunction to stop this from happening before we get evidence from security experts. I am very troubled that we will not hear what our former sergeant-at-arms would have to say. Everyone in this place cheered him for his heroism. Everyone cheered for the wonderful team that defended us on October 22. We do have the benefit of his advice. It is pretty clear to me that the House of Commons security team is constitutionally different from the RCMP. It is not a matter of trust.

I put to my hon. friend that the motion before us is so vague in saying "...ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected Parliamentary Security staff." It does not say where the employment would be. It does not say that our security staff would continue in the roles and functions they have here.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my fellow members of the House that their privileges as parliamentarians would not be affected.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, we looked at our sister Westminster legislatures, including Great Britain. Its parliamentary security is the same as this motion recommends. Members

are trying to cloud the issue, that somehow and in some way we are immensely different from everyone else.

The RCMP would work in conjunction with House of Commons and Senate security. I suspect strongly that the RCMP will continue its relationship with the Ottawa Police Service on the outside of this precinct. It only makes sense that there would be an efficient stream with the RCMP, the police force of this nation, which has access to all of the information that comes to the security service and which keeps us safe both nationally and internationally. The Auditor General of Canada has said that this would be more effective and efficient for the safety of parliamentarians and Canadians in general who visit this place.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise and contribute to this important debate on a motion put forward by my colleague, the Chief Government Whip.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks that began in a parking lot in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu on October 20, 2014, and that moved to the National War Memorial on October 22, 2014, and ended only a few minutes later with the dramatic death of a gunman at the hands of the RCMP, the parliamentary security forces, and the then sergeant-at-arms, I think it is fair to say that this motion was inevitable. The harrowing events of those days, which we all remember, brought a number of things to the attention of all parliamentarians.

First, it showed us the courage, professionalism, and capacity of the RCMP detachment on the Hill; the bravery of the House of Commons and Senate security services and the former sergeant-at-arms; as well as the professionalism and rapid response of the Ottawa Police Service. We all recognize the great job they did that day, and we are eternally grateful for their willingness to stand on guard every day for us here at the heart of our democracy.

On October 22, 2014, their years of training paid off. They advanced in the face of fire and the situation was brought to a safe conclusion. However, October 22, 2014 also brought into sharp relief some really concerning facts about security here on Parliament Hill.

For example, on October 22, 2014, there were four different jurisdictional police/security services. They were the House of Commons, the Senate, the RCMP, and the Ottawa Police Service. The possibility for wires to get crossed with this many points of accountability is high. When dealing with the security of the elected legislators of our nation, the hundreds who support us, and the thousands of citizens and visitors who come here to watch us work, those risks cannot continue.

Government Orders

Many Canadians would be rightly concerned about the fact that there are so many different jurisdictional security services with responsibilities for various parts of the Hill. Bureaucratic silos are an impediment to security, integration, and overall preparedness, which 9/11 showed to the world. On that terrible day, thousands of people died, including 24 Canadians. Our appreciation of the world of security and risk changed forever.

October was a far less catastrophic wake-up call than 9/11, but it was a wake-up call we cannot ignore.

In the aftermath of 9/11, with all of the resulting investigation and introspection, it became clear that all of the evidence had been there to take pre-emptive action, but that no one had put it together. No one had put it together because the various agencies were not sharing information the way they should have done. We cannot let that same type of silo mentality compromise the safety of Canadians, Canada, our visitors, or our institutions.

Although not directly related to this motion, Bill C-51 would go a long way to breaking down the silos that exist between the various agencies making up the security system of Canada. The passage and implementation of that bill would be essential to giving us the tools we need to plan and implement common sense, effective security measures in the parliamentary precinct.

It is imperative that security within the parliamentary precinct be integrated and enhanced. This leads to Motion No. 14, which we are debating today. Motion No. 14 calls on the Speakers of the House of Commons and the Senate to invite the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to lead operational security throughout the parliamentary precinct and the grounds of Parliament while—and this part is important—respecting the privileges, immunities, and powers of the respective Houses, and ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected Parliamentary security staff.

When we say “respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses”, that means you, Mr. Speaker, and your colleague down the hall in the Senate. You have the authority. The RCMP would not be reporting to the government; it would be reporting to the House of Commons and the Senate through you and your counterpart.

This motion would advance the recent efforts by the House and Senate to integrate their forces, but it would not replace them. It is the next step. In the face of a rapidly changing and evolving threat environment, we need to ensure that these efforts continue to be carried out effectively and efficiently in the face of evolving threats.

Let me talk about those threats for a moment. CSIS tells us that it is keeping track of somewhere around 140 people of interest. We can be pretty certain that the actual number that we should be concerned about is much higher. That points to the need for Bill C-51 and the sharing of security information.

ISIS is actively recruiting in Canada and many other countries around the world. Some of that recruiting is targeted at individuals or vulnerable communities. Some of it is more general, seeding destructive, terrorist thoughts into regrettably receptive minds that might also be suffering from mental illness.

Some say that the acts in October, 2014 were not terrorism, but merely related to mental illness. Who of sound mind would carry out those kinds of actions, anyway? I suggest that this would be a misunderstanding of terrorism and the things that make terrorism work.

I am pretty sure that the two killers of our soldiers in October, 2014 were not members of ISIS per se, but they were certainly influenced by the fundamentalist ideology that ISIS spews.

● (1810)

Without knowing who they are individually, these are the kind of people ISIS counts on to be random hand grenades spread around the world just waiting for their pins to be pulled. They do not know when they are going to go off; they just know that they are.

This integrated approach being proposed is essential, and it is in line with the recommendations from the 2012 Auditor General's report that recommended unifying security forces on the Hill, “under a single point of command, making it possible to respond to situations more efficiently and effectively”. One chain of command, one point of accountability.

Of course, access to Parliament Hill must remain for Canadians and visitors, but it must be balanced with very real security concerns. Countries like the United Kingdom and Australia have similar approaches to security, and their experiences have shown that security forces can be integrated while still respecting the privileges of all parliamentarians.

This plan will do nothing to alter or negatively impact the existing immunities and parliamentary privileges of senators and members of Parliament, including the right of members to come and go unimpeded.

It does mean, however, that we as parliamentarians might be asked from time to time to show ID to security personnel, for example. That does not restrict access. It just confirms identification. I know that it is the job of our security forces to recognize this, and they do a very good job of it.

On my first encounter with security personnel on entering Centre Block under the Peace Tower as an MP in 2006, I was greeted by name and welcomed to Ottawa. I was impressed then and I have been impressed ever since. That does not mean that from time to time a member of that security force may not recognize someone and may ask for identification, which every one of us should have available all the time. That is just plain common sense.

This does not constitute a breach of privilege, as was recently alleged, and is not a reason for any member to spring into self-righteous indignation. All parliamentarians must face the reality that our security environment here in this place has changed, and we must adapt to it. That does not mean casting aside our ease of access, though it does mean being prepared to be asked for ID from time to time, even if one is a parliamentarian. That is just plain smart security.

Government Orders

When it comes to integrating parliamentary security, the RCMP is clearly the best equipped to provide operational leadership in terms of command, control, and coordination and to lead security on Parliament Hill. It does not mean that they would do it all. It means that they would lead it.

They have a national presence with access to rapid response training, security assessments, and intelligence that is essential to meeting today's evolving threats. They have the experience and the tools to effectively implement and manage a complex security system. They have been doing that for a long time.

Importantly, these new security measures would have oversight from a parliamentary authority, contrary to what is being suggested by the opposition. Again, Mr. Speaker, this would come through you and through your counterpart down the hall.

One force in Parliament and another force outside it simply does not make sense. We must support full integration throughout the entire parliamentary precinct under the operational leadership of the RCMP.

To those who claim that this is in some way a demotion of existing House of Commons security personnel, let me address that very clearly. It is not. The existing parliamentary security personnel are valued and respected, as they should be. Their continued employment will be consistent with all existing collective bargaining agreements, to the question from my hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands. Those who suggest otherwise are simply trying to play politics at a time when our focus should be on every part of our security apparatus working together to get the job done.

This is a measure that is long overdue after another tragic wake-up call of the kind that our allies have also experienced around the world, most recently in Australia, France, and Denmark.

To honour the memories of Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent, and the security personnel who put their lives on the line that day and every day, we must take action to improve our security on Parliament Hill. To do otherwise would be sticking our heads in the sand and would not be appropriate for a serious G7 country.

This change to security on Parliament Hill is overdue and will balance liberty and security at our national legislature. We owe that to the people who count on us. It is just plain common sense.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder what my colleague who just addressed the House thinks about an extremely troubling, weak comment made by his Conservative colleague.

When one of my colleagues suggested that perhaps the RCMP should not be responsible for managing the security of Parliament, the Conservative member described that as a terrible affront to the RCMP, as though we were denigrating it and that was terrible.

That is so far out of line that this kind of behaviour could even cause diplomatic incidents, considering that American parliamentarians decided to have independent security in their buildings, even though the Americans have a state police, the FBI, and all kinds of extremely effective national structures.

Is my colleague trying to say that the Americans are showing contempt for their national forces with that decision? Is that what the Conservatives are saying? Do they realize how absurd their argument is?

● (1820)

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I have to laugh at that question a little bit.

I respect the question and the questioner, but to suggest that because we are supporting the RCMP because of its experience, long history, capability, connections, tools, and equipment, which clearly make it the best single body in this country to coordinate effective security here, and which does not mean that it would do it all, it is somehow demeaning security forces in another country is just plain silly.

An hon. member: It is rubbish.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: That too, Mr. Speaker. There is no connection there at all. I really would appreciate a more relevant question.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my learned colleague and air force caucus mate for his very good discussion of the challenges we face in the modern world when it comes to security.

Quite frankly, I am shocked when sometimes people in this House harken back to the early days of parliamentary democracy and the early reigns of kings, when most of the people reflected in this House today would not have been part of that parliamentary democracy, because they would not have been permitted to sit in this place or even be permitted to vote.

Certainly our parliamentary democracy has evolved with time. This is an evolution that should be part of it, because we can walk into the Hall of Honour and see first-hand the marks we must learn from in terms of preserving this special place for Canadians of today and in the future.

Speaking of his time with the Canadian Forces, I would like my friend to speak to how the after-action report approach to learning from incidents like this has been taken into account in this case. We have seen that multiple lines of communication and multiple lines of authority can actually lead to a slower response and a less complete picture of risks to the people on this Hill, but more importantly, to our parliamentary democracy at large.

Could the member speak particularly to how a single reporting line and single oversight would allow and actually empower the guards on the Hill who we are so thankful for?

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, for the great job he is doing in that new portfolio and for the question.

Government Orders

It is a very relevant question. His background and mine have been in the military environment. Other colleagues have been in the police environment, where it is extremely important that people know who is coordinating, who is in charge. It does not mean that this person or that office is doing all the jobs. It means that there is one point of command.

Personally, I would relate to being the wing operations officer at 4 Wing Cold Lake. It was a large operation with many different facets. The command post ran the operation, and I ran the command post. There were people out there doing all the different jobs: military police, the flying operation, the security operation, the supply operation, and the armaments operation. All those operations were run by people we trusted, because they knew what they were doing, just like the RCMP trusts the security forces inside the House of Commons and the Senate to know what they are doing. However, there had to be someone at the point of authority to take in the reports, collate them, and say what was going well and where help was needed. There had to be someone there to coordinate and control that and to command that.

That is what this is about. It is about hard-earned experience from decades and decades of military operations, which, let us face it, in many ways is what we are talking about here. This is a paramilitary operation. Especially when they are using force or the force of arms at times, they had better have control over that. They had better know what is going on. There had better be one body in charge of coordinating that reporting to someone who has authority over them, just like the base commander had authority over me in Cold Lake. Someone is the base commander and someone is the Wings Ops O; the RCMP is the Wings Ops O.

The RCMP should be trusted to do the job. It is the one equipped to do it. It has the experience, training, capacity, and tools. Let the RCMP get on with it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I sent a letter to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. I would like to read it so it will be in the record.

I also sent it to the chief government whip, the Prime Minister, the leader of the official opposition, the leader of my party, and every parliamentarian in this House and in the upper house as well.

It states:

Dear Minister...

I am writing to express concern regarding the motion introduced by your government to give the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) responsibility for all security on Parliament Hill, both on the grounds and throughout the Parliamentary Precinct.

First, I support the principle of fully integrated security on Parliament Hill and believe the employees currently responsible for parliamentary security should keep their jobs. They are very competent and no one is questioning their professionalism.

However, I believe we must respect the primacy of Parliament, parliamentary privilege and the separation of powers. Parliamentary privilege is one of the ways of ensuring respect for the fundamental constitutional separation of powers. This privilege protects Parliament from interference. A security force accountable to the government rather than to Parliament could be perceived as outside interference.

Given the limited time allotted for consideration of *Government Business No. 14*, I wish to make a recommendation. It is essential that the RCMP (the operational lead for the proposed integrated force) ultimately report to Parliament through the speakers of the two houses, not to the government. I therefore urge you to amend

your motion to specifically stipulate that the RCMP commander responsible for security on Parliament Hill would report to parliamentary authorities.

Furthermore, I urge you to consult the April 1st, 2012, memorandum of agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia regarding provincial police services.

Specifically, Article 7 stipulates that the "Commanding Officer [of the RCMP] will act under the direction of the Provincial Minister in aiding the administration of justice in the Province and in carrying into effect the laws in force therein." Therefore, a model already exists in our country that could be applied to the Canadian Parliament, a constitutional institution. That type of arrangement could very easily be expressly included in your motion and in any future service agreement. Article 7 of the 2012 Province of British Columbia Provincial Police Service Agreement is attached hereto.

I also draw your attention to another example in the United Kingdom. The London Metropolitan Police Service provides security services to the UK Parliament under a service agreement. The unit responsible works with the Director of Parliamentary Security, who is an employee of the houses of Parliament and is responsible for making recommendations to the Joint Committee on Security (made up of members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords).

In my opinion, the vast majority of Canadians would approve of an arrangement whereby the RCMP is under contract to the House of Commons and the Senate to provide fully integrated security services, and reports to parliamentary authorities. It is a model that allows both [to] respects the separation of powers and the primacy of Parliament, and to ensure its safety through the RCMP. I therefore urge you to amend your motion to specifically state that RCMP security services on Parliament Hill would be governed by a service agreement between RCMP and Parliament of Canada, pursuant to which the RCMP would ultimately report to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the Senate.

Sincerely,

[Self]

As I mentioned, I have sent copies to the Prime Minister, the chief government whip, the leader of the official opposition, the leader of my party, and all other parliamentarians.

Why did I send that letter? It is because I am somewhat preoccupied with the fact that Motion No. 14 before us today could be interpreted different ways. I am not the only one who believes that. I have heard the leader of the Green Party and others mention that. It is not clear that it would stipulate that the RCMP, should it be the agency responsible for the integrated security of Parliament Hill, would be doing it under a service agreement by which it would be stipulated that it report to the parliamentary authorities. It is very important that we have that.

● (1825)

I am also a little concerned that the Speaker, after the events on October 22, informed the House that he would ask for a full review of security matters and how we should better integrate the security of parliamentarians, their staff and visitors. We have not seen that report yet. I know there was a committee appointed to look into that, but somehow things were expedited and we have not seen that report.

The Chief Government Whip advised the whips of the other parties on Wednesday of the last week the House was in session, in the afternoon or evening after the caucus meetings, and then proceeded to have a debate on the Friday, a very short day when not many members could address this matter. I was surprised it had been done that fast and then was even more surprised that the debate would end today. That means members have not had a chance to have their respective caucuses discuss this matter among themselves. That would have been a very useful exercise. Unfortunately, it does not seem that will happen.

Government Orders

That is why I considered this matter, did some research and proposed that the government consider amending its motion. The House procedures make it impossible for someone to propose an amendment to the motion once another amendment has been proposed. I can only propose a subamendment, which I will do later in my address, but then I have to address the amendment that has been proposed and not the motion of the government.

That is why I wrote to the government, hoping it would consider this. The government has nothing to lose amending its own motion to make it clear that the intent was not to have the RCMP be in charge of the security on the Hill and report to the government but to report to the House, and to make it clear through a contractual agreement, as has been done in other provinces, as our mother of Parliament has done in England. That would have made things much more clear and less subject to any interpretation or anyone wishing to challenge it and perhaps would have helped the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the Senate ensure that this would happen, as opposed to perhaps being caught in other wishes, desires and pressures. It has not happened, and I am very sorry for that.

I am going to read parts of a text that has been printed in the *National Newswatch*, written by a lady by the name of Anne Dance. This lady is a history post-doctoral research fellow at Memorial University. She first began researching security and public space as part of the 2008-09 non-partisan Parliamentary Internship Programme. This was published last week. I will not read it all, but I would like to quote some parts of it, as follows:

—some do not seem to understand what Parliamentary Privilege actually is, or why it demands a fierce defence.

Once called Parliamentary democracy's "beating heart" by House Clerk Audrey O'Brien, Privilege is a set of rules developed to protect legislatures from interventionary or violent governments (i.e. the executive; in Canada, this is the Prime Minister and the cabinet). Privilege prioritizes the work of Parliamentarians. Without Privilege, there is no guarantee that MPs and Senators will be able to control and manage Parliament, reach important votes, or carry out their jobs.

As emerging democracies well know, Parliamentary Privilege does not spring fully formed from a rulebook or constitution. Frighteningly easy to subvert or destroy in the name of patriotism or expediency, it must be carefully cultivated and protected.

Another paragraph reads:

Parliamentary Privilege is the hard-won legacy of centuries of struggle by democratic reformers both at home and abroad. It would be a shame for MPs and Senators to let it crumble without a fight.

● (1830)

I invite colleagues to read the rest of her article.

I am not here on a partisan basis. I am here out of respect for Parliament and its duties and powers, and the separation of powers of the government. We have three branches of government. We should never interfere with the judiciary. I know that in the past unfortunately some ministers did and they had to resign from their job. We respect the separation of powers between the judiciary and the legislature.

The respect of the division of powers between the legislature and the executive must also be respected. Unless it is specified in the motion that the government has put before us that the RCMP would be reporting to the parliamentary authorities and not to the government, it can therefore be perceived as a way of undermining parliamentary privilege, Parliament's authority and the separation of

powers. This should be something that none of us consider, and that is why I have brought it forward.

When I wrote this letter to all, the first response I got was from a friend of mine, who happens to be in the Senate and who happened to be the gentleman heading up the committee, Senator Vern White. He told me it was an excellent letter and that he agreed fully.

I want my colleagues to know that this preoccupation is not just shared by members of the third party or members of the official opposition. I have even had discussions with some of my colleagues on the government side, and it is shared by many of us in this room and of course, as I mentioned, in the upper house. It would have been a wise thing for the government to introduce such an amendment because I cannot introduce an amendment to the motion of the government.

I can only provide a subamendment, which will alter the amendment proposed by the official opposition. That is the nature of our parliamentary procedure. I wish I could have presented a substitute amendment or a substitute motion, but it cannot be done.

Therefore, I will move an amendment to the amendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended a) by adding after the words "fully integrate" the words "by way of a contractual agreement with the House of Commons and the Senate";

b) by deleting the words "while respecting" and substituting the following "and through which an integrated security body would report to the Speakers of the two Houses so as to respect the division of powers between the executive and the legislature, parliamentary supremacy and".

● (1835)

[*Translation*]

The rest of the amendment follows.

The subamendment is proposed by myself and seconded by my colleague from Winnipeg North. My colleague from Mount Royal would have seconded it as well, but he had to leave to attend a briefing on another bill that we will be debating soon, Bill C-51.

I do not know what will become of the amendment, but the House of Commons has to debate the need for the government's proposal to be clear and precise. Perhaps that was the government's intention, but it was not written in the resolution. That is the problem. It has to be specified—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member must be aware that once he has moved the motion he cannot speak to it again.

● (1840)

[*English*]

The amendment to the amendment by the official opposition is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. Chief Government Whip.

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would make some comments with respect to the speech by the member for Ottawa—Vanier. He talked about a response to his letter that was written by Senator White, and I could have written that response.

Government Orders

The member's letter, of which I received a copy, was a good letter. My comment to my own people was that this was absolutely consistent with the motion. Our motion empowers the Speakers to coordinate the development of an agreement, such as the examples that have just been given by the member. He talked about the example in British Columbia. He talked about the U.K. model. This is exactly what is contemplated. This is exactly what will flow from the motion.

Why will the member not accept yes for an answer? This is a superfluous subamendment.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, this has not been specifically included in the motion. There is no reference in the original motion that the RCMP would report to the parliamentary authorities. It says respect this and that, but it does not mention division of powers in the motion. There also is no mention of a contractual agreement that would include a reporting mechanism to the parliamentary authorities. If it were in the motion, I would not have done this.

I will give a very modest example of why I believe it is important. I have been stopped four times, the last time was yesterday, by RCMP officers at the main entrance point who do not speak French, and that is not acceptable.

I have written to the Speaker but never have never received a response. The Speaker has no authority, it seems, or if he does, he has not exercised it because there is no contractual agreement.

There has to be a contractual agreement so that we respect certain things, including the official languages of our country, but more than that, the supremacy of Parliament, the division of powers. If it were mentioned in the motion, I would have no difficulties. It is not mentioned in the motion and that is why I think it should be.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my thanks as well to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. It is very clear that this motion before us is so vague as to leave substantial grounds for the concerns that I share with the member for Ottawa—Vanier and that the official opposition shares.

There should be no objection on the part of government members, if this is a question of accepting that we already have a yes for an answer, to accept the amendment of the member for Ottawa—Vanier and let the motion be clear.

I am sorry if government members do not agree, and I will ask my hon. colleague for Ottawa—Vanier if he does, but it is very clear that what we have before us amounts to a demotion of our House of Commons security team. It amounts to a very rapid decision to change the way this Parliament functions, and we have not had any adequate opportunity to see the evidence and hear from experts when we contemplate the best way forward.

We all agree we need a unified, single security force which is well integrated and can communicate clearly, one with the other, but this motion is unacceptable.

•(1845)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I also agree that a united security force would be the way to go, and that we must respect our

current employees, both in the House and the Senate, who have protected us, our visitors and staff.

If the government whip is saying that is what they will do, I would be happy with that, but it is not in the motion. We are being asked to vote on something that is not included in the motion. That causes some concern. I am not the only one who has cause for concern. Members in the House, the official opposition, have read about it. I have had discussions with some members on the government side. It would be so simple to clarify it by saying that the RCMP must report to parliamentary authority through a contractual agreement. It is not said. It is not in the motion.

I do not know what will happen tonight with the votes. However, I will engage beyond tonight with our Speaker if this is not included because I think he will need our support to make sure that is indeed what happens. It would have been very simple, very clear, if it had been included in the motion. That is why I wrote to the government to see if it would be willing to put it in. I have not had that, so I am going to try it this way tonight.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to keeping its word, this government cannot be trusted.

We saw this last week, when the Conservatives voted against a motion that asked the government to keep its word. In fact, we cannot trust their judgment either. People went on strike because they were too tired and they wanted to prevent rail accidents as a result of their fatigue. I heard that things had been settled, but the Conservatives were ready to pass a bill forcing them back to work.

On October 22, I was right beside the door to our meeting room when a bullet struck it. I was very worried. That day, it was our security staff who neutralized the threat. However, we are going to entrust the responsibility for our security to the people who let that man run across the precinct with a rifle. I do not understand that.

I would like someone to explain it to me, if there is an intelligent explanation.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that question was intended for me.

Having been in this place for 20 years now, I have as much respect for our security guards in the House of Commons and the Senate as I do for the RCMP officers.

I moved this motion and sent this letter to the government simply because I wanted to make sure that, by means of a contractual agreement, the supremacy of Parliament, the separation of powers and the rights of parliamentarians will be respected, so that we will be able to do our work.

If that is the government's intention, as the Chief Government Whip seems to be saying, why was that not included in the motion that has been presented to us? That is the mistake I am trying to correct.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I must applaud my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier for taking the initiative to put on the record, through writing a letter, an idea that he is advancing. After his speech, the government then responded by saying that it concurs with what is being said in the letter.

I am an optimist. I am not too sure if this amendment will ultimately pass. I would like to see it pass. However, if it does not, the Speaker and others will have a copy of a very important letter that can often be referred to.

I would be interested in his take on this issue. The government seems to be endorsing, through the government House leadership, the letter that the member has written. I am wondering whether he might want to provide some comment on that aspect, the fact that we now have a formal letter that the member wrote and the government seems to be endorsing.

Is there some merit to that, just in case his subamendment does not pass?

• (1850)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, it would have been better if I had received a written response. I have not. I have had discussions today with some members of the governing party. I think they would not disagree with this way of going about it; that is, that the RCMP do it within a contractual agreement that specifies it must report to the parliamentary authorities, with respect, of course, for our current staff. I hoped that would be the case.

We have been asked tonight to vote on this in a rather precipitated manner because we have not had a chance to discuss it in caucus or see the report that the speaker has engaged to share with us. We are now asked to vote without all of that. I would have wanted to see a resolution that included these things, and it does not. That is why I am proposing that it does.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this topic tonight.

House of Commons Security Services preserve a delicate balance between protecting Parliamentarians and the functions of Parliament, and respecting the right of Canadians to have access to the Precinct and their legislators.

The development and implementation of a long-term plan is an important opportunity to address requirements for efficient and effective security, in particular a Parliamentary Precinct with clear physical boundaries. The plan must allow for a layered system of access control and a solid infrastructure for security systems that lays the groundwork for current and future requirements.

The quote I just made is from the explanation of Parliament security on the government website.

I started my speech from that because of the last nine words on laying the groundwork for current and future requirements.

Before I go any further, I will be sharing my time with the member for Don Valley West.

Security for this place dates back to the 1860s. The site itself was chosen because of its natural topography along the east, north, and west parameters. The wrought iron gates that are found to the south of the precinct and still stand today were built for security. The large lawn area was in itself a security feature. Inside the buildings, there

is a layered approach, with lobbies and vestibules acting as buffer zones between outdoor spaces and the important meeting rooms and offices.

Since that time, the need for security in and around government buildings has increased substantially, responding to new challenges in Canada and to events and circumstances around the world.

There have been a number of security breaches over the years at this place, and a review is done after each one of them to determine how this place could better enhance security. One of the recommendations throughout the years has been communication protocols to ensure coordination of security efforts among the various jurisdictions, which I think is important here.

This place is known as the people's place. It has a high risk of vulnerability, and none was more evident than that on October 22, 2014, when a lone gunman was able to enter this place, and, in my opinion, show some of the glaring problems because we are unwilling to enhance security for the sake of history.

Again, the government website on precinct security says the following:

The boundaries should have a clear physical definition, which can serve as an intrinsic part of security measures;

There should be an adequate buffer zone around the buildings and the Precinct; and

There should be clearly defined and easily accessible zones for the public and the media.

Further in the same document is a reference to infrastructure, which says:

There should be an adequate technological infrastructure to meet current and future security needs. This infrastructure should:

Integrate and standardize systems across the Precinct;

Be simple to use and unobtrusive to occupants and visitors;

Provide internal security forces with external viewing capability;

Provide communication infrastructure that allows for immediate links with primary response partners;

• (1855)

In my opinion, not one of these has been accomplished, because we have been in a multi-silo security detail. Let me explain why we must, as soon as possible, create a single, overarching security team in what is referred to as the precinct. We have to remember as well that the precinct is not just this building; as everyone knows, it goes from the justice department on Kent Street all the way up to Wellington Street. It is a significant area.

I want to speak a bit about the RCMP, because it has come into this conversation a lot.

The RCMP has been a national police force since 1873 when it was created under an act of Parliament in this place. The RCMP is unique because it encompasses federal, provincial, and municipal policing bodies. It provides total federal policing services to all Canadians and police services under contract to three territories, eight provinces, more than 190 communities, 600 aboriginal communities, and three international airports.

Government Orders

RCMP protective services are responsible for over 125 embassies and high commissions in the national capital region, the protection of 500 resident foreign diplomat missions across approximately 500 foreign consulates across Canada, the security of approximately 500 visits by foreign dignitaries and international protected persons per year. It responds to approximately 600 demonstrations a year on average.

The RCMP has a highly integrated intelligence system and an extremely efficient communications system, but most importantly, it has manpower that can be mobilized very quickly. Creating that efficiency in this precinct is a progression of security. In my opinion it has nothing to do with picking sides, as the opposition would like to portray it, but rather with creating an elite team charged with protecting this place both inside and out.

Let us make no mistake: it is not a matter of “if” the next incident occurs here, but rather a matter of when. An integrated unit overseen by one body would be able to communicate much better and react much more quickly. We have to learn from the events that took place here, and October 22, 2014, provided us with a valuable lesson to which we must react. Most importantly, an integrated unit would be provided with the best equipment, technology, and communication available to work as one, and that, as parliamentarians, is what we owe them.

I listened and I want to provide some context to where I believe this needs to go.

It is clear in the motion that was put forward by this government last week, which said at the bottom, “...while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses, and ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected Parliamentary Security staff.”

I do not believe it needs to speak any louder than that itself.

● (1900)

[*Translation*]

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

I will ask him a very simple question because he gave a long description of all the RCMP's responsibilities. However, ultimately, the sergeant-at-arms could coordinate these security forces.

Why does he not have faith in the sergeant-at-arms, who is responsible for security here in the House of Commons?

[*English*]

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, the problem is not the sergeant-at-arms; the problem is that we have multiple silos of security. We have two in here, one outside, and one beyond the gates, but the main ones are the three.

The fact of the matter is that we need one person in charge of all of the precinct, both inside and out, to better reflect how security needs to be completed in this day and age. We cannot live with history and the past. We have learnt from October 22. Let us move forward, recognizing how important it is to have security both inside and out and recognizing the expertise of those both inside and out.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prior to the member speaking, my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier moved a subamendment that calls for the Speaker, in coordination with his counterpart in the Senate, to prepare and execute without delay plans to “fully integrate by way of a contractual agreement with the House of Commons and the Senate” .

The previous government speaker, part of the House leadership team on that side, indicated that this is in fact what they believe as well. If that is the case, would the member not concur that this subamendment is worthy of supporting?

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the motion that was put forth last week is very clear. It recognizes the importance of this place and how it should move forward.

I believe that the motion put forward by the member opposite does not reflect how the government needs to move forward and I am very comfortable with what the government whip had to say.

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia for his intervention today, as well as for his experience as a veteran of the RCMP.

All of us here recognize the value of the protection that we receive from the parliamentary protection services, whether they are at the House of Commons or the Senate, as well as the great training that they have and the risk that they are always prepared to take to protect us. What this motion speaks to is the need to move forward to a more coordinated role by making sure that we get rid the silos and that everybody is working together.

My colleague has clearly laid out how things differentiate within the House and the Senate as well as what happens outside of Centre Block and what happens beyond the fence. Communication, leadership, and coordination are what this motion is all about. It is not only about enhancing protection to us up here, because the risk factors are changing. We realize that now. As my colleague said, it is just a matter of time before the next attack.

How can we better coordinate? We have already seen some major changes take place. More security officers being trained in handgun use, and we are making sure that we receive protection not only for parliamentarians but also for all the Canadians and foreigners who come to visit us here on Parliament Hill.

● (1905)

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, he hit the nail on the head. The fact of the matter is that if we can provide the security detail in this place with the best equipment, the best technology, and the best communication so that they can work as one, we will find this to be a very well-oiled machine.

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to participate in this important debate tonight.

I have listened to many on both sides of the aisle debating this issue. It is an issue that is obviously a very emotional one for all of us who were here on October 22. It is one that we want to get right. This debate is important, and my only caution to those speaking to this issue is that they not inflame the issue or create an environment from which they cannot come back.

Government Orders

The government has a significant duty in the face of emerging global threats, and I believe it is the government's responsibility to protect our parliamentary precinct. The previous speaker spoke very well about the extent of this precinct, how large it is, and the importance of getting it right the first time to protect visitors, families, schoolchildren and all those who come to this place. They are intent on seeing history and seeing this place for what it is, a remarkable landmark in this country that we have a duty to protect. Our job is to ensure that we have the right security environment to protect parliamentary staff and elected officials.

Parliament Hill is a key symbol of Canadian democracy, and failure to protect it absolutely demonstrates failure to uphold the values upon which it was built. The people of this great country have put their faith in our commitment to serve and protect the public interest. That is every one of us in this House.

The public interest demands a unified parliamentary security system that allows for one chain of command and one point of accountability. Bureaucratic barriers or silos are an impediment to meeting today's evolving threats. This is why we must ensure that we have an effective, efficient, integrated security force.

The threat of terror is a daunting reality in today's world. We witnessed this first-hand in this very building on October 22. The attack on Corporal Nathan Cirillo at the National War Memorial and then the attack on Parliament Hill were reminders of the reality encompassing terrorism and its grave consequences.

The recent events at *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters in Paris only reaffirmed these sentiments, sparking pro-democracy demonstrations worldwide. Just this past weekend, similar shootings took place in Denmark during a freedom of speech debate, and other callous and horrific acts of terrorism are occurring around the world as we stand here tonight.

On October 22, there were four different groups of police and security services in and surrounding this very precinct: the House of Commons Security Services, the Senate Protective Service, the RCMP, and the Ottawa city police. The Auditor General's report of 2012 indicated the need for a more integrated parliamentary security system that clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of our security staff.

While we believe that the unification of the House of Commons and Senate security services is a good first step, a fully integrated security force is the best step at this time. It is significant to note that the report particularly identified that:

It is necessary to balance the desired level of access with sufficient security to ensure that risks are mitigated.

This motion today calls upon the Speakers of the House of Commons and the Senate to invite the RCMP to take operational lead on integrating parliamentary security.

The RCMP has a national presence that has access to rapid response training, security assessments, and intelligence that are essential at this time. I am confident that the Speakers will fulfill their roles and ensure that existing immunities and essential parliamentary privileges are maintained.

Specific to the motion, I would just like to read the one paragraph that I feel captures the concerns of all members of this House. It calls upon:

• (1910)

...the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to lead operational security throughout the Parliamentary precinct and the grounds of Parliament Hill, while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses, and ensuring the continued employment of our existing and respected Parliamentary Security staff.

Other countries, including strong allies such as the United Kingdom and Australia, have already pursued integrated security models in their own parliaments, confirming the essential nature of this initiative. Given the urgency of the matter, it is the government's objective to advance the transition in partnership with all security partners as soon as feasible. I understand that a transition committee coordinated by the Speakers of the House of Commons and the Senate will work with senior officials on a clear transition path.

Our parliamentary security force is a pillar of Parliament Hill. The courageous efforts of its individual members on October 22 will forever be admired and respected. We all owe them our sincere thanks. The Sergeant-at-Arms and all those we recognized in this chamber not too many weeks ago are a clear reminder to us of the great respect we feel for the members of the security staff on all quadrants.

Today's debate though has seen members of the opposition point fingers and blame, something that concerns me greatly. Casting fault, planting seeds of dissension, discord, and division is not the way we will bring about a productive solution that will work for the House. That approach, in my mind, is shameful and reprehensible, and we cannot allow it to occur in this debate.

All of the decisions to be taken will ensure the continued employment of the current security staff and be consistent with existing collective agreements. This will be managed with full transparency. Integrating parliamentary security is essentially meant to help our security team work together through focusing on a centralized plan.

The threat of terror is frightfully tangible and should not be underestimated. The truth is that we cannot allow October 22 to repeat itself. We have heard tonight and from others throughout the day that this was a first attack, that there will be more, and that we must be prepared. We simply cannot be ill-prepared for another such occurrence as we experienced on October 22. We owe it to Canadians and to visitors to do what is necessary to ensure that Parliament Hill, a key symbol of Canadian democracy, is kept safe and secure for them to visit and for us to work in this environment.

I look forward to questions and am thankful for the opportunity to participate in tonight's debate.

[*Translation*]

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

Government Orders

In his report, the Auditor General indicated that the next step could be to unify the security forces on Parliament Hill under a single point of command, making it possible to respond to situations more efficiently and effectively. However, the Auditor General never says that they should report to anyone other than the sergeant-at-arms and the House of Commons security services. In fact, paragraph 67 of the report states the following:

67. We found that the House of Commons Security Services has implemented controls based on accepted security practices, and has adjusted its actions according to intelligence received.

The Auditor General already established that the sergeant-at-arms and his staff were up to the task. Why does the government want to bring in the RCMP?

• (1915)

[*English*]

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report clearly identified the need to bring unification and streamlining to remove silos, to remove division, to bring together all of the different policing entities involved in this place and throughout this precinct. But it is also notable that there has to be one key to leadership. That key, I believe, is clearly enunciated in the motion today, where the RCMP is identified as the ideal solution to creating the leadership necessary to work together and coordinate these efforts under one organizational level.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that leadership is necessary. Like the member across the way, I am not a security expert. I look to receive the best advice that we can get. We have been provided some very solid and tangible advice, and I believe, as a whole, we are moving in that direction. In fact, I will be voting in favour of the government's motion.

The concern I have is with an issue of clarity, and my colleague from Ottawa, for example, is providing more clarity. I do not see that as a ganging-up, saying that the motion is not worthy of support *per se*, but maybe that there is a way that we can enhance the motion. For example, the motion mentions, "...while respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses" and talks about the continued employment of our existing and respected parliamentary staff.

Yes, we support these things, but does the member not recognize that there are ways that we can maybe make the issue a bit clearer by, for example, accepting the motion as presented by the member for Ottawa, just for purposes of clarity?

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear that the member opposite will be supporting the motion, because I think it is important. In fact, I think it is important that the entire House supports the motion unanimously and brings this about as quickly as possible.

As a point of interest, I have heard the former sergeant-at-arms' name brought up multiple times. Clearly, the sergeant-at-arms of the day, Kevin Vickers, is a hero to most of us, and likely to all of us, in this chamber. His heroics on that day were an example to us all of what a remarkable individual he was in leading his team and organization.

I do believe that this motion, which mentions our "...respecting the privileges, immunities and powers of the respective Houses", shows

the House's great esteem for all of the parliamentary security staff and their tenure, et cetera. I have no doubt about that. I do not think there is anyone in this place who would contest that. However, I think we must have leadership and that the leadership provided for in the motion would meet that objective.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Northwest Territories.

I am very proud to rise today to speak to this motion and to share my constituents' views.

I would first like to say that there is a real problem with the fact that this is a government motion. The NDP is seriously concerned that a motion, which would have a direct impact on the security of parliamentarians and on the institution of Parliament itself, is coming from the Prime Minister's Office, even though it is a so-called government motion.

Our role here in this place is not necessarily to accept the government's bills, but to check them and study them. This is what we call oversight. It is our role as parliamentarians to oversee government bills. In this case, we are not even dealing with a bill; we are dealing with a motion. This motion did not come from a member. It did not come from the Speaker's office or the Board of Internal Economy, which was mandated to examine the issue of parliamentary security. In fact, the Board of Internal Economy is still examining the issue and, as far as I know, did not draft this motion. I think that the motion came straight from the Prime Minister's Office.

Conservative members themselves have said so. For example, I heard them say:

[*English*]

the government must move forward on this.

The government must move forward on this? I am sorry, but the government does not have a say in this. The government should be listening to parliamentarians. It is the complete polar opposite of what needs to be happening in this place.

• (1920)

We have seen time and again that a number of MPs in this place consider their role to be that of cheerleader for the government. That is not the role of Parliament. The role of Parliament is for MPs to represent their constituents and to bring forward their concerns about issues posed by the government.

We have a democracy in Canada that is different from the American democracy and from many other democracies. Parliamentary democracy is essentially one where we have a government that sits in this House at the same time as parliamentarians. I want to make it clear that if someone is not a minister, that person is not in government. Their role is to defend this place, defend its obligations, and to defend the interests of their constituents. In this case, I do not think this motion would respect that.

Government Orders

In the case of all the people who brought forward motions or amendments to the motion, they all agree on one thing, that we need a fully integrated security system in this Parliament. No one has said anything different. I keep hearing from members on the government side that we live in a number of silos and that this motion would fix that. Everyone in this House, as far as I can see, agrees that we should have an integrated security system. The Board of Internal Economy is actually investigating this matter at the moment. The Speaker has been investigating this matter. We keep referring back to the Auditor General, and the government's motion actually mentions that the Auditor General agrees that there should be a more integrated security service.

No one, except the Prime Minister's Office and those who want to represent that office in this place, is proposing that integration means that it should be under the control of the RCMP, albeit with some deference toward the Speaker's office.

We need a system where the Speaker actually is the defender of this place, and not a situation where we have a security service that, in theory, would have shared responsibilities as far as having to respect authority structures is concerned. An RCMP officer is not going to be trained to respect the Speaker's office; an RCMP officer is trained to respect his or her hierarchy. When it comes to this place, it has to be clear that the Speaker's office has complete control.

If the RCMP were to be in control of this place, we might end up in a situation like we saw in Ontario, under what I believe was the Harris government at the time, when there were many demonstrations held at Queen's Park. Parliamentarians in Ontario decided that it was a mistake for provincial police to be responsible for security in their parliament and decided to go the opposite way of this motion, which was that the security measures would be the responsibility of the assembly itself. That was a wise decision, and that example is being forgotten with the motion that was brought forward today.

For some reason, the example in Ontario, which I think a number of people who sit on the other side actually experienced first-hand, has been forgotten. Now they talk about integration as if it is something they have some unique and limited understanding of. I do not think members in this place want to abdicate their responsibilities. The Prime Minister's Office has put forward a motion, and some people refer to the Auditor General's report as if it supports this motion. I have read that report and I do not see that support anywhere. What I saw on October 22 was that a number of security agents employed by this place did their jobs admirably, to the point of heroism.

Most Canadians saw the videotapes of what happened that day, and the evidence is clear. The best security was found inside this place and not outside this place. Outside this place, the RCMP were responsible for the grounds. I did not see any acts that would have protected individuals, be it the public or parliamentarians, outside of this place. The only acts I saw that were done in a heroic and incredibly responsible fashion were those done in this place.

To say that RCMP security is better trained and better prepared to take care of a crisis situation neglects the recent history we have experienced. We need to clearly see that there are many other options that are currently being debated. This motion short-circuits that debate and brings it in line with what the Prime Minister's Office

wants. If that debate is to happen, all parliamentarians should have an opportunity to speak to it with greater information than they have today.

A motion short-circuits the process that legislation would normally have brought forward. We do not have time to debate this fully. We do not have the facts we need to look at this properly, and it is being rammed down our throats with limited debate. All of these things are an affront to the parliamentary institution.

Again, the role of this place is to have oversight on government bills. It is not simply to look at the text and say, "The government makes perfect sense every time and let's vote in favour of it". The opposition parties have proposed amendments that I think make sense. The amendment that the NDP put forward respects the nature of this place much more than the main motion ever will. The main motion is an affront. The office of the Speaker is responsible for ensuring the safety of this place. This motion would take some of that power away.

We need to understand that the RCMP is not directly answerable to this place. The RCMP is answerable to the government. The RCMP is a government institution and exists to defend the interests of government. Were there to be protests, for instance, on Parliament Hill, I would much rather that Parliament's security take care of them than an agency under the control of the Prime Minister's Office.

We have seen it time and again. I will remind people of the demonstrations that occurred in Vancouver under the previous Chrétien administration, in which some security agents used very extreme measures to control protesters. This place should not be showing that kind of example to those who want to express themselves. They should be showing an example where their right to express themselves might be curtailed by government order. They need to know that parliamentarians have their backs. They need to know that parliamentarians are doing their jobs, and in doing their jobs they should be voting against this motion.

• (1925)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to support the motion, but with trepidation. We all know, as we saw several weeks ago in another Commonwealth parliament, what happens when executive power and security forces are abused. Therefore, I will be supporting the motion, but with trepidation.

My comments reflect the views of many members of Parliament on both sides of the aisle who have not had a chance to speak to the motion because of closure. Mr. Speaker, I hope that you and the other Speakers of the House, along with the clerks, will take into account my remarks when translating the motion into agreements or into contracts.

Government Orders

I support the unification of the security services on Parliament Hill, but it is important that we maintain the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government. In other words, it is important that the RCMP on the Hill report exclusively to Speakers of the Commons and Speakers of the Senate and not to the Solicitor General of Canada. In other words, the final decision-making authority should rest exclusively with the Speakers of both respective chambers and not with the executive branch of government, the cabinet, or any minister, such as the Solicitor General.

• (1930)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member. I would certainly then encourage him to vote against the motion if that is how he feels because I do not see how the main motion is going to reflect what he said at all. He needs to look at this carefully and decide whether he can in all good honesty support a motion that will not fulfill the concerns he has raised at this point.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine for his speech.

There has not been enough emphasis on the fundamental importance of the legislative branch. That independence is both desirable and desired. In Canada, the executive branch has a lot of power. Members of the executive branch of government are all MPs, and that leads to accountability problems. Therefore, it makes sense that the Speaker, as someone who is independent from the executive branch, should have full authority to protect freedom of circulation and expression for all members of the House.

I would like the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine to elaborate on the importance of the independent legislative branch to which we all belong.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for his question.

He is absolutely correct. Rights and obligations, what we sometimes call parliamentary privilege, exist for one clear reason: to prevent the executive from abusing its powers. The judiciary controls the executive, but it acts after the fact.

Basically, in Parliament, when we want to solve problems before they appear, we have to propose amendments and keep an eye on what the executive is doing. That is why I believe the motion before us presents a fundamental problem. First of all, it was moved by the government and this is an excellent example of an abuse of power on the part of the executive, which is imposing its solution on the legislative branch.

Parliamentarians have an obligation to defend their rights, but not because they like the power. Rather, it is because Parliament's reason for being is to control the executive. Otherwise, the executive would behave as it did long ago. It would do as it pleases and members would not speak out and would not be willing to take their obligations seriously.

Ultimately, we would end up with an executive over which we had almost no control. More and more we are trying to control the executive in Canada using the judicial system. However, it would be

much more effective and less expensive if that were done here in the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to debate the motion before us and the amendments that have been made to it.

Of course, the NDP is not opposed to the idea of an integrated security force operating in the parliamentary precinct. That is an idea that most of us have a good feeling about and think would improve the general security of the place. However, the problem is what has happened here to start with and then looking at the details of the motion.

To start with, when we have an opportunity for parliamentarians to make the rules for Parliament, there should be a process that engages parliamentarians and not a process that comes from the Prime Minister's Office. That is not appropriate for dealing with the rules that govern us as parliamentarians. We all understand that, but the Conservatives seem to be willing to go along with the idea that a party of one gets to make the choices in this House of Commons for all of us.

What we have before us is a motion that calls on the Speaker to “invite without delay, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police...”

Therefore, once the motion is passed, the Speaker has his orders. He is going to invite, without delay, without discussion, the RCMP to lead operational security. That is the essence of what is happening here. Everything else around it is on qualifications that may or may not come into play. However, that is what will happen from this motion, which is what we are here for today.

We talk about the privilege of the House and the continued employment of our existing parliamentary security staff, but those are things that can or may be put into place, or they may continue in one way or another. However, it is that the RCMP would take over and lead operational security for this parliamentary precinct. That is what is going to happen.

How do we feel about the actions of the security team in October, which is what has driven the party of one, the Prime Minister, to put forward this motion?

We all saw what happened. We all have our ideas about what went wrong or right on that day. We can look back and ask ourselves if the people in our security service within this House, many whom have worked here for many years and recognize every one of us, were the most important element in what happened on that day. I think we can say yes. We saw what happened outside of the grounds.

We could say that there are technical issues outside of the grounds. Why do we not have electronic locks on the main doors in this place? Why do we not have secondary barriers on the roads leading up to this place? What are we doing about the people on two-wheeled vehicles who roar up the Hill? Nothing. We do have some technical issues on the grounds around Parliament that we need to deal with. We obviously have problems with access to the buildings when someone can walk in without anyone stopping them.

Government Orders

There are issues that need to be dealt with, but they are not issues that need to change the way that Parliament is run and the way parliamentarians take care of themselves. These are technical issues. They are issues that should be worked on by security experts who can put them in place, who can make sure that procedures outside the grounds and inside the House are adequate for our protection and respect the nature of Parliament. We do not need to change the relationship to do that.

My concern about the grounds goes back to an incident in September 2011, when members of the RCMP, in response to the Keystone pipeline protest, put up massive barricades. They shut down the main stairs leading up to the middle of the parliamentary grounds. They positioned people on tops of buildings. There was a crowd of 1,000 people, and they were very concerned about controlling it.

● (1935)

As a member of Parliament, I wanted to access the stairs. I told the RCMP that I wanted to stand on the stairs and talk to people in the crowd. The officers told me I could not do that. When I asked the officers under what authority were they doing this, they said the authority was in a book in the House of Commons. I told them to get the book. When they opened it, they apologized and told me to stand where I wished.

Those RCMP officers did not understand the relationship of parliamentarians to Parliament. Some of them are here for a year or two; some are here maybe a bit longer. They are not like our security staff. They do not understand the nature of Parliament and the parliamentarians who work here and represent Canadians within this building.

We do not want to see that change. We do not want to see the relationship we have with this building change over technical issues that should be fixed and can be fixed.

When I was transport critic in the last Parliament, I spent time on aviation security. It was clear that once security rules are put in place, they stay in place, whether they become rather insignificant and meaningless later on.

We went through a process in transport committee and we heard from many witnesses. When we begin locking the cockpit door of an airplane so that no one can enter it, it changes the nature of what can go into the cabin. An individual cannot open a properly locked cockpit door with a pair of scissors. Threatening someone in the cabin is then like threatening somebody anywhere else. Threats were made, so rules were finally changed.

The Israelis laugh at some of the things that we do here. They have the best security system in the world, but we get into a fixed position about what we think security is and we are then not adaptable to the changes that can take place.

We do need to adapt, but we cannot throw out the baby with the bath water. We cannot make this Parliament less than it is. This is our watch. We are standing this watch. This is the watch that all of us in this Parliament represent at this time. What we do here to change the rules for how our Parliament behaves is important. It cannot be done simply at the whim of the party of one. The party of one does not

have the right to do that to us in this Parliament. We all know what the party of one means here, and no one could deny that.

The differences between the RCMP and the security people in the House are really quite apparent. The security people here look on this as their career. They learn to work with us. They know each other and all of us personally. They understand how this place works when we are here and when we are somewhere else.

What is the likelihood of the RCMP understanding that? RCMP officers have a couple of years on the Hill and then move on. Some rookies from Regina might be brought in and put to work on the Hill. What kind of guarantee is that of the total understanding of the relationship of parliamentarians to Parliament, of respect for the people who work in here, of understanding our job and our authority within the House? There is no guarantee.

This is a dangerous place to go. We do not need to go there. We should go back and put this in front of a group of parliamentarians. We should come together and make an agreement among ourselves. We are not far away. Two amendments have been made to the government's motion, one from the opposition and one from the third party. We are not far apart. Let us bring them together. Let us put this together in a good fashion.

● (1940)

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Northwest Territories spoke about how important it was that the security services here understand the nature of the business that we do and at times know us personally. In fact, in my intervention I spoke to how remarkable it is that they know each one of us and how important the client service delivery they are able to provide us is to security systems.

However, the member for Northwest Territories implied that it was an impossibility for the RCMP to learn that. I am new to this place. I have been here four years now. I did not know the rules and procedures, but as time went by I learned them. There are training mechanisms in place, and those things are quite possible.

I have a direct question for the member outside of that. Does he recognize that the parliamentary precinct encompasses areas that are in different security zones, such as inside this place, in other buildings on the Hill, on the front property, and in Ottawa proper? We travel on green buses between different buildings, as an example. How does he propose we integrate a security system without the lead of the RCMP? It is the only organization right now that has authority in each one of those places as well as on the streets going toward the Valour Building or the Victoria Building or the Wellington Building. It controls all of the access to the front lawns, both in and out, and not just for the House of Commons.

I wonder if the member for Northwest Territories could highlight exactly how we would integrate that security with any lead other than the RCMP, given those realities of jurisdiction and authority on those properties outside of this physical building.

Government Orders

• (1945)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of ideas. I think that a system of electronic locks on the doors that both the RCMP and the security service have the ability to lock from a distance would be a good idea.

When I look at the bollards that were installed, I think of how many terrorists ride scooters. They could simply scooter their way through there and not be stopped by that very expensive system that was put in.

There are things we should do, technical things that need to be accomplished on the Hill to provide safety. I do not have a problem with that. The Speaker and the technical security experts should come together to understand how to make this place safer. I do not think we have done a very good job of it yet. I think we can do a much better job.

However, what I do not want to change is the relationship of parliamentarians with their own security system. It is fine to change the building or the layout, but the most important thing that we do in this House is represent people as the authority of Canadians. We cannot give that up.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am a former police officer. I have observed the behaviour of the House security guards and the RCMP on the outside for six and a half years, and I have a practical question.

As usual, the hon. member for the Northwest Territories was philosophically elegant and eloquent today. However, I have a practical question for him, which is this. Why is it when the security guards, who he has pointed out do a great job, were effective last October 22, whereas the problem occurred outside with the Mounties? Why would we be handing it over to the guys who screwed up instead of handing it over to the guys who do a good job and always have?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I would not characterize anything that happened as the fault of any individual. I think the system was at fault. Clearly, there are technical issues with respect to the grounds around here that need to be fixed. They were not fixed by the security ideas the last group came up with, so we need to have another look at that.

Why would we give the lead to the RCMP? There is some concern that it would be a movement away from the legislature into the executive, and that needs to be allayed by the use of very precise wording. That wording is not there right now. I have read the motion, and it is not in there.

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an important debate, undeniably for Parliament and also for Canadians, for understanding the issues around security on the Hill. Surely October 22 shocked parliamentarians and all the staff and guards and police who were here, and it really shook Canadians in many ways to see that type of violence visited on one of the most important democratic institutions that our country has.

In this debate and in the wording of the motion there is much to examine. We have heard some very thoughtful comments and some

very pressing concerns that have to be met, not the least of which are the concerns of the guards here.

I hope in the time I have remaining to put to rest some of the fears, because I do fear that, for whatever reason, there has been an attempt to leave the impression that the guards here on the Hill had somehow failed in their duty or had not done proper security and that they will be cast aside and would somehow be left in the lurch as a result of the changes that are foreseen.

I think it goes without saying that the precinct of Parliament and the buildings that make up that precinct should not have four separate, or arguably five, separate security forces working within a few hundred metres of the seat of government.

It has been stated a number of times, but it bears repeating, that these silos that have evolved naturally and that occur when we have separate security forces cause a breakdown in efficiencies and communications when it comes to providing proper security, so there is a very practical side to what we are attempting to do.

Mr. Speaker, you have been here a while as well. This discussion has certainly been going on as long as I can remember. When I came here in 1997, the discussion was happening then, but it goes back further than that. It has been the subject of some quite involved and thoughtful studies that relate to maintaining parliamentary privilege while maintaining services and security for current parliamentarians. It comes down to a very important crux of the issue, and that is the ability to integrate security in the most efficient way to protect those within this precinct.

Without going back to October 22 and re-examining the particular issues of that day, it stands to reason that our national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, would be seized of this issue and would be given the overall responsibility. When one considers their plugged-in nature with CSIS for intelligence gathering and with CSEC in terms of military intelligence, their national reach and experience in history and connectivity to this place all lend themselves to being the body that would provide the greatest security.

This is why we have introduced the measure that has been the subject of this debate. It is an idea that I would submit is long overdue. It is not something that was simply brought about in the aftermath of October 22. In fact, in 2012 the Auditor General recommended moving towards an integrated security force. The Auditor General, in the report on the parliamentary precinct, also recommended a unified security force, and the integrated security model announced today and discussed here is all about acting on that recommendation, which states, "It is necessary to balance the desired level of access with sufficient security to ensure that risks are mitigated."

Therefore, there was much work done before October 22, but I would submit that a great deal has happened since.

I said at the outset I wanted to mention and dwell for some time on the issue around the impact on the staff. Some have suggested that the RCMP will somehow exclude the courageous and commendable work that was done by security forces here, that they would somehow be cast aside.

Government Orders

The fact of the matter is that the RCMP, with their resources and their experience, are well versed at working with other security forces. That has been the evolution of our national police force. They have had, by necessity, to work with municipal police, with provincial police, and, as I mentioned, with other security agencies, and that has been to our country's benefit.

• (1950)

We saw a recent example, if I might mention what happened in the city of Halifax just a few short days ago. The RCMP worked closely with Halifax metro and an international police force in the United States to thwart what would have been a disastrous Valentine's Day massacre in the city of Halifax. I salute the incredible work that was done, much of which came about because of intelligence gathering and a humane tip offered through Crime Stoppers.

To come back to the point, the confidence we feel in the House of Commons protective services, the men and women who have guarded these premises for over 150 years and have done so with extraordinary professionalism, courtesy, and personal commitment, is not the essence of this debate. There is no denying that what happened on October 22, 2014 was perhaps the greatest example of their professionalism and courage.

I could not stand here without mentioning the sergeant-at-arms. Mr. Vickers, now our ambassador to Ireland, is a true Canadian hero, but there were many heroes that day, in uniform and working here on the Hill.

To be clear, this is an endorsement of a continuation of inclusion for the betterment of security here in the precinct. It is Canada's national police force that should lead that effort.

We are also committed to providing Canadians with continued access to the House of Commons. This has been another legitimate concern. Canadians want to be able to access this place. This an important home of democracy, and reasonable security measures must be balanced against that concern. Appropriate security measures will be implemented by this new integrated security unit for the parliamentary precinct and will be done with a great deal of input, including, most importantly, from those who have been doing this job for many years and decades.

Ensuring the safety of our visitors, our staff, our elected officials, including those in the Senate, and all those who work here in the precinct is following an international example. It is following what has happened in other parliaments. I am sure that this has been mentioned. In the U.K. and Australia, there has been a natural evolution to recognize the modern security threats and to recognize the physical infrastructure that has improved, as was mentioned by members here tonight.

It is important to emphasize that the Westminster parliament, the mother parliament of all, took steps in this direction some time ago. Canada is lagging in this regard, and the time is here. It and other parliaments have clearly demonstrated that security forces are much stronger and much more efficient when integrated while at the same time balancing the privileges of Parliament.

To that extent, I must also mention that this would not be done under the sole authority of the RCMP. Some have mentioned that it would therefore be the government controlling security. However,

this would be done through the Speakers' offices. The Speakers of the House and the Senate would very much have a hand in how this integrated security force would operate.

I want to stress that the rights and privileges of Parliament through the Chair, the important office of the Speaker, would remain unchanged. This would include the privilege of the House and the Senate to control their own precincts and the right of members to come and go unimpeded.

This motion, should it pass and be implemented, is a natural progression in the development of a memorandum of understanding to govern the next steps. This is not something that would be drafted on the back of a napkin. There is a great deal of work already in place that would continue in a transparent and inclusive way.

The security imperatives are such that it is the government's objective, and it should be all members' objective, to see that this transition and partnership with security partners occurs as soon as possible. Following the passage of a parliamentary motion in both Houses, the government would work with the Speakers on the transition planning.

This again does not suggest that we are beginning this process anew. This is something that has been happening now for some time. It would build on those existing efforts.

Maintaining one force inside the Parliament buildings and one force outside the Parliament buildings simply does not make sense in this current threat environment. That is why we are in full support of integration throughout the precinct under the operational leadership of the RCMP.

• (1955)

The operational command would see an RCMP officer commanding the integrated security unit, but the selection process would be carried out in accordance with the RCMP Act, which is an act that includes all the elements of the existing RCMP. This is something that would be done in consultation with both Houses and with both Speakers.

I know the time is coming to an end, but I want to make the point, again, abundantly clear. This government, and I believe I am safe in speaking for all members here, has not lost faith for a moment in the security that has been provided by the men and women of the parliamentary security force. They are our best friends. They are people who we have come to know and respect and to care for deeply because of the way they have treated all members. I, for one, after time here on the Hill, consider some of the members of this force to be good friends, to be people who I have come to know, and I know their families. It is very important that they understand that we deeply value their service to this precinct but also to this country.

Their bravery that was on display on October 22 was nothing short of extraordinary. I am so glad that we had the opportunity to express that to them personally here on the floor of the House of Commons that day. All members demonstrated an incredible outpouring of personal affection, respect, and appreciation for all that they did on October 22 and for all they have done throughout their entire time here on Parliament Hill.

For those reasons, I would encourage all members in this House to support this motion, as it ends some of the duplication, overlap, and inconsistencies that can be exploited and can cause gaps in our security. No one wants to see security breached, as it was on that day. There has been ample time now to examine in detail what occurred.

More importantly, it is time to move forward in a thoughtful way that includes everyone, that puts security first, and that balances the rights of our parliamentary precinct and Canadians.

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 8:02 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Motion No. 14 under government orders.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment 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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (2030)

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

(*Division No. 331*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Allen (Welland)
Andrews	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Choquette	Christopherson
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseauit
Easter	Fortin
Freeland	Freeman
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère

Gravelle
Hsu
Hyer
Lamoureux
Lavardière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Pécllet
Pilon
Rafferty
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel

Government Orders

Groguhé
Hughes
Julian
Lapointe
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Liu
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Perreault
Quach
Rankin
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valeriotte — 106

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockett
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukivski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson	Norlock
Oliver	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins

Government Orders

Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Schellenberger	Seeback
ShIPLEY	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Wilks	
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 138

Laverdière
Liu
Marston
Masse
May
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Péclét
Pilon
Rafferty
Raynault
Saganash
Scott
Sitsabaiesan
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel — 83

LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Perreault
Quach
Rankin
Rousseau
Sandhu
Sellah
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment defeated.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (2035)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 332)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Fortin	Freeman
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Gravelle	Groguhé
Hughes	Hyer
Julian	Lapointe

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brisson
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chisu
Clarke
Cotler
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeshen
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Falk
Fast
Fletcher
Galipeau
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Hsu
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leaf
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Miller
Murray
Norlock
Opitz
Pacetti
Payne

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Barlow
Bennett
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Clement
Crockatt
Davidson
Dion
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Eglinski
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Freeland
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson
Oliver
O'Toole
Paradis
Perkins

Poilievre
Raitt
Regan
Rempel
Ritz
Schellenberger
Sgro
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Valeriotte
Van Loan
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 161

Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Richards
Scarpaleggia
Seeback
Shiple
Sorenson
St-Denis
Sweet
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (2045)

[Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:]

Mr. Frank Valeriotte: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It was the Liberals' intention to vote yes, and unfortunately we moved from the yes to the noes too quickly. I apologize.

The Speaker: Have we all returned from a very productive constituency workweek with a renewed sense of collegiality?

Does the hon. member for Guelph have unanimous consent to have their votes applied?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There does not seem to be consent.

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

Government Orders

(Division No. 333)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Bateman
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Egliniski
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod
Miller
Nicholson
Oliver
O'Toole
Payne
Poilievre
Raitt
Reid
Richards
Schellenberger
Shiple
Sorenson
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Wilks
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Barlow
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Crockatt
Davidson
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Falk
Fast
Fletcher
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leaf
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McColeman
Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Norlock
Opitz
Paradis
Perkins
Preston
Rajotte
Rempel
Ritz
Seeback
Sopuck
Stanton
Sweet
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Warawa
Watson
Wong
Yelich
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NAYS

Members

Angus
Aubin
Benskin

Government Orders

Bevington
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Caron
Charlton
Choquette
Comartin
Crowder
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseau
Freeman
Genest
Giguère
Groguhé
Hyer
Lapointe
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Perreault
Quach
Rankin
Rousseau
Sandhu
Sellah
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay

Blanchette
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Côté
Cullen
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Fortin
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Gravelle
Hughes
Julian
Laverdière
Liu
Marston
Masse
May
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Péclet
Pilon
Rafferty
Raynault
Saganash
Scott
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Stoffer
Toone
Turmel— 82

Freeman
Genest
Giguère
Groguhé
Hyer
Lapointe
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Perreault
Quach
Rankin
Rousseau
Sandhu
Sellah
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay

Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Gravelle
Hughes
Julian
Laverdière
Liu
Marston
Masse
May
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Péclet
Pilon
Rafferty
Raynault
Saganash
Scott
Sitsabaiesan
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel— 82

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—JOB CREATION

The House resumed from February 5 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Parkdale—High Park relating to the business of supply.

● (2055)

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

(Division No. 334)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bevington
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Caron
Charlton
Choquette
Comartin
Crowder
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseau

Angus
Aubin
Benskin
Blanchette
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Côté
Cullen
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Fortin

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Aspin
Bateman
Bennett
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Clement
Crockatt
Davidson
Dion
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Egliniski
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Freeland
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Barlow
Bélanger
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brison
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chisu
Clarke
Cotler
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeschen
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Falk
Fast
Fletcher
Galipeau
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Hsu
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kram (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukivski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Miller

Government Orders

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)

Murray
 Nicholson
 Oliver
 O'Toole
 Paradis
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Reid
 Richards
 Scarpaleggia
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Sorenson
 St-Denis
 Sweet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Kesteren

Norlock
 Opitz
 Pacetti
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Regan
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Sgro
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Toet
 Trottier
 Uppal
 Valeriotte
 Van Loan

Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Wilks
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

Warawa
 Watson
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 162

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 8:56 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:56 p.m.)

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