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Monday, June 8, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 8, 2015

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-642, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (high profile offender), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: There being no other members rising, I will turn to the hon. member for Saint John for his five-minute right of reply.

Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to stand in the House today to close the debate on second reading of my private member's bill, Bill C-642.

I feel very confident that my colleagues will see the wisdom of these proposed amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

The private member's bill will amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act so as to require Correctional Service Canada to disclose certain key information regarding the statutory release of a high-profile offender. This would be accomplished by posting the required information as prescribed by the bill on the service's website, and also by providing written notice with the disclosure of the information to the victim or victims. The legislation would also provide for community consultation related to the proposed release.

I introduced the bill in order to fulfill a commitment that I made to the citizens of my community after they were exposed to a situation that many felt was a major injustice in 2013. The injustice I speak of today was the release of three high-profile offenders into a halfway house in Saint John without any prior notice whatsoever to the community. This could happen in any community throughout Canada that is home to a halfway house that houses high-profile offenders prior to their full release.

I want to say at the outset that I believe we in society have an obligation to do our part to reintegrate individuals back into society once they have paid their dues. However, it cannot be without

looking after the mental and physical well-being of law-abiding citizens.

I made a commitment at the time to try to ensure this situation was not repeated in Saint John, or in any other community throughout Canada. I felt it was important for communities to have the information they needed in advance to allow the police and the citizens to be prepared, and to ensure that the victims were aware about the people who had violated them as well.

As lawmakers, we have an obligation to listen to our constituents and to act in the interests of the majority. I undertook, in 2013, to address the needs and concerns of the people in my riding. They were concerned and looking to us to provide them with the protection and information they needed to feel good about walking the streets of Saint John.

Bill C-642 would not interfere with the rights of the inmate being released. It would not change the fact that they are being released. It would not deny the protection provided by our Canadian justice and correctional system.

What it would do is to give the citizens of our country, and the victims of crime, more information and a sense that they are being treated fairly. It would make the release of certain dangerous offenders part of the public record.

It would not be the responsibility of the police in local communities to decide if certain information should be made public. This would give the public and the victims the knowledge so that certain individuals would not be able to quietly, and under the veil of secrecy, enter their community and possibly reoffend before the community even knows they are there.

I want to point out that this change would not apply to all offenders being released into our communities. It would only apply to the most dangerous, as defined by schedule I of the act, or if the commissioner determines that the offence dynamics have elicited or have the potential to elicit a community reaction in the form of significant public or media attention.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very much for having taken the time to listen to the bill and consider it. I want to thank all members for taking the time to consider the bill. It is very important to the citizens of my community, and it certainly would make a difference going forward.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Business of Supply

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 10, 2015, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: Given the end of private members' business at this time, the House will stand suspended until noon, 12 o'clock.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:04 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The Deputy Speaker: Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending June 23, 2015, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be now distributed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, employment insurance premiums paid by employers and workers must be used exclusively to finance benefits, as defined by the Employment Insurance Act, for unemployed workers and their families and that, consequently, the government should: (a) protect workers' and employers' premiums from political interference; (b) improve program accessibility to ensure that unemployed workers and their families can access it; and (c) abandon its plan, as set out in Budget 2015, to set rates unilaterally, in order to maintain long-term balance in the fund while improving accessibility.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we often hear members say, "I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to such and such a subject." I rise today not because it pleases me but out of necessity. I suspect it is that

necessity that has prompted so many of us to express an interest in speaking to this motion today, a motion that could only have been moved by the New Democratic Party. As we will see throughout the presentations being made today, both Liberal and Conservative governments have a dismal record on employment insurance.

I wish to announce at the outset that I will be sharing my time with the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour so that as many people as possible can have their say and discuss the ins and outs of this measure, with the hope that through the exchange of ideas and as a result of discussion and debate, we might have a unanimous vote, when the time comes, in favour of workers who sometimes face the unfortunate reality of being unemployed. We want employment insurance to be there to get them through those difficult times.

This motion is especially crucial considering that it directly affects thousands and thousands of people all across Quebec and Canada. No one in the House can claim that they do not know someone, whether a family member or friend, who has been affected recently by a job loss, given the current economic situation. The motion put forward by the NDP today is the beginning of meaningful reparation. It is a first step towards creating a fairer, more equitable society, one that reflects the NDP's policies and vision for future development.

I would like to read the general thrust of the motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, employment insurance premiums paid by employers and workers must be used exclusively to finance benefits, as defined by the Employment Insurance Act, for unemployed workers and their families...

That seems pretty obvious to me. We are talking about an employment insurance plan. Is the point of insurance not to voluntarily pay premiums in order to be prepared when catastrophe strikes? We hope it does not. We all readily agree to pay for car insurance, for example, but hope never to need to file a claim. The same goes for home insurance. We are prepared to pay for our entire lives to protect this colossal investment, while hoping never to need to file a claim. However, when it comes to employment insurance, the Conservative government is completely distorting the meaning of insurance. Instead of attacking unemployment, which is the main problem, the Conservatives have been attacking the unemployed ever since the 2013 reform. The Conservatives would have us believe that using employment insurance in order to work a few weeks a year and then take the rest of the year off has become a way of life for many Canadians. That is totally ridiculous. I have a statistic that says otherwise: the average duration of employment insurance benefits is less than 20 weeks. It is clear to us that people want to work all year. In the famous words of our Quebecois singer, Félix Leclerc, "The best way to kill a man is to pay him for doing nothing." That is not the problem with employment insurance. This is not a question of identifying those who want to be paid for doing nothing.

Business of Supply

What are we now proposing to ensure that this general objective is achieved? Point (a) of the motion proposes to “protect workers' and employers' premiums from political interference”. It is fairly clear that there has been interference over the years. Oddly enough, the employment insurance system will turn 75 in 2015. It is not unreasonable to think that the system may need to be adjusted given that the job market has really diversified in 75 years. That is not the approach taken by the Liberals and the Conservatives over the years. With each reform, reorganization or re-engineering—call it what you will—the objective was the same.

• (1205)

The objective was always to reduce services and benefits and to generate colossal surpluses in the employment insurance fund, which disappeared and became a line in general revenues. Here are some figures. I am not going to give many because I do not have a lot of time.

The Conservative government's last budget reported a surplus of approximately \$1.4 billion. This budget obviously includes employment insurance revenues because they are now part of the consolidated revenue fund. The “employment insurance” line alone for 2015 shows \$3.4 billion in accumulated surpluses. Somehow \$2 billion is missing. For months and months the government has tried to tell us that this money is not used for anything else. You do not need a business school course or a degree in economics to figure out that the \$2 billion has been diverted.

The Conservatives keep telling us that that \$2 billion has not been used for other purposes, that it is a partial reimbursement of the \$9 billion they had to invest during the economic crisis in 2008 and that they are recouping that money over the years as surpluses build up. I really want to believe that, but supposing it is the case, let us take their reasoning to its logical end.

Before the government had to inject \$9 billion into the employment insurance fund to pay out a minimum amount of benefits, the fund had a \$57 billion surplus. If we subtract \$9 billion from \$57 billion, then there should be \$48 billion left somewhere. However, that money has completely disappeared and has been used by successive Liberal and Conservative governments for other purposes.

There is every reason to believe that most of the funding for the unpopular and unfair measures, such as income splitting, that the Conservatives proposed in the most recent budget is coming from the EI surplus.

Obviously, the Liberals and the Conservatives could argue that the Supreme Court has ruled on this issue. This is yet another debate that went as far as the Supreme Court because the major unions persevered and continued the fight. The ruling indicates that employment insurance contributions are now part of the general revenue fund. The NDP believes that while it may now be legal to divert that money, it is still not the right thing to do.

We need to make sure that individuals, employers and workers who contribute to employment insurance are able to get the services that they paid for, especially since, like us, these people pay their taxes so that the government has the money to provide the services it wants to provide. People are being double taxed when both their EI

contributions and the taxes they pay are being used to fund government measures, many of them solely designed to win votes. We need to protect those contributions.

Only one party has introduced a very clear bill to this effect in the House. My colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour had the pleasure and honour of introducing it. I am talking about Bill C-605, which sets out very clear criteria for protecting EI contributions.

Once premiums are protected, what will happen to this tremendous economic lever? Obviously we will increase access to the program. Right now, fewer than 4 out of 10 workers who contributed to the program qualify for benefits at the worst time in their lives. If an insurance company guaranteed its customers that if they encountered a problem, a maximum of four of them would be eligible for benefits, I do not think that company would be around for long. However, that is exactly what the Conservative government is proposing, and those numbers only seem to get worse instead of better. We need to increase accessibility.

In (c) we are calling on the government to abandon its plan, as set out in budget 2015, to set rates unilaterally, in order to maintain long-term balance in the fund while improving accessibility.

• (1210)

I know that my time is up, so I will stop there. I still have a lot of statistics to share, but I am sure that I will have the opportunity to talk about them as we get to questions and other speeches.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech on employment insurance.

We heard a lot of talk in Ontario about increasing CPP, which would increase payroll taxes and premiums for job creators and everyday workers.

Do the member and his party support an increase in EI premiums, which would be another increase in payroll taxes, and lead to a lot of people losing their jobs across Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I imagine that the hon. member simply forgot to listen to my speech.

For a party that boasts almost every single day in question period about respecting jurisdictions, I do not see how his question about a provincial jurisdiction is relevant to what we are discussing today. I really would have liked him to talk about employment insurance and try to defend his government's completely indefensible position. I am sure that we will be getting questions from the Conservatives all day long that try to avoid the issue, since all we ever hear from the Conservatives is doublespeak when it comes to employment insurance.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to broaden the discussion somewhat in regards to employment insurance.

Manitoba often talks about the low unemployment rate, which is based on actual numbers of people on EI. However, many Canadians may not be aware that first nations communities are not factored into employment insurance statistics. I would suggest, if done properly, that would have a serious impact in terms of the level of the unemployment rate.

In terms of the importance of the statistics that Statistics Canada produces, they should be more reflective of reality. I think this is important, and we should be looking at some changes to that effect.

I wonder if the member might want to provide some comments in regards to that.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. As I said earlier, the 75th anniversary of the system is a good reason to sit down and take a comprehensive look at it. That involves a number of related issues. For example, do we have valid statistical data on the job market that would justify taking those steps?

I hope that the Liberals will agree with us and make amends for what they have done in the past. The first thing we need to do is plug the hole in the bucket to make sure that the money collected for employment insurance is used for that and nothing else. If we do not make sure there is money to provide services, it is no use even thinking about all of those related issues.

The main goal of this motion is to stop the hemorrhaging and make sure that the money collected is used for the purpose it is collected for. Thank goodness that on October 19, we will have the only government that is promising not to use premiums for purposes other than those for which they are collected.

•(1215)

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Trois-Rivières, for his leadership on this issue and for the hard work that he has put in to make sure that Canadians understand the damage that the Liberals and Conservatives have done to the important program of employment insurance.

Does the member think it is satisfactory that we have a fund in this country that is supposed to provide support to workers, families and communities when they are unemployed through no fault of their own, yet eligibility has dropped below 4 in 10? In other words, of the 1.3 million unemployed in this country, a small fraction of them are actually eligible for support from this program. Would the member not agree that this is something we have to deal with right now?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that this is an absolutely catastrophic situation. Furthermore, both the Liberal Party and the Conservative party have messed around with the

premium rate over the years to generate surpluses that do not result in more services for unemployed workers.

I am sure that I will have opportunities to speak to this again today. I will now turn the floor over to others.

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to get up and speak for a few minutes on this important issue of employment insurance and the fact that there needs to be a viable program in this country that provides support to unemployed workers, their families, and their communities.

There was such a fund, until the Liberals got their hands on it back in the mid-90s. At that point, 80% of unemployed Canadians had access to this fund. By the time the Liberals got through with it, that had been reduced to 45%. Now, since the Conservatives have had their go at it, it has been reduced to 36% or 37% of unemployed Canadians who actually have an opportunity to access these funds.

I want to talk a bit about that, because that is really at the heart of why we are dealing with this motion today. It is to not only protect the fund, and I will explain why that is important, but to make sure that the account is set up in a way that truly does the work necessary and does what employment insurance was originally established to do, which is provide support for unemployed workers, provide support for parents on parental leave, provide sick benefits, and even provide training for people to bridge the period between jobs.

Let me talk for a second about why access has come to be such a problem.

As I indicated earlier, before the Liberals got at this account, 80% of unemployed workers had access to it. Under their reforms, EI access fell to below 50%. The Conservatives saw an opportunity and have continued to reduce access. As recently as 2012, they brought in some major changes that have particularly affected seasonal industries in Atlantic Canada, which is my part of the world. They made it particularly difficult in a number of different industries that depended on shorter term, seasonal work to the point that in July 2013, fund eligibility reached 36.5%. It is up a bit now and is a little closer to 40%. One reason for that is the high level of unemployment in this country.

Only 60% of new mothers receive maternity benefits, mostly because they have insufficient hours under these Conservative changes.

Business of Supply

On top of those eligibility issues, unemployed workers and their employers have a problem with Service Canada. Of the applicants for EI, 25% are waiting beyond the supposed service standard of 28 days. It is now in excess of 40 days. We raised this issue last fall. We have actually raised it for the past two years, but last fall, the minister responsible stood in this place and talked about how his parliamentary secretary had done a study on this work and had made some changes. We asked him to table the study to show us what the results were, and all of a sudden, that study was not good enough to be released. We still have not seen it. What we do know is that people seeking unemployment insurance benefits are still having to wait over 40 days.

● (1220)

As I indicated, the government made a number of changes in 2012 in terms of eligibility for benefits. One of the particular issues was related to the Social Security Tribunal.

There used to be an appeals process that was tripartite. The worker had a representative at the appeal, the employer had a representative at the appeal, and there was an independent chairperson at the appeal. In other words, there was due process. There was justice. Workers could expect that they would have an opportunity to have their cases heard.

That process has been completely revamped. Now there is an official within the department who looks at this. That individual does not share information. A lot of it is done behind closed doors. The worst thing of all is that at the end of 2014, there was a backlog of 11,000 cases. Not only was the process turned upside down, with workers no longer having access to due process, but now the process is not even going forward, so these appeals are not being heard.

The other point I want to make is in regard to the EI fund. My colleague from Trois-Rivières said that we have tabled a bill in this House to protect the EI fund. Why are we doing that? Why do we have to protect the sanctity of that fund? It is because the Liberals took \$54 billion in the EI fund, and they used it for other purposes. In other words, the money that was put into that fund by workers and employers to provide employment insurance when workers lost their jobs, through no fault of their own, was appropriated to other places. The Conservatives came along and thought that it was pretty neat to have access to that fund, and they tried that too. The Conservatives went ahead and had their way with over \$3 billion in that fund, all the while, of course, not changing premiums.

Now we have a situation where there is less money in the fund. Even so, now the current government is proposing to reduce premiums next year. If we even left the premiums at their current level, we could provide EI benefits to another 130,000 unemployed workers. We think that makes a lot of sense.

My point is that the EI fund should be managed independently. Decisions about premiums should be independent of government. They should not be influenced by the political whims of the government of the day. We have seen the damage that can be done as a result of what the Liberals and Conservatives have done. It is wrong. That is why we are proposing this motion and why we have talked with Canadians about how under an NDP government, we will certainly make those changes.

I want to go back to what we want. We want to ensure that more Canadians and middle-class families have access to the support they need if they lose their jobs, need to take parental leave, become ill, or need to care for loved ones under the compassionate care leave program. That was extended in this budget to six months, which we support. We pushed for that. However, the eligibility problems are still the same: it is accessible by very few people. People caring for ALS patients are unable to have access to that fund.

The NDP wants to make sure that the premiums workers and employers pay to the fund are actually used to provide EI benefits for the unemployed, special benefits for families, and training for Canadians. That is why I had the pleasure of tabling Bill C-605 to put a fence around that fund.

We want to make sure that Canadian workers and businesses are involved in creating an EI fund that actually works for them. When the current government made those five massive changes in 2012, it did so without any consultation with the Atlantic provinces, with Quebec, or with any other provinces. That had a very detrimental impact, and the provinces said so to the federal government.

● (1225)

We are committed to working with the provinces, to working with workers and their representatives, and to working with employers to make sure that we have an EI fund that is protected, that is independent, and that actually supports working people.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully, and it was not tough to hear the hon. member across speak in the House. It did not need any translation either.

I want to ask the member, as a representative of the New Democratic Party, a question so we get it on the record today. Is it still the position of the New Democratic Party that people in this country only have to work for 45 days, and if they become unemployed, they should be eligible for full EI benefits? Is that still the NDP's position?

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Speaker, I do not make any apologies for feeling passionate about working people and about the way the government is treating working people and the way the Liberal Party has been treating working people in this country. I make no apologies for getting a little wound up about that. Let me tell the House that for sure.

I can commit to that member and to those members opposite that when we are in power after October 19, we will work with workers, with employers, and with the provinces to make sure that we have an EI fund that is sustainable, that is independent, and that actually serves the needs of workers, their families, and employers in this country.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of statements the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour had that I fully agree with, and certainly access is one I fully agree with. We have to do a better job as a nation in looking after those who find themselves out of work right now.

Business of Supply

However, specifically on the EI premium rate, could I get his opinion on this? If we go back to 1993, employers and employees were paying \$3.02 per \$100 earned in EI premiums. The unemployment rate was 12.5%. As a matter of fact, the Conservatives had proposed to go to \$3.20. Twelve times since 1993, that rate has come down by a nickel, a dime, or whatever it may have been, to about \$1.78. I think that is what it was when we left power in 2006, so it did come down considerably. Also, the unemployment rate came down from 12.5% to 6.5%.

I have two questions. Does my colleague see that we have to be fair both to employers who create jobs and to employees? Is it at a rate now where we should not go lower? That is what I am hearing in this context. It should be about keeping that fund the same and improving access. I think we agree on that point.

• (1230)

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague from Cape Breton—Canso. This is an issue he knows something about. In 1997, many Liberals in Atlantic Canada got tossed out on their ear as a result of some of the unilateral changes they were making to employment insurance. He knows that, and I would have thought he had learned much from that experience.

The difficulty we have now is that we have a fund, and both the Conservatives and the Liberals are proposing to give cuts to employers to create jobs, something that should come out of general revenues. They would be taking money that should be used to provide support for working Canadians who are suddenly unemployed.

We need to ensure that in terms of rates, they are sufficient to ensure that Canadians, when they are unemployed and need support, are able to receive that support. Those decisions should not be political. They should be independent and done in fairness, with a sense of equity for employers and workers.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to respond to the motion brought forward by the member for Trois-Rivières regarding access to employment insurance.

Our government recognizes that EI is a vital resource for those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. The opposition is trying to distract from its irresponsible scheme that would have people work simply for 45 days and then collect employment insurance for the rest of the year. The high-tax opposition's 45-day work year would cost \$6 billion and be paid for by job-killing payroll taxes levied on workers and the businesses that employ them.

As members know, employment insurance is designed to provide temporary income support to help Canadians and their families withstand financial pressure when they lose their jobs. Our employment program also works by offering training and support to help unemployed Canadians return to work.

We know that Canadians want to get back to work as soon as possible. They want to earn a good living. They want to support their families and be productive members in their communities. To foster a strong, competitive workforce, our employment insurance program must succeed in helping them find a new job. What we are striving

for is economic growth, while ensuring long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

I can assure members that the employment insurance situation of Canadians is a matter of great concern for this government. The result of this hard work has been clear. Since we introduced the economic action plan to respond to the global recession, Canada has recovered all the jobs that were lost during that period. We have one of the strongest job creation records in the G7 and one of the best in the developed world. We have created over 1.2 million net new jobs since the pit of the economic recession in 2009, 80% of those jobs are in the private sector. Of those jobs, 80% are full-time and 65% are in high wage industries.

However, the recovery has varied across the country and across segments of the population. By helping Canadians connect with available jobs and by putting a priority on skills and training, we are ensuring continued economic growth, job creation and long-term prosperity. The employment insurance program is an important part of this success. It plays a key role in helping Canadians stay attached to the labour market and return to work as quickly as possible.

With all due respect, I do not believe the members opposite know all that they need to when it comes to accessibility for employment insurance.

First, I want to put to rest the notion that only a small percentage of unemployed Canadians receive EI benefits. According to Statistics Canada's latest survey, in 2013, nearly nine out of ten recently unemployed Canadians who paid into the EI program and lost their job were eligible to receive EI benefits. That is not a small percentage; that is the vast majority. Further, of those people who were disqualified from EI in 2014, far less than 1%, it was because they failed to search for work or refused to accept suitable work.

Members should keep in mind that the entire unemployed population includes many people for whom the program was not designed and therefore does not work well. This includes people who did not work in the previous 12 months, people who quit their jobs to go back to school and people who quit their job without a good reason.

Another myth that I would like to address is that changes to the EI program in recent years have negatively affected eligibility rules. That is untrue. The reality is that changes that were introduced by our government have assisted unemployed Canadians in returning to work and have not restricted any access to EI benefits. It had nothing to do with accessibility.

Our government is committed to a program that is more reflective of and more responsive to local labour market conditions. When we designed the changes, we took into account the unique needs of the different regions and the different circumstances, including seasonal workers. We believe that working is always a better option than collecting employment insurance. We are committed to supporting workers and ensuring that EI enables a strong and competitive workforce for all Canadians in every region of the country from coast to coast.

Business of Supply

To achieve this, over the last three years we have announced several targeted, common-sense changes to help Canadians in all regions of the country. These changes were not about restricting access to EI benefits, but rather supporting unemployed workers by giving them the tools that they needed to help them get back to work. As long as workers meet their obligation of seeking suitable employment, they will continue to meet their obligations and will then be eligible to receive their benefits.

• (1235)

We introduced ways to help Canadians connect with available jobs in their own communities. For example, the job alert system makes it easier for job seekers and employers to connect. More specifically, the job alert service has sent out 514 million alerts to over 775,000 since it was launched in January 2013, making it easier for job seekers and employers to connect. These numbers continue to grow each and every day.

We also clarified the long-standing responsibilities of EI claimants to look for work while they are receiving benefits. Some say the changes hurt claimants living in small communities by forcing them to travel great distances or worse, forcing them to move out of the community altogether. That is simply not true. No one ever has been and no one ever will be forced to move. Claimants are only expected to look for work within their communities. Moreover, personal circumstances are always taken into account, such as the availability of public transportation and access to child care. Those are things that are considered when evaluating each individual employment insurance claim.

However, let us not lose sight of the fact that the purpose of the EI program is to provide temporary income support to those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own, while they look for a job or they look to upgrade their skills. It was not, and is not, meant to be an income supplement for those who choose not to look for work for part of the year. However, for those Canadians who live in areas of higher unemployment, or areas where jobs simply do not exist outside seasonal or specialized industries, EI benefits will always continue to be there for them.

We have also implemented the variable best weeks approach to calculating EI benefits. We believe that claimants living in regions with similar labour market conditions should be treated similarly when they look for work. Before variable best weeks was implemented, there were two different methods for calculating this benefit rate. This meant that claimants with similar work patterns and similar labour market conditions would receive different benefit amounts just because they lived in different parts of Canada. Variable best weeks created a national benefit rate calculation based on the monthly unemployment rate within the claimant's EI region. Further, by making weekly benefit calculations with the regional unemployment rate, EI is more responsive to changes to labour market conditions.

In budget 2015, the Government of Canada proposed a \$53-million investment to renew the working while on claim project parameters for another year. Working while on claim is designed to help unemployed Canadians get back to work in their local workforce as quickly as possible. The previous pilot project, which began in August 2012, encouraged EI claimants to accept available

work while on EI. This working while on claim project reduces claimant's weekly EI benefits by 50% for each dollar earned while on claim, starting with the first dollar earned. Earnings beyond the threshold of 90% of the weekly insurable earnings used to calculate EI rate of benefits reduce weekly EI benefits dollar for dollar.

This 90% cap ensures that claimants cannot earn more while on claim than they were while they were working. The working while on claim project applies to claimants receiving regular, fishing, compassionate care, parental or parents of critically ill children's benefits, as well as self-employed persons receiving compassionate care, or parents of critically ill children.

Initiatives, like the working while on claim pilot project, help ensure the EI program remains relevant for today's labour market. According to the 2013-14 employment insurance monitoring and assessment report, they will continue to be effective. The report demonstrates that the EI program continues to support unemployed workers and their families as they transition back to work.

The report also reaffirms that eligibility for EI remains high. Over 85% of individuals who have paid into the system and have lost their job do no fault of their own are eligible for EI benefits. For example, in 2013-14, 1.33 million regular claims accounted for \$10 billion in regular benefits.

The same year, there were more than 515,000 special claims, such as maternity, parental, sickness, compassionate care, parents of critically ill children. These resulted in \$4.7 billion in special benefits. The numbers do not lie. The EI program is clearly a strong support for those who need it and strong support when people need it the most.

We know the employment situations of Canadians can change for any number of reasons. Some, like an employer going out of business, are difficult but understandable. Others, like dealing with a critically ill child or a friend or family member's serious illness, are less so.

Business of Supply

●(1240)

Through the employment insurance program, compassionate care benefits provide financial assistance to people who have to be away from work temporarily to care a family member who is gravely ill, with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. A recent parliamentary committee report on palliative and compassionate care showed that family caregivers provided a substantial amount of care, between 70% and 80% in fact. The report stated that family and friends were the invisible backbone of the Canadian health care system. As such, we want to ensure the program's parameters better reflect this reality. That is why in economic action plan 2015 we outlined our intention to invest an additional \$37 million annually to ensure those caring for gravely ill family members would have the support they needed.

Here is what we are doing. We are extending the duration of the compassionate care benefit from the current six weeks to six months as of January 2016. We are also expanding the period of time during which claimants can receive these benefits. These benefits can be used to care for a parent, spouse, partner, child or sibling and extended family members.

We have not forgotten that no program can be successful if its benefits do not reach those who truly need them, which is why we continue to improve how we deliver EI benefits to Canadians. Service Canada monitors EI claims on an ongoing basis to ensure we provide the best possible service to Canadians who are in need of these benefits.

Our government has continued to make a range of improvements to ensure we can manage fluctuations in the volume of applications in a cost-effective manner. It is a challenging problem and one we are up to.

It is clear that the EI program continues to be there for those who have paid into the system and those who have lost their job through no fault of their own, including in areas where jobs simply do not exist outside of seasonal or specialized industries. We have spent years implementing changes to make this program more fair and flexible, while continuing to support Canadians when they need it most. We have done so to meet our commitment to a national program that is more reflective of our response to local labour market conditions.

These are responsible, necessary and sensitive efforts to help Canadians get back to work faster. It is good for government, good for the economy, good for employers, but most of all, good for Canadians and their families.

●(1245)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the text that my hon. colleague just read to the House.

I must say, I have a hard time believing him when he says that employment insurance is always there for those who need it, when all the figures prove otherwise, and worse still, when many of the workers in this country are excluded from those figures and statistics, because they are no longer even part of the employment insurance system.

My question relates to that remark. I am sure everyone remembers that a few years ago, the former finance minister, Mr. Flaherty, urged large corporations to put the extra money they were saving as a result of tax breaks into the economy in order to create jobs.

Here is my question: is the employment insurance fund really the fund that should be used to pay for job creation measures? Consider the Conservative government's proposal for example. The Conservatives want to spend \$550 million to create 600 jobs, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. That \$550 million will of course come from EI premium reductions. It seems to me that a real job creation program should be funded by general revenues and not by taxing workers twice.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how the opposition parties believe that when we invest in tax cuts so employers can hire more people, by lowering payroll taxes like CPP premiums and EI premiums, it somehow is government spending. That is not what it is.

We want to ensure we have a fund that meets the needs of people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. The changes we made in 2012, unlike what the opposition claims, had nothing to do with accessibility. We did not change one thing about accessing the program. In fact, if we look at recent figures from Service Canada, it shows that less than 1% of claimants actually lost their benefits due to turning down work.

We are now investing in connecting people to available jobs. There is the job alerts program. We are negotiating with the provinces to try to ensure our labour market development agreements actually get to people earlier, sooner after they lose their jobs, so we can get them back into the workplace as soon as possible.

Those are the things the EI fund is being used for, getting people back to work.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my friend and colleague on the human resources committee, the parliamentary secretary, I am a Nova Scotian and I represent a rural community. We have long seen the movement of people from rural communities to urban centres, from Atlantic Canada to opportunities in Saskatchewan and Alberta. However, one thing we had not seen in my time in politics is that sectors in the seasonal economy had not had any problem getting workers. For the first time, we are seeing fish plant operators and tourism operators making applications for temporary foreign workers.

It may be great for the government to say that its only seeing 1% in refusals for those who apply for employment insurance in those seasonal industries. However, what we are seeing is that people in those communities are voting with their feet. They are moving out of those seasonal industries into other industries. We are seeing those communities being impacted; certainly, the businesses are being impacted.

Business of Supply

Is there any way that the government is measuring, beyond the 1% refusal, as to what kind of impacts these changes have made? We do not have access to the information, but anecdotally we are hearing that people are leaving the industries.

• (1250)

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if someone is working a seasonal job where they are forced to collect unemployment in the off-season, and then they have an opportunity for a full-time job, particularly if it is in the same community, it is much better for them to take full-time employment. There are many reasons for why that is, but I will give one right now.

When people are collecting unemployment insurance benefits, they are not contributing into the CPP. When they are working all year round, they are contributing into the CPP for 12 months a year. When they turn 65 and retire, they will have a much larger benefit. They will not be as reliant upon government, and they will be able to be more self-sustainable.

With any effort to get people to take full-time, full-year employment instead of seasonal employment, those people will be better off in the short term and they will be better off in the long term.

We do need to have workers in the seasonal industries in Atlantic Canada. This is why we need to work with employers, why we need to ensure we connect people who are currently unemployed. Most of these areas have higher than 10% employment, yet these seasonal industries are having a hard time in attracting workers. We need to ensure that these seasonal workers have the skills they need to apply for these jobs. The unemployed workers who are currently not working in the off-season have the skills they need to do those seasonal jobs as well. That is why we should be using the employment insurance premiums to help fund training that matches with jobs.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief comment about the philosophical difference of striving for equal results through social engineering versus striving for equal opportunity through rational and pragmatic policies. More specifically, I mean the incentives to people—the vast majority of people who actually do want to work in Canada—through retraining, job search help, and so on, and the balance for the disincentives to the small number of Canadians out there who actually do not want to work.

How do we balance incentives for those who do want to work and the disincentives for those who do not?

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, first, people have to accept that they are always better off working than they are collecting employment insurance benefits. If they accept that they are always better off when they have a job, we need to have a government program that supports people through training and employment.

Last year, people saw us make a landmark deal with the provinces across the country for the labour market agreement, a \$500-million fund from the government coffers to support connecting people to jobs and ensuring that they have training.

We have changed that now. We have established what is called a Canada job grant. The Canada job grant allows employers to put

some skin in the game, hire someone who does that training, and then the labour market agreement kicks some money in for that training. That allows the employee to train and get skills for a job they know is going to be there at the end of the training.

We are now negotiating with the provinces on a much larger fund, the labour market development agreement, which is a \$2-billion fund in terms of training. One of the goals we share with the provinces is that we need to ensure we have access to people for training sooner after they lose their jobs, so they can more quickly get back to jobs.

This is why we are putting an emphasis on connecting people to available jobs and training. We also have to ensure that people who are currently on benefit apply and attempt to get work when they are collecting that benefit. They will be better off in the long run. Those are the priorities that our government has put in place.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Nova Scotia rose in the House to again support the Conservatives's attitude, when my colleague asked a question about where to find the number of people who want to work and those who do not want to work.

The last time the Conservative minister from Madawaska—Restigouche was in the House, he said that people back home in New Brunswick have not changed and would rather get EI so they can go hunting and fishing instead of going to work. Again earlier today, the same hon. member who just spoke, the member from Nova Scotia or one of his colleagues, said that the NDP wants people to work 42 weeks a year.

Did you know that you are insulting the workers, the men and women who work in this country? Instead of respecting them, you are saying that workers are a lazy bunch of people who are living on employment insurance.

Do you not realize that you are insulting them?

• (1255)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst must know that I did not do what he is alleging in his comments.

I would remind the hon. member to direct all his comments to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, I said no such thing. What the member is talking about is their plan to implement a 45-day work year, where someone can simply work for 45 days and then collect employment insurance benefits for the rest of the year. That is the NDP plan. That is not our plan. We want to put measures in place to give people the training they need to take available jobs.

Business of Supply

We have a problem in Canada right now. We have literally thousands of jobs available without employees with the proper training to take those jobs. When we look at the construction trades alone, over the next eight years, 300,000 new employees will be needed. Right now we are not going to be able to meet the demand that the industry will place upon Canada.

However, if we can reach into our workforce, give them the training they need to get these high-paying, high-wage jobs in the private sector, they will be much better off in the long run, as will all of Canada. This is why we have focused on tax cuts, training, and trade. Those are the keys to a successful future, not a 45-day work year.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join in this debate.

My friend and colleague from Acadie—Bathurst and I have been in the House for 15 years now. We have been on the same side of a number of debates and on different sides on others. He is leaving and gave a farewell statement the other day. I know he has been a strong, passionate supporter of Canadians who work in rural communities and seasonal industries, and this is one issue that he and I have worked on a number of times during my time in the House. I respect his interventions and commitment to making sure that all Canadians are able to share in the wealth of this country.

In response to my question to the parliamentary secretary about the impact of the EI changes on those who work in seasonal industries, he said that Conservatives are happy to see Canadians leave those seasonal jobs and go to full-time jobs in those communities. He should step back from Starbucks and go to rural Canada because full-time jobs are not there. When a seasonal industry cannot maximize its operations because it does not have access to a workforce, that has an impact on everything in that community. It has an impact on schools, hospitals, all aspects of how that community operates, including charitable organizations and volunteer groups. Those communities get old and dry up. That is the reality of what is happening. That is what we are seeing. Anecdotally, we are seeing that, and I am sure that other members have seen the same. The changes are having an impact.

I would like to discuss a couple of aspects of the motion that was put forward, and I should say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Markham—Unionville.

Right now, we are at a 70-year low. Less than 38% of unemployed Canadians are actually receiving EI benefits. Obviously, part of the problem is that the current EI system does not reflect the new reality in Canada's job market. We are seeing an increase in the number of Canadians who are working in minimum wage jobs. There are almost a million Canadians working for minimum wage right now. That is an increase of 66% since the government took power.

Whenever Conservatives are asked questions on the economy, they like to stand and talk about the jobs they have created. If there has been an increase in 66% of minimum wage jobs in this country, what they are probably doing is leading the G7 nations in creating crappy jobs. I do not know of anybody who can look after and raise a family in a minimum wage job. We see time and time again that Canadians are knitting together a number of different job

opportunities and working a couple of different jobs just to make ends meet.

In this country, there are now 165,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than before the recession. There are some 200,000 more unemployed young Canadians than before the recession. Year over year employment growth has been below 1% for 15 months in a row, the longest stretch below that mark outside of recessions in almost 40 years of record keeping. Job quality is reported by CIBC to be at a 25-year low.

● (1300)

Part of the motion is on accessibility, and we see an increase in the number of long-term unemployed in this country. We see that 37% qualify, but the part we should really be concerned about is that 25% of those who would be eligible are really long-term unemployed Canadians. Where do they end up? They end up on provincial welfare roles, as files in community service departments in the various provinces. This is 25%, and that is up over the last number of years.

We see the rise in temporary work, precarious work, and the changes in the EI rules have had an impact. We know that when the Conservatives came to power, they cut 600 jobs in the EI processing centres, which affected processing and the appeals process, as mentioned by my colleague for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

When I first came to this chamber, if somebody was three weeks late in receiving an EI benefit, we would get a call, because that person would be in a bit of panic. Now we see time and time again files going seven and eight weeks for some people, and five weeks is not uncommon. There are 700,000 claimants each year. If the square peg is in the square hole and the round peg is in the round hole, there is chance of getting a cheque in 28 days. For anything outside of that, anything being referred back for more information, and I am thinking of 70% of the claims that are not right not on the money, they are now waiting an average of seven weeks. Try running a household without that income. People who are living cheque to cheque, week to week, are not investing in their tax-free savings account.

When we take that much manpower out of the system and think that the machines are going to do it, that does not happen. Therefore, the Conservatives have gone back and reinvested, and brought about 135 people back in the last year. However, two years ago, if we phoned an EI processing centre, there was a 54% chance that the call would be dropped, which is down to about 47% now, and that is with the addition of those new bodies.

One would think that the government would be able to connect the dots: if we put the necessary manpower, recommit to the public service and put some people to actually process these applications, then maybe the hardship would not be put on this group of Canadians. Maybe we could deal with these and actually provide service at Service Canada. I would hope this would dawn on those who are making the decisions over there.

Business of Supply

The working while on claim was changed in budget 2012, which introduced a new clawback rule. For example, a person receiving a benefit may be able to get one day of work, which is not uncommon. The tourism industry is really busy from May until the end of October and then it is quiet. A person may claim an EI benefit, but there may be something come up in November and be able to work one day. However, the government would now claw back 50% of those earnings. Unless a claimant works four or five days, and back home in Cape Breton—Canso they call that a full-time job, but any less than that, one, two or three days, then there are clawbacks. Therefore, those changes have hurt Canadians and a lot of industries in a lot of communities across this country.

We are looking forward to this debate today on the motion put forward by my colleague from the NDP.

• (1305)

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his contribution to the debate today. However, I want to ask his party the same question that I had the opportunity to ask the New Democratic Party earlier today. Unfortunately, we did not get an answer from the New Democrats, but my colleague from the human resources committee is a straight shooter, so I am sure I will get a yes or no from him.

The question is this. Is it the policy of the Liberal Party of Canada that if an individual works only 45 days out of a year that he or she should be eligible for full EI benefits? Yes or no?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, no.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my Liberal colleague's comments. I have to say that I concur with almost all the criticisms he directed at the Conservative government.

However, I am unable to ignore the fact that the reduced accessibility and benefits originated with the Liberal Party. The motion we moved today proposes measures to improve the plan.

My question is very simple: does my colleague agree that premiums must be protected and used for the purpose that they are collected for? Does he also agree that the government, no matter its stripe, should have no say in the process that sets the amount of the premiums?

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, as I said before to my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, a bit of history does not hurt this topic. Prior to when the Liberals came in in 1993, the Auditor General had identified that the EI system had been bankrupt under Brian Mulroney and the previous Conservative government. The unemployment rate was 12.5%, and inflation was in double digits. Therefore, Paul Martin had frozen the rates at \$3.02, as they were on their way to \$3.20, and he brought them down 12 successive times over the course of the Liberal government. I am not saying that is the entire answer, but I do not think we can divorce the fact that it was an incentive to business to further invest in employees because there was not that heavy tax burden of EI premiums. Therefore, the unemployment rate went from 12.5% down to 6.5%.

Is it where it should be now? I agree with my colleague that the focus now should not be on lowering rates but on increasing access.

• (1310)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question posed by the Conservative member, my colleague gave a very short and concise answer, that being no. I am wondering if he might want to provide some comment on whether or not that would stop the Conservatives, realizing the truth in his answer, from being less than truthful in terms of what they tell Canadians.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to do I think the Conservatives will stop being untruthful is no.

The member made reference to the 360 hours. Somebody made a statement like that when Toronto got rocked by the SARS epidemic and so many people were staying away from work. I was in the House at the time and somebody had made the comment that it should be 360 hours and access, but that was never adopted as Liberal policy. The unfortunate part is where this House has gone. I know we are approaching an election. This is a serious issue and a serious motion brought forward by the NDP today. We should be drawing that emotion and that partisanship out of this and talking about what works best for Canadians. That would be ideal. What creates jobs, what creates sustainability, what shares the fairness in this country should be the topics of this discussion today. Do I think that will happen today? It is very unlikely.

[Translation]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the major problem is that the Conservatives froze employment insurance premiums at an artificially high rate in 2015. Due to the government's decision, workers and employers paid \$2.7 billion, and that is more than what they should have paid. According to the Chief Actuary of Canada, the government should have lowered these rates.

The amount of \$2.7 billion is important because the government estimated that the surplus for 2015 would be less than \$2 billion. Therefore, it is solely because of this artificial freeze on employment insurance rates that the Conservatives were able to post a surplus. Had they done what the Chief Actuary of Canada suggested, they would have lowered the EI premium rates and Canada would definitely have had a deficit this year.

These figures were not provided by the Liberals, but by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The Chief Actuary of Canada recommended lowering the rates. These are the statements of competent people.

Canadians need to know that this artificial surplus is the direct result of the government's political and arbitrary decision to freeze EI rates when it should have lowered them. That is the main point that I want to make.

The Liberals do not have a problem with balancing the EI account over the economic cycle. In principle, the government is saying something similar, but it is nothing more than a theory. The reality is completely different.

Business of Supply

The government set up a body whose only role was to set the EI premium rates. However, the government then ignored the recommendations of the office that it itself set up and eliminated that role, leaving it up to politicians to make those decisions for political purposes.

The government set these EI contribution rates for purely political reasons so that it could tell Canadians in an election year that it had balanced the budget and that the Conservatives are excellent economic managers. In reality, without that arbitrary decision, the budget would not be balanced.

Many economists are saying that, even with that decision regarding the EI rates, we are still heading toward a deficit because we are currently in an economic slump. However, the Conservatives do not seem to care, since that deficit will not be announced until after the election. Once the votes have been counted, it will be too late for Canadians to find out what is really happening.

• (1315)

[*English*]

I would also say it really is amazing that the Conservatives, of all people, are maintaining artificially high employment insurance premiums, or what they would call payroll taxes. Who is it who day after day rants and raves about the job-destroying properties of payroll taxes? It is the Conservatives. In many respects, they are wrong on that. Under Paul Martin in the late 1990s, there were significant increases in premiums to reform the CPP, and employment growth chugged along at a nice pace, so I think the Conservatives are out to lunch anyway.

The point I am making now is that when a party goes berserk about payroll taxes saying that they're the most evil thing to confront a country, it is the height of hypocrisy for that same party to artificially keep those payroll taxes at a high level just to claim that they have balanced the budget. It is the height of hypocrisy for the payroll-hating party over there to itself artificially raise or keep payroll taxes high, which all of the experts tell us should be brought down. According to the Conservatives' own logic, had they reduced employment insurance premiums, as the experts all say they ought to have done, imagine all the jobs that would have been created because of the reduction of this job-destroying payroll tax, which the Conservatives are keeping artificially high.

[*Translation*]

That is the height of hypocrisy and it is unacceptable.

[*English*]

The other thing I would say is that the Conservatives do not even know what a tax is. They keep talking about higher premiums paid by individual Canadians for the CPP as a tax hike. They seem blissfully unaware of the fact that this is not money that goes into general revenues as does a tax increase. Each and every penny of any additional contribution to the CPP by an individual Canadian is invested on behalf of that Canadian and paid back to him or her at the time of his or her retirement in the full amount, plus interest.

Let me say also that it is high interest, because the CPP has had an excellent rate of return over the years. This last year, I think it was 16% or some huge level. In the last decade or so, the return after

inflation was 6.2%, which in a period of record low interest rates is a hugely successful return on investment. I read today that they might be acquiring the private equity component of GE, which would be another vehicle for good returns.

It is not as if this money would be put into a sinkhole and wasted. The track record is that the rate of return on such funds is high, and that is a direct benefit to Canadians, because all of that money is returned to those Canadians in the form of pensions, based on their own contributions and based on the very substantial rate of return earned by the CPP.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

I will conclude with this central point: the only reason we have a surplus this year is because the government artificially maintained employment insurance premiums at a level that all experts deem is far too high.

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Markham—Unionville made an entertaining speech this afternoon. I think there was quite a bit of revisionist history in most of what I listened to.

Actions speak louder than words. The Minister of Finance announced a three year freeze on EI premiums, which was called for by businesses. Certainly, workers would appreciate it, too. We have run a very strong and stable EI system, and I agree with the member, as a segregated fund. However, they are also payroll taxes.

One of the things that the member clearly does not understand is that his leader's promise to increase CPP premiums on workers is a payroll tax. It is not forced savings for some time down the road. It is a clear tax that would kill jobs today.

Why is the Liberal Party's position to kill jobs today hoping that there is retirement money for somebody 20 years down the road?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, if I accept the member's false premise for a moment, I could turn the question on him and ask, why this fantastic amount of job-killing payroll tax hikes by the Conservatives when, as he just said, they froze the EI premiums, but all the experts are saying that circumstances call for a reduction?

It is the member's government that has imposed artificially high payroll taxes in the form of EI premiums that are too high. The member is the one who should be apologizing for these job-destroying payroll taxes.

Business of Supply

I will have to take him through the subject once again. What I said and what is true is that when an individual Canadian pays more premiums on the Canada pension plan, that is not a tax, because every penny of that money is invested on behalf of that person, and every penny plus a substantial return goes back to that individual as a pension in his or her retirement years. That is not, I repeat, a tax. I will repeat what I said earlier, which the member seems to ignore, that it is his party that has imposed an unnecessarily high level of employment insurance premiums.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I found my Liberal colleague's comments a touch amusing. When I heard his all-out attack on the Conservative government, it made me think that this government had probably learned from the best.

My question is very simple. If we agree that the employment insurance fund should be balanced over an economic cycle and that it should be available to the people who need it when they need it, could my colleague explain the Liberals' poorly designed job-creation program, which was financed from the EI fund?

I do not see how this helps a worker who just lost his job, especially since they do not even seem to be able to distinguish between gross jobs and net jobs in their plan.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Liberals cannot tell the difference between net jobs and gross jobs, but I would say that the NDP cannot tell the difference between any two things to do with economics.

• (1325)

[*English*]

They are out to lunch on the economy in general. They do not have a clue how to manage the economy. They do not know what it means to balance a budget.

To criticize the Liberals for economic incompetence is like the pot calling the kettle black. I would remind the member that it is we in the Liberal Party, having inherited a \$43-billion Conservative deficit, who eliminated that quickly, paid down debt for 10 long years, and moved Canada from being the basket case of the G7 to being the star of the G7 in terms of fiscal probity. That star position was there for a while, but it was removed by the Conservatives who run nothing but deficits.

Obviously, we need Liberals in charge of the economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my very hon. colleague from Acadie—Bathurst. If there is one issue that my colleague has mastered in his 18 years in the House of Commons, it has to be employment insurance.

To begin, I will add to what my Liberal Party colleague said, because he seems to have forgotten to mention that the only reason they were able to balance the budget while they were in power was that they pillaged the employment insurance fund. We all remember that they took over \$50 billion from the fund. Now they go around boasting about how they can balance budgets. Frankly, they

balanced their budgets at the expense of the poorest people in Canada. If their party really wants to build a more just society, maybe it should go get some money from its friends in the Senate who are now being investigated because they have a lot of money.

In my riding, Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, we had an inkling back at the beginning of my term in 2011 when we found out that the Conservative government wanted to close employment insurance processing centres in our ridings and transfer those jobs—by pure coincidence, I am sure—to ridings held by Conservative MPs.

That was really hard to swallow. We lost over 40 well-paying jobs that had been filled by people who knew the region and knew how to process claims in a fair and just manner. Where are we today? Processing centres in the Gaspé, Rimouski and Sept-Îles have all closed. Once again, they were all relocated to Conservative ridings. That is a strange coincidence.

I want to talk about the situation facing people who claim EI benefits. Without naming any names, I would like to share the story of one of my constituents. In the Gaspé there is only one road, highway 132. This individual receives EI and looks after her affairs. She is looking for work and keeps an eye out in her area. The other morning, she received a phone call from an employment insurance officer who had found her a job. Being an industrious person, she told him how happy she was and asked when she could start. She was told she could start the following Monday. She guessed that the officer, from his office, was not familiar with the Gaspé. Since she lives in New Richmond and would have to go to Chandler—for that is where the job is located—the trip would take her two hours every morning and two hours every night.

This is a situation where the person applying for EI benefits truly needs them. Local knowledge is lost with the local workers who used to process these applications. Now everything is centralized in offices that are very far away from our region, and the Conservatives have completely failed to grasp that the distances can be quite vast in a region. I even heard of cases where people from the Magdalen Islands, in the middle of the gulf, were offered jobs 300 km west. I guess they were supposed to commute by canoe. Frankly, I do not know how they were supposed to get to work. We lost local knowledge, and that is when things started to change back home.

We then found out that the Conservatives wanted to follow the Liberal Party's lead and save a pile of money so that they could now brag about balancing the budget. It is obvious that they did not balance it. In this year's budget, we can clearly see that they took \$1.8 billion from the EI fund in order to be able to brag about balancing the budget.

So far, at least \$57 billion has been taken from the EI fund. With the budgets the Conservatives brought down last month, it is estimated that another \$17 billion will be taken from the fund over the next five years. That is no way to balance the budget. It is a way of transferring debt to people who simply do not have the means to pay it.

Business of Supply

Back home, in the regions with seasonal employment, workers need to know that their government is there for them when they need support. They are not getting that support today. As a result, people are thinking about leaving the regions.

• (1330)

We have seen it. People are moving away from eastern Canada because, unfortunately, neither the Conservative government nor the Liberal government before it understood the reality in regions where there is seasonal work. If we want to start making reforms so that people stop filing claims for benefits, perhaps we should start by asking ourselves whether there are enough jobs for people working in the regions.

What is the Conservatives' and the Liberals' long-term vision for creating jobs in our regions? I do not think that criticizing people every time they lose a job and telling them that it is their own fault is going to generate wealth in the regions. Seasonal work areas need support, and that includes training and employment insurance benefits. People also need to be treated fairly.

The Conservatives' budget does just the opposite, and that is worrisome. Unfortunately, they followed the Liberals' example. Their so-called improvements were a step in the wrong direction and are hurting more and more people.

I would like to point out that we are setting records with regard to employment insurance. Under the Liberals, only 50% of unemployed workers were eligible for EI benefits. That is not 50% of Canadians who lost their jobs at some point during the year. I am talking about those who lost their jobs and filed a claim for EI benefits. Right off the bat, 50% of them were not even eligible for EI benefits. We have the Liberals to thank for that.

EI is an insurance policy. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if you paid for home insurance coverage in case of fire. Your house catches on fire and your insurance company tells you that, unfortunately, you are among the 50% of people whose claims are automatically refused. In my opinion, that is not an insurance policy.

The Conservatives did not stop there. At present, only 35% of the unemployed workers in Canada are entitled to employment insurance. That is a record. The employment insurance fund has become a cash cow increasingly used to eliminate the deficit of the party in power, whether it is Conservative or Liberal. They get satisfaction from mistreating people by bringing forward programs that will hurt the poorest Canadians. What happens to that money? The Conservatives want to give it to the richest 15% of the population. That is not a fair and equitable society. It is a society that gives the elite more than what they deserve, and lets them send money overseas so they can hide it in bank accounts in order to evade taxes. Instead of trying to recover this money, the Conservatives make cuts to Revenue Canada so that the rich can continue to evade taxes. Meanwhile, employment insurance benefits are taken away from the poorest Canadians. That is really unfair and no way to govern a country. If the goal is to make the rich richer, then congratulations to the Conservatives, who have truly figured out how to do that. However, I want a much fairer society, a society that helps people when they need it.

I would remind members that the EI system was created during the depression in the 1930s when there was a huge need for this kind of program. Since then, Canada has recognized that we want a fair and just society. We do not want a country in which the gap between the rich and the poor gets bigger, yet that is what is happening right now. The richest 10% in Canada now control much more than 50% of the economy. We must achieve a better balance, and the government must use the tools at its disposal to ensure that all regions of Canada experience economic growth.

The Conservative government is often accused of caring only about the ridings that voted Conservative. This has sometimes been the case. Did it simply abandon eastern Canada? Frankly, that is how people back home feel. They feel abandoned by their government, as though the Conservative government does not listen to them. That is why people are increasingly seeing that there are other ways to manage this country.

What it will take is a party that reflects them. What it will take is a vote for the NDP.

• (1335)

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated about half the intervention of my colleague. However, I want to go back to EI processing. I know he represents a great number of people in seasonal industries, so I am sure he has a number of active files within his riding.

I would like to ask my colleague if this makes sense. Prior to 2008, the standard for EI processing centres was to answer the call within three minutes. That happened about 95% of the time. After the Conservatives got their hands on the EI processing centres and starting making cuts, rather than reinvesting and keeping that standard, they lowered it to 80% of calls within three minutes. Last year, they lowered answering the call 80% of time within 10 minutes. We are starting to see a pattern here. Now, in response to an order paper question last year, they are only hitting the standard of answering a call within 10 minutes 45% of the time.

Is this what Canadians are experiencing now for someone who is trying to put some food in the fridge, maybe fill a prescription or put some oil in the tank? Is that what you are experiencing?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind all members, including the past speaker, to direct their questions to the Chair and not to other members.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is spot-on when he points out that there have been so many drastic cuts to so many services in the federal civil services, and employment insurance has not been exempt from that.

Business of Supply

I will remind people it is “Service” and not “Services” Canada. I think the Conservatives might have dropped the “s” during its mandate. However, there clearly is a much longer wait period for people to try to get their files treated. Some people are on the phone for hours at a time. This is not an exaggeration. It is three hours sometimes. My understanding is that they are not even counting the statistics if people hang up before Service Canada hangs up on them. Therefore, when he says that there has been a degradation in the amount of time that people wait to have their calls treated by Service Canada, in fact it under-reports what the actual situation is because people cannot spend the day on the phone.

I will remind my colleague and members of the Conservative Party that when people wait that long on the phone before they can get some service from Service Canada, perhaps their time would be better spent looking for a job. However, no, they have to sit at home waiting for an answer from Service Canada. The government has cut much too much and it is very inefficient.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that he thought the government had forgotten people on EI. I want to remind him that in the budget this year, on page 240, there is extensive coverage on an issue with which I know you, Mr. Speaker, are very familiar. It has to do with extending palliative care and care for those who are providing palliative care up to six months of coverage through EI. Up until now it has only been six weeks. In fact, prior to these changes, people claiming EI would have to prove that their relatives were close to death.

Our government has initiated very good programs. Would my colleague acknowledge the fact that it is our government that has put into place many changes, like the one I just referenced, which help Canadians who are the most vulnerable and who need this kind of care most?

• (1340)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out that there was one measure in the budget from which some people might actually benefit. The problem is that in making a request in the first place, they will have to call Service Canada and wait several hours. That is probably not very efficient.

In areas of seasonal work, those who will try to benefit from what he just said likely will have insufficient hours to get EI the next year. Although the government has created a program whereby they will get more benefits one year, they will be cut entirely from getting benefits the year after.

Therefore, I honestly do not think this is any long-term solution for a very long-term problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on the subject of employment insurance.

Workers across the country who know me know that I came to Parliament in 1997 the day we booted out Doug Young because he and the Liberals made changes to the employment insurance program in 1996.

I would like to talk about what led up to that event and read from a letter by a former Canadian prime minister, Jean Chrétien, to a group

of workers in Rivière-du-Loup. The letter was written on February 17, 1993, and it was about unemployment insurance. I like to call a spade a spade, and I would rather talk about unemployment insurance than employment insurance. Here is how the letter goes:

The Liberals are dismayed by these measures. By reducing benefits and further penalizing those who voluntarily leave their jobs, clearly the government [it was the Conservative government then] cares very little for the victims of the economic crisis. Instead of attacking the real problem, it is attacking the unemployed. These measures will have a disturbing impact, for they will discourage workers from reporting harassment cases and unacceptable conditions in the workplace.

That was the former prime minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, who said that. He was elected because of it. At the time, Doug Young, the former Liberal MP, did not have nice things to say about the Conservatives. On July 31, 1989, he told *Acadie Nouvelle* that he was urging all New Brunswickers to fight tooth and nail against changes to employment insurance because they would be disastrous for New Brunswick.

Yes, it has been a disaster for New Brunswick. In September or October 1993, the Liberals took office. They discovered that the employment insurance fund could be the government's cash cow. Money was coming in from all over the place. They said they needed even more, and in 1996, they made some huge budget cuts and introduced the 420-hour and 910-hour conditions to be eligible for EI. Whereas in the past 82% of workers had been eligible for EI, at that point only 38% were eligible.

The biggest pilfering of the EI fund happened under the Liberals, who helped themselves to \$57 billion. That is right, \$57 billion was taken from the EI fund. The Liberals' defence, however, was that the government was running a deficit and cuts had to be made somewhere. They made cuts to EI and to health care. In 1994, Paul Martin made Canada's health care system sick. At a time when the federal government was paying 50% of health care costs in each province, the Liberal government cut that down to 15%. Then the Liberals went after the CBC and cut \$350 million there.

Next came the Conservatives, who said that they did not want to steal from employment insurance and that they would make some changes. They proposed a new independent fund—although that would not really be the case—and a new framework. They therefore transferred the \$57 billion the Liberals had stolen back into the fund and said they would not touch it again.

The government's latest budget announced a surplus of \$3.4 billion in the EI fund. However, the government is reporting a budget surplus of \$1.4 billion. If it were to take that \$3.4 billion out of the employment insurance fund, the government would be running a deficit. It would not be able to say that it has balanced the budget or all those wonderful things, or everything else it is saying about the EI fund.

It is not the workers who depend on employment insurance, but rather the Conservatives and the Liberals.

Business of Supply

• (1345)

I have known the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso for 15 years. I was disappointed when he answered the Conservative member's question on whether or not he agreed that a person should work only 42 weeks a year. Instead of saying no, I would have liked him to say that Nova Scotia has seasonal employment and people who work in the lobster fishery, for example. Sometimes they stop working for three or four weeks. They collect employment insurance and then go back to work. That is what seasonal employment is all about.

The Conservatives made cuts to the employment insurance program. People down east said they could not go on like that, and they left to go work out west. Now we have temporary foreign workers doing the work back home and contributing to EI. When they have an accident, they are put on the next flight home and do not collect a dime of EI. Again, this government is stealing from workers.

Is there something wrong with the NDP motion that the Conservatives cannot support? It seeks to "protect workers' and employers' premiums from political interference". In this motion we state that we are going to protect workers' premiums. We are going to tell politicians to stop stealing from the employment insurance fund and relying on it, because it belongs to the workers. They are the ones who contribute to it. The Liberals and the Conservatives like to say that employment insurance premiums are a tax. That is false. They should consult a dictionary. It is a premium that people pay in the event they lose their jobs. It is not a tax. They say that the NDP wants to increase employment insurance premiums. The Conservatives had a \$7 billion surplus and the Liberals had a \$3 billion surplus in the employment insurance fund. The Conservatives lowered corporate taxes by \$40 billion at the same time that the banks made \$22 billion in profits and their presidents paid themselves \$11 million in bonuses. That is another example of money being stolen from Canadians and taxpayers. That is the work of the Conservatives. Shame on them.

Given all that is happening with employment insurance and workers, there is only one thing to say. I once mentioned it to the Prime Minister: what have workers done to the government for the government to hate them so much? With all due respect for employers, how is it that, if one of them runs into difficulty, the government rushes to that employer's aid to make sure that he does not lose his business? However, if a worker loses his job, he is abusing the system. Were it not for workers, the honest men and women who get up every morning and work for those employers, there would be no employers. There would not be any rich people, any millionaires and billionaires. There are now more billionaire CEOs in the world than ever. Some of these people are hiding their money in other countries and not even paying their taxes. Even Paul Martin owned ships that did not fly the Canadian flag and hired cheap labour. He eliminated jobs for workers.

I see these people in my riding. I see women and men who work in fish processing plants. I see people who work in the forest. I meet with them. I meet with people who pick blueberries. I meet with people who cut trees to make Christmas wreaths, who are trying to earn a living and buy food for their children. The Conservatives could not care less about these people. Today we are hearing insult

after insult, as we have heard from the minister who represents the riding of Madawaska—Restigouche. He says that people back home have not changed and would rather receive EI so they can hunt and fish instead of working. What an insult to workers. That is unacceptable. They deserve an apology.

The NDP's motion is commendable. It is commendable to say that we will protect workers' premiums. We want to create a system that will guarantee that women and men who lose their jobs will receive an income while they search for another job, instead of being forced to claim social assistance or work in other provinces.

I hope this motion is adopted. I hope that the NDP wins the next election and that the government starts to respect the men and women who get up every morning and work to build this country.

• (1350)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with all the comments the member has put on the record, obviously. At least from my perspective, the New Democrats do not own the right to proclaim that they represent the workers.

I represent a North End riding, for example. The NDP has never been in government nationally, but it has been provincially. I think of individuals like Jim Budd and other injured workers, who would say that the NDP government in Manitoba has been saving money on the backs of injured workers in the province of Manitoba. Not even the New Democrats can say that they are clearly in defence of workers, when we think in terms of the injured workers and the abuse they have to go through to save money through Workers Compensation.

I say that, for what it is worth, as the member wants to take shots at former Liberal prime ministers Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien. I would ask if the member would acknowledge the reality that when Jean Chrétien assumed government, we had an unemployment rate in the double digits, in excess of 12%, and we were able to reduce it to 6.5%. That also allowed us to reduce the rate of unemployment premiums the employer and employee had to contribute. Would he not recognize that as a good thing?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, if the NDP government in the member's province has done that, it is wrong, because we should support the workers and give them what should come to them.

Regarding Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien, if they said they did the job as they did, they did it by stealing the money from the workers. There was \$57 billion that came from employment insurance. They were bragging in this House that they had a zero deficit and that they had a surplus. At that time, there was a \$7-billion surplus every year that came from the workers, men and women who lost their jobs. They have nothing to brag about Jean Chrétien. They have nothing to brag about Paul Martin, when he was not even paying his own taxes in our country.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my very hon. colleague from Acadie—Bathurst for his speech. He has so much knowledge and experience. For 18 years now, he has been fighting tooth and nail for employment insurance, or rather unemployment insurance, which—I agree with him—is a more accurate term.

He did a very good job of emphasizing that seasonal jobs, though they are not the only ones, are essential economic activities in the regions and in urban centres too. Many activities ebb and flow with the seasons. Often, these are very important businesses in terms of the overall economy of their regions.

I would like my colleague to comment on the harm done to economic activity and businesses that are doing their best to keep going. As we have often heard, these businesses end up losing very experienced employees with irreplaceable knowledge. Such losses threaten seasonal activities that are important to the economy of regions like Acadia.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, successive Conservative and Liberal governments over the past several years have not found a solution for seasonal workers. What does this mean for my region and everywhere else in Canada?

I have travelled around all the provinces, from Newfoundland to Vancouver, and I hosted 54 meetings with people from 21 different regions. When employers lose trained staff, it is hard for them to find new workers who can work on a production line in a fish plant, for example. Not just anyone can walk into a restaurant and know how to do what needs to be done. Not just anyone can become a logger. Those kinds of employers have lost good workers.

As another example, no one becomes a fisher overnight. It takes months to become a good fisher. Some regions have lost skilled fishers. People were fed up, so they went to work in western Canada, and now our employers are suffering because of decisions made by previous Liberal and Conservative governments.

Today, we are still paying the price. We need to find a solution for seasonal workers. We need to find a way to help that industry, instead of hiring temporary foreign workers and saying that Canadians will not work.

•(1355)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Edmonton Centre will have three minutes before we go to question period.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this debate, and I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Employment and Social Development.

These are important questions we are dealing with, and obviously, there are a couple different philosophies at play here. While the Liberals and the NDP would increase taxes for the middle class, our job is to continue to cut taxes, which we have done 180 times or so since 2006, and we will continue to do that.

The reason the NDP is opposed to our plan is that EI rates will fall. The NDP wants to hike those kinds of job-killing EI premium

taxes. Whether we call them fees or taxes, the impact is the same. It is money coming from workers, and it is money coming from employers, which would have a negative impact on job creation. The best social program in the world, of course, is an actual job.

I applaud my colleague, the member for Acadie—Bathurst, for his passion. I know he is sincere and believes passionately what he says. I applaud that. However, there are a couple of different ways of looking at it.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has talked about increasing mandatory CPP contributions, which is not the same as EI, obviously, but is in the same ballpark. They are going to force people to contribute, employers and workers, which will hurt the very people we are trying to help. These kind of payroll taxes would cost Canadian workers upwards of \$1,000 or more, depending on how much they are making.

The NDP's real plan for employment insurance is a 45-day work year, which makes no practical sense at all. It would increase EI premiums for Canadian workers by billions of dollars, and that does not help create jobs.

Last fall, we introduced the small business tax credit, which reduced EI premiums for 780,000 small businesses. Of course, the high-tax parties opposed that cut. In budget 2015, our government reaffirmed our commitment to reduce EI premiums by 21% in 2017. That will promote job creation.

Some 99.8% of all businesses in Canada are SMEs, small and medium enterprises. Those are the folks who drive the Canadian economy. Those are the folks who provide the jobs that are so necessary to ordinary Canadians, who are, as we have heard today, all in the same boat, to varying degrees, putting food on the table, gas in the tank, and so on. Those are the kinds of people we need to spend the most time looking out for, and those are the people we are concentrating on in keeping taxes low, in keeping things like job-killing EI premiums and mandatory CPP contributions low, and we do not actually go to CPP, so that industry can continue to create jobs for the very kinds of people who everyone on all sides of this floor wants to help.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Centre will have seven minutes when we resume debate on this topic after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on June 18, the Victoriaville golf club is hosting the 11th annual police officers charity golf tournament. Sûreté du Québec officers from the Arthabaska RCM will be playing to raise money for the Centre de stimulation L'Envol. I am extremely proud to be an honorary patron, even though I feel sorry for my golf partners that day.

Statements by Members

More than 250 golfers and more than 300 dinner guests are expected again this year. The Centre de stimulation L'Envol provides stimulating activities and games for children 1 to 12 with developmental disabilities, including difficulty communicating. The centre also provides expertise and knowledge sharing services to help the children become independent and to provide support to their families. L'Envol was founded in 1996 by Marguerite Bourgeois, a mother of two children with communication impairments who found there was a lack of specialized services. Today, the centre, which began in Ms. Bourgeois' basement, is known far and wide for the quality of its services.

Last year, the police officers raised \$18,000 for the centre. I would like to thank them as well as the participants and the countless volunteers.

* * *

● (1400)

[English]

DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently we have witnessed good progress in the advancement of the key democratic principle of free and fair elections. I want to congratulate the people of Sri Lanka, Turkey, Nigeria, and Mexico, to name a few, where people have exercised their democratic right to choose their leaders peacefully despite strong-arm tactics. Let me give a few examples: the defeat of former president Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka, the loss of the majority of President Erdogan's party in Turkey, and the change of government in Nigeria where I attended the new president's inauguration.

However, sadly there are countries where this democratic right is denied. A few examples are Iran, Thailand, Eritrea, and the Maldives.

This government is proud to have a strong record of supporting democracy and the protection of human rights around the world.

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WORLD OCEANS DAY

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark World Oceans Day, an international event that draws attention to the threats facing our marine ecosystem, celebrates oceans, and encourages conservation.

This year's theme is "Healthy oceans, healthy planet", which is intended to bring awareness to the approximately eight million tonnes of plastic entering our oceans every year and on ways to decrease our reliance on plastic materials. Plastic destroys marine life and puts our marine ecosystem at risk. It is the number one source of pollution in our ocean today.

We need government policy that conserves, protects, and restores our oceans. This must include meeting our UN commitment to protect 10% of Canada's oceans and lakes in marine protected areas.

The time to act is now. Let us help our oceans today and every day. I encourage all members of the House to participate in World Oceans Day by attending the World Oceans Day reception on the Hill today.

MEMBER FOR OKANAGAN—SHUSWAP

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to acknowledge the three staff who have worked with and supported me over the past nine years that I have served as the member of Parliament for Okanagan—Shuswap. They are Jeannette Gasparini, my Ottawa executive assistant; in the riding, Penny Renyk, my constituency office manager; and, Tammy Martin, my constituency community and communication assistant, who has ensured that I was at the right place, at the right time, saying the right things. These ladies have made being an MP easy, and I thank them.

I also thank the many people from the constituency who have served on my EDA board and those who have worked on my three successful election campaigns.

I thank my bride of 45 years for making everything I do better. Without her at my side, I am only half the servant I should be. I know she will be missed by all of the MP and senator spouses whom she has encouraged over the years.

I thank the Prime Minister for being a principled and courageous leader. It has been an honour to be part of his team.

Finally, I thank all of those in this place who serve our great nation. May God bless them as they serve, and may God bless Canada.

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ALLAN ROBERTS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Allan Roberts of Wild Cove, Twillingate, who passed away on May 30 at the age of 93.

Allan's early years were rough. He lost his mother at the tender age of 2, and started in the workforce with his father at the age of 12, building boats in the winter and fishing in the summer. He served as a gunner during the Second World War, losing his hearing while bravely fighting on the front lines. In 1960, Allan started a new career as a light keeper at the Long Point Lighthouse.

Allan was known as a kind, gentle, patient, and fun-loving man. He always had an exciting story to share with his children and grandchildren, who listened in awe of his adventures. He was dedicated to community service, as a member of the church board, working with youth, and lending a hand when needed. He was also an avid reader and enjoyed writing poetry.

We say goodbye today. However, Allan's legacy will live on in our hearts.

Mr. Allan Roberts will be lovingly remembered and never forgotten.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

GLOBAL VISION

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the founder of Global Vision and former parliamentarian, Terry Clifford, and Junior Team Canada ambassadors, who have joined us in Ottawa today to celebrate Global Vision's 25 years of producing today's global leaders.

These youth represent Canadian communities from coast to coast to coast and have worked together to develop innovative ways to actively involve their peers in civic engagement and economic and community projects as we pave the road toward 2017.

Throughout their hard work as Junior Team Canada ambassadors, they have demonstrated their true attachment to Canada, helping to build stronger, more viable communities. This would not have been possible without the valuable partnerships with universities, colleges, Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada, and First Air providing youth with the unique opportunity to understand Canada beyond their own backyard.

I encourage them to continue to get involved, take action, and be engaged as today's generation of leaders. Thanks, Terry.

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[Translation]

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER WEEK

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to mark the third edition of St. Lawrence Week.

This event is important to me, especially because the majestic river's north shore runs for 350 kilometres along my entire riding, from Quebec City to Colombier.

I want all of my constituents to realize how important it is to get to know our river and thus realize that it is fragile and that we are mutually dependent. We should acknowledge the many benefits we derive from this great river by personally getting involved in protecting it and preserving it for future generations.

We can show our support by attending this event and participating in great numbers in the many activities offered during St. Lawrence Week.

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[English]

2015 PAN AM GAMES TORCH RELAY

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games torch will be passing through my riding of Dufferin—Caledon this weekend.

On Friday, June 12, the torch will travel from Shelburne to the town of Mono, and finally to Orangeville, where it will stop for the evening. Orangeville will be hosting a spectacular event as a major celebration community.

The next morning, on Saturday, June 13, the torch will leave Orangeville and travel through Palgrave, Bolton, Inglewood, Belfountain, and Alton, and finally arrive in Caledon East, where

the town of Caledon will also be hosting another outstanding event as a major celebration community.

I am very proud that these two communities in my riding have been selected as major celebration communities during the torch's travels from May 30 to July 10. I encourage everyone to join the wonderful celebrations taking place that will showcase the very best that our province and communities have to offer the world.

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MEMBER FOR PERTH—WELLINGTON

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I approach retirement, I am struck by the gratitude that I have for those who have supported me, those who have challenged me, and those I have had the privilege to serve.

I have had the pleasure of working with the staff of the House of Commons, foreign diplomats, and our public service.

I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their help and support along the way. I thank my staff, both here and at home, some of whom have been with me since I was first elected. I would like to recognize Les Broadfoot, who suggested that I go into politics.

I cannot begin to express my thanks for my wife Judy and our family, who have been by my side throughout this journey.

I will always remain indebted to my constituents for their faith in me over these past 12 years.

It has been a great honour to serve Canada in this wonderful House.

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[Translation]

FEDERAL PORT FACILITIES

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 11 ports and wharves in Manicouagan will be sold or ceded under the federal ports asset transfer program.

These facilities are necessary to the survival and economic development of municipalities in our region, especially those that are not accessible by road. They are used to provide coastal communities with food and fuel and are essential to the commercial fishery.

However, the federal government announced its transfer program without giving any clear and specific information about the funding to maintain and upgrade these facilities before they are transferred. Many municipalities want to ensure that the government will provide them with financial support since the facilities in question are old and outdated. We are therefore calling on the Minister of Transport to provide us with details about this as soon as possible.

Statements by Members

●(1410)

*[English]***SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL**

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to mark the visit to Canada of Randolph Churchill, the great grandson of the great Sir Winston Churchill. I would also like to note that this visit was organized by Ron Cohen, who is the president of the Churchill Society of Ottawa.

Sir Winston Churchill provides the example of leadership on the world stage for modern day political leaders. It is because of his strong and principled leadership that I have the freedom today to give this statement. Churchill once remarked in Quebec City, “the spirit of freedom has found a safe and abiding home” in Canada. These words remain true today more than ever.

I would ask the House to join me in recognizing the legacy and life of one of history's greatest leaders, Sir Winston Churchill.

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NATIONAL ORDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want recognize a hero today. Because of his service in World War II, London's own Michael Sydorko is now a Knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honour of the Republic of France.

Born in Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba, Michael served with the Lake Superior Regiment 4th Canadian Armoured Division of the Canadian army. The “Lake Sups,” as they came to be known, played a vital role in the liberation of France and the Netherlands from Nazi occupation.

Michael volunteered for duty as a teenager and risked his life for the liberty of others. He has the distinction of being the only Canadian soldier to disarm U.S. General George Patton, who, after relinquishing his arms, complimented Sydorko's pluck by saying he would like to have him in his unit.

The distinction of knighthood is just one of many military honours that Michael has received over the years, and it is France's highest honour. Michael is one of fewer than 40 Canadians to receive it. It is only fitting that he be recognized and honoured in the House today.

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PENSIONS

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has an independent mandate that is crystal clear: to serve the best interests of hard-working Canadians who have paid into it.

The board is responsible for investing CPP funds prudently in a diversified portfolio of assets to the benefit of CPP contributors and beneficiaries. This helps to ensure that the retirement funds Canadians rely on remain safe and secure. However, the Liberal leader is planning to pay for his irresponsible spending by “alternative sources of capital, such as pension funds”.

It gets worse. The Liberal leader also said of his spending schemes, “It is time for a new revenue source...”. Canadians know

what that means: another tax hike from the Liberal leader. To the Liberal leader, we say hands off Canadians' pension plans.

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WORLD OCEANS DAY

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Oceans Day.

I am proud that previous Liberal governments have a strong tradition when it comes to our oceans. We introduced the Oceans Act in 1996, Canada's oceans strategy in 2002, and Canada's oceans action plan in 2005.

Unfortunately, the Conservative government is lost at sea when it comes to protecting our oceans. DFO research centres have been cut or shut down, the marine contaminants program is gone, DFO libraries and water pollution labs are gone, scientists have been fired or muzzled, the Fisheries Act was gutted, conservation offices closed, oceans management cut, PNCIMA eliminated, and the list goes on.

A Liberal government would continue our proud tradition and ensure the protection and preservation of Canada's oceans and marine resources.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES DAY

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Canadian Armed Forces Day, an opportunity to say thanks to the men and women in uniform who stand on guard for Canada, the true north, strong and free.

We are all blessed to call Canada home. Our military keeps us safe, serving us at home and abroad in times of both peace and conflict, ready for duty at a moment's notice. On behalf of my constituency of Miramichi and all colleagues here today, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the soldiers, sailors, and aviators who keep Canada safe.

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●(1415)

*[Translation]***NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it must be a rude awakening for all of the Conservative members who were confident that they would change the Liberals' culture of secrecy in Ottawa.

Who was the recipient of the Canadian Association of Journalists' Code of Silence Award on the weekend? The Conservative government, naturally.

I am talking about the same Conservative government that promised to clean house, manage transparently and restore Canadians' trust.

After 10 years of Conservative power, Canadians have seen the Conservatives protect their friends by altering reports before they were made public and heavily redact documents requested under the Access to Information Act.

It is no surprise that Canadians have had enough of this tired old Conservative government. In October, Canadians will no longer have to vote for secrecy under the Conservatives or the Liberals. They will finally be able to vote for an open and transparent government—a New Democrat government.

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[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Liberal leader revealed that he will pay for his irresponsible spending by “alternative sources of capital, such as pension funds”.

It would be highly irresponsible for the Liberal leader to jeopardize Canadians' retirement security to fund his wild spending promises. If that was not enough, the Liberal leader is also promising to look for a new revenue source. Canadians know exactly what that means, when a Liberal promises a new revenue source. It is higher taxes on the middle class.

While the leader of the Liberal Party is promising to raise taxes and put at risk the pensions of Canadians to pay for his massive spending, our government will continue to reduce taxes and protect pensions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a million dollars in fraudulent claims by 30 senators. Nine senators immediately referred to the police. The Conservative and Liberal leaders in the Senate and the Prime Minister's hand-picked choice for Speaker are all on the list.

Did the Prime Minister know about Leo Housakos' spending habits before naming him Speaker of Canada's Senate?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Senator Housakos has already answered that question.

At the same time, it was the Senate that actually invited in the Auditor General to review all of their expenses, and we anxiously await their report and the Senate's response tomorrow.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Actually, Mr. Speaker, here is what Senator Housakos did say over the weekend: we in the Senate “should be thanked by the population for our actions”.

Oral Questions

No wonder Canadians are fed up.

Leo Housakos is a close ally of the Prime Minister. He was appointed Senate Speaker just a month ago. Now he has set up an arbitration process that has allowed senators like himself to dispute the Auditor General's finding.

Has the Prime Minister's Office been in touch with Senator Housakos about this scandal? Is the Prime Minister's Office once again orchestrating the response to the most recent Senate scandal?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, as you know, it was the Senate that invited the Auditor General in to examine all of their expenses. The report is due tomorrow. We anxiously await this report and the response from the Senate.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve clear answers, because it is their money. We are talking about appointments made by this Prime Minister and we are talking about audit reports being tampered with. We are all familiar with the role of the staff of the Prime Minister's Office, particularly in the Mike Duffy scandal. As for the chiefs of staff, Ray Novak and Nigel Wright, their role is quite clear.

The question now is what role the Prime Minister's Office is currently playing in the latest Senate fiasco. Who knew about it, and who was in contact with Senator Leo Housakos to try to manage the most recent crisis in the Senate of Canada?

● (1420)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as everyone in the House knows, it was the Senate that invited the Auditor General in to examine all of their expenses. We anxiously await tomorrow's report. I hope the Senate will respond immediately.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, climate change is another issue on which the Conservatives have repeatedly failed, from their unambitious national plan to their non-existent emissions caps and their withdrawal from the Kyoto protocol. Worse still, today we learned that Canada is responsible for watering down the G7 communiqué on climate change.

Why is the Prime Minister determined to make Canada an international pariah when it comes to the fight against climate change?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the G7 released a strong, unanimous statement on climate change. Our budget announced the measures that we are taking to combat climate change and protect our environment. Our government has reduced emissions, lowered taxes for middle-class families and balanced the budget.

What do the Liberals and New Democrats want to do? They want to increase taxes for middle-class families, put Canada back into the red and implement a job-killing carbon tax.

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the G7 is calling for a complete phase-out of fossil fuels by the end of this century. So far the only thing that the Conservatives have been phasing out is environmental protection.

Canada is the only country in the world to have withdrawn from the Kyoto Protocol.

When will the government deliver a real, credible plan to fight climate change instead of leaving Canada with an environmental black eye on the world stage?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's record is clear. We have reduced emissions while growing the economy and creating good, paying jobs.

We will continue to take a responsible and balanced approach. Building on this, we will reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, regulate the production of chemicals and nitrogen fertilizers, and regulate emissions from natural gas-fired electricity generation.

The Liberals and the NDP on the other hand want high taxes on middle-class families, high taxes on middle-class seniors and high taxes on middle-class consumers. We will not go there.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, the global economic situation served as a smokescreen for the Minister of Finance, who tried to explain the need to reduce the infrastructure budget by nearly 90%.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister signed the G7 communiqué calling for more investments in infrastructure in order to stimulate economic growth.

Who is speaking on behalf of the government? Why are there two different messages at home and abroad?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows full well, the new infrastructure plan, which is currently in progress and began on April 1, is the largest infrastructure plan in the history of Canada.

We are delivering the plan together with the provinces and municipalities. I know that does not please the NDP, which wants to raise everyone's taxes.

That is not what we are going to do. We will carry on and respect our partners.

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference in Edmonton this weekend, cities and towns across Canada were treated to a new version of the old classic *Oliver Twist*. On transit, urban leaders are pleading with the government, “please, please, just a little more”.

Instead what they got from the stage was a spin on the old classic, what they got was *Oliver Twisted*.

The Minister of Finance barked to municipal leaders. He said, “Get real. Get real, cities. You can expect less from this government”. Cities and towns are clear, they need infrastructure dollars and they need them now and they want them now. Instead, the government has orphaned Canadian municipalities. When does the transit money come and why does it not come now? When are they going to give us more?

[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, I totally disagree with the premise of my colleague's question, and he knows it.

[English]

Two times a year, our government is transferring money to provinces and municipalities, two times a year for gas taxes, each year. They have already received a lot and they are applying for the new building Canada plan and he knows that. I know that is not the way they worked when they were in power. I remember this era because like many others, 27 of our members were former municipal politicians.

● (1425)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he can twist it all he wants, the transit funds he promised will not come for years and when they do come, what we found out this weekend is that they are only coming for a few choice cities. At the FCM meeting, the Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification said the funds are for big cities only. That was not in the budget.

Then the Minister of Finance said it is only for a few major projects, not for every city in the country. It is always the small print with the government. Conservatives are always playing one side off against another, one city off against another. Why will the Minister of Finance not invest in cities now, treat all cities fairly and come clean on the budget?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is twisting Dickens and twisting the facts. The facts are we are building on an \$80-billion infrastructure program, the biggest and longest in the history of Canada. We are very proud of the transit plan. It is going to deal with the critical issue for municipalities, which is traffic gridlock. The money will be available when the projects need it.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and the Conservatives have created a \$172-billion infrastructure deficit with their neglect.

Oral Questions

That is why the NDP will invest an additional 1¢ a litre from the gas tax to help cities like Montreal fix its roads and bridges. That is \$1.5 billion more than what is being made available at this time. The NDP will also invest \$1.3 billion in public transit.

Will the government adopt the NDP's plan to provide long-term predictable funding for our infrastructure?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we know, the NDP leader wants to make Canadians pay a \$20-billion carbon tax. It is easy to promise programs and say that you are going to deliver things by increasing everyone's taxes.

We are delivering the largest infrastructure plan in Canada's history while we continue to cut people's taxes. We are working with cities across the country, including Montreal, where I was yesterday.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the Conservatives' plan is not working.

The evidence in the greater metropolitan area is clear: our bridges are crumbling, traffic congestion is costing the middle class billions of dollars, and people are late for work and late picking their children up at day care. Parents are wasting precious minutes on the road that they could be spending with their children.

The NDP will invest in public transit. We need to repair our roads and bridges.

Will the Conservatives do what the NDP does and work with the municipalities or will they continue to stick future generations with the bill?

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, we work with the municipalities more than the NDP does. The New Democrats are making promises, but we are keeping promises. I would like to remind my colleague that 96% of our country's infrastructure belongs to the municipalities and provinces. We have been their partner since 2006. No other government has invested as much as ours in infrastructure, while respecting jurisdictions.

The NDP wants to centralize decision making in Ottawa. We are working with our partners while respecting their jurisdictions.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, recently the Conservative MP for Calgary Centre decided that the best way to fix the lack of needed funding for her city was not to fight for more help but to attack the mayor of Calgary. She lectured that he should hurry up and get on with applications for new federal dollars.

Here is a news flash. Calgary has applied three times. Two of them the Conservatives rejected, and the third one they are sitting on it. No wonder Mayor Nenshi said that the Conservative approach “doesn't make any sense at all”.

Rather than attacking Canadian mayors, rather than just representing Ottawa talking points in their home towns, why do

Conservatives not work with the mayors, work with the NDP, and fight for the people who actually sent them here?

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, while we were building the new building Canada plan, we held 13 round tables across the country. One organization was been invited to all of them, the FCM, which was there at the table with us, and we continue to work with it.

As the member knows, a provincial election in Alberta just happened, but we continue to work—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1430)

The Speaker: Order, please. I think the opposition was a little early with its applause. I do not know that the minister is finished. If members could just applaud when he is finished answering the question, I am sure the minister would appreciate it.

Hon. Denis Lebel: Mr. Speaker, as is our habit, we will respect the provincial jurisdiction and work with the governments of the provinces.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we heard the Minister of Finance this week. He said that it was risky and reckless to invest any more in our cities. Well, we saw the evidence this morning of both Liberal and Conservative neglect of public transit in our country. Our largest city was shut down by a subway system failure, leaving hundreds of thousands of commuters stranded.

We have a plan to get transit moving in towns and cities across the country. Will the Conservatives get on board with the NDP's practical plan for public transit?

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, it is exactly what I said a moment ago. The NDP wants to manage on behalf of the municipalities and provinces. We would have to manage day-to-day transit across the country. This is what the NDP thinks, but it is not what we will do. We will transfer the money to the provinces and municipalities, and work with them, not on behalf of them.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the Senate expense scandal rocked the Prime Minister's Office, the Conservatives have been trying to sweep the whole thing under the rug. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and new makeshift ethics expert has still not answered our questions. We will give him another chance.

Oral Questions

After Senator Housakos was personally appointed as Speaker of the Senate by the Prime Minister, did the Prime Minister's Office give him strategic advice to minimize the damage of the expense scandal?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said on a number of occasions, it was the Senate that invited the Auditor General to review the expenses of senators. What we understand is this. When one makes a mistake, if it is a deliberate mistake, one should pay it back.

Of course the NDP's mistake was not deliberate. It set out a scheme that was hatched in the office of the Leader of the Opposition to take money out of the ridings of the different members of Parliament to the tune of \$2.7 million. The NDP members have been ordered to pay that back to their constituents, and they refuse to do that. Instead, they will be spending the summer in court explaining to Canadians why they refuse to pay them back the \$2.7 million they owe them. They should just pay it back.

[Translation]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister still refuses to answer, but it is clear that his office was directly involved at all stages of the scandal. Canadians deserve to know once and for all whether the Prime Minister's Office is still deeply involved in the Senate expense scandal.

The Conservative Speaker of the Senate, the Conservative leader and the Liberal leader, who were all identified by the Auditor General in his report on Senate spending, have implemented an appeal process to defend themselves. This process was put in place by the very people who will use it. Does the Prime Minister agree with this type of process?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Senate will respond to the Auditor General's report tomorrow.

What is very clear is that the member who talks about ethics in the Senate owes the Canadian taxpayers \$27,111, part of a \$2.7-million bill that 68 members of the NDP owe the people of Canada. The member is refusing to pay the residents in her community back, just as all the other 67 members of the NDP caucus have. What they should do is look at their constituents and pay them back the \$2.7 million they owe them.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister came to Ottawa promising strong rules to improve accountability in the Senate. Now the Conservatives have abandoned any reform.

The Prime Minister appointed Senator Housakos as speaker. The senator then immediately started working with Liberals, behind closed doors, to devise a new system so senators could appeal the Auditor General's findings.

Was the Prime Minister aware when he appointed him that Senator Housakos was making up new rules after learning he was to be named in the Auditor General's report?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the senator has already answered that question.

However, the question that has not been answered is why 68 members of the NDP caucus participated in a scheme, hatched by the Leader of the Opposition, to take money out of the ridings of various members of Parliament and funnel it to an illegal politically partisan office in Montreal.

If reports are to be understood, the Senate expenses are about \$1 million. The NDP owes \$2.7 million to the Canadian taxpayers. If it is wrong for the Senate, and when taxpayer money is abused it is wrong, then it is also wrong for these 68 members of Parliament to refuse to pay taxpayers back.

• (1435)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party remains the only party in the House that is pushing for reform and accountability.

Canadians are outraged by the magnitude of the scandal and look to the House for leadership. They do not expect it from the Senate, where we see that the men who are charged with the Senate review are actually named in the report. In fact, a Conservative senator said that Canadians owe him thanks and the Liberal Senate leader has been attacking the work of the Auditor General. There is no accountability and no contrition.

Here is a simple reform step. Why do we not just cut off the tap to the trough, insist on higher ethical standards from them and bring some accountability to that disgraced institution?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we understand that the NDP has absolutely no respect for the Canadian Constitution and it actually has no respect for the Canadian taxpayer.

If they had respect for the Canadian taxpayer, the New Democrats would be able to look at themselves and say that they have used \$2.7 million of taxpayer resources inappropriately, and they would pay it back. However, they are refusing to do that to the point where they are going to have to go to court. Sixty-eight of them will be squeezed into the defendant's box all summer explaining to their constituents why they refuse to pay them back the money they owe them.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with answers like that, after the next election I suggest the member for Oak Ridges—Markham give his resumé to Sepp Blatter.

Rather than be the defenceman of blather, let us talk about the defence of change. If he wants to clean up the House, let us get rid of that Board of Internal Economy. Let us bring in the Auditor General to look at oversight and mechanics. Let us start to deal with the corruption over there.

Instead, he stands up and defends the indefensible time and time again. What happened to the Prime Minister who promised Canadians that he would clean up that House of ill repute in the upper chamber?

Oral Questions

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a New Democratic Party that owes three times as much as the Auditor General has apparently identified in the Senate, \$2.7 million.

That is an NDP member who in the last election went to his constituents and said that he would vote to cancel the long gun registry then came to this place, broke his word to his constituents and voted to maintain it. He now supports a leader of the opposition who wants to bring that back.

When it comes to accountability and ethics, the member has nothing to talk about.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I will ask members to try to come to order. I know it is the first day back after a weekend, but we are going to be in rough shape on Wednesday if this progresses.

The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite celebratory announcements in October and December of 2013, and then again in August and September of 2014, the CETA deal is still not done. Last September's premature party alone cost hard-working Canadian taxpayers nearly half a million dollars.

The government cynically boasts about the number of deals it has signed, but the grim reality is record high trade deficits of \$3 billion and \$3.9 billion in March and April. When will the government finally scrap its tired talking points and tell us when CETA will be finished?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no government has done more to advance Canada's trade interests than this Conservative government. Our government has concluded free trade agreements with 38 different countries, with many more to come.

Had the member actually reviewed the statistics she quoted, she would have found that, if we factor out the decline in energy prices, our exports are actually up 6.2%, year over year. On our manufacturing related statistics, our sectors have posted double-digit export gains.

We will take no lessons from the NDP when it comes to trade.

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[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to strong pressure from the G7 countries, the Prime Minister was less than willingly persuaded to sign on to an agreement on global greenhouse gas emissions. According to some reports, Canada appears to have blocked a more ambitious agreement.

Why should our G7 partners believe in the Conservative government's good faith considering that its previous commitments

have been unreliable and its action on climate change so late in the game and unconvincing?

• (1440)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the G7 released a strong, unanimous statement on climate change. We have significantly increased our support for initiatives that reduce pollutants and improve air quality for Canadians. In addition, we will invest \$1 billion in public transit every year.

What do the Liberals and New Democrats want to do? They want to want to increase taxes for middle-class families, put Canada back into the red and implement a job-killing carbon tax.

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century, barely.

After immense pressure from the G7 leadership, he reluctantly agreed to a communiqué that would get Canada out of fossil fuels by the end of the century. However, his minister only has a target of 225 megatonnes by 2030. She seems awfully keen on mini-tonnes, however, on fugitive methane emissions from oil, gas and fertilizer sectors.

Since fugitive emissions are relatively small potatoes in the emissions profile, what is her plan for the rest?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is pretty rich, coming from the Liberals who did absolutely nothing on climate change other than to name their leader's dog Kyoto.

We have a clear record. We are reducing emissions, while growing the economy and creating well-paying jobs. We have a balanced approach, and we will take a responsible approach.

Building on this, as the minister mentioned, we will be reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, regulating the production of chemicals in nitrogen fertilizers and regulating emissions from natural gas-fired electricity generation. We are going to do that without a job-killing carbon tax.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Éloïse Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Deschamps report, which was released a month ago, exposed the problems of sexual harassment within our armed forces.

To fix the problem, one of the recommendations was to recruit more women to join our troops. We have learned, however, that instead of taking the report seriously, the government is about to quietly reduce the minimum number of women to be recruited into the ranks.

Oral Questions

When did the Conservatives decide that having fewer women in our armed forces is the solution to the problems of harassment in the military?

[English]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of serving alongside some exceptional female leaders in the Canadian Armed Forces when I served. Canada, in fact, is one of the leaders in ensuring that we have women in leadership positions throughout the Canadian Armed Forces. That will continue under this government.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is simply irresponsible for the minister to allow DND to try to reduce the targets of recruiting women in the Canadian Armed Forces, when we know from the Deschamps report that having more women in the military can be a critical factor in reducing the sexual assaults and harassment.

This is a classic response from the government and totally unacceptable. It is more interested in saving face than dealing with the deep-rooted problems that continue to contribute to women's inequality in the military.

Will the minister tell DND to focus on meeting the target for women, not weakening it?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, the Canadian Armed Forces has committed to implementing all of Madame Deschamps' recommendations.

We want to encourage young women from across the country to pursue a career in the Canadian Armed Forces, where their leadership will be cultivated and highlighted. Canada is one of the strongest NATO countries in terms of women in the military.

We will continue to pursue that, and encourage more people to join the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so why are they lowering the targets?

Once again, Canadian Forces members are being left behind by the government. Those looking for help to get replacement IDs, service pins, or other records call the designated line only to be told that it is not staffed due to budget cuts. There is no use calling back. One reservist said that he has been trying to get help with his basic request for five months.

Our soldiers deserve so much better than having the books balanced on their backs. Why did the minister cut such basic services that the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces rely upon?

• (1445)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Armed Forces is going to ensure that proper information gets out to both current serving members in the Canadian Armed Forces and veterans for their Canadian Forces decoration service pins.

No government in the history of this country has recognized the service and sacrifice of men and women in uniform and our veterans more than this government: the 75th Victory Pin for World War II;

the Bomber Command Bar; the Year of the Korean War Veteran. We honour and pay tribute to that service, and we will continue to do so.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloise Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the postponing of the decontamination at CFB Valcartier is another sign that the Department of National Defence is broken.

Although DND had assured the people of Shannon that work to clean up the water table would begin this summer, we have since learned that nothing is going to be done any time soon. Will it be in 2016? 2017? The minister does not even know.

How can the Conservative government continue to bury its head in the sand when the health of the residents of Shannon is in danger?

[English]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence have committed to this decontamination project adjacent to Valcartier and are working with the community of Shannon and the surrounding municipality to ensure that this project is done properly. It is budgeted for and it will happen.

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TAXATION

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Liberal leader has only one plan for the economy and that is to raise taxes. In contrast, we have lowered taxes and created new voluntary options for Canadians to save, such as the tax-free savings account.

Would the Minister of Finance please give this House an update on the government's plan to help Canadians save while lowering taxes and creating jobs?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be concerned about the Liberal leader's comments at the FCM conference. He said that to fund his infrastructure schemes, he would need to find alternative sources of capital, such as pension funds. The Liberal leader would undermine the Canada pension plan's independence and put our pensioners at risk just to find money for his irresponsible pension schemes. I say, hands off Canada's pensions.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Cindy Blackstock is currently fighting the government to gain recognition for the injustice suffered by aboriginal children when it comes to social services. From what we have learned, rather than letting the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal do its job, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development was found guilty of having deliberately retaliated against Ms. Blackstock.

Oral Questions

Is that how the Conservatives see reconciliation: punishing those who dare to criticize them?

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to the health, safety and well-being of first nations children. Since 2006 our government has increased child and family services funding on reserve by 40%. We are taking action in collaboration with willing partners to ensure that children and families have the support they need to lead safe and healthy lives. We are reviewing the tribunal decision to determine the next steps.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is how committed they are. The Conservatives were so outraged by the abuse of power by a Conservative staffer that they gave the man a promotion. Apparently, retaliating against someone who dares to complain about Conservative discrimination, especially against aboriginal children, is the perfect qualification for serving as chief of staff to the Minister of Natural Resources. This certainly sends a chilling message to any first nations who want to meet with the minister.

Why did the Conservatives legitimize this kind of unacceptable behaviour with a promotion?

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, our government remains committed to the health, safety and well-being of first nations children. We are reviewing the tribunal decision to determine the next steps.

Our government has increased child and family service funding on reserve by 40% and we are taking action in collaboration with our partners to ensure that children and families have the support they need to lead safe and healthy lives.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, rather than punishing those who dare to speak out against the injustices still suffered by too many aboriginal children, the government should show leadership and move toward reconciliation. As a first step, the Prime Minister should use his visit to the Vatican as an opportunity to seek an official apology from the Pope for the role that the Catholic Church played in Indian residential schools.

Will the Prime Minister take this opportunity to raise this important issue with the Pope, yes or no?

• (1450)

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of Indian residential schools. As acknowledged in the Prime Minister's historic apology on behalf of all Canadians in 2008, there is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential school system to ever prevail again.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has written to the provinces, the territories, the Federation of

Canadian Municipalities and the Vatican to bring to their attention the report and its recommendations.

We will continue to promote reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the legacy of the Indian residential schools can best be described as 130 years of intergenerational social tragedy. That is why the Truth and Reconciliation Commission feels it is important that the Pope himself apologize for the role the Catholic Church played.

The Prime Minister will be meeting with the Pope this week. So far, the Prime Minister has been deadly silent on any of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Will he or will he not push the Pope to apologize formally on behalf of the Catholic Church for the role that it played in this intergenerational tragedy?

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again we thank the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for its work. We thank the former students for sharing their stories with the commission and with all Canadians.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has written to the provinces, the territories, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Vatican to bring to their attention the report and its recommendations. We on this side of the House will continue to work with aboriginal Canadians and non-aboriginal Canadians to continue to promote reconciliation.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just learned that Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court has upheld Raif Badawi's sentence of 10 years in prison, a \$330,000 fine and 1,000 lashes. The time has come for the Prime Minister to intercede directly with the king of Saudi Arabia and tell him that these human rights abuses are intolerable and that Raif Badawi must be freed.

Will the Prime Minister act on behalf of the House, which clearly expressed its position on this issue through a unanimous motion on April 1?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the punishment imposed on Mr. Badawi is a clear violation of human dignity. Canadian representatives have raised this issue with the Saudi government. They will continue to do so until Mr. Badawi is granted clemency.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Canadian military plans to lower its target, currently a modest 25%, for the recruitment of women. This goes against Justice Deschamps' advice in her report on sexual harassment and the hostile environment for women in the armed forces. Plus, the government is currently responding with an internal committee and not the independent response that Madam Justice Deschamps said is needed at committee.

Dropping targets instead of fixing the problems is just a cop-out. Why is reducing the number of women in the Canadian Armed Forces the minister's plan to deal with the awful situation of sexual harassment and abuse in the military?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said in response to a previous question, the Canadian Armed Forces has committed to implementing all of Madame Deschamps' recommendations and learnings from her study of this serious issue. I also said that when I was in the Canadian Armed Forces, I had the honour of serving alongside some exceptional female leaders from across Canada. The Canadian Armed Forces has some of the highest rates of female participation in our military and this government is committed to ensuring that continues.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Raif Badawi was arrested in Saudi Arabia almost three years ago. Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court has just upheld Mr. Badawi's inhumane sentence of 1,000 lashes and 10 years of imprisonment. There is no legal recourse.

Will the government send a clear message to the Government of Saudi Arabia indicating that freedom of expression is a fundamental right that must be respected in all places, at all times? Will the government show leadership, for a change, in the movement calling for Mr. Badawi's release?

• (1455)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, we are quite concerned about the fact that Mr. Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in prison for simply exercising his right to freedom of religion and expression. Canadian officials have raised this matter with the Saudi government. That will continue until clemency is granted.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an official is not enough. There have to be high level interventions. Yesterday, blogger Raif Badawi saw his 10-year prison sentence upheld by the Supreme Court of Saudi Arabia. That sentence also includes 1,000 lashes. From the beginning, the NDP has been strongly opposed to the unjust and degrading treatment of the blogger and has called on the government to do everything in its power to ensure Mr. Badawi's release.

Will the government increase diplomatic pressure on Saudi Arabia in order to obtain Raif Badawi's release?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian officials have continuously raised this matter with the Saudi government, because we consider the punishment of Mr. Badawi to be a violation of human dignity. We continue to call for clemency in this case, and that will continue until clemency is granted.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Calgary Northeast and constituents across Canada were pleased to see regulations concerning citizenship revocation come into force.

We all know that Canadian citizenship is incredibly valuable and incredibly valued by people all across the world.

Would the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration please explain to the House how these new regulations will protect the safety and security of Canadians from those who would seek to harm us?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the hard-working member for Calgary Northeast for his work on strengthening Canadian citizenship.

Of course, the new act will ensure that those who wish to do us harm will not be able to exploit their citizenship in order to endanger our country, our freedoms, and our democracy.

This government knows there is no higher duty for any government than to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. From Afghanistan to Iraq and Syria, we have not been afraid and have never been afraid to call jihadi terrorism by its real name.

Citizenship revocation will be applied to dual nationals convicted of terrorist threat offences, high treason, treason, or spying. We want to show that threatening—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Paul's.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Human Rights Commission is forcing the government to pay first nations child advocate Cindy Blackstock \$20,000 for retaliating against her human rights complaint. It found that the conduct of Conservative staffer David McArthur was "wilful and reckless". Shockingly, Mr. McArthur was then promoted to chief of staff to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Will the government publicly apologize to Ms. Blackstock, and what sanctions will the government impose on Mr. McArthur?

Oral Questions

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have said, we are reviewing the tribunal's decision to determine the next steps, but our government remains committed to the health, safety, and well-being of first nations children. Since we took office, our government has increased child and family services funding on reserve by 40%. We are taking action in collaboration with willing partners to ensure that children and families have the support they need to lead healthy and safe lives.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is once again proving that it is incompetent in the implementation of its single email platform for all federal departments. This new system was to be ready this year, but it will not be in place until 2016. This clearly shows the inability of the minister in charge of Shared Services Canada to effectively manage this project.

Instead of blaming others, when will the minister accept responsibility?

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to being more efficient with the email system, consolidating 63 separate systems into one. That will save Canadian taxpayers money. It will also make the government more responsive to those same taxpayers. This will also increase the security of the system. Once implemented, we will achieve \$50 million a year in savings.

* * *

• (1500)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday marked the 71st anniversary of D-Day. It was on that day 71 years ago that Canada and allied forces stormed the beaches under the code names Omaha, Utah, Sword, Gold, and Juno to begin their successful campaign to liberate Europe from tyranny and oppression.

It is our duty to remember those who fought and sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom, peace, and democracy. Can the Minister of Veterans Affairs please update this House on what Canada is doing for our veterans?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been 71 years since D-Day. Canadians will never forget that immense sacrifice and the freedoms that were won as a result of it.

At our request, the French government has extended its prestigious Legion of Honour program to honour Normandy veterans. Last week I wrote to all members of this House urging them to work with their legions to find all of our living Normandy veterans so that they can receive this high honour from the French government. I would ask them to make sure that all nomination

forms are in by July 10 so we can honour and remember our veterans.

* * *

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, defying all logic, the National Energy Board is continuing with the assessment process for the energy east project, even though we still do not know the new route that TransCanada intends to propose.

Quebec's natural resources minister and Ontario's energy minister are demanding that the board explain this decision because, in their words, their citizens "deserve accurate information".

Will the Minister of Natural Resources continue to wash his hands of this matter or will he finally require the National Energy Board to be more transparent?

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, we do not take positions on specific applications for energy infrastructure until an independent review is complete. Our government relies on the independent National Energy Board for decisions related to proposals for energy infrastructure, including TransCanada's energy east proposal. Our government has been very clear that proposals will only be approved if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Prime Minister showed the whole world that he is more concerned about the oil industry than the fight against climate change.

At the G7 meeting, Canada once again expressed reluctance to adopt greenhouse gas reduction targets, in order to diminish the scope of the planned agreement.

Will the government finally understand that the era of polluting fossil fuel energy is behind us and we must now encourage electric transportation, including by restoring an improved ecoAUTO program?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, the G7 made a strong, unanimous statement on climate change.

Our budget sets out the measures we are taking to address climate change and protect our environment. Our government has reduced emissions, lowered taxes for middle-class families and balanced the budget.

The Liberals and the NDP want to increase taxes for middle-class families, put Canada back into the red and implement a job-killing carbon tax.

*Routine Proceedings***INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is completely out of touch with how things work in small communities.

For the Canada 150 community infrastructure program, which was announced on May 15, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions instructed organizations to submit their proposals by June 26. That deadline is totally ridiculous.

It seems that the federal government does not really want to let small not-for-profit organizations submit proposals. They cannot just snap their fingers and make it happen.

Does the Minister of Infrastructure realize that the deadlines imposed by Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions are unrealistic and will deprive small organizations of the opportunity to get help with their projects?

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, this is the third program of its kind that Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions has administered. For my colleague's information, over 300 proposals have been submitted to Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions since we launched the program.

We will continue to help Knights of Columbus halls and seniors' clubs upgrade their facilities. I have no doubt that there will be plenty of proposals.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's attitude towards climate change is an absolute disgrace.

While the G7 issued a communiqué calling for a significant reduction in greenhouse gases and calling on countries to maintain the target of limiting the rise in temperatures to two degrees, we have learned that Canada sided with Japan to try to water down the final statement.

Worse still, in his closing statement at the G7, the Prime Minister of Canada did not mention the environment a single time. He acts as though the problem did not even exist.

Will the government do its part, take action and join the global effort to combat climate change?

• (1505)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, the G7 made a strong, unanimous statement on climate change. We have significantly increased our support for initiatives that reduce pollutants and improve air quality for Canadians. We will invest \$1 billion in public transit every year.

Our government has reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lowered taxes for middle-class families and balanced the budget.

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Randolph Churchill, great-grandson of Sir Winston Churchill and principal spokesperson for the Churchill family.

The year 2015 marks a number of important anniversaries within the legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. It is now 75 years since he first assumed office as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

[Translation]

It has been 70 years since the end of the Second World War and 50 years since this great man passed.

[English]

In order to mark these important anniversaries in the legacy of Churchill, I will be hosting a panel discussion this evening at 6 p.m. in room 237C, and I invite all hon. members to attend.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 28 petitions.

* * *

SUPPORT FOR CANADIANS WITH PRINT DISABILITIES ACT

Hon. Candice Bergen (for the Minister of Industry) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (access to copyrighted works or other subject-matter for persons with perceptual disabilities).

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 38th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs concerning the code of conduct of members of this House, sexual harassment.

If I could have a moment, I would like to thank the subcommittee that did a great deal of work on this: the member for St. Paul's, the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, the member for Peace River, and the member for Calgary Centre. Without their working above and beyond the normal for this Parliament on this policy on sexual harassment, the report would never have been finished.

Of course, to the clerk and researchers of that committee, the extra time given to make this a success is also well noted by all of the members. I thank them for their very hard work on this, and I am happy to present the report.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's 2013-2014 Departmental Performance Report and 2015-2016 Report on Plans and Priorities”.

• (1510)

FINANCE

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, entitled “A North American Renminbi Hub: Canada as the Leader”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

As well, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, entitled “Recent Oil Price Changes: Selected Canadian Impacts”. Again, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

PETITIONS

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition from my constituents who say that Canada's 400-year-old definition of a human being is inadequate in this day and age. The petitioners would like Parliament to confirm that every human being is a human being in Canadian law by amending section 223 of our Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of my constituents who are very concerned about the fact that flavoured tobacco products are still being marketed by the tobacco industry. These are candy-like products that attract young people and can certainly cause addiction at a very early age. The petitioners are asking the Parliament of Canada to pass legislation that will remove all flavours from all tobacco products so that children are not led into addiction.

Routine Proceedings

AGRICULTURE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by a number of people across Saskatchewan, particularly in the western and northwestern part of the province, addressing the inherent rights of farmers. They are calling for Parliament to enshrine in legislation the inalienable rights of farmers and other Canadians to save, reuse, select, and exchange and sell seeds.

DEMENTIA

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization says dementia is a public health priority and a ticking time bomb and calls on governments to put in place a national dementia plan. Today, someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease once every five minutes in Canada and the cost to the health system is \$15 billion annually. In 30 years, someone will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease once every two minutes and the cost will be \$153 billion.

The petitioners call on the government to implement a national dementia plan.

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by hundreds of my constituents. This petition once again calls on the government to put an end to cuts to postal services. The petitioners call on the government to oppose the cuts that Canada Post wants to make, since these cuts will penalize seniors and people who do not want to go to community mailboxes.

Over the weekend I went door to door in my riding, and this was a topic that came up a lot. We now know where the community mailboxes will be installed in my riding. They will be very far from the homes of some individuals, and those people are worried about these changes.

I ask the government to listen to them.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The first is on the subject of climate change, apropos of today's developments at the G7. The petitioners from my riding call for significant reductions in greenhouse gases on the path to decarbonization, to get to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on the subject of human rights and the People's Republic of China's abuse of the rights of people who practise Falun Gong and Falun Dafa.

Routine Proceedings

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is from residents within my own riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands, who are calling on the government to reject the Enbridge proposal through British Columbia, putting risky tankers on the coastlines.

HEALTH

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first is from some 256 people in Sudbury, Ontario, calling for support for my motion, Motion No. 501, a national strategy for innovation, effectiveness and cost effectiveness in sustainable health care. The petitioners note that it calls for establishing five regional centres for innovation to bring together integrated medicine with allied professionals to collaborate, research and document low-cost, low-risk health care options.

● (1515)

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners are drawing attention to the fact that flavoured tobacco products are being marketed today to youth. They are calling on Parliament to enact legislation that removes all flavours from all tobacco products.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 1169 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 1169—**Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to Marine Atlantic Incorporated: (a) what were the marketing, advertising and promotional expenditures of the company respectively for each fiscal year from 2008-2009 to 2014-2015, broken down by the cost of (i) in-house work effort for creation or planning, (ii) the use of outside consultants or other professional media, marketing and advertising agencies or services for the purposes of planning and creation, (iii) media buying by either an agency on behalf of Marine Atlantic Incorporated or directly by Marine Atlantic Incorporated; (b) based on the information provided in (a)(iii), what were the media buying expenditures, broken down by (i) radio, (ii) television, (iii) newspaper, (iv) magazine, (v) internet and social media, (vi) other forms print or electronic media; (c) based on the information provided in (b), what were the expenditures in each form of media, broken down by the trade or popular name of (i) the broadcast company, (ii) newspaper, (iii) magazine, (iv) internet site in which the advertisement appeared; and (d) did Marine Atlantic ever report to Parliament that promotional rates or marketing efforts were not appropriate for services such as the ones provided by Marine Atlantic Incorporated and, if so, has the view of the company changed, and, if so, why?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), in-house work effort for creation or planning amounts to approximately \$35,000.

With regard to (a)(ii), a(iii), (b) and (c), the corporation cannot respond to this question in the requested time frame. Significantly more time would be needed and Marine Atlantic Inc., MAI, would also incur a substantial cost from its consultants to gather this information.

With regard to (d), in the corporation's 2005 corporate plan summary, MAI discussed various pricing strategies and marketing efforts and noted that they were not appropriate at that time. However, it was also noted in the same corporate plan that MAI would "continue to explore any promotion opportunities that will generate a positive contribution for the company".

Based on MAI's current fleet capacity, rate structure and traffic levels, the corporation continues to pursue opportunities that will make a positive contribution to the operations as deemed appropriate.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 1163, 1171, 1172, 1173, 1181, 1182, 1184, 1185 and 1194 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1163—**Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to benefits available to seniors: (a) what are the most recent estimates, broken down by province of the number of seniors who would meet eligibility requirements for (i) Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits but are not in receipt because they have not applied, (ii) Old Age Security (OAS) benefits but are not in receipt because they have not applied, (iii) Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) but are not in receipt because they have not applied; and (b) what are the annual dollar values, broken down by province of the missing benefits for seniors who meet eligibility requirements for (i) CPP benefits but are not in receipt because they have not applied, (ii) OAS benefits but are not in receipt because they have not applied, (iii) GIS but are not in receipt because they have not applied?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply***Question No. 1171—Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to the Manolis L shipwreck: (a) for each cofferdam used or installed, (i) on what date was it first put in place, (ii) what location of the ship was the cofferdam installed at, (iii) on what dates was it inspected and by what department, agency or contractor, (iv) what was the outcome of each inspection, broken down by nature or reason for inspection, outcome of inspection, costs associated with each inspection, (v) what is the plan for future inspections, replacements and removals, including anticipated dates and reasons, (vi) what material has been blocked from leaking by the installation of the cofferdam, (vii) what material has escaped around the cofferdam, (viii) what material was recovered from the vicinity of the cofferdam, broken down by type of material, date, quantity of material, disposal method, department, agency or contractors involved, (ix) what was the total cost of all cofferdams, broken down by cost of installation or removal, costs associated with removal and extraction of materials in cofferdam, required personnel, equipment or technology utilized, any other actual, planned, or anticipated costs; (b) for all other activity related to the wreck, including work by divers, remote operated vehicles, the use of neoprene gaskets, and any other specific activities related to the wreck both on and off site, what activities have taken place, are taking place, or are anticipated to take place, broken down by (i) date of activity, or anticipated date of activity, (ii) type of activity, (iii) department, agency, or contractor involved, (iv) actual, planned, and anticipated cost, (v) location of the activity, or position of the activity within the wreck site; (c) what departments, agencies, contractors, outside experts, other governments, or any other individual or organisation have been consulted by the government through this process, broken down by (i) name, (ii) date, (iii) purpose, (iv) cost; and (d) what are the details of all records, correspondence, and files, broken down by (i) relevant file or tracking numbers, (ii) correspondence or file type, (iii) subject, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1172—Mr. James Rajotte:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Edmonton—Leduc, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1173—Mrs. Joy Smith:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Kildonan—St. Paul, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1181—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Windsor West, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1182—Hon. Ron Cannan:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Kelowna—Lake Country, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1184—Hon. Ron Cannan:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Vancouver Kingsway, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1185—Ms. Wai Young:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Vancouver Centre, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1194—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With respect to all the small craft harbours located in New Brunswick: how much funding has been allocated by the government since fiscal year 2001-2002, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) small craft harbour, (iii) specific expenditure program?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Business of Supply

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank you personally for recognizing the presence in this chamber today of the great-grandson of Winston Churchill, Randolph Churchill, who I had a chance to meet today. He reminded me of one of Churchill's great sayings to the effect that trying to tax one's way to prosperity is like trying to lift oneself off the ground by standing in a bucket and pulling up on the handle.

That is particularly appropriate for the motion put forward in the House by the NDP, supported I presume by the Liberals, which has the effect of raising payroll taxes on Canadian workers. The opposition NDP view Canadian taxpayers as a bottomless pit from which it can take endless supplies of money to spend on all of the dreams that a left-of-centre politician can conjure up. Today the New Democrats are focusing on payroll taxes. Let me help them understand what payroll taxes are. They are a fixed sum of money that is taken off of the paycheque of every single worker and used to fund the Canada pension plan and employment insurance. Deductions are also matched by the employer so that both employer and employee must make these payments in order to fund these programs.

Our approach has been to keep these payroll taxes as low as humanly possible. In fact, with the soon to arrive surplus in the employment insurance account, we will have the ability to lower payroll taxes in the year 2017, at which time they will go down by 21%, one-fifth, which will save money for both small business people and the hard-working employees who work for them.

The NDP and the Liberals want to do exactly the opposite. They would like to raise payroll taxes. Therefore, let us start with the two things that they had announced they want to do to raise payroll taxes. Both have recently announced support for Premier Kathleen Wynne's proposed pension plan in Ontario. That Liberal pension plan would raise payroll taxes by \$1,000 per worker for every person earning \$60,000 a year. It is indicated in a schedule to the publicly available Ontario Liberal government plan put out in 2014 how much extra taxes Canadians would have to pay. For example, someone earning about \$70,000 would pay an extra \$1,200 in payroll taxes and so would the small business that employs him or her. Someone earning only \$45,000 would pay an additional \$800 and his or her employee would be forced to match it.

When Kathleen Wynne came up with this new tax, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business asked its members, thousands of small businesses right across the country, how they would carry this new burden. The answers that the small businesses gave are the following: a majority said they would have to fire people; a majority said they would have to cut wages; and, many said they would have to do both. In fact, a significant number of small businesses indicated that they would have to close their doors altogether were they to be burdened with this increased tax.

That is precisely why we have rejected higher payroll taxes to fund pension schemes. Our approach for pension security is to cut taxes. We believe that if you leave more money in the hands of those who earn it they can set more money aside to prepare for a brighter future. Therefore, we brought in the tax-free savings account that

allow people to put aside money and grow it tax free for the rest of their lives.

• (1520)

The opposition claimed that the people who contribute to these are making too much money, so I checked, and I found that on average, 60% of those who max out their tax-free savings accounts earned less than \$60,000 a year. Liberals and New Democrats think that if people earn \$60,000 a year, they are too rich and they should pay more to the government. They could not be further from the truth.

Our approach for retirement security is a low-tax plan. Their approach is a high-tax scheme. Whenever Canadians are given a clear choice between low taxes and high taxes, they always choose wisely because they understand that a dollar left in the hands of the person who earns it will always be more productively spent and invested than in the hands of the politician or bureaucrats who tax it. That is the lesson that they will teach the NDP and the Liberals when they vote on this payroll tax in October.

There is one member in the House who gave me applause and I want to thank him for that. The member for Brandon—Souris is very generous and I know that he agrees that his constituents should be able to keep more of their own money and that is why they have confidence in him.

I know there is no applause on the other side of the House when we speak about lower taxes. They believe in a big usurpatory government that takes as much as humanly possible. We know that any government that has to spend more on the irresponsible schemes of a left-of-centre party ends up emptying the pockets of hard-working Canadians and we will not allow them to do that.

I now move on to the second tax increase that both the NDP and Liberals propose and that, of course, is an increase in employment insurance payroll taxes. We have here in the House of Commons one of the greatest supporters of the 45-day work year. He proposes, and so do both opposition parties, that employment insurance be paid out for an entire year after someone works 45 days. How do we run an economy if people are only working 45 days a year?

The NDP and Liberals have both endorsed this approach that would cost billions of dollars in order to increase eligibility for EI to a year-long period after 45 days of employment. This plan would apply in every single economic region in the country, even places with acute labour shortages where employers struggle to find people to work. The NDP and Liberals would institute this multibillion dollar scheme of a 45-day work year.

The problem is not just that it would harm our workforce, it would raise our taxes because we cannot find billions of dollars to spend on a scheme like that out of thin air. Budgets, unlike the Liberal leader's view, do not balance themselves and neither do expensive schemes like this pay for themselves. They would have to raise payroll taxes on those Canadians who get up every day and work hard and the people who employ them.

Business of Supply

We know if it is more expensive to hire, our employers will hire less. On this side of the House, we believe in creating jobs because the best way to lift people up and to create a brighter future for them is through the three pillars of prosperity: jobs, families and communities. The best anti-poverty plan is a good job. The most reliable social safety net is a strong family. For those who have trouble finding a job or whose families struggle, we have a third pillar which is community. Let me briefly talk about all three of them.

Our plan for jobs is the three Ts: training, trade, tax cuts. Training connects Canadians with the opportunities to be employed. Trade gives markets for our businesses to sell to. Tax cuts allow our consumers to spend, our families to save and our businesses to hire. These three Ts create jobs.

• (1525)

As for families, we are putting money into the hands of moms and dads so they can make the best decisions for their children.

As for communities, we are eliminating the tax on charities, which used to punish our non-profits every time they got a donation from a philanthropist, so that 100% of charitable giving will be tax-free from now on.

Families, jobs and communities are the three pillars of a strong Canada. That is our future.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am always disappointed when the hon. member does not include a quote from F.A. Hayek or Robert Nozick in his speech. He has the habit of doing so.

What the member is proposing is basically that seasonal workers in my riding do not have a right to a job. They also do not have a right to live in their community. The changes the government made to employment insurance are forcing workers out of their communities, away from their families, to move into cities. Whole industries are being destroyed by this. It is not good for the employers because they are expecting to have trained specialized workers in their community. Those trained specialized workers in their community, which my hon. colleague flaunted, are having to leave the community, and the employers and business owners in my community cannot find people to do the specialized jobs. How is that helping?

Compounding that, his party, as well as the party all the way down over there, stole money from Canadians to invest in their own insurance plans to bail themselves out. How is that right?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the NDP plan for jobs is to punish those who work and punish those who hire them. It wants to raise taxes on small businesses that go out into the world and hire people and create opportunities. We should do exactly the opposite.

That is what we have done in our recent budget. In fact, if we look at the tax relief we have instituted since 2006, right through to the recent reductions put forward in this budget, we are cutting taxes for a business that earns \$500,000 a year by \$38,000. That is enough for each one of those small businesses to hire a promising young person, with a great job and rewarding salary, right out of school.

The member across the way just said something very shameful. He said that small businesses do not hire people. In fact, they do hire people. The NDP member from New Brunswick should be absolutely ashamed for insulting our small businesses. They are the ones that create the jobs and the opportunities for our country.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am from Prince Edward Island and I would like to direct a question to the minister, who I am sure does not know very much about Prince Edward Island. I will start with a couple of facts.

First, Prince Edward Island has among the highest labour participation rates in the country when the jobs are there. Second, Prince Edward Island has a small population and a small landmass. Until recently, all of Prince Edward Island was treated the same when it came to access to EI benefits. That has changed. Prince Edward Island now has two zones. One zone is the central third of the island, where seasonal workers have to work a lot more for fewer weeks. The other zone includes all of the riding of Egmont and some other rural parts of Prince Edward Island, where the qualification period is shorter and the benefit rate is higher.

These changes were made before the minister took over leadership of the portfolio. Does he support the pitting of Islanders against one another with respect to eligibility for EI benefits?

• (1530)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I support more jobs for Islanders, and that is exactly what our agenda seeks to do. Though trade, training and tax cuts, we are encouraging Canadians from coast to coast to work hard and succeed.

Nowhere is this more important than on the east coast. It will benefit disproportionately from the presence of a Canada-EU free trade deal. The reality is that this will create enormous opportunity for coastal communities across the Maritimes and Newfoundland and Labrador, precisely because of geography.

The Liberals delivered almost nothing for trade during their time in office. We had free trade with only six countries when we took office. Now we have free trade with 44 countries. That gives our businesses a world of customers and our customers a world of choice.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with the member for Drummond.

On behalf of my constituents in LaSalle—Émard, I rise in the House to support my colleague's motion. I will be supporting the official opposition motion moved by my colleague from Trois-Rivières. The motion states the following:

Business of Supply

That, in the opinion of the House, employment insurance premiums paid by employers and workers must be used exclusively to finance benefits, as defined by the Employment Insurance Act, for unemployed workers and their families and that, consequently, the government should: (a) protect workers'...premiums...; (b) improve program accessibility...; and (c) abandon its plan, as set out in Budget 2015, to set rates unilaterally...

When we are elected to the Parliament of Canada and form the government, it is important that we keep our promises. When we collect EI premiums from workers and employers, that money must be used for its intended purpose.

In other words, those premiums must be used to help workers who have had the misfortune of losing their jobs, so that those workers can make ends meet and provide for their families until they can find another job.

When we take office, that is a commitment we make. It is what is written, for example, in the contract of this employment insurance program, which is one of the commitments that Canada has made to Canadian society. These are the programs we have set up over the years to ensure that we have a society that is more just and more equitable.

In addition, for decades, Canada was rightly acknowledged as a fair, equitable and, I would even say, compassionate society. We introduced programs such as employment insurance, health insurance and the Canada Pension Plan. All of these programs are part of the social safety net that Canadians decided to establish and to which they contribute year after year through a variety of contributions and income tax.

It is a government's responsibility to ensure that the contributions it receives from workers, from Canadian men and women, are used fairly and equitably for government programs.

However, over the past 20 years, we have noted that government after government has not kept the commitments it made or its promises, and this is why Canada is no longer the fair and just society that we used to know.

Over the past two decades, that is, since the major cuts made my Liberal governments and now those made by the Conservative government, the wage disparities between rich and poor as well as between men and women have continued to grow. I am not the one who is saying it, this is in the OECD reports: income inequality between rich and poor and between men and women in Canada is rising, and rising more and more quickly. This worries me.

This is the reason why we have programs such as employment insurance and others that I mentioned before that help reduce these inequalities.

• (1535)

I am lucky to represent the riding of Lasalle—Émard. It is a riding that experienced a golden age, at a time when the manufacturing sector was important. Over the years, manufacturing has declined somewhat and major companies that employed a large number of people have unfortunately closed down.

We have come to realize that there is a significant transition happening in the Canadian economy. First, a number of Canadian companies have been bought up by foreign interests. Then they just closed down, because it was decided to move production to

somewhere else in the world. Other companies did not invest wisely in their employees or in the business itself to ensure its survival, and they too closed down. What happened to most of these workers? They lost their jobs. It is at this point that workers want to be able to rely on employment insurance.

I find it extremely sad to hear some of my Conservative colleagues talking about people who lose their jobs as if it were their own fault and as if the government were not required to help them. I know that Canadians are supportive and compassionate people. These are people who want to help each other. When I listen to Conservatives on the other side of the House, I do not recognize myself in them. Most Canadians would not recognize themselves in them, either.

As I mentioned, a number of large manufacturing companies in my riding have closed down. There has been a transition and, today, one of the fastest-growing sectors in my riding is the retail trade. What do we have now? We have precarious employment, part-time jobs, minimum-wage jobs and very difficult jobs. It is very hard for a family to make ends meet.

In addition, because of the type of jobs in retail, when the American giant Target closed its doors just a year after coming into Canada with great fanfare, between 60 and 70 jobs were lost in my riding. The same thing then happened with Best Buy. Because these jobs have such piecemeal schedules, it is really difficult to get a certain number of hours. In addition, who occupies most of these jobs? They are women.

We know that, with the cuts made by the Liberals and then by the Conservatives, and the fact that they have made access to employment insurance more and more difficult, these people often find themselves with nothing. It is not just the workers who suffer. Their families suffer, too. What we have noticed in the riding of Lasalle—Émard is that people are poorer because the cost of living is increasing and jobs are precarious. When someone loses a job, it is difficult for him or her to have access to employment insurance. The social safety net that we built generation after generation in this country has been ripped apart.

I think that those currently in government do not understand Canadian society at all or the values held by Canadians. In October 2015, I think it will be their turn to receive a pink slip that says they have been fired.

• (1540)

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from LaSalle—Émard for her speech. She spoke about specific cases of people who have lived through the loss of a job in her riding. We are forgetting to talk about precarious employment.

Business of Supply

There is another facet to these multiple changes, closely tied in with employment insurance, that is very troublesome: more and more, there is a lack of options for workers who are dissatisfied or frankly unhappy, or who get sick at work. There is a lack of opportunity to assert their rights or even just to be eligible to employment insurance benefits in order to change jobs. This undermines labour force mobility and people's ability to improve their lives, and of course talented people with great skills are prevented from flourishing somewhere else.

I would like my colleague to tell us about the paralysis we are currently facing in the labour market, which forces people to bear the unbearable in the workplace.

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou. He made an extremely timely point. Employer-employee relations are quite tenuous and it is getting harder all the time to find jobs.

Money is not the only thing that counts in this world. There is also job satisfaction, having a job where we can thrive and use our skills and our professional and personal qualities. All of this has changed in recent years. It is getting harder and harder to find a job in an area that will be satisfying, interesting and fulfilling.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I brought up a little earlier today, with respect to employment insurance, the way we do not recognize first nation communities or reserves in the sense that when we get our unemployment statistics, they are often factored out. That has a fairly profound impact. It underestimates unemployment in certain regions of our country.

When we talk about employment insurance and the program itself, one of the things that needs to be looked at is how we can more accurately reflect true unemployment in Canada. I wonder if the member might want to comment.

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Winnipeg North, because I think he pointed out a really good point, which is that with the loss of the long-form census, we are losing a lot of data on very vulnerable communities. The unemployment data quite often does not reflect the number of people who have lost hope of finding jobs and who depend on social assistance from the provinces. This shows how the federal government makes unilateral decisions that affect the provinces very strongly.

If they cut unemployment insurance, then what happens is that it is the provinces that have to take the brunt of that cut and have to increase social assistance, because they cannot leave people on the streets all the time. The cities, as well, are impacted.

It is the federal government that has the biggest fiscal plate. When it cuts, cuts, cuts, what happens is that the provinces and the cities are affected by those cuts as well.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to talk about employment insurance. I want to commend my colleague from Trois-Rivières on the excellent work that he does. He moved this motion that allows me to speak in the

House about the employment insurance program and how important it is.

The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of the House, employment insurance premiums paid by employers and workers must be used exclusively to finance benefits, as defined by the Employment Insurance Act, for unemployed workers and their families...

The motion goes on to explain how that would be accomplished.

What my colleague from Trois-Rivières presented is very important, and I know that he has been working very hard on this issue for some time now. It is an important issue that we have worked extremely hard on. Of course, we criticized the tens of billions of dollars in cuts that the Liberals and then the Conservatives made. In reality, they dipped into the EI fund in order to lower taxes for multinationals, corporations, instead of using that money for good.

I would like to point out that, in Drummond, I work with local organizations in order to serve the interests of my constituents. One of these organizations is the Regroupement de défense des droits sociaux des sans-emploi, or RDDS. This non-profit organization provides services to everyone, whether employed or unemployed, who wants to really learn all about their rights in terms of financial assistance of last resort, including employment insurance and labour standards. I have been working with this organization since 2011. I know it well and it has informed me about the problems of certain workers. We have worked together to meet the needs of these people and we continue to do so.

RDDS's mission is to improve the living conditions of employed or unemployed people and to help empower them by providing them with information and training on social rights. This organization is very important, and there are similar organizations across Quebec and Canada. They do excellent work and it is crucial to support them and, above all, to listen to them.

The Conservative members need to listen more closely to these organizations. They would understand why the motion moved today is extremely important.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by the president of the Drummondville RDDS, Richard St-Cyr, and all of the other administrators, including Jason Grant, whom I also know very well. I also want to recognize the excellent work of the team: Joan Salvail, Sandra Malenfant and Stéphanie Bombardier. They do an exemplary job.

Business of Supply

Recently, I had a meeting with the RDDS and the NDP riding association for Drummond, and we talked about how we could continue to inform people and what we could do to make sure that people are aware of their rights. We had the brilliant idea to invite someone who is a very well-known advocate of workers' rights and the employment insurance program, Hans Marotte, to come and give a speech in Drummondville. As members know, Hans Marotte has been the head of legal services at Mouvement action-chômage de Montréal since 1996. He has therefore been working on this issue for a long time. Mouvement action-chômage de Montréal is a community organization whose mission is to inform and defend workers and the unemployed with regard to employment insurance. Mr. Marotte also practises social and labour law. Mouvement action-chômage de Montréal and the Regroupement de défense des droits sociaux are two organizations that are working toward similar goals.

By way of information, Hans Marotte will also be running in the 2015 election in the riding of Saint-Jean. He is doing excellent work in that regard.

He came and gave a speech, and it was really interesting to learn about the various positions and about how the employment insurance program has changed over the years. First, the Liberals dipped into the EI surplus. Then the Conservatives took billions of dollars from the EI surplus, all at the expense of the people receiving employment insurance, which used to be known as unemployment insurance.

Let us remember one thing. In the past, 80% of people had access to the employment insurance program.

• (1550)

Over the years, Liberal and Conservative governments repeatedly made unfair reforms that did nothing to help our regions and our workers, but that instead made the jobless feel guilty.

There are many seasonal workers in the greater Drummond area, in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and horticulture. These are skilled individuals who have very good values. They have acquired valuable knowledge. The owners of these small businesses do not want to lose these workers. Employment insurance gets them through the off-season, when seasonal work is not available. They need employment insurance.

It is called employment insurance. A worker can apply for employment insurance when an accident or a problem occurs. It is very important. Hans Marotte compares it to car insurance:

I've never heard someone say that they look forward to getting in a car accident so they can file an insurance claim.

This situation is similar.

That goes for jobs too: nobody wants to lose theirs. What I do not understand is how people can get money for their car in three days but have to wait months when it is for their own selves.

See, it is the same thing. It does not make sense. When people have a car accident, they get service right away because they have insurance. They make claims. They get support. They even get temporary use of a car. They get to borrow a car. The insurer covers all of those costs because people pay for that insurance. That is how insurance works.

Employment insurance works differently. People have to fight to get their benefits, and they have to wait. We are talking about human beings and families. These are people with children; they might be the family's sole breadwinner. People are made to feel a bit like criminals when they claim employment insurance. With the new reform, people practically have to beg to get employment insurance even though it is something we should all be entitled to because we, both workers and employers, have paid the premiums for all of the years we have worked. That is why this motion is so important.

Let us take another look at the three specific points, a, b and c, of the motion. Here is what they say:

consequently, the government should: (a) protect workers' and employers' premiums from political interference;

We have watched the Liberals and Conservatives alike dip into the employment insurance fund. As of October 2015, the NDP will be in power. We want to protect us from ourselves and make it impossible for anyone to politically interfere with the EI fund. That is a wise thing to do.

(b) improve program accessibility to ensure that unemployed workers and their families can access it;

We said earlier that eligibility has gone from 80% to just under 40% today. It makes no sense to have an EI system that protects barely 40% of the people. Finally, the motion concludes:

(c) abandon its plan, as set out in Budget 2015, to set rates unilaterally, in order to maintain long-term balance in the fund while improving accessibility.

That is what we want. We want an employment insurance system that is there for Canadians. We want to listen to people on the ground who know what they are talking about. I mentioned the Regroupement de défense des droits sociaux, the RDDS, which is doing a great job. I also talked about Mouvement action-chômage and Hans Marotte, who are also doing a great job. We need to listen to them in order to reform the employment insurance system properly and take the politics out of the EI program. That is what we will do in October 2015 when we come to power.

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member across the way for his speech. One of the things he talked about was access to the employment insurance system. He said that people have to fight for it, but that is not true. For anyone who has paid into the program and has the requisite number of hours, all they have to do is apply and employment insurance is there for them.

There is a service standard that Service Canada has put forward, in that 80% of people who apply for employment insurance will receive their benefits within 28 days. That service standard is now being met. Therefore, anyone who is eligible for employment insurance and makes an application will have that claim put through within 28 days and will start receiving their benefits.

Knowing that, my question for the hon. member is whether he is now prepared to admit that there is access to the employment insurance program.

Business of Supply

People do not have to fight for it. The program is there. All they have to do is put forward the requisite number of insurable employment weeks and they will then get their employment insurance benefit, just like any other Canadian who is due those benefits.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I think that my honourable colleague works with local organizations in his constituency, just as I do.

As I mentioned, I work with the RDDs. There is also the provincial Mouvement Action-Chômage. We often see atypical cases of problems experienced by constituents who nonetheless observed the law, and this is the sort of thing I am referring to, among others.

There is also the fact that first the Liberals and then the Conservatives have weakened employment insurance to the point where 80% of insured people were eligible for employment insurance before, while now only 40% are eligible.

Can we say this is a valid insurance program when only 40% of people have access to it? No, we cannot.

This is what we deplore today, and this is why we must pass the motion that my honourable colleague for Trois-Rivières has brought forward today.

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is comical listening to the Conservatives talk about EI and what they are doing to it. We see what they are doing with the seasonal workers, whether a part-time nurse, substitute teacher, or someone trying to get maternity EI benefits. The Conservatives have cut, cut, cut. Not only that, they have eliminated the appeal process as it used to be, which is making it harder for anybody to go to an appeal process.

I was listening to my hon. colleague, and it sounds like he has a riding similar to mine with a lot of seasonal workers. Also, in my area, we have a lot of people who work out west. However, now there is a downturn, so we have a lot of young men and women who have to shift what they are doing. Therefore, I do not think the motion went far enough.

EI is only for people who get laid off. Why did the NDP not have something in there for training? There should be money kept in the EI fund to help people transition from different types of jobs.

My question to the NDP member is, why is there no money allocated in that EI fund for training for new skills?

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my honourable colleague for his question and for his comments about seasonal workers. There are seasonal workers in the constituency of Drummond, and, in this regard, not only do employees come to see me but the employers do so as well. Since 2012, ever since the Conservative government made these atrocious reforms to employment insurance, small business bosses have been coming to see me and telling me how harmful the reforms have been for seasonal workers.

In addition, SME employers and bosses find these reforms terrible in terms of retaining their employees, because they take the time to train them in order to have qualified and experienced workers. If their workers have to look for another job farther away, and they may well be asked to look for jobs that are sometimes quite far away, the SMEs would lose these qualified employees.

We must get back to a better employment insurance program.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to respond to the hon. member's motion. Before I begin my remarks, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Richmond Hill.

I would like to thank the opposition for this opportunity to once again highlight our government's outstanding record on economic performance and achievement. Canadians are paying close attention. What the opposition does not understand is that Canadians know when they are being sold a false bill of goods like the one on offer in the hon. member's motion here today.

Canadians know the facts, and the facts are quite clear. The opposition speaks in today's motion of encouraging small business creation as though this is something it has experience in accomplishing. The fact is that it does not, and our government does. Ours is a record of success in the face of global adversity, and it is one that I and hard-working Canadians take great pride in.

Let me take this opportunity to help the opposition out a bit. It is important that it pays close attention so it does not continue to make the same mistakes over and over again. Here are the facts. Since the depths of the economic downturn, 1.2 million net new jobs have been created, the majority of which are full-time and high-paying jobs in the private sector. As a result of our government's actions, we have not only recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession, but more Canadians are working today than at any other time in our history.

Canadians understand these facts. They may not be convenient to the hon. member's agenda, but they are the facts.

The reality is that today, and for some time now, Canada has experienced one of the strongest job creation records among advanced economies. Our government does not need to be told that lower payroll deductions and lower payroll taxes create jobs. We know that. We have always known that, and that is exactly what we have been doing.

What is more, it is the very same opposition that is proposing to ask Canadians to accept a mandatory tax hike, one that affects employers and employees. This is the same as over \$1,000 less in take home pay for every worker. As if this were not bad enough, it gets worse. Businesses have spoken, and job creators would need to pay billions of extra dollars in payroll taxes. What would this all lead to? It would lead to frozen salaries or salary cuts, and even terminated jobs.

With the opposition firmly supporting this reckless program, it is baffling to be having this debate with the opposition, which does not have a credible plan to get Canadians to work.

Business of Supply

Our Conservative government has been clear. We have consistently refused to introduce tax hikes on employers and employees. Ours is the only government that can be trusted to keep taxes low for all Canadians.

We have also recently introduced the small business job credit, which is the latest in a range of measures that will cut costs and support small businesses in creating jobs and growth. The small business job credit will effectively lower small businesses' employment insurance premiums, from the current rate of \$1.88, to \$1.60 per \$100 of insurable earnings in 2015-16. Since employers pay 1.4 times the legislated rate, this 28% reduction is equivalent to a reduction of \$0.39 per \$100 of insurable earnings in EI premiums paid by small businesses. Some 90% of EI premium paying business, about \$780,000 in both 2015 and 2016, will directly benefit from this credit.

Overall, our small business job credit will cut EI payroll taxes by nearly 15%. We expect that it will save small businesses more than \$550 million over the next two years. These are savings that will create jobs and growth.

Hon. members do not need to take my word for it. They should listen to the people who know best, which are small businesses themselves.

● (1605)

Dan Kelly, president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, has said:

...the credit will make it a bit easier for small business employers to hire that one extra worker, increase employee wages or help pay for workplace training.

He concludes:

Across Canada, we estimate that the \$550-million left in the hands of small businesses will lead to 25,000 person years of employment in the next few years.

Clearly, small business owners and their representatives know that our efforts to reduce their costs are making a real difference in creating jobs. Our efforts are not just helping small businesses, but the entire Canadian economy. Small businesses employ half of the working men and women in Canada's private sector. They account for a third of our country's GDP. Small businesses drive our prosperity and give back to our communities.

Let us face it. Canada today is an economic success because small business is successful. It is our government's actions that are helping them to succeed each and every day. We have cut red tape. We have implemented the one-for-one rule. For every new regulation imposed by government, a regulation must be removed. By the end of 2013, that rule had reduced the administrative burden by \$20 million, money that will be used to create more jobs. We cut their taxes. We cut the small business tax rate to 11% and increased the amount of income eligible for this lower rate. Together, these changes are providing small business with an estimated \$2.2 billion in tax relief in 2014 alone.

Under our government, the amount of income tax paid by a small business with half a million of taxable income has declined by over 34%, a tax savings of \$20,600 that can be reinvested in business to create jobs. However, once again, we are not stopping here. We are building on our success. Economic action plan 2015 is lowering the small business tax rate even further, to 9%.

Small businesses are saving even more on payroll taxes as a result of our actions. Last year, we froze EI premiums for three years, providing employers and employees with savings of \$660 million in 2014. Going forward, we have instituted the seven-year break even rate starting in 2017, to ensure that any surplus in the EI account will be used for EI expenses.

We are not just supporting small business in job creation, but all businesses. We have delivered tax reductions totalling more than \$60 billion in job creating businesses from 2008-09 through 2013-14. This includes the reduction of the federal general corporate income tax rate to 15% in 2012, from over 22% in 2007, and an extension of the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment through 2015. They would not be alone in acknowledging that we have created a superb environment for business.

Here is another fact that the opposition should listen to closely and take great pride in. As a result of our efforts, in 2013, Canada leaped from sixth to second place in Bloomberg's ranking of the most attractive locations for business. According to KPMG, Canada's total business tax rate is the lowest in the G7, 46% lower than that of the United States.

Our government created this environment on the understanding that lower taxes and payroll costs support jobs and growth. We have proven with our actions that they empower Canadian entrepreneurs, leaving more of their hard-earned money for them to invest and grow their businesses, supporting families and communities that depend on them. Where the hon. members opposite are big on talk, we are big on action.

Today's motion for debate calls for three tax cuts. Our government has provided tax relief over 180 times since taking office. I would encourage the hon. members to reject this motion and its empty rhetoric in favour of the real results that our government will continue to deliver in supporting small business and job creation.

● (1610)

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague. We both sit on the Standing Committee on Finance. However, his logic has failed him once again. This is not surprising, for a Conservative. In the eyes of the Conservatives, an improvement in the Canada Pension Plan is a tax, even though it is basically a savings.

Business of Supply

In regard to employment insurance, my colleague has forgotten, rather selectively, some of the work done by our committee in reviewing the budget implementation bill. The director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation spoke out against using the surplus in the employment insurance fund to balance the budget. He was right because, according to his forecasts, this would be the government's eighth operating deficit.

Is my colleague giving proper consideration to this organization, or is he equating it with a leftist organization? I would like to know what my colleague thinks of this witness.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Adler: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the member and I do sit together on the finance committee.

In response to the member's question, the member knows that taxes are not there just to be raised. Taxes are also there to be lowered, and we have done so 180 times since coming into power in 2006. Our government is focused like a laser beam on creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity in our country. We know that small business is the backbone of our Canadian economy in creating prosperity.

My dad was a small business owner and I can say that if he were here today and had the shoe store that he had back in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, he would really appreciate less red tape, lower taxes and lower EI rates so he could expand his business and hire more people, all so he could support his family even more.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. member, I do not think his dad would appreciate what the Conservatives are doing to the people on EI, whether they are in remote fishing communities, whether they are substitute teachers or part-time workers. I hear stories in my riding and across Canada of people trying to get maternity leave. The waiting time is unbelievable.

The system is there and people pay into it. It is there to help people. It has helped seasonal workers and people who are going through hard times. Why are the Conservatives making it so hard for these people to make ends meet? Why do people have to wait months to get EI? When there is a problem, there is no tribunal or place to go when they need to settle a claim.

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member fails to realize is that our plan is working. Our Conservative plan of tax cuts and job creation is working. We are the first economy in the G7 to balance our budget. We have created 1.2 million net new jobs.

What the hon. member does not understand is that the money in programs like employment insurance, which I might add his party pillaged of some \$500 million when it was in power, belongs to the workers. Typical Liberal philosophy is that the money belongs to us in the government so we can create large bureaucracies and ultimately lead to higher taxes, which is what the Liberals' whole *raison d'être* is.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently in Queen's Park in Ontario, the provincial government insisted it was moving ahead with the payroll tax on companies like General Motors of Canada and Ford, which suggested that they cannot afford that type of payroll tax. We

know in this place that the Liberals and the NDP support higher taxes similarly for the Canada pension plan.

I wonder if the member could comment on the impact not just of EI payroll taxes but of Canada pension plan payroll taxes and how our opponents want to force those on Canadians.

• (1615)

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, the issue is quite clear and has never been clearer. That side stands for higher taxes and we stand for lower taxes. We believe that more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families is the best place for it, because hard-working Canadians know how to spend their own money, not governments and not bureaucracies, as the opposition would have everyone believe.

We heard it last week from the leader of the third party when he said he would fashion a pension plan similar to Kathleen Wynne's. We know that the Ontario government's own figures show that it will cost employers \$1,000 more for every worker who is making \$60,000.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the points raised by the hon. member opposite with respect to the motion on employment insurance, and more generally, what our government has done to create more and better jobs for Canadians.

Let us start with the obvious one. Canada has had a remarkable job creation record in recent years. Our prudent management of the nation's finances and careful targeting of incentives to spur our economy's job creators, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, are in large part the drivers behind this success.

The fundamental strength of the Canadian labour market has been particularly evident after the recent global recession. Despite the weak global economic environment, the Canadian economy has experienced one of the best performances among the G7 economies in terms of both output growth and job creation, with over 1.2 million jobs created since June 2009. That is not all. Nearly 90% of the jobs created since June 2009 are full-time positions; almost 85% are in the private sector, and nearly 60% are in high-wage industries.

Canada has weathered the economic storm well and the world has noticed. For example, the World Economic Forum rated Canada's banking system as the soundest in the world for the seventh year in a row in its annual "Global Competitiveness Report".

Business of Supply

This economic resilience also reflects the actions our government took before the global crisis, actions such as lowering taxes, paying down debt, reducing red tape, and promoting free trade and innovation. Unfortunately, Canada is not immune to external developments. Recently we have seen a struggling global economy which has had its effects here. To a large degree this was reflected in the sharp drop in global oil prices and its impact on investment activity in the oil sector. Economic growth in the United States was also very weak during the first quarter. As our main trading partner, weaker U.S. growth has also had a negative impact on Canada.

In this context, I am happy to report to the House that the government has a clear plan for achieving even better performance. This is crucial, given that there are still too many Canadians either out of work or unable to find a job that they are trained for at a time when skills and labour shortages are re-emerging in certain sectors.

This need for more and better jobs is why the government published its "Jobs Report: The State of the Canadian Labour Market", last year. While the Department of Finance continuously monitors and analyzes the labour market situation, the jobs report provided a snapshot of Canada's labour market in 2014.

The results are clear. Despite significant labour mobility in Canada, Canadian firms are having more difficulty in hiring than the unemployment situation would normally warrant, with imbalances between unemployment and job vacancies persisting in certain regions and occupation groups. There is evidence of a misalignment between the skills of the unemployed and those required by employers, with higher job vacancy rates in the skilled trades and science-based occupations.

A number of groups are not reaching their full potential in the labour market, including less-skilled individuals, recent immigrants, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and older Canadians.

From 2000 to 2011, the number of apprentices completing training and obtaining certification doubled, but apprenticeship completion rates averaged only 50% over this period.

Our government believes that the solution requires a more mobile, flexible and highly skilled labour force to keep up with rapidly advancing technology and increased worldwide competition. The good news is that Canada is off to a strong start. Among our OECD peers, we have the largest share of population with at least a post-secondary education.

• (1620)

Canadians are fairly mobile. They respond well to labour market signals and move to regions and occupations with better employment opportunities. However, significant disparities in regional unemployment rates persist. Evidence suggests that there remain institutional and non-economic barriers to mobility in Canada. The evidence shows stubborn imbalances between labour supply and demand in certain occupation groups and regions. These imbalances are larger than the unemployment rate would normally warrant.

Our government will continue to be there for Canadians. As long as Canadians are looking for work, our government will be committed to creating jobs for them to find.

Under the fiscal leadership of our Prime Minister, our government has created an environment that fosters new investments, sustainable growth and job creation. To this end, since 2006, the government has implemented a plan to achieve a higher performing economy now and into the future. The plan has substantially improved Canada's business tax competitiveness, expanded trade and opened up new markets, contributed to modernizing Canada's infrastructure, supported research, innovation and creation of large-scale venture capital funds, streamlined the review process of major economic projects, improved incentives to save and work, and strengthened Canada's retirement income system.

However, we are faced with some irony here with this motion. Both opposition parties have a reckless view that when it comes to job creation in Canada, the Liberals and the NDP have both promised to attack job creators with massive tax hikes. In fact, the Liberal leader was quoted as saying that he wanted to introduce a mandatory tax hike on employers and employees. Let me be clear. That is a \$1,000 mandatory tax hike for both the employer and the employee.

That is not how to create jobs in Canada, but members should not just take my word for it. Canadian businesses have been clear that the last thing they need are tax hikes and the mandatory CPP expansion as it would not only mean freezing or cutting salaries, but it could also result in having to fire workers. This is on top of the Liberals and the NDP both wanting a 45-day work year that would drastically increase EI premiums by 35%.

I could go on longer, but we have two examples of how the opposition does not have a credible plan to create jobs here in Canada.

Our government has acted on employment insurance, which is why we are moving toward a seven year break-even rate that would result in a substantial reduction to the EI premium rate. The savings from this action alone would benefit over 16 million Canadians by 2017.

The recent great recession was an unprecedented global challenge. As we have seen throughout history, extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. I am proud to say that our government acted decisively and precisely when strong action was needed most.

Canada's labour market has generally succeeded in meeting challenges and performs well compared to most nations in a number of areas, including job creation and post-secondary attainment. The last thing we need is increases to taxes. However, as the hon. member opposite will no doubt agree, we can do better, and indeed, we must do better for Canada and Canadians.

Business of Supply

Our Conservative government will remain focused on the policies we put in place to create an environment conducive to new investment, economic growth and job creation. Most of all, we will continue to keep taxes low for employees and employers. If the opposition NDP and the Liberals had their way, Canadians would have to brace themselves for massive tax hikes, which would do extreme harm to the job market in Canada and to families.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the electoral spin coming from my colleague from Richmond Hill, and although I do not agree with the substance of the speech, I would have found it easier to take if it had been at least consistent.

Since the beginning of this debate, there has been a lot of talk about how we want to raise taxes unreasonably. We are not talking about taxes. We are talking about premiums. When we buy insurance, we pay a premium in order to get services on the day that disaster strikes.

If we really want to talk about a tax, then we need to turn the question back to the Conservatives and ask them why they froze the contribution rate at 1.88 when the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the break-even rate was 1.75 for 2015. That is a real tax implemented deliberately in order to generate a surplus and allow the government to achieve its ideological goals.

We might also wonder what the Conservatives are doing with a job creation plan, funded by EI contributions, that will cost \$550 million, and according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, will create 600 jobs. That means that every job created will cost \$950,000. Give me just one of those budgetary envelopes and I will create far more jobs than that in my own riding.

Could the Conservative side try to be a bit more consistent?

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the member's ridiculous opening rant, it is becoming abundantly obvious that the member and the NDP do not understand how businesses work and how small businesses create jobs for Canadians. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business would take great exception to increasing payroll taxes, which we know would only serve to kill jobs in Canada.

Small businesses, I say for the member, are critical to the health of the Canadian economy. To help these businesses grow and create jobs, our government has delivered substantial ongoing tax relief for small businesses and the owners, because we know, on this side of the House, that when companies have more money to invest in their businesses, that creates jobs, and people stay employed. That is something that has completely eluded the member and the party he represents.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting listening to the Conservatives speak. One after another they stand up, and it is almost as if they are reciting some notes coming right from the PMO.

I wonder where that enthusiasm was when the Liberal Party, through the leader of the Liberal Party, indicated a plan for EI and

new hires whereby if a company were to have a new hire, it would have an EI holiday, thereby creating literally thousands of jobs in all different regions of our country. Back then, just last fall, the Conservatives said no to that plan. I contrast what the member just finished saying with what the Conservatives were saying when the Liberal Party proposed an idea that would have generated the types of jobs we want to see developed here in Canada.

Can the member explain to the House why the Conservative government voted against the Liberal idea of giving a new-hire EI break last fall?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, what audacity of the member opposite to stand in the House and reference the PMO or some convoluted idea he has that somehow lines are passed down from the PMO, when he is a member of a party, the Liberal Party, whose leader says that budgets balance themselves. I think the Liberals would probably do a budget written in crayon on the back of a textbook that they do not even bother reading.

Here is the difficulty the Liberals have. They have seen what this Conservative government, under the leadership of this Prime Minister, has done for the economy of this country. We have a balanced budget. We have created over 1.2 million jobs since the depths of the global economic recession. We are the first country among the G7 to come out of that recession. We are very proud of that record.

We will stand up for Canadians, and Canadians know very well in their own families that budgets do not balance themselves.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina, Infrastructure; the hon. member for Hochelaga, Housing; the hon. member for Ahuntsic, Public Safety.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord.

I rise in the House today to speak in support of the motion moved by my colleague from Trois-Rivières, the NDP employment insurance critic.

A number of my colleagues from different regions in Quebec and Canada will speak to this motion today. I am joining them today to draw attention to the mess that our employment insurance system is in and urge the government to implement measures that will restore the original purpose of employment insurance.

Business of Supply

It is important to say up front that, one after the other, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party siphoned off no less than \$57 billion from the employment insurance fund and cut services to workers with reform after reform. The current situation is such that it is increasingly difficult for Canadians to receive employment insurance benefits and wait times have reached a less than enviable high.

Since the 1990s, radical reforms have had a significant impact on the lives of thousands of workers. These reforms include a significantly larger number of eligibility requirements, shorter benefit periods, lower benefit rates, the abolition of the right to benefits in cases of misconduct and voluntary leaving without just cause, and stricter punitive measures. From seasonal workers in the Gaspé, employees in New Brunswick's tourism industry, construction workers in British Columbia and farmers in the Prairies to employers in specialized seasonal fields, thousands of people are outraged at a government that is attacking their way of life and preventing them from putting food on the table for their families.

How many times will we have to state loud and clear that employment insurance is not a government benefit? Employers and employees contribute to the fund. Canadians make their employment insurance contributions in good faith because they believe that this social safety net will be there for them when they need it. This ludicrous intrusion, which dates back to when the Liberals shamelessly stole \$54 billion from the fund, must stop immediately.

When the Conservatives took office, they misappropriated \$3 billion. In budget 2015, the Conservatives used the EI surplus to give tax breaks to the wealthiest members of society rather than improving access to benefits. This government does not have the right to interfere in a matter that concerns employers and workers. It is high time that the government stopped playing political games with the employment insurance fund.

Employment insurance is a social safety net that provides some support to Canadians when they go through more difficult times. Unfortunately, fewer than four out of every 10 unemployed workers today have access to employment insurance.

• (1635)

The government is not doing anything to improve accessibility, which is at an all-time low. Instead, it insists on claiming that unemployment is the individual's responsibility. It implies that it is the individual's fault if he loses his job. Under the Conservatives, social problems like unemployment are seen less and less as a collective responsibility and more and more as an individual responsibility. Unemployment is no longer seen as a social or public issue, as though the risk of losing one's job is an individual problem and not a social one. Can a worker be blamed for losing his job because the company replaced him with a machine?

The Conservatives are trying to claim that they have created countless new jobs, but the facts speak for themselves: today, we have more than 1.3 million unemployed Canadians for about 270,000 available jobs. This means that there are five unemployed workers for every job.

Moreover, 15.1% of Canadians aged 15 to 25 are unemployed. There are still 200,000 more Canadians out of work than there were

before the recession. Right now, it seems as though the Conservatives are squeezing workers and forcing them to accept undesirable low-paying jobs instead of helping to make these jobs more desirable and focusing on effective ways to stimulate the economy. That is shameful.

Furthermore, instead of improving people's standard of living, they are actually setting the bar even lower, lower than it has ever been. The EI system is part of our economy. It is what gives us a sound and diversified economy. It is precisely this system that makes our tourism industry possible and means that fishers, substitute teachers, and forestry, silviculture and farm workers can have jobs. These jobs contribute enormously to our economy and to the overall quality of life of all Canadians, even those who will never draw benefits in their lives.

In closing, since 1995, Liberal and Conservative governments have taken over \$57 billion from the employment insurance fund. The purpose of the Employment Insurance Act—it was called unemployment insurance until 1997—has always been to compensate workers if they lose their job. That is no longer the case today.

One thing is clear: based on what we have seen over the last few decades, the NDP is the only party that can be trusted when it comes to employment insurance. We are the only party to propose policies to improve access to employment insurance benefits, not further limit access.

• (1640)

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

I would like to begin where she left off.

The NDP and a number of civil society organizations, such as the Canadian Taxpayers Federation—an organization I mentioned earlier that nobody would call left-wing—have criticized putting the annual employment insurance fund surplus into the consolidated revenue fund to balance the budget.

My colleague mentioned the other theft that is taking place in relation to the employment insurance fund: the fact that millions of people who lose their jobs or quit for excellent reasons, and who would have been entitled to benefits a long time ago under a previous incarnation of the system, are being deprived of legitimate benefits.

I would like my colleague to explain why people who really need benefits are being denied. Many of those people come to see us at our offices.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for an excellent question.

As we all know, and as I mentioned toward the end of my speech, the NDP wants to make sure that more Canadians and middle-class families have access to the help they need when they lose their jobs, take parental leave, get sick or have to take care of a family member. We recognize that employment insurance premiums belong to the workers and employers who contribute them. That money belongs to workers and employers, not to the government.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about people needing compassionate care.

As we know, this year's budget clearly dictates that we will be expanding the compassionate care part of the employment insurance program so someone who has to take care of sick relative, maybe an elderly person or child, can extend that six weeks to six months. The NDP has said consistently that it supports this, and we thank it for that.

Knowing that this is in this budget, will she put her money where her mouth is and when it comes time to vote on this budget, will she stand up for the millions of Canadians who have been delivering compassionate care to their children or their adult parents who need a little help? Will she stand in her place and support that and this budget?

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague on the other side of the House.

We know that good ideas come from this side of the House. It is the NDP that has talked about helping family caregivers and it is our party that asked the government to provide leave for parents whose children were very ill. I would like to remind him, too, that access to special benefits has also been limited because of the changes made by the Liberals and Conservatives.

For example, we see that only 60% of new mothers receive maternity benefits. Do we know the reason why they are not eligible? It is because they have not managed to accumulate enough hours of work. We can understand how when a woman is pregnant, if she is in an environment where illness could spread or she is doing very demanding work, she would not be entitled to special benefits because she had not accumulated enough hours. We can imagine what that situation is.

•(1645)

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after the speeches I have heard today on the motion before us, the least we can do for workers who work hard year-round would be to support this motion.

I am proud of the work done by the NDP on employment insurance and workers' rights. It is important that we be able to speak about our concerns and the concerns of the constituents I represent when it comes to the looting of the employment insurance fund.

Unfortunately, the government would rather lower the premium rate for campaign purposes and divert money that belongs to workers, and thus deprive 130,000 jobless people of the benefits for which they have paid their premiums.

I would note that according to the last EI monitoring and assessment report, barely 39% of unemployed workers have access to their benefits. That is fewer than 40%. Recently, the Conservatives presented us with an eighth deficit budget, were it not for the \$4.2 billion pilfered from the employment insurance fund. They have the

nerve to claim that they are good managers, on top of that. That is too much for me. It is time for things to change. After diverting the money, the government then announced that it would reduce the premium rate, the effect of which will be to reduce access to the employment insurance program.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, if the premium rate is reduced as the Conservatives propose, 130,000 workers will be denied access to employment insurance that they have paid for. One hundred thirty thousand workers is virtually the entire population of a riding. Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, the constituency I proudly represent, deserves better. More specifically, it represents the people from the Beauport area of Québec City to Colombier in Haute-Côte-Nord, including the Île d'Orléans, Côte-de-Beaupré and the greater Charlevoix area. We would be mistaken to think that only the workers are affected. When we say 130,000 fewer workers, we have to read between the lines: that is 130,000 families, women and children.

The objective is to improve access to the employment insurance program, in order to offer Canadians a better quality of life. That is what the NDP is proposing to the House in this motion, and also in a number of other proposals to help middle-class families.

At present, in a region like Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, there is a black hole, a period without income that ranges from one month to four months. That is 15 weeks without income for families of workers in seasonal industries, when, in fact, the employment insurance fund has all the money needed to help those families; excuse me, it had all the money needed, before the government used it for other purposes.

An image just came to mind: The employment insurance fund has become the financial cushion of bad managers among the Conservatives, and the Liberals before them. They broke and raided the piggy bank with all the hard-earned money that workers and employers saved up. We must do something about this questionable approach to making extra money. The money needs to go back to whom it belongs.

I do not think I need to remind the House how important it is for a company to keep the same workers from one season to the next, in order to maintain a quality workforce.

Instead of using the money from the EI fund, which was put there by workers and employers, the current government would benefit from allowing workers to have an income during the hard times. We must support workers and stop stealing their insurance money.

Fortunately, the NDP is proposing concrete measures to help middle class families.

Again, our motion states:

That, in the opinion of the House, employment insurance premiums paid by employers and workers must be used exclusively to finance benefits, as defined by the Employment Insurance Act, for unemployed workers and their families and that, consequently, the government should: (a) protect workers' and employers' premiums from political interference; (b) improve program accessibility to ensure that unemployed workers and their families can access it; and (c) abandon its plan, as set out in Budget 2015, to set rates unilaterally, in order to maintain long-term balance in the fund while improving accessibility.

That is the least it could do.

Business of Supply

•(1650)

The Conservatives will not be able to pat themselves on the back for much longer with a biased unemployment rate. The people of Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord are not easily fooled, contrary to what the Conservative government seems to think. We know that access to the employment insurance program has been limited since it has been managed by the Conservative crew and that the present government has passed the buck to the provinces by forcing honest working people to apply for social assistance. They no longer qualify for employment insurance benefits, which have become inaccessible. When the time comes to find all the tricks for keeping the money to which Canadians are rightfully entitled, our government demonstrates considerable creativity. Unfortunately, it lacks the imagination to find effective solutions for creating jobs.

Seasonal work is a reality in a number of regions of Quebec, but this government is unfortunately not interested in protecting those regions, and instead it is abandoning them.

We have to find solutions, as my colleague did when he moved this motion, and as my other colleagues did when they introduced bills like Bill C-605 in the House. That bill offered genuine solutions to help honest Canadian businesses and their employees. The money that working people pay in premiums belongs to working people.

Conservative management means billions of dollars misappropriated from the employment insurance fund in hidden taxes and more than \$100 billion added to the national debt in less than 10 years; it means a reduction in federal transfers to the provinces and tax cuts for the wealthiest, but nothing for the middle class; it means offering billions of dollars in tax relief, only to have that money lie dormant in the coffers of big corporations; and as the Minister of Finance says, it means shifting its responsibilities onto our grandchildren.

Yes, Canadians have had enough, and on October 19, we will finally have a responsible New Democratic government that will stimulate the economy and put an end to the Conservatives' and Liberals' misappropriation of these funds.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could I get the member's thoughts on what took place in 1990s when Jean Chrétien assumed the office as prime minister? Unemployment was just over 12% and the projection by former prime minister Kim Campbell at that time was it would continue to be high for the next decade. However, Mr. Chrétien was able to get it down to just over 6%. At the same time, contributions from employees and employers to the program were reduced. There was also the benefit of using an EI premium forgiveness to generate jobs for Canadians.

Does the member believe it should be just one set fixed price in employee-employer contributions and that politicians play absolutely no role? It seems to me that Mr. Chrétien got it right, particularly when we take into consideration what the Auditor General of Canada said with respect to EI and the surplus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, to date, there has been too much political interference in the rules governing

the employment insurance fund, and past Liberal governments in fact proved that they interfered too much in them.

At the time, the Liberal strategy was to keep premiums paid into the employment insurance fund too high in order to collect more money and thus provide the government with a hidden tax. It would be a good thing if our previous governments, Liberal and Conservative, finally admitted the truth, which is that the money they took from the employment insurance fund was a hidden tax and not premiums, since they took that money to use for other purposes.

The gasoline tax is a tax on gasoline. Income tax is a tax on income. The goods and services tax is a tax on goods and services. Premiums are premiums. It is therefore time to admit their wrongdoing in the past and finally stop interfering in something that is not the government's business.

•(1655)

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord for his speech. In fact, his speech brought to mind something about the pension plan for Canadian retirees. The memory goes back nearly 30 years, when Prime Minister Brian Mulroney faced a finger-pointing pensioner. If he ever touched pensions, it would be "Goodbye, Charlie Brown".

What is interesting is that if what is being done to the employment insurance scheme were done to the Canada Pension Plan, retirees would be mobilizing on a massive scale and would be rather intimidating. The only real problem is that unlike Brian Mulroney, who was actually somewhat accessible, the present Prime Minister travels around by limousine between Langevin block and the Parliament buildings.

I would like to ask my colleague whether, in fact, we should be afraid there will be other manipulation attempts by this government in addition to the manipulation of the employment insurance fund that we see openly going on?

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, personally, yes, I am afraid of that. That is why this motion needs to be passed. We have to prevent these misappropriations.

There are other examples. There is the pension fund, for one. The government is raising the retirement age from 65 to 67 and playing games with the premium rates, when all the actuaries say the fund is viable for the next 60 years. This is electioneering. When the Conservatives are unable to misappropriate the money, they lower the premium rate so they can say they are fine fellows and they are lowering the tax burden.

It would therefore be a good thing if people could keep their contributions to the pension plan in the pension plan and their employment insurance premiums in the employment insurance fund. In fact, that fund no longer exists. It is nothing but a line in the consolidated revenue fund.

Yes, it still concerns me. That is why, next October, Canadians will finally be able to choose a government that intends to manage public funds properly: a New Democratic government.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in this debate. The motion talks about employment insurance, but it also gives us an opportunity to talk in greater detail on the state of the Canadian economy, some of the things this government has done over the last number of years to improve Canada's economy and ultimately put people back to work.

The fact that we are debating this topic today really highlights one of the very big weaknesses in the NDP. One of the problems that the New Democrats have today, and have always had, is that they have never have, and probably will never have if we are this close to an election, a plan to create jobs and economic opportunity for people. The New Democrats always want to focus on how they would take care of people who are unemployed. I guess it is because in the past, in the provinces they have governed, they have done a really good job of putting people out of work. Therefore, they have perfected the art of putting people out of work as opposed to getting people into real jobs so they can contribute to the Canadian economy.

We are a few weeks away from the end of this session. We brought forward a continuation of the economic action plan with a whole host of very important initiatives for the people of Canada, in regions and communities across the country, and the NDP's focus is on how it would respond to the people who are out of work.

I think any member of Parliament on either side of the House would want to ensure that if people lose their jobs through no fault of their own, because of the economy or whatever the rationale, the system or state is there to give them a helping hand. That is the whole point of employment insurance. One of the things this government has focused on is to ensure the resources are in place to take care of Canadians if they need to access the employment insurance fund.

As we have seen in the past, when the economy runs into difficulty, we have to then worry about how we will make those short-term payments until the economy comes back into a more stable climate. Therefore, the government tries to have a balance when it comes to the employment insurance system, so that in good times we accumulate the necessary resources to pay when the economy takes a downward turn, as it has on occasion.

It is important to recap a bit about where we have come from and where we are going. When we came to office in 2006, we knew Canada had to do a number of things. The previous Liberal government had been focused on other areas, but not on how to create an economy that was strong and stable for the vast majority of Canadians moving forward.

Therefore, we looked at where Canada was and said that we had to do a better job of opening up Canada's market, giving manufacturers the opportunity to sell into other markets. We said that Canada was open for business, that we would get out there to provide new opportunities for manufacturers and small, medium and large job creators, so they would have larger and more markets to sell to. We started off with opening up free trade negotiations.

It has always been Conservative governments that have looked at how to expand trade opportunities and open up new markets for

Canadians. We have the free trade agreement with the United States and the North American Free Trade Agreement, both very important trade agreements which opened Canada up and created millions and millions of jobs. Both of those agreements were rejected by the NDP and the Liberals.

However, we went further and said that we had to do more. This is why today we can say that we have concluded agreements with some 44 different markets and nations, and we want to go even further. We know that when Canadians are given the opportunity to compete, they can be successful. Why is that important? It is really important for a community like mine. I represent Oak Ridges—Markham, the communities of Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, King and part of Richmond Hill. Markham is an important centre for high-tech manufacturing. King and Stouffville are important centres for agriculture and exporting. Opening up opportunities for them has created thousands of jobs and enormous opportunity. However, we know there are challenges.

● (1700)

There are always challenges, and those challenges are always compounded when there is an opposition that is so completely opposed to finding and creating the opportunities for Canadian businesses.

However, we have been very successful at opening up these opportunities for Canadian manufacturers, and we will continue to do that because it helps create jobs. We do not want to focus on putting people out of work. We want to focus on putting people into jobs so our Canadian economy can grow and so we have the resources we need to provide for Canadians who, when they find themselves in difficult situations, the government or state is there for them.

I am very proud of the fact that we have been able to do that. However, there are challenges. As an Ontario member of Parliament, there are a number of hurdles that we are seeing put before us. By and large, these hurdles have been put in place by a provincial Liberal government, which has somehow been unable to understand the concept of when it is more costly to do business or when opportunities are closed down, businesses and job creators will find other areas in which to invest.

This has become a very big problem in the province of Ontario, whether it is the high energy prices that have resulted from the policies of the Kathleen Wynne/Dalton McGuinty Liberal Governments of Ontario or the recently announced Ontario pension plan, which Ontarians will not see, apparently, for some 30 years, but which will cost employees and employers thousands of dollars every year.

To put this into context, the leader of the Liberal Party has come out and said that he wants to implement a mandatory Canada pension plan contribution increase along the lines of what Kathleen Wynne has introduced for the people of Ontario. He wants to emulate that.

Business of Supply

I know a lot of members here are not from Ontario, so they might not be focused on what it is considering. What they are talking about is this. On somebody who is making \$60,000 a year, the cost to that person, to that family, would be \$1,000 from their paycheque. That is a lot of money, and we understand and know this would cost jobs in the province of Ontario.

If the same thing were done nationally, it would cost jobs across the country. We know that small, medium and large job creators in Ontario have been openly critical of the Ontario Liberal plan. They have written to the Ontario premier and suggested that she rethink this. When that is combined with the extraordinary increase in hydro in the province of Ontario, there are challenges.

At the federal level, we are going in a different direction. We are finding ways to put more money in the pockets of Canadian families. We introduced, through our recent economic action plan, tax savings and tax cuts. We are providing additional incentives for our manufacturers so they can upgrade their machinery and equipment, and can compete not based on a low dollar but on productivity.

We are seeing the benefits of that. The recent job numbers have showed us that our manufacturers, particularly in Ontario, despite the challenges that are put in place by the provincial Liberal government, are starting to succeed because of the policies that this government has put in place to allow them to increase productivity. We are going to continue down that path.

Additionally, we need to support families. By supporting families, we are giving them greater opportunities. Our universal child care benefit, for example, puts more money back in the pockets of families. We have increased the tax-free savings accounts so people can invest up \$10,000. These are all important initiatives that put more money back in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families.

We have the tax credits for families when it comes to fitness and arts. It is about putting more money back in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. That has been one of the hallmarks of this government since we were elected.

●(1705)

Back in 2006-07, because of the hard work of members of Parliament, the cabinet, and the government at the time, we had surpluses, and there was a debate at that point as to what should happen with respect to the surplus. It was this Prime Minister who suggested at the time that we always had to be ready for what would happen in the future and that we should repay debt with that surplus. Members will recall that the opposition, the NDP and the Liberals, suggested that we go on a spending spree. The Prime Minister said that we had to be prepared, that there were signals in the global economy that were troubling, and that we should pay down debt.

In 2008, when the global economy went into a very drastic recession, Canada was prepared to meet the challenge of a global economic recession. When people were put out of work, the Government of Canada had the resources to ensure that they had what they needed to get through the slowdown.

We did a number of things. We provided increased benefits directly to Canadians by reducing their taxes. We reduced the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%. Of course, the opposition was against that entirely.

We then provided a stimulus program, because we understood that what the economy needed and what Canadians wanted were jobs. They did not necessarily want enhanced programs. They wanted to go to work so they could provide for their families and so they could pay to help other Canadians. That is what they wanted, so we brought in an important stimulus program, which saw the creation of thousands of jobs across this country, which invested in our infrastructure, and which allowed us to work with our municipal and provincial partners to address very important infrastructure challenges so that as we came out of the global economic downturn, our small, medium, and large job creators could seize on the opportunities that were created by investing in the infrastructure. Again, the opposition was opposed to these investments.

The opposition at the time, and currently, particularly the official opposition, supported by the Liberal Party, has advocated what is called the 45-day work year. To put that into context, at the same time they bring a motion forward about ensuring that we have the resources available to protect families and workers when they are left, through no fault of their own, without work, the NDP and the Liberals are seeking to institute a 45-day work year.

I am not sure we could truly calculate what it would cost Canadian workers and Canadian businesses to implement something like this. It is completely irresponsible, and it is really, in essence, the foundation of what we are talking about today. It is part of the opposition's secret agenda, by and large.

We are now seeing the Liberal Party coming forward with a plan that would basically attack Canadians' pensions. The Liberals have not even introduced the full scope of their platform yet and already they are billions of dollars in the hole. Scrambling, as Liberals usually do, to try to find out how they will fill the holes of the massive deficits, they have decided that the best way to do that would be to raid the Canada pension plan and private pension plans and hope that nobody notices.

New Democrats truly have no shame when it comes to spending Canadian taxpayers' money. They do not actually care that they would increase debt and deficits for Canadians. They would be honest about it in some circumstances, because that is just what they do. Fortunately, Canadians have looked at the NDP over a number of elections and have rejected that type of economics for Canada.

We in Ontario understand how disastrous NDP economics can be, and that is why we have consistently rejected the NDP because of that really unfortunate experience in Ontario. I was just out of university at the time, and the increase in unemployment in Ontario was staggering.

Business of Supply

•(1710)

The deficit at that time, in the 1990s, in the province of Ontario, was \$11 billion. The NDP government in Ontario was spending \$11 million more an hour than it was taking in. It was an absolute disaster, and it was not until 1995, under the leadership of a Conservative government, which included a number of members serving in our caucus here today, such as the President of the Treasury Board, that Ontario's economy was brought back into balance. We created jobs, we opened up the Ontario market, and we unleashed the potential of the Ontario small, medium, and large job creators to create jobs. We put more money back into the pockets of Canadian families, very much like what we are doing here and what the NDP is threatening to take away from Canadian families.

I come from the community of Markham, which is the most diverse community in all of Canada. Under previous Liberal administrations, and the Liberals will know this to be true, we would go around the world and tell people who wanted to come to this country to come to Canada, because it was a great place to start a family and they would be able to get work. What we did not tell them was that although Canada was a great place and a great place to raise a family, their credentials would not be recognized when they got here.

We have heard time and time again about people with incredible résumés and incredible educations who are working as cab drivers but should be working in other areas. They should be contributing more to the Canadian experience. Under previous Liberal governments, they were sold a bill of goods. They were brought here and they were told that they could not actually participate in the Canadian economy to the fullest extent, because their credentials would not be recognized.

This government set out to change that. It is one of the reforms we brought in. We set out to change it. We worked with our provincial counterparts to have credential recognition in a number of areas. We provide grants to new immigrants so they can upgrade their credentials and fully participate in the Canadian economy.

These are some of the things we have brought forward. These are some of the things the people of Canada are financing through their taxes so that we can create jobs.

I know that the opposition is consistently focused on what it will do when people lose their jobs. On this side of the House, we think the best thing we can do if people lose their jobs through no fault of their own is provide them with the opportunity to get new jobs. That is why we have invested in training, through the hard work of the former minister of Employment and Social Development. That is why we have provided resources for our provincial partners so that they can partner with us.

A little over a year ago, we heard from the opposition, when we brought forward the Canada job grant, that it would never happen, because it would be too difficult to bring our provincial partners along with us. We said we could make it happen, because we had to keep Canadians working. The former minister of Employment and Social Development, who is currently the Minister of National Defence, went across Canada and struck a deal so that we would

have appropriate job training programs in each of the provinces and territories, programs that would make sense for the local economy.

We worked with our provincial and territorial partners to find out what skills they needed. These are the people we then bring to this country so that they can contribute immediately.

I look in my community of Markham, which as I said is the most diverse community in all of Canada, and I see the results of the things we have done. Our manufacturers are prosperous. I look in Stouffville and see my farmers competing and exporting to different parts of the world and preparing to export to the world's largest economy, Europe. I am proud of that.

I look at the IMF report that recently said that other countries in the world should emulate Canada's low debt-to-GDP. Despite the fact that the global challenges still exist, Canada is doing better and has done better than almost any other country.

Around the world, people want to emulate what Canada has done. That is why I am extraordinarily proud to be in this caucus, with these members of Parliament, under the leadership of this Prime Minister, who has given this to Canadians.

•(1715)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about money. Does he know what premium means? Those premiums are money on the payroll of the employee and the employer so that they have some money to find jobs and feed their families. The Liberals stole over \$57 billion from the employment insurance fund, and the Conservatives, who said when they took over that they would not do it, had a \$3-billion surplus, and the government is saying now that it has a \$1.4 billion surplus, but that comes, again, from the employment insurance fund.

When will be the day when the government will respect working people? Is it only businesses that have to be okay? The government says it is close to families but keeps cutting them and hurting their ability to feed their families. Are you not ashamed of that? That is what your Conservative government has done. It is the same as the Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I go to the parliamentary secretary, I would remind all hon. members to refer their questions to the Speaker rather than directly to their colleagues.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Business of Supply

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, what we have done since coming to office is actually put more money back into the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. We started by reducing the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%. New Democrats voted against it. We cut income taxes for all Canadians. They voted against it. We took millions of the lowest-income-earning Canadians off the tax rolls entirely. They voted against it. We brought in the universal child care benefit for Canadian families. They voted against it. We are increasing that benefit for children under age six to \$160. They voted against it. We are increasing it and giving a new benefit for kids age six to 17. They voted against it. We brought in stimulus programs to get Canadians back to work and keep them working. They voted against it. We brought in job creation measures on our east coast with one of the largest shipbuilding programs in Canadian history. They voted against it.

We have an employment insurance fund that is able to provide for people who lose their jobs when times are good and when times are bad, such as during the global economic recession. I am proud of the fact that because of this government it is safe and secure, and Canadians are better off than they have ever been before.

• (1720)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the member has in his Kool-Aid, but when I think of the information the member just put on the record, there is so much. He talked about pensions at one point. We know that the Prime Minister would like to kill the CPP. Prior to being Prime Minister, he did not want Ottawa to do anything with the CPP. We know that the Prime Minister is increasing the OAS age from 65 to 67. Conservatives are out of touch with Canadians on this issue.

The member made reference to opening up new markets. He said we have so many trade agreements, but no, we do not. The EU, which is the 28th of the 38 agreements he is boasting about has not even signed off. We have a trade deficit. No government in the history of Canada in the last 50 years has had as much of a trade deficit as the current one does.

How does the member reconcile truth and reality?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, that is the most comical question I have heard. Let us take a look back in history, shall we? The Liberals were against North American free trade. They were against free trade with the United States and said they would tear it up, but it has created millions of jobs for Canadians today. They did not tell the truth.

We reduced the GST. Apparently, there is no GST to reduce, because Liberals got rid of it in 1993. Oh no, they did not. It is still there, but we have reduced it.

The Liberals' record on trade is an embarrassment. They call themselves the natural government of Canada. How many trade deals did they do in all the time they were in office? What did they create? They had two trade deals with small countries. They could not even get that done.

It is because of this government and this Prime Minister that we actually are creating millions of jobs, close to 1.2 million net new jobs.

Of course, we all recall the big promise that they would not cut transfers to the provinces. Yet what did they do? They cut health and education transfers by \$50 billion. That is the Liberal record. They say one thing to get votes. As soon as they get into office, they do the exact opposite. At least the NDP will tell Canadians that they will take them for all of their money. They would do it. The Liberals, on the other hand, always misrepresent what it is they would do. Canadians are far better off with this government, and they know that.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments and his responses to some interesting questions.

What we have here, in my view, is a basic difference in philosophy and ideology, and so on. Would the member comment on the difference between the vain attempt by socialist governments around the world for the last many years—

An hon. member: And Liberal governments.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Well I did say socialist, Mr. Speaker.

Could the member comment on the attempt by socialist governments to socially engineer equal outcomes versus a pragmatic and rational policy that gives people equal opportunity and then promotes training, promotes trade, promotes job creation, promotes the things that will actually empower people to take advantage of that opportunity?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Centre is exactly right. We have seen this time and again. We are seeing this with some of our European partners which are in such difficult circumstances right now. When they try to tell people what they should do and how they should do it, it does not work.

What we have been doing is we have been unleashing the potential of all Canadians and we will continue to do that. That is what we are doing. By providing more resources for Canadians, by investing in infrastructure and by investing in small, medium and large job creators, we are unleashing the potential of all Canadians to maximize their contributions.

The member for Edmonton Centre is completely right. How many times do we have to go down this road of trying to engineer a false economy, only then to call upon Canadians or wherever they are from to actually come back, look at it again and try to fix the disaster that was an engineered economy. It does not work. It did not work in eastern Europe. It certainly is not going to work in Canada.

The best way we can move forward is to provide opportunity for Canadians, and that is what this government will continue to do.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oak Ridges—Markham for his speech. It gives me an opportunity to expand the discussion a little and ask him this question.

Business of Supply

Throughout his speech, he spoke at length about the importance of getting people back into the labour market as quickly as possible, and no one is opposed to that. He talked about the importance of contributing to developing a strong economy and putting as much money as possible in taxpayers' pockets. I imagine that is so they can keep the economy going.

My question is very simple. How are all these figures pragmatic and consistent with another Conservative reform of employment insurance that means that, in the relatively short term, claimants—the four out of ten claimants who are lucky enough to get EI benefits—are required to accept any suitable employment, which itself is not defined, at 70% of their previous wages?

When we know that the average wage for people who claim employment insurance is about \$15 an hour, what they are effectively saying is that they are putting everybody to work for minimum wage. Is this the economy they want to develop with their Conservative policy?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, the difference between the member and me is I always believe it is better to give Canadians the option to find a job. When we ask Canadians would they rather be working or be on employment insurance, I tend to believe that 99% of the time people are going to say that they would rather be working. If they do not have that opportunity, they would rather get training so that they can provide, and become a part of the new economy. That is why we brought in new training and a Canada job grant. That is why we are supporting our apprentices.

The NDP could be focused on how to keep Canadians out of jobs. On this side of the House, we are going to focus on giving Canadians the opportunity to find jobs. That is why our reforms have created up to 1.2 million new jobs. We are providing opportunities for training. We are providing opportunities for apprentices.

The one thing that is consistent in all of this is that the New Democrats and the Liberals will always vote against it because what they want to do is exactly what the member for Edmonton Centre suggested. They want to tell Canadians what they should do and how they should do it, as opposed to giving them the opportunity to succeed. We will focus on giving Canadians the opportunity to succeed. We will let the New Democrats and Liberals try to explain to Canadians why it is that they want to tell them what to do.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Compton—Stanstead.

I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Trois-Rivières, for putting this motion together. This is a very important debate that we are having today, although it sounds like we are debating with the folks from never-never land over on the other side. However, I want to try bring this debate about employment insurance back to what it means for people in their everyday lives. I want to talk a bit about my grandparents.

My grandparents lived during the Great Depression in Canada. They went through that horrible period that affected so many Canadians right across this country, when people were ready for work and wanted to work, but they could not find jobs. I remember my mom telling me that even though my mother's family, my mom

and her parents and her sisters, lived in Toronto, my grandfather would go out with a slingshot and try to find rabbits in the ravine. He would kill rabbits with his slingshot and bring them home to my grandmother, who would clean them. My mother would go door to door with the rabbits on a little tray and she would try to sell them to the neighbours. They did that so they could get money because they could not find work. Eventually, both my grandmothers worked as cleaning ladies in other people's homes and did whatever bits of work they could possibly get to make ends meet. They were poor. They lived in a time of genuine hardship.

The difference between that time and today for people who do not have jobs to go to is that we have social programs which were brought in by that generation and the subsequent generation in order to protect people from the absolute worst elements of unemployment and poverty. We have New Democrats to thank, for example, for our universal health care system. It was because of the pioneering New Democrat leader Tommy Douglas in the province of Saskatchewan, in spite of stiff opposition from the kinds of folks like my colleagues opposite, that they were able to bring in medicare in the province of Saskatchewan and subsequently across the country.

These social programs matter, because what they do is they buffer inequality in our country. They help remove the most extreme elements of poverty and help people get by in their everyday lives.

However, what we have seen with one of our most important social programs, what former prime minister Brian Mulroney called our best economic adjustment program in the country, which is employment insurance, is a steady erosion of that very important protection for working people. Nothing is more disastrous for a person, whether it is a member of Parliament or someone working in a factory or in a retail store, than losing one's job.

With all due respect, the people in this House have better protection because we have good severance and we make a good salary. However, for the average person, when unemployment strikes, it is a disaster for them. They need employment insurance there to help them when they face the calamity of unemployment.

What we are finding increasingly today is that far too many people cannot get employment insurance benefits. It used to be, back in the time of Brian Mulroney, that about 80% of unemployed Canadians got insurance when they lost their job, but that has been eroded significantly.

● (1730)

I want to quote from an article in today's *The Globe and Mail*, which quotes two people from Statistics Canada. They said, from their study at Statistics Canada:

It was during the period of 1994 through 2000, when [pre-tax] inequality remained high but total redistribution through taxes and transfers fell, that after-tax inequality rose....

That was during the Chrétien years when we had dramatic cuts to employment insurance. Far too few people were able to get access to it. In fact, the government dove into the EI fund with both hands and used that money, the money paid by workers and employers, to balance the books so that the government would look better in the eyes of Canadians.

Business of Supply

The Liberals were not the only ones to do that. Under the Liberals, as I said, it went from 80% coverage of unemployed workers down to less than 50% of the unemployed who got coverage. However, the Conservatives thought this was such a good idea that they continued the trend.

If we combine the EI premiums taken out by the Liberals and Conservatives, they have taken over \$57 billion out of the EI fund. Some people have called that theft. Some people have said that is stealing money from working people and employers. We are talking about \$57 billion.

In the city of Toronto, I think it is down around 30% of unemployed workers who can actually get access to EI benefits. Why would that be? A Toronto-Dominion Bank study recently reported a dramatic decline in the quality of work in Canada. We have seen in Toronto that barely 50% of the workers have any kind of job security, and precarious labour, these insecure, temporary, often part-time jobs, have increased by 10% under the Conservative government since 2001. Almost one in five workers in the greater Toronto area is in the most insecure employment. TD Bank estimated that for people in one of these insecure jobs, the gap between that kind of a job and permanent employment is as high as \$18,000 a year.

We are finding that these people in a precarious situation are the least likely to get access to EI. Imagine if we had access to that \$57 billion that was taken from the EI fund. Imagine if we had that money. It would be there to give benefits to working people when they lose their job and need that money. Would that not be a big advantage over what we are facing today with so many workers getting no support? It is taking Canadian workers back to the time of the Great Depression, where if people lost their job, they were on their own and good luck to them.

What have governments been doing with this money?

The Conservatives, of course, have used EI funds to help balance the books federally. Now they have turned around and given a great big tax cut to the wealthiest 15% of Canadians through their income-splitting scheme. Basically, this has been a transfer from the people who can least afford to pay this money. Unemployed workers and their families are having food taken off their tables and given to the wealthiest people in this country. I say that is shocking. It is wrong, and the government needs to be held accountable.

I see my time is almost up, which is unfortunate, because I could go on at length about the importance of employment insurance and the scourge of both the current Conservative and previous Liberal governments in gutting this most important social program. However, I will wrap it up, because I am looking forward to what I am sure will be very cogent and important questions from my colleagues.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems that everyone is trying to avoid the term “insurance”. All of us pay for car and home insurance.

Would anyone consider it acceptable for Desjardins Insurance, which insures my car, or National Bank Insurance, which insures my

home, to decide that it will not cover my loss because they spent the money somewhere else?

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

When people pay for insurance, they are entitled to expect that they will receive benefits in the event of any crisis, difficulty or accident. This government and the previous one stole these funds and are depriving unemployed workers of EI benefits when they need them. That is completely unfair and unjustified.

If this motion is adopted by the House, EI premiums will be protected and will only be used for EI benefits for unemployed Canadians. That is fairer.

[*English*]

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's words and her passion on this issue. I believe that we all value the issue of how important employment insurance is to the many people who rely on that as a last stop effort when they end up unemployed.

However, I cannot help but say that the New Democratic Party that she represents has never been in government. It has never had to look at how to balance the books when there is pressure from everywhere, the fact of taking from one to choose the other. At the end of the day, there was never a lack of funding for people who were claiming employment insurance. Therefore, I take offence to the accusation of stealing the money from one to the other. Responsible governments do what is necessary in order to continue hosting the programs.

I would like my colleague to comment as to what she thinks she would do if she were forced to look at balancing the books responsibly. Would she leave that money there and do nothing with it?

• (1740)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I work together on the industry committee. I know she shares the same goal that I do of creating jobs and having good income for Canadians. That is certainly the option that Canadians want above all.

However, with respect, I first have to say that the New Democrats have been in government in many provinces. We do intend to be in government come this October. We think that would be a very positive development for Canadians. New Democrat governments have the best record of balanced budgets of any political party, if we look at all levels of government in this country. Therefore, with respect, we have had to make difficult decisions and we look forward to doing so again.

However, to be clear, let me say this. This money did not belong to the government for it to take to balance the books. This was money given in good conscience by working people and employers for the purpose of insurance when those workers found themselves without a job. The fact that over 80% of workers used to be covered by EI and it has fallen to below 40% in this country, I think speaks to where that money went. It did not go into the pockets of unemployed workers where it should have gone.

Business of Supply

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague who did some duty work, even on the standing committee, allowing me to be near my wife as she was giving birth to our second child. However, now I am back.

[*Translation*]

To hear the comments that some of my colleagues opposite have made since I returned early this afternoon, one would think that they do not often get out into the community to see the people on employment insurance and the social fabric that the governments have tried to put in place in the past 50 years, since World War II, in order to help people at specific times in their lives, especially when they lose their jobs.

We are not going to talk about social housing or old age security, but about employment insurance, because this vital program to help people in an industrialized and modern country has also been abused.

Employment insurance was created after the Second World War, on the eve of the 30 glorious years, to give employees and employers a tool that would guarantee employees a stable income during the transition period between two jobs, but also, and more importantly, during temporary layoffs, since that is always happening in the manufacturing industry.

The employment insurance program allowed employers to keep a skilled workforce that was available as soon as business picked up. In other words, it provided an income to employees who were temporarily laid off so that they could pay their rent, feed their families and purchase essentials, such as clothing and school materials. When employees went back to work, they would pick up their daily tasks where they left off, as though nothing had happened, and no training was needed. Of course, they sometimes needed to upgrade their skills, but the workers came back and carried out their duties properly.

Over the past few decades, industries that rely on seasonal and temporary jobs have developed. Although they sometimes involve non-standard employment, these industries contribute to the regional economy. Take for example tourism, agriculture and the fishery.

What happens when employment insurance is not there to fulfill its basic mandate, which is to meet the needs of Canadians, allow the regions to continue to survive and stabilize their economy? Employers lose their workers and have to train new ones, which costs them time and money.

That is an important part of the equation, since seasonal workers are not slackers. They are skilled men and women and single-parent families that often live in the regions. This sector of economic activity is often found in the regions.

When the government eliminates social housing programs, makes it harder to access old age pensions, cuts services for people with disabilities and does not provide employment insurance when needed, communities are destroyed and people can become disengaged. People no longer believe in the economy and no longer trust these governments. Some will even become disengaged, and it leads to domestic violence, suicide attempts, and so on.

● (1745)

The local economy includes the restaurants in the little village or the municipality, the credit union, the post office. When all of that disappears, the social fabric is torn. That is what we are currently seeing in Canada's regions.

I will be speaking on behalf of the regions because that is where it hurts the most. There are a number of urban sectors in which things are going well, but in which there are still high unemployment rates, especially among young people and women. These are people who are often looking for work and who are left behind. If they are also denied access to employment insurance, it is catastrophic in many regions of Canada.

I will talk about the Eastern Townships. Back home, we rely on agriculture, forestry, tourism and culture. These are all of the industries that bring in billions of dollars and provide tens of thousands of jobs. These are people who still believe that they deserve their job. When the time comes they are prepared to go back to those jobs. Perhaps we should make employment insurance more accessible to self-employed workers. There are some needs there as well. People do not have access to employment insurance even though the employer and the employee paid their premiums.

The system works. It can work. Someone is whispering that it could be a lot more effective. It is not effective. In the past, eight or nine people out of 10 who had paid into the employment insurance fund had access to it; now it is four people. Sometimes it is less than four. Why? Because there are so many hassles and refusals. No one will talk to these people. The administrative tribunals are stretched to the limit. People give up. We cannot even include them in the workforce statistics. They are not even unemployed. They are no longer workers. Where are they? Are they working under the table? I do not know where they are, but these people have paid into the employment insurance system and they are entitled to employment insurance.

Canada is one of the industrialized countries where the system is the most callous toward the unemployed.

I am going to tell the story of a company in the Eastern Townships where the workers had 20 or 30 years' experience. The company closed down overnight. There were no layoffs; the whole company closed down. There were so many hassles that half of the people who were entitled to employment insurance ultimately never had access to it. These people found themselves unemployed, with three or four years of mortgage payments still to make. They had worked and contributed their whole lives, and then they were refused access to employment insurance. The employer and the employees had paid their premiums. The money is not there. What is happening with this system?

I must correct what I said earlier. I said that the system worked, but it does not.

Business of Supply

In the early days of the scandal involving the \$50 billion that was misappropriated by the Liberals, who did a really fine job that was continued by the Conservatives, one of my former economics professors, Jean Lacharité, told me that the workers had worked their whole lives and contributed to a system that was supposed to be there to serve a purpose: to fill a temporary need and help people move from one stage to the next.

A rich, modern, industrialized country like ours needs an effective employment insurance system. With a motion like the one put forward by my colleague from Trois-Rivières and especially with the NDP in power in the fall, in a few months, we will put things right. There will be no more hoops for the unemployed to jump through. Workers will be working in a prosperous economy.

• (1750)

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Compton—Stanstead for what was a very passionate speech, and entirely justifiably so.

However, I would like him to dig a little deeper into his expertise. He talked a lot about his part of the country, which makes sense when he is talking about seasonal workers. I just want to emphasize once again that the workers are not seasonal; the jobs are. Fishing is harder in winter. Forestry in January is next to impossible. It is the work that is seasonal. That is a fact of life in our country, and we need to keep it in mind.

The problem is that too often, we tend to think that seasonal work is regional work: fishing, tourism and forestry. I gather that part of my colleague's riding is urban. Urban areas also have problems related to seasonal work. I am thinking of construction workers. Think of all the people in the film industry who work as technicians and whose busy time is the summer.

Can he tell me whether seasonal work is a fact of life in both urban and rural areas where he is from?

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for helping me get back in the swing of things.

Indeed, in urban areas, we must not forget the construction and tourism sectors, which are very big. The same is true of the cultural sector. As the member said, these are seasonal jobs. These jobs return year after year and are always there.

As for the local economy, I was talking about restaurants, but I really mean the entire local economy—everything from a night out at the movies to dinner out at a restaurant. The entire local economy, whether in an urban or rural area, suffers. When we have an employment insurance system, old age pension system and social housing system, and when those programs are realistic and tailored to people's needs, that is what supports an economy. Those economies are the ones that will come out ahead, and in the end, Canadians will be much happier and will contribute to the country.

• (1755)

[English]

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that the EI system is as strong, robust and successful as it is today is because we have had successive governments, and especially this government, that have made sure the system is robust. We have made sure that premiums are at a level

that support the system so that people who qualify for benefits receive them.

We have also made some excellent changes. I remember the first bill I voted on in this House, and I was very proud of it, was to extend EI benefits to the parents of critically ill and murdered children. We have done a lot as a government to make sure our EI system is a 21st century employment insurance system.

That is the whole point. This is an insurance system. It is not welfare. It is not a handout. One of the things New Democrats will never understand, because they have never formed a government and they never will form a government, is that this is a system that employers and employees pay into to make sure that when they need to access the system for losing a job due to no fault of their own, there are benefits available to them.

I wonder if the member actually understands how the system works, because I listened to his speech and clearly he does not.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, to hear the comments from members on the other side of the House, you would think that they do not often get out into the community to listen to people and talk to them about the problems they face because of a system that does not meet their needs.

When a system does meet people's needs, the local economy, whether it is urban or rural, is stronger. That is not at all what we are seeing now. With all of the Conservatives' reforms and disparaging of employment insurance, it is less accessible and it meets the needs of the public less than ever. A system like this will not help us develop strong economies.

If the economy is prosperous, the season for seasonal jobs will keep expanding. The unemployment period will always be shorter, because when the economy is prosperous, money is everywhere, jobs are abundant, people are happy and they contribute voluntarily. This is a great country that we will continue to build this fall with a New Democrat government.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this motion on behalf of all of those who, through no fault of their own, find that they have to avail themselves of the employment insurance system from time to time; especially, those in my constituency of Random—Burin—St. George's who both pay into and end up having to rely on employment insurance.

Mr. Speaker, let me say I will be splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

I am told that until one actually has to avail oneself of the employment insurance system, it is really hard for one to understand or appreciate just what is involved. I heard that from time to time from my constituents, the people I represent, who would really much rather be working and earning a living than having to depend upon a system of any sort to help them provide for their families.

Business of Supply

Recently released employment data, for instance, for the province I represent, Newfoundland and Labrador, shows that unemployment levels are steadily rising. The general unemployment rate for February 2015 was 12.6%, up nearly a full percentage point from February 2014. For the same period, the unemployment rate for young people aged 15 to 24 was 16.4%.

That tells us how difficult it is for some people in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, let alone throughout the country, to make ends meet when they are having difficulty acquiring a job. We have adult children moving back in with their parents because they cannot get that first job. If they are lucky enough to secure work, if the jobs are available, they are part time, making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to make ends meet by their own means. That is the impact that such a weak economy is having upon parents and their children.

Young adults trying to find that first job are unable to contribute EI premiums and, thus, despite being unemployed, are unable to access benefits. They are forever caught between a rock, which is a weak job market, and a hard place, which is their inability to receive EI because they have not worked enough hours to qualify. This creates a vicious cycle, particularly with respect to EI training benefits.

EI training benefits are intended to help unemployed workers gain the skills they need to find a new job. However, there is a catch. First, they must be EI beneficiaries to access them. This is particularly problematic when we consider the fact that, according to the Mowat EI task force report, those who do not have enough hours to qualify for EI may benefit most from access to training programs. These young workers stand to benefit the most from these training programs and yet are unable to access them. It is indeed a vicious circle, one that we must put a stop to.

The best way to combat youth unemployment and to help create a secure financial future is through job creation and job training. At a time when youth unemployment is high and many students and recent graduates struggle to find jobs or co-op placements, the current government is continuing to compound the problem by its actions. Instead of supporting young workers, the current Conservative government cut funding to the Canada summer jobs program, which provided income and valuable job experience for young Canadians.

Young workers and the self-employed are not the only people struggling to obtain benefits. In addition to keeping premiums artificially high, the current Conservative government has also made major changes to the EI system that have had disproportionately negative effects on workers in seasonal industries.

The current government has required people to accept jobs further and further from where they are living, increasing commuting costs, often dramatically, and decreasing quality of life. A one-hour commute in my riding can impose a significant financial burden upon already vulnerable workers because of lack of public transportation and high fuel costs. Also, in a lot of cases, the conditions of the roads over which they have to travel are not the most helpful and, again, this increases costs because of the wear and tear on the vehicles that they drive.

● (1800)

The Conservative government has also moved to broaden the definition of suitable employment to force people to accept jobs that are less comparable to their previous employment. Frequent users of EI, such as those in seasonal industries, must now accept virtually any available job. These changes mean workers may be forced to constantly jump between industries and towns more than ever before, again, just to make ends meet.

What does the government offer them? Callous indifference. The same sort of indifference we have seen in my office and offices across the country, as people call in desperation as they are forced to wait well beyond the 28 days for their claims to be processed. All because cuts at Service Canada left them understaffed and unable to process claims in a timely manner.

We have had instances in Random—Burin—St. George's where people had to wait as long as 70 days. If they make one little mistake, they do not get a call asking about that mistake, their claim is denied and they have to reapply. Not just 70 days, but we have had them wait 45 days. It is unreasonable and it is indeed callous. These are people who are having to go without an income while they are waiting to have their claims processed.

They would much rather be working. They do not want to have to depend on a government system, although remember, it is their system, their money and they paid into this insurance program. They would much rather work and it is unfair for them to have to wait such a long period of time to access their own money through the insurance program.

This jeopardizes not just the economic security of those hard-working Canadians forced to travel in search of work, it also jeopardizes the economic security of their communities, many of which are reliant on seasonal industries for their continued survival.

The government should be working to make it easier for Canadians to not just make ends meet, but to thrive. Instead, the Conservative government seems intent on making it more difficult. This is an issue of fairness. Canadians need and deserve an employment insurance system that provides fair benefits at a fair cost. While this motion will not reverse all the damaging changes we have seen in the EI system over the past almost decade of Conservative government, it is indeed a step in the right direction.

Liberals have been calling for the Conservatives to allow the EI account to balance itself over the business cycle. However, since the government agreed to that in 2012, it has never actually allowed the rate to be set where it should be to achieve a seven-year balance. After several EI rate setting mechanism changes over the past few years, the government finally settled on a plan that aims to have the EI account balanced over the course of seven years, a time frame which in theory should prevent very large premium hikes in periods of economic downturn.

Business of Supply

Unfortunately, despite this new system, the government opted not to follow its own actuarial advice on where to set the EI premium rate in 2015. Instead, it chose to set the rate above the level needed to achieve the seven-year balance. The Parliamentary Budget Officer in his recent report said the setting of the EI premium rate in 2015-16 continues to be a concern and that this acted against the government's objective of ensuring EI premiums are set transparently and used only for EI benefits and administration purposes.

The Conservative government froze EI premiums artificially high in 2015, forcing workers and their employers to pay \$2.7 billion more in premiums this year than the government expects to pay in benefits. That is \$2.7 billion that could be reinvested in Canadian business to create more jobs and put money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians. That decision by the government was unfair. Perhaps even more unfair, many unemployed Canadians are unable to collect EI benefits despite paying into the program.

In 2014, only 38% of unemployed workers in Canada were eligible to collect EI. Contract workers are often unable to access benefits between contracts. Part-time workers often do not accumulate enough hours to be eligible and the self-employed still have access to fewer benefits than other workers. It is time for us to take this seriously and to do what needs to be done to set the employment insurance benefit system right.

● (1805)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Newfoundland and Labrador for her speech.

I would like to ask her how the Conservatives' employment insurance reforms affect her region, in Newfoundland and Labrador, and her constituents.

Since it is increasingly difficult to access employment insurance, a lot of people in my riding of Lasalle—Émard are affected. How have these EI reforms and these cuts affected her region?

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, anyone who has had to be available to those who need to access the employment insurance program knows only too well how difficult it is and how hard people find it. Some of them are embarrassed about having to access a program that really is their program, one into which they have paid. It would not exist without them. However, so many have had to wait so long that sometimes they give up. They leave their families and apply for work across the country. Certainly, in Newfoundland and Labrador, many people have gone to work in Alberta because they know if they wait to find employment in Newfoundland and the length of time it takes to avail of the employment insurance programs, they cannot support their families. Therefore, they will leave their families.

Unfortunately, in many cases it means parents have to go without attending a graduation or do not get to be part of a birthday celebration. Their parents are getting older and they cannot be around them. This is affecting family life. The measures the government has taken have not helped in any way, shape or form to make life easier for those who, through no fault of their own, have had to avail of the employment insurance system.

● (1810)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech. As usual, it was insightful and she was able to relate the situation on the ground in her riding to the national debate we are having in the House.

It was mentioned by members on the other side of the House a short while ago that the government was creating opportunities. What would the member say to that? She mentioned that the unemployment rate had gone up in her community. The government would be quick to say that it is not the fault of the unemployed that they are unemployed. However, if the government really believed that, how can it say it is creating opportunities when the unemployment rate is going up?

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, we are watching the unemployment rate go up in Newfoundland and Labrador. We all know there could be any number of reasons for that. The issue for us is that we need to help create jobs. Governments do not create jobs on their own. They need to work with the private sector to do that. However, when private small and medium-sized businesses are having trouble because the rates for EI premiums are increasing, they are more inclined not to hire than to hire. That affects the hiring process.

Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy, particularly in rural communities. If we are to make the premium so high that it is impossible for employers to meet the demand if they were to hire, then it really does ensure that they do not do the hiring they want to do or that needs to be done to accommodate those people who have a certain skill set. Instead they are forced to leave Newfoundland and Labrador to make use of it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe I could pick up where my colleague left off.

With regard to the whole issue of jobs, the Liberal caucus understands and appreciate how important it is for us to deal with the middle class by providing hope where there is no hope and by looking at ways government policy can have a positive impact by generating jobs.

I cannot think of a better example than the one we used last year when the leader of the Liberal Party made the suggestion of allowing an EI holiday for new hires. At the time of that announcement, we had feedback from outside this chamber, from independent sources, indicating that this was the way to generate the new jobs that would be necessary. It did not matter where, because it would affect all regions. Whether it is Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, British Columbia or my home province of Manitoba, all provinces and territories would have benefited from that program.

Business of Supply

I hear Conservatives talk about giving small businesses tax breaks. My colleague hit it right on when she indicated that small businesses were the backbone of Canada's economy. If we want a healthier economy, we need to start supporting small businesses in a much more tangible way. The program we espoused last year would have made a difference. It would have meant more people being hired in Canada. However, for whatever reason, whatever rationale came out of the Prime Minister's Office, and I suspect it was because it was not his idea, the government turned it down.

The Liberal Party has experience in dealing with this issue. Back in 1993 when the Liberal Party formed government under Jean Chrétien, the unemployment rate was well over 12%. We were able, through a consecutive budget over the years, to reduce that unemployment rate from 12% to just over 6%, contrary to what former prime minister Kim Campbell said in the lead-up to that 1993 election, that Canada was in for double digit unemployment figures well into the future. However, we did not accept that. We recognized that government had a role to play by getting behind the workers, the middle class and supporting them through good government policy.

An excellent example was the one the leader of the Liberal Party proposed to the House last fall. The government lost that opportunity. The opportunity is still there if the Conservatives are prepared to take it, but the clock is ticking. At the end of the day, I think we will see a change take place in Canada, in good part because Canadians realize that the government is not a fair government.

We see that in the types of policies the Conservatives bring forward. Look at the last budget. Look at the income taxes, whether it is income splitting, which will generate, via hundreds of millions of dollars, \$2 billion a year. Who will benefit? Canada's wealthiest, less than 14% of the overall population. What about the middle class that really needs the break? There is nothing on income splitting. The Liberal Party has said that we will give straight percentage cuts for the middle class, because we know that a healthy, strong middle class means a strong economy.

I listened to many of the comments of the Conservatives today. They talked about a balanced budget. The balanced budget in this document will never be realized until after the next election. This is the first time the majority government has claimed to have balanced budget, but we know it does not have one.

● (1815)

I find it ridiculous when the Conservatives make the assertion that people cannot trust the Liberals to balance budgets. They have never honestly achieved a balanced budget under the current Prime Minister. Compare that with previous years of Liberal administrations. There were balanced budgets, surplus budgets in fact. The Liberals gave the Conservatives their first balanced budget, which evaporated right away, even prior to the recession.

Canadians understand and appreciate the importance of employment insurance. We value this social program because we know it is important to Canadians. Employees and employers contribute to the fund. The government needs to know—

Ms. Irene Mathysen: They stole them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The member likes to heckle, Mr. Speaker. She thinks the NDP is on the high road on this issue. If I have time, I will comment on that point later.

However, I want to emphasize that the employment insurance program is of great value to all Canadians, whether they are unemployed or employed. Even if they are employed, they never know if they will find themselves in a situation where they might require employment insurance. It is a wonderful safety net that we need to support.

Whether it was Paul Martin, my current leader, or other members, we have talked about looking at the employment insurance program and improving the social condition of others, such as the issues of maternity or compassionate care for parents. These are the types of things we should be exploring because it supports workers and families, and it the right to do. This will be a high priority for a Liberal government. We understand the benefits of approaching issues of this nature with an open and progressive mind, and in making a difference and supporting workers. That is really important.

When we look at youth unemployment in particular, we have had some very serious problems. The government says that it has created 1.2 million jobs. It has been saying that for the last year. The reality is that in the last couple of years, the government has failed to meet the needs of Canadians when it comes to jobs. Far too many of the jobs it has created have not been good, strong, valuable jobs, those jobs which we have lost in the last decade. The manufacturing industry alone has lost hundreds of thousands of jobs since the government took office. In the history of Canada, there has never been a government as worse as the Conservative government when it comes to manufacturing jobs.

The government can say that it has created 1.2 million, but look at what has happened in the last couple of years. It has fallen short and some of the individuals who have been hit the hardest are our youth. Look at what the government is doing with the summer employment program. It has no problems spending vast amounts of public tax dollars on self-promotional partisan ads, totalling \$750 million, of which a good portion of that went to pat itself on the back. However, at the same time, it is dising our young people and other individuals who are looking for training and for additional opportunities so they can get engaged in Canada's workforce.

My advice for the government is to recognize the value of Canada's middle class. If it recognizes that, it will start investing in it. By investing in the middle class, it is going to be investing in Canada. By investing in Canada, we all win.

I will reserve my comments on infrastructure for another time.

● (1820)

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a wonderful speech of revisionist Liberal history as to what has really taken place, coming from a party that had the biggest raid on the EI fund we have seen in a generation. The Liberals talk about their balanced budgets during the Chrétien-Martin years. That was because they slashed transfer payments to the provinces, literally starving the provinces through the Canada health and social transfer reductions that they made. That is how they balanced their budgets.

Government Orders

That is not the way this government has done it. We have increased our transfers to the provinces in a considerable way.

One of the interesting comments the member made was with respect to the Liberal proposal for an EI holiday for new hires. That member was not paying attention for the first three years because that was in our first three budgets. We delivered on that. There was an EI hiring reduction for new hires. The Liberals voted against it.

My question to the hon. member for Winnipeg North is quite simple. He talked about payroll taxes. How is it that he believes a government, under the current Liberal leader, which has offered a huge increase in CPP premiums to pay for an expanded mandatory CPP process, would allow for small businesses to hire more people, when at \$60,000 of pay for an individual, they would be taxed an additional \$1,000 and their employer would be taxed an additional \$1,000?

I think there is a lot of hypocrisy over on that side.

• (1825)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member wants to talk about pensions. I have indicated this before. The reality is that the Prime Minister and the current Conservative government do not support the Canada pension program. The Prime Minister would like to see CPP disappear completely. He does not believe it is a part of the federal government's responsibility. We know this because the Prime Minister advocated this in his earlier days. Then, we take a look at the OAS program where it is increasing the age from 65 to 67.

We know that the government does not believe in pension programs. That is fine. It can differ itself from the Liberal Party of Canada because we do believe in our safety nets, in all three of our social pension programs. As for the transfers, when the Conservatives stand up and glow about the health transfers being a record high today, the person they should be thanking is not the current government; it was Paul Martin and the health care accord that was signed in 2004. That has allowed the provinces and Canada to have the highest amount of health care transfers that they have ever had.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always find it rather funny to see the Liberals and Conservatives look back on each others' measures and debate which of the two parties that have governed Canada is the least objectionable and which did the worst things. It is always fun to see them debate this.

I would like to know whether my colleague agrees with the practice used by various Conservative and Liberal governments of taking the EI surplus and using it to balance their budgets. What does the Liberal member for Winnipeg North think about that practice?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there are two things. First, the member could read my comments and he would get a better sense of what I was referring to with respect to the changes that ultimately led to a reduction of premium rates during the nineties. It would be interesting to hear what the New Democrats have to say with respect to that premium rate. I look forward to that.

Second, the member made reference that he always finds it interesting in terms of drawing the comparisons. I can tell the member, being an MLA from Manitoba, that there are many injured workers in the province of Manitoba who would say that the NDP government of Manitoba has saved dollars from the workers' compensation program on the backs of injured workers. Therefore, as much as he might have enjoyed the exchange between the Liberals and the Conservatives—and we listened to many speeches today from his New Democratic colleagues taking shots at the Liberals and the Conservatives—they need at times to get off their high horse and recognize that there is room for improvement, and not only across the way. All political entities have a responsible role for constantly looking at ways that we can improve the system.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m. and this being the final supply day in the period ending June 23, 2015, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the opposition motion.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: I have the permission of the member for Edmonton Centre to say that the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), the division stands deferred until later this day.

* * *

• (1830)

MAIN ESTIMATES 2015-16

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—THE SENATE

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC) moved:

That vote 1 in the amount of \$57,031,359 under the Senate program expenditures in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016 be concurred in.

Government Orders

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion that is before us today. The motion obviously speaks to the motion brought forward, but it also speaks to the overall budgetary situation that the government finds itself in. I would be remiss if I did not spend at least a moment before getting to the main topic of discussion to highlight the extraordinary work of the President of the Treasury Board, and, of course, the Minister of Finance over the last number of years to bring forward Canada's economic action plan, balanced in a way that has left Canada as one of the strongest nations in terms of our competitors. We have a balanced budget. Our debt-to-GDP ratio is one that is envied around the world. We are—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the late point of this session of Parliament, I want to make sure that we use the time we have in the House of Commons correctly. The issue we are dealing with now is a \$57 million vote for the Senate of Canada, vote 1 in the main estimates. I am worried that the parliamentary secretary is going off on a tangent about the merits of the economic action plan and not speaking to this important, timely, topical issue of whether or not it is the will of Parliament to send another \$57 million to the Senate of Canada for it to use or misuse as it wishes.

The Deputy Speaker: I am afraid the parliamentary secretary is too soon into his speech for me to determine whether it is going to be relevant to the issue before the House. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre obviously has a valid point that the debate has to be relevant. I will give the floor back to the parliamentary secretary, but again caution him that relevancy is obviously always an issue.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset of my speech, I want to take a moment to highlight some of the work. This is a budgetary issue as well, and we would not be able to debate the ability of the Government of Canada to fund issues if we did not have a good President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Finance. They put the Government of Canada on the path toward long-term balanced budgets and economic stability. I would be remiss if I did not talk about that.

Specifically, we are talking about the motion brought forward by the member for Winnipeg Centre with respect to the Senate of Canada. A lot of focus has been put on the Senate of Canada over the last number of years, and it goes without saying that the Senate is a constitutionally mandated part of our parliamentary democracy. Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that both chambers have the resources they need to constitutionally fulfill their mandates. This motion would provide the other chamber with the resources it needs to continue on in some of the very important work that the Senate does.

We have been talking a lot about the Senate and Senate reform. It is obviously very important for us to talk a bit about what we have seen in the other chamber over the last while. A couple of years ago, a potential abuse of taxpayers' dollars was identified. That is something that we on this side of the House find absolutely appalling. Members will recall that when this first came out, I was often in the House answering questions regarding what we were seeing about Senate expenses. On this side of the House, we were

focused on ensuring that the individuals who were highlighted were being held accountable for their actions. That is something that has been the focus of our government since we took office in 2006.

We were all somewhat surprised about the rules regarding how the individual senators handled their expenditures. The rules there were dramatically different from the rules that we follow in this chamber, and a number of us were surprised by that. There was an opportunity for the Senate to come to an understanding that the systems it had in place were not acceptable to Canadians. They were certainly not acceptable to members of Parliament, who have the opportunity to vote on expenditures like we are doing tonight. We all expected better and something different from them.

That is why the Senate made some very important changes to the structure of its finances. They are changes that we have supported. At the same time, it was the Senate that then invited the Auditor General to review all of the senators' expenses. That was a very important move. As I just said, we had very different circumstances in the House of Commons for handling our expenses. A lot of us could not rationalize how expenses were done here in comparison to how they were done there. It was important not only for members of the House of Commons who have the opportunity to approve their budgets, but, more importantly, for Canadians to understand what was happening and how, and to ensure that this had never happened before.

We heard from Canadians that they wanted the maximum light shone on how the Senate was undertaking the payment of expenses.

I want to be clear on this next point, because I have heard about it from some individuals. This was not and is not an issue with respect to the public service workers who handle expense claims. I want to be very clear on that. Those who are in the public service work very hard and do a professional job. Their job was to undertake the repayment of senators' expenses based on the rules that the Senate had brought in place. These are rules that had been in place for many years, through previous Liberal administrations. They were tightened up, but not to the satisfaction, at least of members on this side of the House, or, more importantly, to the satisfaction of Canadians. We see that change has happened.

● (1835)

Also, we have an Auditor General's report which was recently completed. That will be tabled in the Senate tomorrow. Obviously, we anxiously await the results of the audit.

I think it is relevant to the discussion here today that we have heard from a lot of Canadians with respect to possible changes to the Senate, how we could reform the Senate to better reflect our current democracy.

Government Orders

We have brought forward a number of recommendations to change the Senate, to make it an elected Senate, to make it accountable, and to place term limits on senators. We brought those changes forward. We sent it through to the Supreme Court of Canada, because we want to ensure that we could do what we were proposing. The Supreme Court of Canada has come back to us and said that the only way we could change this institution, the only way we could change the Senate was if we received the unanimous consent of all the provinces and territories.

What we have now is that the Council of the Federation, which comprises the provinces and the territories, have it within their mandate to look at the reforms that we have put forward and to come back to us suggesting whether these are reforms the provinces would like to undertake with us so that we could modernize the Senate. Failing that, we do not in the short term believe that Canadians have an appetite to enter into long, protracted constitutional negotiations with respect to reforming the Senate. We believe that Canadians want us to continue to focus on jobs and economic growth.

We know that the NDP have put forward a proposal with respect to the abolition of the Senate. While that might be a good sounding point, of course it would require a constitutional amendment, which again, as I said, would require the approval of all of the provinces. As we know, that just is not there right now.

Many of the provinces have suggested that they would want to enter into constitutional negotiations to address other issues that they have with respect to the Canadian Constitution, which would plunge Canada back into something that we saw back with the Charlottetown and Meech Lake accords. While there is global economic fragility, that is not something this government wants to entertain.

We have reform proposals. We have them on the table, the proposals that would have it elected, that would have term limits. Now it is up the Council of the Federation to come forward and address those proposals that we have on the table.

We also know that the Liberals have made some proposals with respect to changing the Senate. Their proposals would see an unelected, unaccountable Senate be appointed by an unelected, unaccountable body, which is completely not something that Canadians want.

We also know that the Liberals have come forward and said that the Senate Liberals, even though they call themselves Liberals, are not members of the Liberal Party. Well, I think they do a disservice to themselves and I think they do a disservice to Canadians when they suggest that just by changing the name from Liberals to Senate Liberals they no longer belong to the Liberal Party, when they campaign for the Liberals, when they fundraise for the Liberals, when they attend Liberal conventions, and when they call themselves Liberals. I think they are trying to fool Canadians into thinking that they are not Liberals. They are Liberals. I think that does a disservice to Canadians.

This is not what Canadians want. Canadians want these people to be accountable for the decisions that they make. That is something that we on this side of the House have been fighting for right from the very beginning.

There can absolutely be no doubt that the deliberate misuse of taxpayers' dollars is not something that any Canadian will stand for. As I have said on a number of occasions in this House, I look back to my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham, and people in my community and in communities across this country work very hard.

● (1840)

In my riding people are up early in the morning. They hop on the GO train and go to work. Farmers are up at the crack of dawn working their fields. They work hard for the amount of money they get to invest in their families and for that, they send money to governments, federal, provincial and municipal, and they expect that those dollars will be treated fairly and with respect. When that does not happen, when there is a deliberate attempt to misuse those dollars, Canadians have every right to be angry and they have every right to expect that their elected officials at every level will do better.

That is what we are insisting on and continue to insist on with the Senate. However, make no mistake. Senators are an important part of our system right now. We have a bicameral system. It is in the Constitution. We have a responsibility as parliamentarians to ensure that senators continue to do the work they have before them.

I will come back to how taxpayers view expenditures. As I said, Canadians work very hard. They want to be able to provide for their families. They want to be able to save some money for their futures, for their children's futures, to invest in their businesses. They expect a very high standard from us. We have put in place on this side of the House and of course now on the Senate very strict rules on how taxpayers' dollars should be used. When that trust is broken with Canadians, the very least Canadians can expect is that the funds be returned and in the instances when taxpayers' dollars are misused deliberately, that the people who do it are held accountable.

That is what we are seeing right now in the Senate. There will be a report presented tomorrow. If the reports are to be believed, some senators will be investigated by the RCMP and other senators will be asked to repay money. Here is where we have a bit of a dilemma. It is when elected officials think that they are above the law or that somehow what Canadians expect of other politicians is not what is expected of them.

When I look at the NDP right now, I find it very difficult to understand how we can be debating this motion tonight and not talk about the fact that it is the NDP that owes millions of dollars to the Canadian taxpayer. That is very important. If reports are to be believed, the Auditor General has come forward with some \$900,000 worth of payments, which need, in one way or another, to be accounted for and paid back to the taxpayer of Canada. We know that right now the NDP owes \$2.7 million to the very same taxpayers. Where did the \$2.7 million come from? They came from resources that are provided by taxpayers, that come—

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•(1845)

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I have cut the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister a lot of slack. I know he is running out of gas and running out of ideas. I think he got the short straw on who would try to defend the indefensible tonight, but he is straying wildly off the subject matter, which is vote 1 in the main estimates and whether the House of Commons should approve the appropriation of \$57 million to send over to the Senate for its members to spend as they please.

He is wildly off topic. We have tried to be tolerant because I kind of feel sorry for the guy. He always gets stuck with this crappy job of trying to defend the indefensible, but he is so far off topic that he is doing a disservice to the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the parliamentary secretary is probably off on a bit of a tangent. I would ask him to come back to the Senate. The points that he has raised, at least on a superficial level, were still relevant, but I think he should move back to points on the Senate.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate your ruling and I will certainly abide by it, the point I am trying to make is that the opposition is trying to suggest that we not fund a constitutional body of Parliament, that we starve the Senate for funds, that we break the Constitution and we kill an institution that is part of our parliamentary democracy. Opposition members want to do that unilaterally without seeking the consent of our provincial partners. They want to break the law, and the excuse they are using is the Senate expense scandal.

While I agree that what we have seen and the potential abuses that we are hearing about with respect to expenses are important to all Canadians, I can certainly tie in the fact that members of Parliament, all parliamentarians, in making a decision to hold back funding for another body, have to also be accountable for the expenses they are claiming here. It is very relevant when we look at the expenses of all parliamentarians.

The Senate is a parliamentary body and we have to look at how Parliament is spending its money. There is a very relevant connection to how the expenses of members of Parliament are operating, as well as the NDP and all of us for that matter. It is not just the NDP. It is not just a Conservative, Liberal or NDP function. It is all of us. We are sent to this place as guardians of taxpayers' dollars and when we fail that responsibility to the taxpayer, the taxpayer wants accountability for it.

Throughout this debate over the next number of hours, I am going to take every single opportunity that I can to highlight the responsibility that parliamentarians at all levels and from all parties have to the taxpayer. By the end of the debate tonight, I want to ensure that all Canadians understand that we all have a responsibility for the tax dollars they send here.

I intend to drill down and make a very important connection to the \$57 million vote that we are doing for the Senate and also connect the taxpayers' \$2.7 million that was redirected by the NDP caucus away from taxpayers in their own ridings into an illegal partisan office.

I intend throughout the hours here tonight to question each of these members individually and to have the opportunity to make that connection for Canadians, because in making the decision at the end of the night, we should make sure we are making the decision based on full facts and full information. I know the NDP will want to cooperate on that. After all, it was the New Democrats who brought a motion forward that suggested that answers had to be very clear and concise. By that standard tonight, I expect to question each of these individual members for many hours.

I appreciate the fact that the NDP has given me the opportunity on behalf of taxpayers to get even more information with respect to the \$2.7 million it owes, as well as the appropriation for the Senate.

•(1850)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to ask the parliamentary secretary about a bill that was passed here three years ago in the House of Commons, Bill C-290, the single sports betting bill. It would delete one sentence in the Criminal Code and would allow provinces to, if they wanted to, negotiate to have single sports betting.

The bill has been in the Senate for three years. It was passed here unanimously. It went through the House of Commons. The member actually agreed with it. Why has the bill not been passed by the Senate? It was democratically approved by the House of Commons and is now being blocked by Liberals and Conservatives in the Senate. It is costing jobs, employment and a series of things related to organized crime benefiting, as well as offshore betting, but it has not been passed. It has been three years in the Senate.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to understand and respond to us directly on Bill C-290. Why can he not get that passed in the Senate? Why has the Senate denied it? I would like to know.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I believe, if I am not mistaken, that the bill is with respect to betting on single sporting events. As to whether I agreed with it, the member might have to look carefully at that. I do not recall actually voting on that bill.

Having said that, I know that the New Democrats might not like the fact that there is a constitutionally mandated second chamber that has to review the work we do here, but that is the Constitution of this country, and that is something we will continue to fight for and support. We have a constitutional obligation as a government to support the Constitution and to make sure that we pass laws in accordance with the Constitution.

I know the NDP's philosophy is to unilaterally eliminate it, breaking the Constitution and what the Supreme Court has said. We will not do that. We will protect the Constitution, because that is what a government must do. Until that body is reformed, we will continue—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Windsor West on a point of order.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, my question was simply to Bill C-290, not other things. I would like the minister to respond to that. Why has it not passed? It is as simple as that.

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

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is the Conservative plan to reform the Senate?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, our plan is this: We want to see an elected Senate. We want to see term limits in the Senate. We think Canadians have that responsibility. As members know, the Conservative Party is the only party that has actually appointed elected senators, and we would like the opportunity to continue to do that.

As I mentioned in my remarks, the Supreme Court has said that we need the unanimous consent of all our provincial and territorial partners to do that. That is something I hope the Council of the Federation will be seized with and will take a look at. These are our proposals. We certainly do not want to do what the Liberals have suggested and allow an unelected, unaccountable Senate to be appointed by unelected, unaccountable officials. We think that is completely inappropriate, and Canadians would not accept that.

Very directly, we want an elected Senate, we want term limits, and we want to continue with those types of reforms.

• (1855)

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are speaking tonight about accountability. The parliamentary secretary mentioned that he wanted to hold to account those who spoke about the motion tonight in regard to the Senate. I would like to give him the opportunity to do just that and draw the parallel between how if one group or individual wants to hold someone else accountable, they should be responsible as well for the way they execute their behaviour in regard to funding.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale for that question, because he is right.

Tonight we are being asked to consider continuing to fund the Senate, which is, as I said, a constitutionally important, mandated part of our parliamentary democracy. One of the rationales being given by the NDP is that because there are some expenses to do with some of the members, that body should be relieved of all of its funding.

Currently we have 68 members of the NDP caucus, two-thirds of its caucus, who have spent \$2.7 million, three times as much as, if we are understanding correctly, what the NDP—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre on a point of order.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, my concern is again on the issue of relevance. We are wasting valuable time that is dedicated to the deliberation on vote 1, which is an appropriation of \$57 million to the Senate. I am interested in asking a question of the parliamentary secretary. He is wildly off topic. I wonder if you, Mr. Speaker, will rein him in, call him to order, or ask him to sit down so that I can ask a question of him.

The Deputy Speaker: I am having some difficulty, both with, quite frankly, the question and moving into this area once again. I

think I have made my ruling fairly clear that we were way off on this in terms of relevancy.

The parliamentary secretary still has the floor, but I would caution him. I will allow him to continue the question, but then I am going to say that it is final on this. It is just too far away from the issue before us this evening.

The hon. parliamentary secretary may complete his answer.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I intend throughout the evening to ensure, before a final decision is made with respect to this motion, that Canadians understand that the individuals who are bringing this forward have issues of their own, which would, I think, highlight the rationale for some of the decisions they are making. I intend to continue very specifically on that path throughout the evening, while following your rule, Mr. Speaker, and respecting your decision.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a very short and specific question. The debate we are having now is on a motion in the name of the President of the Treasury Board, seconded by the member for Central Nova, or Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, which is what he does now that he has announced his retirement.

My question is, why did both of them take off like jackrabbits when it came time to speak to the motion? Why did they leave it up to the parliamentary—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre knows it is inappropriate and unparliamentary to make reference to whether people are in the House.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

• (1900)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand from the answer of my hon. colleague that the plan of the Conservatives for Senate reform is still an elected Senate. The Supreme Court said that to elect the Senate, we would need a constitutional amendment, supported by seven provinces with 50% of the population.

Is it the view of the government that the constitution must be reopened, yes or no?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I am assuming that the member came into the chamber a little late, or he would know that, of course, it is absolutely not our intention to reopen the Constitution. That is not something Canadians want. They want us to focus on jobs and economic growth, which is something we will continue to do.

We have put our reforms on the table. It is something the Council of the Federation can take a look at. Will the government be involved in constitutional negotiations with our provincial and territorial partners on the Senate? No.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today on behalf of the New Democratic Party to oppose vote 1 in the main estimates, the appropriation of \$57 million for the Senate of Canada, and to urge my colleagues in the House of Commons from all parties to do the same.

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We simply cannot keep giving them money. It only encourages them. I put it to members that while we may not have the authority to unilaterally abolish the Senate, we can cut off its blood supply, curb its activities, and limit the ability associated with this wholesale waste of money and abuse of power.

Let us face it, Canadians have just about had it with the upper chamber. The Auditor General's forensic audit, to be released tomorrow, is not going to improve the public's opinion of this outdated, undemocratic vestigial appendix of colonialism. In short, the jig is up for the Senate of Canada. No amount of tinkering is going to convince Canadians that it is worth preserving. No amount of baffle-gab from the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister is going to take the stink off recent developments in the Senate of Canada.

I want to know the answer to the question I did not get a chance to ask. Why did the parliamentary secretary end up making this speech instead of the person who moved the motion to adopt and fund this appropriation, which is the President of the Treasury Board? It may be revealed later in the day.

This latest round of expense account shenanigans may be the catalyst for the public's latest outrage. Stories of wretched excess and gluttony never fail to offend the sensibilities of hard-working Canadian taxpayers, but the pure patronage pork of the Senate appointments process since its inception has been unworthy of any western democracy, and it is a disgrace.

Greg Thomas, of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, calls it a "wretched bordello of back-scratching".

However, there are more serious reasons why the jig is up for the Senate and why we should not only cut off its funding but find a way to abolish it altogether, and I will address those reasons as we go forward in tonight's debate.

I want to say at the outset that there is a great history and tradition of the member of my riding opposing the vote in the main estimates funding the Senate. The former member for Winnipeg Centre, J.S. Woodsworth, began efforts to abolish the Senate and oppose its funding when he was first elected as the member for the Independent Labour Party in 1921.

Woodsworth opposed funding for the Senate, because he knew what the Senate stood for and why it was really created. It was created to keep the democratically elected House of Commons from passing laws that may have a deleterious effect on the interests of capital and the wealthy. Sober second thought meant curbing the misguided ambitions of the great unwashed, like members in the lower chamber, who may seek to legislate in the best interests of ordinary Canadians not just in the best interests of capital. He knew that the Senate was not just an expensive nuisance. He knew that it was an obstacle and an impediment to democracy.

Apologists will say that the Senate is there to protect the rights of minorities. What they do not say is that the minority they are talking about is the rich and powerful elite. In the words of Sir John A. Macdonald himself when debating the creation of the Senate:

We must protect the rights of minorities, and the rich are always fewer in number than the poor.

It was created as a check on the democratically elected chamber in case they got too uppity. In the first decades of our history as a nation, the Senate vetoed almost half the legislation the lower chamber sent up to it. J.S. Woodsworth and the Independent Labour Party got burned themselves by the Senate. I want to share this example with the House.

In 1925, the Independent Labour Party offered to support the minority Liberal government of William Lyon Mackenzie King in exchange for one simple thing: a promise to create an old age security pension. Mackenzie King agreed, and a famous letter sealing the deal is on file at the NDP headquarters on Laurier Street as we speak. The legislation was passed at all stages through the House of Commons, only to be rejected in 1926, vetoed by the Liberal-dominated Senate.

The will of the people as expressed by the democratically elected members of the House of Commons was thwarted and undermined by the unelected Senate. As a result, Canadians went into the Great Depression with no old age security.

It should offend the sensibilities of anyone professing to be a Democrat if the will of the people, as expressed by their democratically elected representatives in Parliament, can be vetoed on a whim by unelected, self-serving partisans appointed by the ruling party.

● (1905)

That is what rubbed the Reverend J.S. Woodsworth the wrong way. As early as 1926, there is record of him calling for the Senate's abolition.

J.S. Woodsworth, as many here will know, went on to become the founder and the first leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the predecessor to the NDP. It should surprise no one, then, that at its founding convention in Regina, 1933, the party called upon an amendment to the British North America Act to abolish the Senate. The Regina Manifesto is worth remembering today. It says:

In its peculiar composition of a fixed number of members appointed for life...it is a standing obstacle to all progressive legislation, and the only...satisfactory method of dealing with the constitutional difficulties it creates is to abolish it.

When J.S. Woodsworth passed away in 1942, the good people of my riding elected another United Church minister and long-standing advocate of the social gospel movement, the Reverend Stanley Knowles. He remained the MP for Winnipeg North Centre for 42 years. During that time, he faithfully continued the tradition established by Woodsworth of trying to defund the Senate as an interim step toward its ultimate abolition. He put forward motions and bills to abolish the Senate at least 18 times that my research can find. I am proud of the history and the tradition of the Independent Labour Party, the CCF and the NDP in my riding of Winnipeg Centre.

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I can say with all humility that every day I take my seat in the House of Commons, I am very aware of the honour that is mine to stand in the footsteps of these two great men, two of the greatest champions of social economic justice and democracy that this country has ever known. It is a great honour for me to uphold the Winnipeg Centre tradition of opposing any further funding for the Senate in the main estimates of this year or any other, and to work toward the day that the institution is abolished and excised from the Parliament of Canada once and for all.

I am not going to indulge today in any bashing of individual senators because, notwithstanding some ethical lapses by some, the real problem lies with the institution, not with the individuals. As Stanley Knowles said in 1964, after the Senate killed a bill to fund the unemployment insurance system, many members of the Senate are decent and even “outstanding Canadians. Many of them have rendered great service to this country. That is not the issue. The issue is the power they possess.”

He went on to say:

The Senate of Canada, whose members are appointed for life, has powers greater than those of any such body in any democratic state. The British House of Lords can delay the passing of a bill for only one year. Our Senate could veto a Commons measure year after year to the end of time.... The House of Lords cannot reject or even delay a bill providing money. Our Senate can...

It just did, with the unemployment insurance bill of 1964.

Should non-elected people be in a position to veto or delay the will of those elected by the people?

I believe it should not. That is why my party and I have long favoured the abolition of the Senate.

I was reminded today of Mikhail Gorbachev's reaction when he was touring our Parliament with Eugene Whelan and how stunned he was that Canadian senators were not only appointed, but appointed for life. He was shocked, according to *The Toronto Star*. A member of the politburo in a communist dictatorship was aghast at what an affront that is, just as we all should be shocked. It is unworthy of any western democracy. It is an embarrassment and it is a national disgrace.

The appointment process has offended Canadians perhaps even more than the bogus expense claims. No prime minister in the history of Canada has abused the appointment process as much as the current Prime Minister. It is ironic and, perhaps, even poetic justice that his first broken promise to Canadians, “I will not appoint unelected senators”, has now come to be perhaps his greatest headache, his greatest liability and hangs like a great stinking albatross around his neck. He has appointed 59 senators and counting. It seems that it did not take him long to learn, like other prime ministers before him, that patronage is the K-Y Jelly of politics.

Members will remember the notorious day when, in an absolute orgy of political patronage, the Prime Minister appointed ten failed Conservative candidates, the campaign manager of the Conservative Party's election campaign, the president of the Conservative Party, the communications director of the Conservative Party and the chief fundraiser of the Conservative Party.

●(1910)

Pretty much the whole war room of the Conservative Party's election campaign was appointed to the Senate as one big fat “eff you” to the Canadian public and there they could continue their purely—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Edmonton Centre is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is known for his colourful rhetoric and extreme language, but he is going too far with references to lubricants and not very thinly disguised references to foul language. I request that he keep it a little more dignified in this place, despite his tendencies.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no question that the last comment was clearly unparliamentary. I would ask the member for Winnipeg Centre to withdraw it.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, on your request, I would be happy to withdraw it and replace the word with one big fat “insult” to the Canadian people, if that is more palatable to those present.

That whole group, the whole Conservative war room, could continue its purely partisan activities with \$140,000-a-year salary, staff and office space, and incredible travel privileges. It is wrong and unfair on so many levels that I do not even know where to begin.

Also, the Conservatives are by no means alone in this. The Liberals have been equally guilty over the years of stacking the Senate with their political operatives, so that the partisan activities of the party are passed on to the taxpayer. It is an abomination and an affront to democracy.

Earlier I referred to the early years of our democracy when the Senate would veto much of the legislation passed by the House of Commons. I spoke about how the Senate arbitrarily vetoed J.S. Woodsworth's Old Age Pensions Act of 1926. We spoke of the Senate vetoing funding for the new unemployment insurance act in the 1960s. One would think such a thing could never happen today, but one would be wrong.

I refer members to Bill C-311 in the last Parliament, Jack Layton's climate change accountability act. For five years, over two minority Parliaments, Jack Layton massaged and encouraged his climate change bill through the lower chamber, only to have it unilaterally and arbitrarily struck down in the Senate without a single hour of debate and without a single witness being heard. Now Canada, at the G7 discussion on climate change, hangs its head in shame, because it has nothing to bring to the table. No legislation has ever been brought forward on the subject of this existential threat to the world. It is no wonder Jack Layton called the Senate “outdated and obsolete...a 19th-century institution that has no place in a modern democracy in the 21st century.”

I refer also to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and the very modest parliamentary reform act that he encouraged members of Parliament to adopt. I believe the vote was 270 to 17 in favour in the House of Commons and, sure enough, it has gone to the Senate to die, I believe. I put it to everyone that we will not see that bill succeed in the 42nd Parliament.

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The third bill was already mentioned by my colleague from Windsor, which I believe you put forward, Mr. Speaker, on sports betting. It has languished for three years in the Senate, probably never to be seen again. The last bill was introduced by my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, a bill on transgendered rights, an important bill that was nurtured through the House of Commons, a very real social issue, again dying an unnatural death in the Senate.

After years of failed attempts and a frustrating Supreme Court ruling, Senate reform is now sitting squarely on the too-hard-to-do pile. The Prime Minister would have us believe that there is no appetite among the provinces for what he calls another round of constitutional wrangling, but how would he know? He has never called a first ministers meeting. He has never asked them. It has been 23 years since we had a go at amending the Constitution. Does he think that is too frequent to consider the well-being of our federation?

The Constitution is supposed to be a dynamic document, a living, breathing thing, not static and rigid. I think the Prime Minister is wrong. I believe there is a real and growing appetite for reopening the Constitution to discuss any number of things, from interprovincial trade to revenue sharing, to the Canada pension plan, to yes, even the future of the Senate of Canada.

I took part in the constituent assemblies leading up to the Charlottetown accord led by Joe Clark. I was one of the ordinary Canadians who wrote a letter to *The Globe and Mail* and 160 of us were chosen to learn more about the Constitution of Canada and embrace some of the issues that the federation was facing. I can inform members that it is a healthy exercise to take the pulse of the federation from time to time and try to address the legitimate concerns and grievances that inevitably grow in a federal system of government. It is healthy to come together to reaffirm the resolve that it takes to keep our loosely knit federation intact.

It was a worthwhile and important effort that almost had me convinced that the Senate could be fixed. I no longer believe that. I now share the view of the premier of Saskatchewan that it is irredeemable and should be abolished.

• (1915)

Let me close by quoting, once again, Mr. Greg Thomas, of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, in his recent article in the *Toronto Star*:

The Senate is a disgrace to Canada. The Senate doesn't make our nation better; it makes it worse. And unelected assembly of landowners has no legitimate right to rule over the rest of us, no matter what the Constitution says. The Senate is a constitutional institution, to be sure. But then, so was...the slave trade, in Britain, in the 19th century.

Democracy in Canada could be enhanced by abolishing the Senate.

I say to my colleagues, through you, Mr. Speaker, by voting nay on vote 1 of the main estimates tonight, members of the House of Commons will put this issue on the national agenda. I urge members present to vote tonight, reflect upon what is best for democracy, reflect upon what their constituents would want them to do and vote accordingly. I suggest that leaves them with no choice but to vote nay on vote 1 of the main estimates 2015-16.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to note that previously the member had suggested we could not talk about expenses. However, in the very first sentence of his speech, in the very opening remarks of his speech, he referred directly to Senate expenses as an issue. I think that I will seize upon that later on in debate and ask some very specific questions with respect to expenses.

However, something troubled me even more in his remarks that I think we have to get to, because this is something that the Leader of the Opposition has not wanted to talk about, but the member stated in his speech and I want him to be very clear on this. He suggested that it is policy of the NDP that it would, if it ever formed government, begin constitutional negotiations as a priority, to open up the Constitution to talk about how to reform the Senate.

I wonder if the hon. member would confirm that is a priority of the NDP, to open up constitutional negotiations, and if he could highlight for me what each of the individual premiers have told them their positions would be on that.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, the commitment has been, and it has been made very publicly as recently as this weekend, that the leader of the official opposition would consult with Canadians and would consult the premiers for the purposes of finding collective interests in abolishing the Senate and meeting the requisite numbers where the Senate could in fact be abolished, as per the lower chambers. All the provinces that used to have second chambers have gone bicameral, those will testify and admit that their lower chambers were not diminished by abolishing the upper chamber; in fact, they were strengthened.

However, the mandate of senators comes into question, too, and it needs to be addressed as it is part of the problem that we are facing today and part of the abuse that we are going to hear declared by the Auditor General when he releases his report tomorrow. It has to do with the fact that the mandate of senators, as they see it, is so open-ended that the mandate of a senator is anything the senator deems to be his or her mandate. They are spending money freely, without any oversight, without any scrutiny, without any control even by the rule of reporting.

If the ruling party has senators in its caucus, surely the ruling party could exercise some control over those senators so they do not abuse the system and abuse their expense accounts. Where is the accountability on the part of the ruling party and the Conservatives?

• (1920)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for a very vigorous and substantial speech. He seems quite enthusiastic about the idea of reopening the Constitution.

I would like to know if he spoke on behalf of his leader when he said so; especially, when he said that the constitutional talks he is considering would not be limited to the Senate, but would touch a lot of issues, such as the three that he mentioned.

Government Orders

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, what I was referring to was how much I enjoyed the exercise leading up to the Charlottetown accord. What an honour it was, as a carpenter by trade, to be chosen as an ordinary Canadian, going through what was an incredible learning experience, learning about the fabric of our country.

As my colleague knows, the Charlottetown accord was not limited to the future of the Senate or the reform of the Senate, although substantive recommendations were made. If my memory serves me, the accord proposed that each province would be assigned six senators and each territory one, and additional seats would be added for the representation of aboriginal peoples of Canada, an idea that we borrowed from the country of New Zealand, where the Maori have representation, and that elections would take place under the federal jurisdiction at the same time as elections in the House of Commons.

Those were interesting developments arrived at by consensus-building in six meetings across the country, talking to ordinary Canadians.

The initiative failed, but at least the government of the day did not put it on the too-hard-to-do pile. It embraced it as an issue and as a subject that Canadians wanted to talk about.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that hard-working Canadians who pay taxes are very concerned with what is happening in the other House. While in my riding this weekend, I heard they were strongly questioning what was going on in the Senate.

The Prime Minister said that he wanted to do away with the Senate. Could the member comment on how the Conservatives failed to deliver on a pre-election commitment that the Prime Minister often made?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have dropped the ball on the Senate, and I share the frustration. We have to give them credit for trying, and they did try. I went with the Prime Minister on the day he introduced the bill in the Senate regarding limiting the term to eight years. I was curious to see how the public and Senate would react. The fact is that it is now put on the too-hard-to-do pile. The Prime Minister has washed his hands of any commitment to reform the Senate.

I remember when the old Reform Party used to bring out the Mexican hat dance and the mariachi band, and play outside the Senate, criticizing those senators who spent all their time on the beach in Mexico. That was when we had people who were committed to reform the Senate, and we joined them in their enthusiasm.

However, the fact is that tonight we are voting on sending another \$57 million to the Senate with no more accountability than the last pile of money that it abused.

Canadians have to ask themselves if they want us to spend their hard-earned tax dollars this way, and if so, why?

I ask all members of Parliament if, deep in their own conscience, they are accurately reflecting the will of their constituents if they vote in favour of funding the undemocratic, unelected, under indictment Senate.

● (1925)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is exactly what the member for Winnipeg Centre has said, which is that we are voting on \$57 million of expenditures for the Senate. It is up to members to figure out after the vote whether they want to show up for work.

The fact is that the Senate has not passed motions and legislation from the House of Commons. Therefore, why should we spend \$57 million more? What is the \$57 million reason for Canadians?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, Canadians may be even more concerned that the total budget for the Senate is more like \$90 million. The House of Commons gets to vote on the \$57 million in vote 1, which is the appropriation for the Senate, but some of its funding is in fact statutory.

The fact is that Canadians are wondering why they are paying anything for it. Not only has there been a pattern of abuse, but it serves as an undemocratic barrier to the will of the people as expressed by those elected representatives in the House of Commons, time and time again. There are 133 examples that the researchers at the Library of Parliament found for me where bills were vetoed by the Senate which were passed in the House of Commons.

Nobody elected those guys to make legislation. Senators should have no right to interfere with the will of the House of Commons, and they certainly should have no right to generate bills.

More and more bills that we are dealing with in the House of Commons, as members know, are not called Bill C-51, for example, but rather Bill S-6, Bill S-13, or Bill S-33. The bills are originating in the Senate. Here we are dutifully debating bills that are generated in the other chamber. It is completely upside down. It is completely absurd. If Canadians think about it, this is an affront to democracy and everything that is good and decent about our notion of democracy.

When Sir John A. Macdonald first crafted the Senate, to cut him some slack, he was two years away from the American Civil War. He was looking south of the border thinking that he could not give too much authority without some checks and balances or God knows what could happen. North America was traumatized. However, that happened not in the last century, but the century before that.

We do not need to be bound by the limitations of John A. Macdonald's thinking when he made that terrible quote about how "We must protect the rights of minorities, and the rich are always fewer in number than the poor".

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the review of the Senate budget should be done in a comprehensive way, not as an attempt to initiate an abolition of the Senate bit by bit, incrementally, as the NDP is trying to do today.

Government Orders

The Liberals strongly support any sound measures that increase frugality, openness and transparency in our parliamentary democracy. Our open Parliament plan specially called for a more detailed audit of the House of Commons by the Auditor General. It is our strong belief that House and Senate Boards of Internal Economy should work with the Auditor General to develop mandatory performance audits of the House of Commons and Senate administrations.

The Liberal leader and member for Papineau rightly said that parliamentarians had the privilege of serving Canadians, and Canadians rightly expected them to adhere to the highest ethical standards. This principle should guide all parliamentarians during a time when we really need to improve ethical standards in the House as well as in the Senate.

The Senate, in particular, needs to change. Not only is change needed to its rules around transparency and accountability processes, but the whole institution cannot stay the same. The status quo is unacceptable.

Three bold options to reform the Canadian Senate are on the table: abolish it, make it an elected body or make it more independent and less partisan.

Only the third option, proposed by Liberal leader, the member for Papineau, is the realistic option. The other two do not stand a chance. Why? Abolition or an elected Senate would both require constitutional amendments, as confirmed by the Supreme Court in its April 25, 2014, opinion. The court ruled that Parliament could not change the nature of the Senate unilaterally. Making it an elected chamber would require the agreement of Parliament and the concurrence of seven provinces representing 50% of the population of the provinces, the 7/50 rule. Abolishing the Senate would require the unanimous agreement of Parliament and the 10 provinces. Unanimity among provinces for abolition is out of reach. No more is there the majority concurrence required for making the Senate an elected chamber.

At least one province, Quebec, has declared that it will not enter into constitutional negotiations on the sole issue of Senate reform. There is an regional veto act that gives veto power over constitutional changes to the five regions of Canada. To abolish the Senate would require a referendum, constitutional negotiations and very likely a majority in every province of the country. Therefore, this will not happen.

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

That said, Canadians have had enough of the ethical and financial scandals created by the actions of certain senators. Canadians want no more of the favouritism and extreme partisanship that have tarnished the Senate's reputation and reduced its usefulness, favouritism and partisanship pushed to unequalled and intolerable extremes by this Prime Minister.

We Liberals agree that reforms are needed to return the Senate to the role assigned to it: the chamber of sober second thought. We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure that the Senate does the best it can to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to it by the Fathers of Confederation: to scrutinize bills carefully and to identify

errors, flaws and inaccuracies, and on that basis, to propose useful amendments.

We Liberals will ensure that the Senate plays its constitutional role as an upper chamber that is attentive to the needs and aspirations of the regions and to minorities in our diverse country, including the first nations and the official language minority communities.

We Liberals will ensure that we have the Senate that is needed, an institution that is more serene and more independent and is composed of first class legislators who are competent, ethical and highly qualified, and are chosen through a non-partisan procedure.

A more independent Senate: this is the challenge that the Liberal leader is committed to undertaking.

The Liberal plan has two components. The first has already been realized; the second will be if Canadians elect a Liberal government in the next federal election in 2015.

The first component became a reality on January 29, 2014. Since that date, there have been no senators in the Liberal caucus; it consists of members of Parliament only.

The Liberal caucus and the Liberal Party of Canada no longer have a direct relationship with senators who, like any citizen, may belong to the political party of their choice.

Senators have thus been relieved of all partisan duties and are better able to devote themselves to their duties as parliamentarians and legislators. The Liberal leader did invite the Prime Minister to do the same in his own caucus. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the Prime Minister refused.

We therefore now have a Liberal caucus with no senators, and senators with no partisan obligations. In a swift and decisive move, the Liberal leader accomplished the most important reform made to the Senate since Confederation. In a single morning, he did more to reform the Senate than the Prime Minister has done in nearly ten years in power, and the Liberal leader will go even further along the road to reform if Canadians elect him as their next prime minister.

The second component of Liberal reform of the Senate provides for the implementation of a non-partisan appointment process through which the upper chamber will at all times be composed of eminent, dedicated and highly qualified legislators. Some constitutional experts recommend setting up a senatorial advisory committee, somewhat like what has been put in place for the selection of certain members of the upper chamber in the United Kingdom.

The advisory committee would be responsible for providing the Prime Minister with informed and objective advice on potential candidates for the Senate. In my opinion, this model should be among those considered. In this model, the committee would base its recommendations on serious, objective, non-partisan criteria.

Government Orders

To be recommended, a candidate would have to show a long list of qualities: exceptional skill in his field; an indisputable connection to the province concerned; a record of exceptional service to his community; exceptional work habits; flawless honesty and integrity; open-mindedness; the wisdom and good judgment we expect from a legislator; and a thorough understanding of the role of a chamber of sober second thought. Senators would be expected to propose improvements to bills without challenging or usurping the legitimate and dominant role of the elected House within a democracy.

The committee would take care to ensure equal representation of women and minorities, including first nations and official language minority communities that have historic ties to the Senate.

How might the senator selection process take place? What I am describing is one possible way.

In accordance with constitutional conventions, the Prime Minister would make the final recommendation to the Governor General from a short list prepared by the advisory committee.

If the Prime Minister felt unable to appoint someone from the list, he would have to explain himself to Parliament and ask the advisory committee to come up with a new list.

[*English*]

An act of Parliament enacting such a selection process would be fully constitutional. It would not change the Senate's fundamental nature and role, a nature and role that, according to a 2014 Supreme Court opinion, section 52, Parliament has no right to alter unilaterally. In contrast, the court confirmed that making the Senate an elected chamber would fundamentally alter its nature and role, thus requiring that the 7/50 provincial approval threshold be met.

The court noted, in section 65 of its 2014 opinion, that the framers of the Constitution Act, 1982 extended the constitutional protection provided by the general amending procedure to the entire process by which senators were selected. This means that the entire process must be considered in order to assess if it changes the fundamental nature and role of the Senate.

If the entire process only aims to make the prime minister's choices less partisan and more objective, as the Liberal proposal does, it does nothing to change the fundamental nature of the institution. To the contrary, it reinforces the likelihood that the Senate will actually correspond with the court's definition of the upper house's fundamental nature.

The definition reads as follows, to provide "sober second thought" on the legislation adopted by the popular representatives in the House of Commons", to be "a thoroughly independent body which could canvass dispassionately the measures of the House of Commons, and "a complementary legislative body, rather than a perennial rival of the House of Commons in the legislative process". It would be removed "from a partisan political arena".

I believe it would be wise to experiment with the new process before entrenching it in an act of Parliament in order to test its uptake.

[*Translation*]

In closing, I would just like to say that the commitment made by the Liberal leader, namely to give Canada a more effective, less partisan and more independent upper chamber, is entirely realistic and particularly necessary.

Without changing a single word of the Constitution, he will create a Senate made up of senators who have the competencies, knowledge and skills to carry out the task that the Fathers of Confederation entrusted to the institution: to scrutinize and improve the bills passed in the House of Commons. The Trudeau plan to reform the Senate—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1940)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville named the Liberal Party leader. He may continue, but without referring to other members by name.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

The Liberal plan to reform the Senate will give us an upper chamber that will be a source of pride and confidence among Canadians—truly a chamber of sober second thought.

The time has come for bold actions. The time has come for an effective, non-partisan Senate. The time has come for a Liberal plan to reform the Senate.

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with considerable interest to my hon. colleague. I have a question about regional and provincial representation. As a point, Prince Edward Island has about the same population as resides in my riding of Edmonton Centre, and it has four senators and four members of Parliament. That is the way it has been since Confederation.

Therefore, I would be interested in the thoughts of my colleague about how in his estimation they would re-order the representation of the Senate, if they could, to make it more regional and population based so it is not so out of balance. Having said that, if any proposal were to do that, does he think Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and P.E.I., particularly, who are very overrepresented in the Senate proportionately, would go along with that?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked a very valid question. I wish he would have asked the question of his Prime Minister when he wanted to elect the Senate without addressing this difficulty.

An elected Senate would be more powerful than the Senate of today. The under-representation of Alberta and British Columbia would be completely unacceptable with an elected Senate. That is why all of the prime ministers before the current Prime Minister were responsible enough to not propose to elect the Senate, as long as provinces did not agree between themselves about how many senators they may have by province. It was completely unreasonable and irresponsible for the Prime Minister to do so, especially as an Albertan.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier is invoking the Liberal Party's own turpitude as an excuse for doing nothing. It was the Liberals, in fact, who made the Constitution so hard to amend, and now they are using their own misdeeds as an excuse for not doing anything.

After listening carefully to the hon. member's presentation, it is clear that what he is recommending is an elitist Senate. It seems to me that he is saying that they would select those whom they deem to be intelligent enough to be members of that great, noble institution. Canadians see that institution as a parasite. Canadians want people who are accountable to them.

Why is it so hard to accept the idea that anyone who holds legislative authority should be accountable to the people?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, my colleague might be frustrated with the Constitution, but that is not going to solve the problem. To have an elected Senate, we need seven provinces and 50% of the population. To abolish the Senate, the provinces need to be unanimous. The member will have to ask his caucus and his leader whether in their plan to hold a referendum on this issue the required majority will be the majority in every province of our country. If the majority in some of the provinces vote the other way, then they will have veto power over the others. Does the hon. member really want to divide Canada in that way?

The other way to look at it is to realize that every great federation has two chambers. Our Parliament is not unicameral. There are two chambers, like in Australia, for example. Every federation has two chambers. Since we have an unelected chamber, can we come up with a way to ensure that that chamber is better chosen, in a non-partisan way, that it is more independent and that is better able to fulfill its responsibilities as the chamber of sober second thought, give careful consideration to the legislative work done by the House of Commons and propose useful amendments?

● (1945)

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the response that my colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier, gave to my NDP colleague's question. He is right to say that the Constitution has to be changed and only if there is unanimity. He is right. Where I do not see eye to eye with him is on his defeatism. He thinks it is a lost cause and accepts that we would not get a majority in every province of Canada.

I choose to believe that our Constitution is not a fixed law, it is not a sealed object for which we have thrown away the key. I choose to believe that this Constitution can be changed by future generations and that we can drive that change.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, I will be very pleased to discuss this with my colleague during the election campaign. Is it really a public priority to nostalgically return to the time of the Charlottetown accord, as my colleague mentioned? Members need to understand that Canadians have no interest in reopening the Constitution just to deal with the Senate. The premier of Quebec clearly indicated that if the federal government approaches him about the Constitution, then he is going to put forward his demands for Quebec. Given the report published last week regarding

aboriginal peoples in Canada, one can only imagine how long such a list could get.

We need to be frank with Canadians and tell them that a vote for the NDP is a vote for a huge constitutional negotiation with a very slim chance of success.

[*English*]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the independence that the member talks about for the Senate is also good enough for the House of Commons, more specifically whether members for Cardigan, Scarborough—Guildwood, or Winnipeg North, or candidates coming into the House of Commons under the Liberal Party banner, ought to be free, for example, to vote their pro-life views?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, that is a different and complicated topic. It is about party discipline and what kind of party discipline each caucus decides to have within its own rules.

In the Liberal Party, it is very clear. We have party discipline for everything that is linked to the basic philosophy of our party, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and everything that is linked to budget issues and to the commitments we have made in our party platform.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about the Liberals' famous plan for the Senate.

I do not know whether he looked at the list of senators, but while a number of them are retiring, the terms of others are not up until 2030, 2039 or 2026. Even if senators are appointed more carefully, it is still going to take at least 30 years for the Senate to be completely renewed.

Is the Liberal plan a 30-year plan?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, every time there is a vacancy in the Senate, the next senator will be chosen according to this non-partisan procedure, which will ensure that senators are more independent and better qualified.

From what I understand, the Prime Minister has no desire to appoint any more senators, so the next government will have a lot of appointments to make. If it is a Liberal government, those appointments will all be made according to this non-partisan procedure, which will benefit all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments. However, I think we have to talk a bit further about this proposal from the Liberal Party, which would see an unelected, unaccountable Liberal Senate being appointed by an unelected, unaccountable group of people.

How does that type of Senate actually reflect the mood of Canadians, for one?

Government Orders

The second question is more important than the first one for now. I wonder if the member could touch on what we have heard today, that the new NDP position is to open up constitutional negotiations with respect to the Senate and to hold referendums. I know that he has been part of this in the past, and that strikes me as being a very vain, very dangerous proposal, especially at a time of global economic uncertainty. I wonder if he might comment on that very dangerous proposal of the NDP.

● (1950)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, I prefer to debate the NDP proposal with the NDP. However, since my colleague has invited me to debate the Liberal proposal with him, I think he does not have the right information.

In our proposal, the prime minister would still be accountable for his or her choice, but through a process that would inform the prime minister in order to have candidates who would be highly recommended. If the prime minister did not accept the short list that is proposed to him, he may reject it and ask for another short list. However, the prime minister would have to justify his or her choices, and in the end would have to look at Canadians in the eye and say, “I chose this legislator in the proper process, and this person is a great legislator”.

It would not be done anymore by a press release on a Friday afternoon. It would be done in the House officially, and the prime minister would have to be accountable for his or her choices.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that I will be splitting my time with the member for LaSalle—Émard.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to this motion, which is totally inappropriate considering what is happening right now. A report will be tabled tomorrow. It will name 30 senators, some of them current senators and others who have retired. Nine of them—two of whom are still sitting and seven who have retired—have claimed expenses that have been deemed sufficiently inappropriate to be referred to the RCMP.

There is therefore a major problem, and the motion that was put forward to cut funding to the Senate was completely appropriate. Canadians are thoroughly discouraged by what is going on in the Senate. Of course there are the expenses, but there is also the way senators act.

A bill was passed at least two years ago now. It was introduced by my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and concerned the rights of transgender people. The bill has been sitting in the Senate since then. The government is well aware that, with the election coming, the bill is likely to die on the order paper. The members work hard on bills that may perhaps be rather controversial or that deal with sensitive issues. They make sure that they are amended and modified and they seek the opinion of their colleagues so that the bill can be accepted by everyone in the House and passed by the majority. Then, the government can turn around and tell the senators to make sure that it is never discussed and that in any case it will die on the order paper.

This makes no sense. The worst of it is that the government is doing this not only to the official opposition but also to its own caucus. The Conservatives are doing the same thing with the bill introduced by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills. He worked very hard. He conducted consultations. He came to speak with us and agreed to make some changes because we had some problems with the bill. Now, the bill has been completely amended and it is likely to die on the order paper. They are doing the same thing. They do not respect what goes on here in the House.

There are other rather strange goings-on among the current senators. Such is the case with Senator Don Meredith. I am going to quote an article that I found particularly interesting. It has not been discussed much. It is an article from the *Huffington Post* written by Zi-Ann Lum.

[*English*]

Entitled “Tory Senator Don Meredith Touts Degrees From Unaccredited Schools”, the article states:

A Conservative senator earmarked as one of the Senate’s top spenders holds a master’s degree from a school whose phone number directs calls to a customer helpline for a website that sells iPads and printers.

Senator Don Meredith, a Toronto-area Pentecostal pastor, has a master’s degree in religious studies from California State Christian University (CSCU)—an unaccredited and unregulated private institution that has shifted addresses at least four times within the last 10 years.

Further on, the article states:

Meredith also says he has an honorary doctorate from an association of Christian counsellors that has no standing as a degree-granting school. Since receiving this honorary doctorate, Meredith frequently signs his newsletters and press releases as “The Honourable Dr. Don Meredith.”

● (1955)

[*Translation*]

A few days after this article was published, Senator Don Meredith stopped using the title “doctor” in his blogs and letters.

It seems to me that anyone who twists reality in terms of his degrees and qualifications is not the kind of person that I am particularly proud to introduce. It appears that in the Senate, these kinds of things can go on with relatively few consequences. Don Meredith is still a senator. There is no problem, there are no consequences, despite the fact that he distorted the facts about his degrees, probably even when he had a discussion with the Prime Minister before being named to the Senate. This is surreal.

Let us talk about former senators. In one of his speeches, a Liberal senator decided to read his book in English from *a* to *z*, in order to obtain a French translation of it free of charge, since everything that is said in the two houses is translated, because this is a bilingual country. He obtained a French translation of his book free of charge and published the translation.

Is this really the kind of parliamentary work that Canadians deserve? I do not think so. Even in terms of the quality of the work, there are major problems.

There will be charges, or at least claims, for inappropriate expenses, but there is also a multitude of very debatable expenses about which we can do nothing.

Government Orders

For instance, questions should be asked when senators continually take return flights between Toronto and Ottawa in business class that take less than an hour and easily cost \$2,000 to \$3,000, and they are accompanied by their spouse.

In the House of Commons, the rules are clear about when we are entitled to fly business class and when we are not. Unfortunately, in the Senate, the rules are not clear. People regularly take short return flights in business class that cost the taxpayers a fortune. These expenses are not challenged because the senators have the right to do this. There is a problem in terms of the expenses that people legally have the right to claim.

The Senate is a major problem, and according to the list of appointments, a number of senators will be with us until 2027, 2037, 2026 and even 2040. The Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Housakos, will be in the Senate until 2043, and the Auditor General's report pointed the finger at him. The Speaker of the Senate will be in office until 2043. He has clearly adopted the flawed attitudes that currently hold sway in the Senate.

How can we change an institution that is so flawed, where the senators can remain in office for all these years? My baby will be in university when the Speaker of the Senate retires. How can this change? We will have to wait a generation if we hope to pay a little more attention to Senate appointments. However, paying more attention to the appointments is not a solution. We have an institution here that is completely flawed.

In construction, if a house is too shoddy, there is nothing else to be done. There is no choice. When the foundations and the very structure of a house are too flawed, there is no choice but to tear it down, and this is precisely the problem with the Senate.

We have reached a point where we cannot simply hope to repair the damage. The repairs will be far too onerous in comparison with the problem. There is no choice. We must take action and tear this institution down in the hopes that we can get closer to what Canadians want. Many Canadians are disappointed with what is going on, and they do not understand how we can let it happen.

If someone in any private company distorted the facts about his degrees, would he keep his job and his degrees with no consequences? No. If an employee exaggerated his spending in order to claim huge expenses, would the company agree to keep him? No.

We are at the point where the institution is so flawed that we have no choice but to tear it down, rebuild it and hope that the end result will be what Canadians want.

However, at present, based on what is on the table, I am not going to wait until my child is in university before at least trying to do something to improve the Senate.

In my opinion, even the Prime Minister knows that the Senate is no longer working, and there is a reason why he has not appointed any senators even though there are more than 20 vacant seats.

• (2000)

[*English*]

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

part of the rationale the member had for eliminating the funding for the Senate was with respect to credentials. She also highlighted the expense issues. She highlighted nine senators' expenses as part of the rationale for killing the funding.

As we know, that is a member who owes the Canadian taxpayers \$31,793 with respect to inappropriate expenses for an office that was an illegal partisan office in Montreal. These are resources that were to be spent in the member's particular riding but were redirected to an illegal partisan office in Montreal.

The member will probably recall that on September 22, when asked where the office would be, the member confirmed that the office would be in Ottawa, and then had those funds redirected to Montreal—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard on a point of order.

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the parliamentary secretary that we are debating the main estimates, specifically the \$57 million and change allocated to the Senate. I would therefore remind him that for the time being, we are discussing this motion and his question should be related to the motion being studied by the House.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Chair thanks the hon. member. As members will know, I have just taken the chair, and I understand this conversation began before I arrived.

I would make the statement that I have made many times in the past, that members are obliged to speak to the business that is before the House at all times, and the Chair often gives latitude for those who are making points related to what is before the House, but they cannot go too far afield.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary, as with all members, to keep the comments related to what is before the House. The time is almost up for the parliamentary secretary, so could he quickly put his question?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that it was the member who actually talked about the Senate expenses, I wonder if the member would agree that the same standard she is applying to the Senate should apply to herself. Does she think that we should cut off her salary, her office funding and the salary of the other 67 members of the NDP caucus who owe money because of the example she cited with respect to the Senate and why she wants to kill the funding to the Senate.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, in my case the decision was made behind closed doors, even though we asked that the process be public. It was decided that my employee's salary was inappropriate, even though no one ever tried to speak to me and no one ever spoke to my employee. That was an absolutely partisan decision.

I am referring to expenses that were deemed inappropriate by an outside auditor, the Auditor General, who is not partisan. We asked that our case go to court. We even asked that it be referred directly to the Supreme Court.

Furthermore, we are talking about two completely different cases. On the one hand, we have the Conservative MPs who decided to get into bed with the Liberals and rule that we had made partisan expenditures. On the other hand, I am talking about expenses that have been deemed inappropriate by the Auditor General, who is completely independent.

- (2005)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is safe to say that Canadians are looking for leadership on the Senate file.

The leader of the Liberal Party has very clearly indicated the opportunity for Canadians to have some sense of hope toward making changes to the Senate that do not require constitutional changes.

Would the member not support at the very least in the interim ideas like what the leader of the Liberal Party has been talking about, reforming the Senate wherever we can, where constitutional change is not required? In this way at the very least we would be providing an opportunity for Canadians to see something that they want to see, and that is a change in the Senate. It would seem to me to be a responsible way of approaching the Senate today.

Could the member provide some comment on that suggestion?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' plan is completely unrealistic and it is a 30-year plan.

The Liberals are saying that, when there are vacancies, they will appoint more qualified senators who will be less partisan. However, I would like to remind my colleague that most senators will be retiring when my baby goes to university.

I cannot wait 30 years for our country to have a Senate that might be somewhat less partisan. In any case, the plan has to work first, and that will not happen. Some senators will be there until 2043. The senators representing Quebec alone will not be retiring until 2024, 2024, 2049, 2039, 2021 and 2024.

Do we have time to wait for all of these senators to retire before we can hope that the Senate may begin to do its work in a less partisan manner? This plan does not make any sense and is unrealistic. It is not a solution. It is merely a band-aid for the problem, an attempt to find an easy solution. Most people do not understand that this plan will not work because there are senators who are not scheduled to retire for another 30 or 40 years.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we resume debate and before I go to the government House leader, I understand that there has been some back and forth this evening in terms of what is or is not relevant. I commented before the last question, but again, to remind all hon. members, the matter before the House, which has to do with the main estimates, is specifically related to Senate expenses. There is a certain irony here in that in most cases, questions about the Senate are out of order and the House is to be dealing with matters before the House.

It strikes the Chair that the argument is that because the Senate is before this place, we cannot link it to the House. First of all, obviously it is the opposite of what we normally deal with, but I think the discussion about expenses in the Senate inevitably leads to discussions more broadly about expenses, and it would seem a very narrow drawing of relevance to suggest that members making reference to things that go on in the House of Commons is not allowed because we are only talking about the Senate.

I again go back to my earlier comment, which is that the rules are there not so that members can do whatever they can to get as close to the line as possible. The Standing Orders and the rules were agreed upon by all members to guide and manage debate in this place, and relevance is a part of that. The issue really is not what a member can get away with; it is about members being professional and parliamentary in terms of staying within what is relevant to what is before the House, and if all hon. members made a good faith effort to do that, I believe that this and all other debates would go more smoothly.

The hon. government House leader is rising on a point of order.

* * *

- (2010)

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES ACT

BILL S-7—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must advise that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) concerning the proceedings at the report stage and third reading stage of Bill S-7, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose, at a future sitting, a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of the proceedings of the said stages of the said bill.

* * *

[Translation]

MAIN ESTIMATES 2015-16

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1 — SENATE

The House resumed consideration of Motion No. 1.

Government Orders

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly proud to be a member of the New Democratic Party. I am particularly proud to stand on the shoulders of giants like J.S. Woodsworth and Stanley Knowles. I am also particularly proud to see my colleague from Winnipeg Centre carry on the tradition of questioning the institution we call the Senate.

This evening we have talked about our Constitution and about the institution we know as the Senate. We have also discussed Senate reform; these discussions are nothing new. We also talked about the Constitution, a topic that does not come up often for fear of having to open up the Constitution or talk about it.

This evening we are talking about allocating \$57 million to the Senate. I must admit that I am opposed to sending this amount of money to the Senate because we have hit a bit of a dead end in our talks about Senate reform. One option we still have in the House of Commons is deciding how to allocate money to the various departments. In this case, I think that in recent years the Senate has proven that it does not take its duties seriously when it comes to spending and the way it spends money.

Once again, I have to say that not necessarily all senators are at fault. However, over the past years and decades, the Senate has lost its purpose. I think that is the fault of a series of prime ministers who made partisan Senate appointments.

I have to say that when I came to the Parliament of Canada, I was pretty innocent. I had absolutely no idea that senators attended MPs' caucus meetings. I found that totally outrageous. Why did senators, who were supposed to be objective, attend MPs' caucus meetings every week? That suggested some almost insidious connections within the old parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. Because of those connections, people from the upper chamber, who were supposed to be non-partisan, attended Liberal and Conservative caucus meetings. That has been going on for decades.

It is very clear that senators appointed in recent years were put to use by the Conservative Party. Those appointments were made solely to help the Conservative Party line its coffers. Senators were sent from riding to riding to raise funds for Conservative MPs. That is outrageous. I could not believe it. They also carried on the Liberal tradition of raising funds and participating in election campaigns with impunity.

• (2015)

It is truly extraordinary and surprising that the NDP, without the help of any senators who specialize in fundraising and travel all over Canada, became the official opposition in 2011. That is to our credit. We succeeded in forming the official opposition in the Parliament of Canada because we worked hard and met with Canadians.

This evening we are doing what we have been doing for quite some time. As the official opposition, we are in proposal mode. On October 22, 2013, my colleague from Toronto—Danforth moved a motion. It is interesting, because our Liberal colleagues like to brag about being the first party to present a plan for thoughtful Senate reform. However, they voted against our motion, which stated:

That, in the opinion of this House, urgent steps must be taken to improve accountability in the Senate, and, therefore, this House call for the introduction of immediate measures to end Senators' partisan activities, including participation in

Caucus meetings, and to limit Senators' travel allowances to those activities clearly and directly related to parliamentary business.

That is a motion that we moved in 2013. The Liberals, who are supposedly newly converted to Senate reform, voted against that measure to make the current senators less partisan.

We are carrying on the tradition of proposing changes to the Senate. One of the first things to do is to oppose the \$57 million included in the main estimates. We are simply saying no. That is one of the first things we can do right now.

As Campbell Clark of *The Globe and Mail* said this morning, this is the first step toward reform. This is something the members of the House can control. They can say no to this transfer of funds to the Senate.

What is more, the idea was already out there. The Conservative MPs are in favour of reforming the Senate, and the Prime Minister has been talking about Senate reform since the 1980s, but they voted against our motion, which simply said that we must adopt urgent measures to end partisanship in the Senate. That is a very important first step. The motion also said that senators should not attend caucus meetings, among other things.

I must also point out how unfair these measures are. We made a careful choice based on principle. We do not want any senators. There are no NDP senators, and I am very proud of that. In fact, the two old parties have always campaigned by using their senators to raise money. All their old campaign organizers are in the Senate, in any case. This must stop and we must cut off this \$57 million. It is a good step toward real reform of the Senate.

• (2020)

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's comments intently. One of the rationales she used with respect to eliminating funding for the Senate was, in her words, careless spending, being careless with money. We know that this is a member who owes \$27,866 to the Canadian people because of inappropriate spending. This is a member who, on September 22, authorized a certain amount of funds, to be spent, as she said in her authorization, in an Ottawa office, but unfortunately, she redirected them to a Montreal office.

I hope that she certainly uses—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, you just ruled on the fact that we are supposed to stay on the issue before us. My hon. colleague across the way is just throwing mud on issues that have nothing to do with the debate before us. I think if you are going to apply a ruling, we have to actually make sure that the ruling is sustained on both sides.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The matter before the House tonight relates to the main estimates and specifically a motion from the official opposition to defund the Senate. That is the matter that is before the House. I have listened carefully to the member's speech and the member's speech touched on lack of justification for the Senate. If and when members make arguments that the Senate ought to be defunded because money is improperly or unwisely used, and the government members respond with a question that relates to the spending of money in other parts of the estimates, including in the House of Commons, this is where we sit. There is no specific Standing Order that relates to this. It would appear that the parliamentary secretary is intent on asking essentially a similar question to different members when they do this.

I go back to the point that I made a couple of minutes ago which is that the point of the rules is not to put an absolute limit on where you are allowed to go, but it is to guide behaviour of members in the House. I would ask members, including the parliamentary secretary, to keep the questions focused on the business that is before the House as it relates to the Senate. His contention that a standard that is being applied in the Senate ought to be or could be applied in the House of Commons is a rhetorical question. I am not sure that the parliamentary secretary needs to get into all of the specific details in order to make that point, if that is the point that he wants to make. If he wants to ask that rhetorical question, that would be acceptable, but to get into the detail of matters that are before the House that do not relate directly to the Senate will be ruled out of order by this Chair.

I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to put his question to the hon. member. For all hon. members that ask questions subsequently, again I would ask for members' co-operation to stick to the matter that is before the House related to Senate expenses.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks to motive. I am trying to understand the rationale for what the member opposite is trying to get at. We have heard NDP member after NDP member suggest that it is time to open up the Constitution of Canada to immediately convene a constitutional conference with respect to reforming the Senate. I wonder if the hon. member could further explain that process which the NDP members have made a priority. I wonder if she could outline, if the NDP formed government, when a constitutional conference would be called and when a referendum would be held and what the referendum question would be since they have highlighted that as a priority of any future NDP government.

• (2025)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I am always dumbfounded by the false information that the parliamentary secretary provides, in particular, how he can distort what I can try—

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member opposite just accused me of providing false information. I would be delighted to table for the House and to read specifically when the member suggested that those funds would be sent to an Ottawa office and to provide the supporting documents that show it was sent

to an illegal partisan office in Montreal. If that is the member's desire, I could certainly do that with the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I agree, there is a circus on both sides of the House, not just one.

The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, when I said I was against sending \$57 million to the Senate, in one sense, it was a first step towards some kind of reform.

When I spoke about the motion put forward by my colleague from Toronto—Danforth, it was also a way to try, in this case, to make certain changes in the immediate future. As for the rest, I do not think it is useful, when we hold debates in the House and we try to explain quite complex ideas, to turn them around and reduce them to simplistic terms.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Senate is a part of Canada's Constitution.

My question is related to the motion. If the motion were to pass, obviously it would change what takes place in the Senate virtually overnight.

Can the member indicate to the House what provinces she and the leader of the New Democratic Party have on side that are actually supporting the motion? I am sure she would understand the implications, and no doubt the NDP would have solicited some support from the provinces. Could she indicate which provinces actually would support what the NDP is doing here this evening?

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, what we are discussing this evening is simply an item in the main estimates.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this House as an elected member representing the people of Timmins—James Bay. Elected members are accountable to the people who vote for them. They go back every two years. I have gone back once at 18 months, at two years and at four years. It is a job interview, and if the people decide they do not like an elected member's record, they vote the member out. That is what democracy is.

Here tonight in a democratic House, we are talking about people who have no democratic mandate, people who believe themselves to be superior to the people of Canada. We are talking about a group of people who show such outrage over questions of accountability because they have never had to show accountability to anyone except their political masters, the leaders of the Liberal and Conservative parties who appointed them.

Government Orders

This motion we are debating tonight comes on the eve of the most explosive political scandal with the Senate in Canadian history. It is certainly one of the great political scandals. This is not just about the abuse of public trust. This is not just about fraud. This is about people who actually constitutionally may not even be allowed to sit in that upper chamber and yet they have the right under this present system to overrule the democratically elected voices of the people of Canada.

We saw that when Pamela Wallin helped galvanize her cronies to defeat Jack Layton's climate change bill. Pamela Wallin at that time was sitting on the boards of all manner of corporations, including tar sands development corporate interests. It was considered okay that she could take her role as a senator and also receive the financial interests for doing tar sands development, and yet kill a climate change bill that was voted on with the support of the people of this country.

The issues of how we are going to deal with this unelected and unaccountable Senate are things that this House needs to deal with. It is fascinating to watch the behaviour of the members of the other two old parties. The Liberals were born as the party of cronyism and corruption. That is their baby in the upper chamber. It is not a surprise that so many Liberal senators are up to their necks in this scandal, because that was how the Liberal machine was done. It was a system of cronyism. It was a system of patronage. It was a system of the old boys' club. If people flipped pancakes at Liberal fundraisers, they might some day end up in the Senate, and then they could travel around the world and do whatever they wanted and never have to be checked. I am not surprised at the Liberal intransigence and their deep desire to defend the Senate.

Certainly, from having been elected here in 2004, the behaviour of the Conservatives is something to see. I remember a different Conservative Party, a Reform Party that believed that the cronies in the upper chamber were an abomination to Canadians. They sold themselves in western Canada as being the ones who were going to bring accountability, but they never did. Instead of bringing accountability, the Conservatives brought us Patrick Brazeau, Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin, Carolyn Stewart Olsen, and the rest of that crew. Now we see them doing whatever they can to change the channel on the endemic corruption that is in that institution.

I could do a long litany of Senate abuse going back through the ages to Senator Andy Thompson who lived in Mexico and collected a paycheque and showed up in Canada maybe once a year. That went on year after year. We were told back then that he was a senator and could not be touched. I could talk about Raymond Lavigne, the Liberal senator who was convicted of fraud and was sent off to the hoosegow, and all the red flags that were raised by the RCMP at the time of his incarceration, which the Senate ignored.

I could talk about numerous failed candidates and party organizers and bagmen over the years who have been dumped in that upper chamber where, for the rest of their lives, taxpayers paid them to work for the parties. However, let us just focus on how we came to this present corruption scandal. The Conservatives are doing everything they can to change the channel on how we got there.

This debate tonight is so important because it begins with the notorious three of Wallin, Brazeau, Duffy and the appointment of the three of them by the Prime Minister back in December 2008.

● (2030)

At that time, questions were immediately raised that Senator Pamela Wallin and Senator Mike Duffy were not eligible to sit in the Senate. In fact, at the time, when the media asked how Mike Duffy could be a senator for Prince Edward Island when everyone knew he lived in Kanata, Dimitri Soudas told the media that all of the nominees would meet their residency requirements. This was the beginning. This was the original sin that led us to where we are tonight.

People who were not eligible to sit in the Senate were appointed to the Senate. Why? It was because they were going to do the heavy lifting for the Conservative machinery in terms of fundraising. That was Duffy's role. That was Wallin's role. That was even Patrick Brazeau's role.

There were flags raised because Pamela Wallin did not live in Wadena, Saskatchewan; she lived in a condo in Toronto. Section 31 of the Constitution is clear that a senator will be disqualified if he or she "ceases to be qualified in respect of Property..". What the Conservatives have attempted to claim is that only \$4,000 worth of property will make an individual eligible to sit in the Senate, but that is not what the Constitution says. It says that a senator "shall be resident in the Province for which [they represent]".

The Prime Minister knew that they were not qualified to sit in the Senate. This is the beginning of all of the issues with Mike Duffy. We have seen numerous prevarications from my colleagues, particularly from the member for Oak Ridges—Markham, who said that the rules have been clear for 150 years but will not explain what the rules are.

If we look at the RCMP investigation into the Mike Duffy affair, it keeps coming back to the fact that Mike Duffy was well aware that he was not eligible to sit in the Senate and he wanted that issue dealt with. He was told not to worry because nobody has ever been thrown out of the Senate. That is true, because it is an old boys' club. It is like being a made man. Once they are in the Senate, they are looked after. However, Duffy was aware of that issue.

The issues were raised on numerous occasions. On February 15, 2013, Nigel Wright wrote to Benjamin Perrin, saying:

I am gravely concerned that Sen. Duffy would be considered a resident of Ontario...Possibly Sen. [Dennis] Patterson in BC too.

Wait a minute. Is Senator Patterson not supposed to represent Nunavut? Wright went on to say:

If this were adopted as the Senate's view about whether the constitutional qualification were met, the consequences are obvious.

Nigel Wright was writing to the Prime Minister's lawyer on February 15, 2013, that if the word got out that Duffy was not eligible to sit, what about the other senators? Constitutionally, they knew that they were not even eligible to sit. That sitting gave them the power to override a democratically elected House.

Government Orders

The Prime Minister's Office pressured the Senate rules committee to remove the definition to protect the caucus, and to secure Duffy's own repayment of expenses. The PMO said it would cut the cheque for Duffy if that was "all that stands in the way of Sen. Duffy paying back his \$32,000 and closing out his situation". However, Duffy did not owe \$32,000. He owed \$90,000.

Nigel Wright said:

If the [Rules] and Procedures Committee doesn't have the right membership, then the Senate by motion should constitute a special committee that will have the right Senators on board. We cannot rely on the Senate Leader's office to get this right... have to do this in a way that does not lead to the Chinese water torture of new facts in the public domain, that the PM does not want...

The Prime Minister's right hand was saying that they could not trust the Senate to get this right and to protect this cover-up. To defend the Prime Minister, they were going to have to make sure that they would, through the Prime Minister's Office, start appointing people to handle the audit.

What does that have to do with tonight? This has to do with the fact that, according to the RCMP, key senators, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Prime Minister's staff recognized that they had to come up with a scam to cover up the fact that Duffy was ineligible to sit in the Senate, and it would lead to whitewashing the audit.

Nigel Wright then said:

I will advise Sen. LeBreton that we will not take any steps in the Senate to address residency...unless anyone challenges the qualification of any of our Senators, in which case we will defend (and defeat any motion regarding) any Senator who owns property in the correct province...

He said "defeat" because they had the majority. He went on to say:

I will advise Sen. Duffy that we will defeat any challenge to his residency...and advise him to settle the expenses matter promptly.

He was going to tell Duffy that they would deal with the residency thing and get the money paid back. Wright then said:

I think we should lay out the approach in a brief memo to the PM...

...because getting confirmation of qualification residency is all that is needed to close out the Duffy situation.

● (2035)

They have the scheme. They have the plan. They are going to appoint the people to the Senate board that is dealing with the audit. They just need to get the sign-off from the Prime Minister to say that Duffy is a resident, which everyone knew he was not.

On February 20, Nigel Wright sent an email to Chris Woodcock, Benjamin Perrin, and other PMO staff. It states:

...I have spoken again with Sen. Duffy. Tomorrow morning I shall receive by courier redacted copies of his diaries and other info to back up his claim to have "PEI" (as opposed to his home in Cavendish) as his primary residence. Our team will have to look at that to see if there is anything in it that we would not want his lawyer to send to the Senate steering committee. Maybe it will persuade us to let him [take] his chances with Deloitte's findings. If not, then I have told him I will be back on his case about repayment.

They are already planning what they are going to share with the audit committee.

Then they approach Senator Tkachuk, approach LeBreton, and they are talking about whitewashing an audit into potential fraud. This is the Prime Minister of the country of Canada and his staff cooking up a scheme to whitewash an audit into fraud.

This was the deal. It was their five-point deal. The big issue that held up the deal was that Duffy "will repay, with a couple of conditions, including that admitting to a primary residence in Ottawa does not disqualify him from representing [Prince Edward Island] in the Senate".

They are just making the Constitution up. That is part of the deal.

Nigel Wright said:

...(I have been specific with Sen. Duffy that a "senior government source" will make a statement on the day of his statement to the effect that there is no doubt he is qualified to sit as a Senator... The PM[O] will also give this answer [if he] is asked, as will other authorized...people for the Government.

He talked to Benjamin Perrin. He said I have to go to the Prime Minister. I have to run this deal by him. Then he came back and said it is good to go. Then the Prime Minister of Canada stands up in this House and repeats verbatim what was in the plan to get Mike Duffy off the hook, which is that Mike Duffy, a man who lives in Kanata, Ontario, somehow qualifies to be in the Senate representing Prince Edward Island.

They thought they were going to get away with this. However, the questions continued to be asked. Then, once the RCMP became involved, we began to see an attempt to whitewash the audit, to interfere with the Deloitte audit.

Are Canadians to trust the Senate on this latest scandal? Are they going to trust the Prime Minister? Hardly.

We now have the Auditor General's report brought in. LeBreton, Tkachuk, Stewart-Olsen have been disgraced for having been involved in this scheme. They are all still in the Senate. They cannot be fired. Who replaces them? Leo Housakos, the Prime Minister's Montreal bagman, was appointed to the Senate. Suddenly he was appointed by the Prime Minister as the Speaker of the Senate.

Senator James Cowan, the Liberal leader, and Senator Carignan, who received letters that they have spending problems, step forward to the Senate to tell the senators that they will set up a process to deal with this. When the Auditor General comes up with findings, that will be the process. We are in this crazy alternate universe where the Senate and the Conservative Party have created views that this is just the Auditor General's opinion so they have to set up another process.

I have never heard of the Auditor General investigating any department and being told that was just the Auditor General's opinion, that within the department where they found all of these problems, they will set up another internal process run by their own department to show that the Auditor General is wrong. However, that is what the Senate claims it will do. Who will run that? Leo Housakos, James Cowan, and Mr. Carignan step in to announce that they will set up this other process that they will oversee, at a time when they knew they were under investigation.

We should ask the Canadian people if that has any credibility. With the pattern we have seen of abuse of public trust here, is there any reason for them to trust?

We still have not dealt with the fact from the ITO that there are a number of senators who are not living in places that they claim to represent and may not even be eligible.

Government Orders

● (2040)

On May 15, 2015, the Senate invoked privilege to keep secret a document about whether senators are even eligible to sit in the upper chamber. This is a complete abuse of the Canadian people, and senators get away with it because they do not believe they are accountable to the Canadian people. That is unacceptable. It is unacceptable that a democratically elected House is told there is nothing it can do about this gang because whatever they decide is their own ticket.

We are in a situation where the Auditor General has brought out a report that was immediately leaked, in all manner of areas, by the senators under investigation. They gave themselves four or five days of damage control to undermine the Auditor General of this country. James Cowan, Liberal leader in the Senate, came out and started attacking the work of the Auditor General while saying he is going to make sure the process is trustworthy.

Canadians have no faith in that. Canadians are fed up. They have dealt with this institution for too long. They have been told that there is nothing we can do about them, that they can write their own ticket, and that they can do whatever they want. It is like the honour system in there.

What I am seeing from my colleagues in the Conservative Party is absolutely no leadership whatsoever on tackling this. This is the great scandal of our generation. The Conservatives have gone to ground because the scandal continues to go back to the Prime Minister's Office. It is in the RCMP ITO, the cover-up, the naming of senators who were not eligible, the fact that they had decided they could not trust the Senate itself to do the cover-up for the Prime Minister, that the Prime Minister's Office would choose who was going to be on the committee.

Carolyn Stewart-Olsen was appointed to the Senate. What are her qualifications? She was a communications flak for the Prime Minister. She was put on the board to oversee this. The Prime Minister puts in all of his key people.

This is no longer a government that has anything to do with the legacy of Preston Manning and the promise of reform, and that were going to deal with the Senate and look for alternatives that could have the trust of the Canadian people. This is now a government in absolute damage control.

The Conservative government is mired, locked in step with the corruption in the Senate. The Prime Minister has decided that he can get better deals by appointing people who are not eligible to sit in the Senate to do party work, something he railed against in opposition. Right now, this is the Conservative plan.

The Conservative government does not want to deal with this, so it is going to try to ride this out. I do not think it is possible anymore. We are being told again and again—here we are in 2015—that the Canadian people have no ability. We are just the little peons and we have no ability to stand up to this culture of entitlement.

Tonight we actually have an opportunity. We can say sorry, enough is enough. If they want to continue sitting in the Senate, we are going to cut off the taps. Then we are going to start talking. We

are going to talk about establishing a clear set of rules for an unelected and unaccountable group.

I would like to see the senators gone tomorrow, but in the meantime, I would like to see clear ethical standards set in place for them, unlike with Mike Duffy, where we saw a diary full of lobbying and potential illegal lobbying, which is not his business. His business should be reviewing legislation. He should not be travelling around the country doing this.

I would like to end with a quote:

Obviously the government thinks it is being clever by appointing [men and] women. But the real concern is, whether it's women or men or French or English or whatever, these people inevitably don't represent anybody but the prime minister who appoints them.

We don't think that [party] patronage has any place in the Parliament of Canada.

I have never agreed with the Prime Minister of this country before, but I certainly agreed with his sentiments when he said that in 1995. I want to ask, what happened to that Prime Minister? Why did he lose his way? Why did he lead Canadians directly into the corruption scandal that we are in today because of his desire to hang out with the Senate?

● (2045)

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not want to interrupt the speech of the hon. member across the way, but O'Brien and Bosc provides guidance to the House through the rules of the House. The debate is a fair question. Should the Senate be funded? Should all funding be removed? That is a fair debate for us to consider, but I am troubled by the language that we have heard in the House.

I would like to reference chapter 13 of O'Brien and Bosc, under "Reflections of the House and the Senate". It states:

Disrespectful reflections on Parliament as a whole, or on the House and the Senate [as component parts of Parliament] ...are not permitted. Members of the House and the Senate are also protected by this rule. In debate, the Senate is generally referred to as "the other place" and Senators as "members of the other place". References to Senate debates and proceedings are discouraged and it is out of order to question a Senator's integrity, honesty or character.

It goes on to say:

This "prevents fruitless arguments between Members of two distinct bodies who are unable to reply to each other, and guards against recrimination and offensive language in the absence of the other party".

It is important that we respect the other House. Some members are being considered by the RCMP and by Senate on questionable expenses. That may or may not, and likely will, reflect on our debate. However, I would reflect that comments that are made that call into question the integrity of individuals or the Senate as a whole are not appropriate and break the rules.

I would ask that we show respectful language in the House and that the debate is respectful.

Government Orders

● (2050)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The point raised by the member for Langley reflects back to comments made by the Chair 25 minutes ago, before the member for Timmins—James Bay began his speech, which is that the general practice in this place is that questions directly related to the Senate are not considered government business. Consequently, there are times, for example, in question period, when questions are ruled out of order for that reason.

However, the matter before the House tonight relates directly to the Senate. Just to correct something I said in a previous intervention, the matter before the House tonight is whether to fund the Senate. It is not, in fact, a de-funding motion; the question is whether to fund the Senate. A yes vote would be in favour of funding and a no vote would be opposing that funding. I want to make that clear.

What the hon. member for Langley has quoted from O'Brien and Bosc is correct. He read it from the book. The Standing Orders do not specifically say that is context that comes from O'Brien and Bosc in terms of guiding the debate in this place.

In the opinion of the Chair, the fact that this motion has been deemed in order to be brought before Parliament makes that the subject before the chamber. Members are debating whether, as parliamentarians, they are going to support this part of the main estimates. It is not a direct question in terms of the jurisdiction of the government. It essentially is a parliamentary question as to whether members of Parliament will fund the Senate or not. This is the context that puts it in order.

The second point is the general practice in this place, that members are restrained in their direct comments related to members of the Senate. In that regard, the member for Langley is also correct that this is the general practice in this place. However, there are matters in the public eye at this point, in the media, that relate directly to specific members of the Senate and the spending that takes place in the Senate. Those things do relate to the matter before the House tonight.

This is a long way of saying that with regard to the debate we are having tonight, there is a set of rules that is a little different than what is normally before this place in referencing members of the Senate. However, I would ask all members to be mindful of the fact that one of the reasons why members of the House of Commons avoid speaking directly about senators is because the senators are not in this place and do not have the opportunity to directly defend themselves and their actions. Therefore, I would ask members to be mindful of that.

As all members can imagine, I have listened quite intently to almost every word from the member, not simply because he is such a great speaker, but because everybody in this place has been getting very close to the line tonight. I would again ask all hon. members to respect not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the rules that guide debate in this place.

In that context, the Chair is ruling that the speech by the member for Timmins—James Bay was in order. It is impossible to talk about the Senate without mentioning the Senate or senators. Therefore, in

the opinion of the Chair, when the decision was made that the motion before the House was in order and was appropriate, that opened the door to this conversation tonight.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

● (2055)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite has the same motivation in cutting off spending for the Senate when 68 of his colleagues owe over \$2.7 million to Canadian taxpayers. I certainly hope they will show the same type of motivation to cut off the spending of those 68 members.

We have heard the member for Winnipeg North and a number of members of his caucus talk about the abolition of the Senate. We know that it requires the unanimous support of the provinces and territories. We also heard talk of a referendum.

I know it has become a priority of the NDP to abolish the Senate. If the NDP is fortunate enough to get the confidence of the Canadian people, when will it call a referendum, what process will it use to bring about a constitutional amendment, and if that amendment is turned down by both the Canadian people and the provinces, what next step will it take to try to abolish the Senate?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, what is really sad is the idea that my Conservative colleagues would hide behind defending the integrity of a disgraced institution.

That is not the party of Preston Manning or Monte Solberg. I remember the days when they spoke for the taxpayers and they claimed to speak for the ordinary Canadian people. Instead they are telling us we have to show deference in the face of issues of breach of trust, fraud and bribery.

I want to thank the Speaker. There is no need to get into side issues with the upper chamber because we are dealing with such serious issues.

For my hon. colleague from Oak Ridges—Markham, it is amazing that the Prime Minister, who came to Ottawa promising to show leadership, has just left the country. I think he has been in the House about five days out of the last session because he cannot answer his involvement in the corruption scandal.

The Conservatives are throwing up roadblock after roadblock saying that it cannot be done, or it is impossible, or they go through all the constitutional things. They are starting to sound like the tired old Liberal Party.

The vote tonight is really a simple question as to whether my colleague in the Conservative party will give \$57 million to that institution, and they are obviously more than set to give that money.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a representative of what my colleague just called the old tired Liberal Party, I want to gently say for my colleague that the Senate will not be abolished because there is no unanimity in the country to abolish it.

Government Orders

Since my colleague knows that we need to improve what he called “this disgraceful institution”, does he agree that we need to do two things. First, we need to ensure that senators are not part of a caucus of members of Parliament, something that was done in the Liberal Party but not in the Conservative Party. Second, the process by which senators would be chosen would be non-partisan to protect the independence and the competence of the Senate.

Does he agree with these two reforms that happen to be supported by the leader of the Liberal Party, of this old tired party?

• (2100)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and his defence of an old tired party, and the fact that poor James Cowan still calls himself the leader of the Liberal Senate.

The Liberals have not been very effective in getting the message that they are throwing the bums out. If they are serious about this, they would take steps to have them removed. If we want to find non-partisan people, we would move to ensure that people like Rod Zimmer and Marie Charette-Poulin, a former Liberal Party leader who is under investigation, Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Colin Kenny, Pana Merchant, a whole list of them, would not be appointed. They are Liberal operatives. Suddenly, when they become damaging to the present Liberal leader, he says that they are Liberal operatives, but they are actually independent Liberal operatives, so they have actually seen the light. What a crazy deathbed conversion.

If the Liberal leader were serious, he would work with us and say that he wanted the whole lot of them thrown out, that we should bring in a constituent assembly and replace them with truly non-partisan people, but that is not the case. We are looking at a long tired list of Liberal operatives, bagmen, party leaders, and suddenly they are all independents. Why? Because the scandal goes right to the Liberal leader as much as it does to the Conservative leader.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member. It was a great speech. I and the member are both from northern Ontario.

Today the list of offending senators was released. On that list are 15 Conservatives and 15 Liberals. Unfortunately, the Liberal from northern Ontario is in second place on the list, having misspent over \$131,000. Unfortunately Rod Zimmer spent \$176,000. She was in second place, followed in third place by another Liberal who was followed in fourth place by another Liberal.

Could my colleague from northern Ontario, the member for Timmins—James Bay, comment more on Senator Charette-Poulin from northern Ontario and how the people of northern Ontario have been betrayed?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. Before I go to the member for Timmins—James Bay, I thought I had made a point, but maybe I need to reinforce it.

Obviously, members are going to talk about the Senate and senators tonight. However, I had hoped that I had also made it clear that it did not mean that it was open season on individual members of the Senate and that they could be accused of things, particularly that have not been proven, and that all commentary was open. That was not the intent of the Chair.

Again, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay can respond, but stay within what I think are the guidelines that every member of this House understands and what the Chair means.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank you for doing yeoman's duty tonight in trying to keep both sides on a very reasonable course and focused.

I agree with the Speaker that it would be very unfair for me to talk about individual senators at this point, in deference to my colleague for Nickel Belt, because we do not know the charges or what the issues are.

As a generality, my colleague comes from Nickel Belt and I come from Timmins—James Bay, and our people are hard working. People who are 68 years old have told me at Tim Hortons that they are going back to work. I am sorry, I am not to mention Tim Hortons. I know the Conservatives are deeply opposed to Tim Hortons.

They have told me that they are going back to work underground in the mines, because they do not have pensions. I hear people tell me that they cannot afford to heat their houses in the winter because they cannot pay their hydro. These are people who built our country. When I go home on the weekends, they are deeply offended by this abuse of trust in the Senate, because they see that these are people who should know better. These are people who are set for life and should do the decent thing, because these people do the right thing.

Therefore, I would say to my hon. colleague, whether it is the people of Nickel Belt in Sudbury or anywhere in this country, in western Canada, or in Quebec, we expect the upper chamber, just like we expect the House of Commons, to do the right thing. When senators show such egregious abuse and such disregard, people have a right to be angry, and they have a right to ask their members of Parliament to stand up. They have a right to expect that their members of Parliament are going to hold that group to some level of accountability, which is why we are debating this issue tonight.

• (2105)

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

The Senate is an unelected legislative body whose members are appointed through political favours without any checks and balances and without any mandate from the Canadian people. Moreover, it has no fundamental accountability to the citizens and taxpayers of this country.

The Senate simply does not believe it is accountable to the Canadian people. It believes it is above the standards and principles of accountability that apply to the lower chamber of this Parliament, the House of Commons. The result is a culture of corruption, which has manifested itself over the years in numerous scandals, such as the latest one involving Senator Duffy.

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This is not to say that the senators are somehow more predisposed to be corrupt than elected members. Not at all. The difference is that the democratically elected House of Commons has initiated numerous mechanisms to ensure its accountability to Canadian taxpayers. This includes, for example, limits on spending and travelling expenses. In contrast, the Senate has stubbornly refused to put similar standards and accountability mechanisms in place.

As a result, there is no clear code of ethics, and there are many loopholes, which some entrepreneurial senators are happy to use to advance their interests. They use the Senate's funds for dubious purposes at taxpayers' expense. Some of them even sit on the boards of corporations.

A unelected and unaccountable legislative body whose members cannot be removed from doing a bad job or abusing public trust is poised to go down a path of abuse and corruption, and sadly, this is exactly what we see happening.

This inevitably begs the question, does Canadian democracy need such an institution in the 21st century? The answer is clear: No. This archaic institution has no place in our political system anymore. It drags us down and prevents our Parliament from becoming a more transparent, accountable, and efficient democratic institution.

The time has come to roll up the red carpet. Of course, this will not be an easy thing to do. It will certainly require extensive consultations with the provinces, some of which have expressed their concerns about representation in Parliament with the abolition of the upper House.

An NDP government would engage in a constructive dialogue with the premiers to decide the future of the red chamber, and I am sure that Canada will be better off without that archaic institution. The experience of New Zealand and the Scandinavian countries clearly demonstrates that unicameralism is a viable choice for a modern democracy. I am confident that this is the right choice for Canadians as well.

• (2110)

[*Translation*]

Once again, the House is being called upon to intervene on an important issue and express the views of the people it represents. The people have expressed their opposition many times to the lack of accountability in the Senate, an institution which, we must remember, because of its composition, does not necessarily act in the interest of the citizens and taxpayers of our country, and whose members are named through political favours or merely through a partisan selection, without any checks and balances or any mandate from the Canadian people.

The issue before us today and on which we must vote this evening is very important. Will we listen to the vast majority of Canadians or, on the contrary, will we decide to close our eyes, ignore what real democracy is and sidestep the corruption scandals in this institution that inflame public opinion?

In fact, in the wake of the scandals in the Senate, and further to the successive revelations that have thrown light on the flawed practices of senators, there are many questions that remain unanswered. On the other hand, it is becoming more and more

evident that this institution as it stands today is not a true representation of a democratic system. Its conduct is not above reproach, and it does not seem to be able to spend public money responsibly.

It is time to put an end to all these lapses of accountability, the flagrant lack of transparency and the contempt for the most elementary rules of democracy. It is time to take bold measures, measures that will stand as examples and will put an end to all attempts against the public interest.

Unlike senators, members of Parliament have a direct relationship with their constituents and are in regular contact with local residents. That proximity enables them to stay informed about public opinion and about what the public wants. On that point, there is a very broad consensus as to the need for thorough reform of that institution, which is unfortunately resistant to change.

Elections are the legitimate foundation of democracy. They provide a way to hold governments accountable to the people. They make it possible to build a strong and representative democratic system. Citizens are free to choose their political representatives. Candidates are selected on the basis of their political affiliation and their election platform, as well as their social involvement, their productivity and their performance throughout their political career.

Those candidates will be penalized at some point, or instead rewarded with renewed voter confidence when an election is held. That is the electoral model that Canadians want and demand, a model that embodies the principles and the core of democracy: a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Unfortunately, the Senate cannot say that it adheres to these basic principles. Canadians have simply had enough of hearing about senators who use taxpayers' money as if it were their own. They have had enough of an entitled and utterly corrupt Senate.

Canadians across the country believe it is unacceptable that a body as powerful as the Senate does not have a system with the capacity of strengthening democratic control and ensuring proper management of its own operations through oversight and checks and balances. The present model has clearly failed. What purpose is there, then, to keeping a dead body on life support?

The NDP's position is based on very clear principles. There is nothing that justifies the existence of an unelected, unaccountable Senate that enacts legislation for Canada, particularly when its members are incapable of obeying their own rules. It is time to abolish the Senate once and for all.

I often knock on doors in my constituency, and this was a subject that came up again this weekend. It really is unbelievable because when I go door to door, I introduce myself by saying that I am their member of Parliament, I am happy to be there because I want to know their opinions, I am going back to Ottawa the following week, and I would like to know what issues they would like me to talk about in the House. I ask them whether they want me to consider an issue, to put it before the House, to ask a question and to introduce a bill, on any subject. I ask them what they want me to talk about in the House the next week.

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These days, we talk regularly about Canada Post. In Dorval, it is the Dorval golf club operations. We talk about the Canadian economy, and we talk quite regularly about the Senate. When I see that the people I ask to tell me what issue is most important go so far as to name the way we use Canada's upper chamber, it means that Canadians are very concerned about the situation.

In a constituency like mine, there are local issues and there are immigration problems. People come to see me to talk about very individual situations. Overall, however, what we talk about is the Senate. We hear people talk about the abuses committed by senators and the trips taken and paid for out of their office expenses to engage in partisan activities.

When I am asked what the Senate does, I have to explain that basically, the Senate was in fact created as a repository of a certain constitutional memory and to put people in place who had very diverse experience. What is it now, though?

Now, the Senate is a gang of buddies put in place by a Liberal leader or a Conservative leader to represent partisan interests and go out and collect money, and it drags out the process of enacting legislation in Canada, because we have to go through the same process all over again in a second chamber.

Unfortunately, the people who make up the Senate at present are no longer the people who were supposed to have an institutional memory, and that is very disappointing. It disappoints me tremendously, it disappoints the NDP and it disappoints Canadians.

The question we are asking ourselves tonight is whether we should keep funding the upper chamber. I think the answer is no. Canadians think the answer is no. I hope that all members will vote not to send money to the Senate.

• (2115)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the hon. member. Canadians, or at least her constituents, would feel a lot better about her remarks if she took the opportunity to repay them the \$169,171 she owes them for her support of an illegal partisan office in Montreal.

I wonder if she could help me understand, because the member for Timmins—James Bay and every single speaker from the NDP has refused to answer a very simple question that has been brought forward by me and the leader of the Liberal Party. That question is, with respect to the abolition of the Senate, and I will get a little bit more specific—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The hon. member for Saint-Lambert is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is once again deviating from the topic we are discussing this evening by bringing up other situations that have nothing to do with the motion we are debating.

I would ask the Speaker to intervene, to call the parliamentary secretary to order and to ask him to stick to the motion on the Senate that we are debating this evening.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I think it is unreasonable for members to suggest that if the House is debating the funding of the Senate, it is not relevant to discuss the possible consequences of that decision. While the Chair is reluctant to engage in the substance of the debate, the Chair thinks it is entirely reasonable, if the debate is about funding an institution, for a question to be raised that if the institution is not funded, what does that mean and how would that be managed. While previously there were questions raised that clearly were of questionable relevance, I think the question about the future of the Senate if it is not funded is absolutely relevant to this conversation.

The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, on a point of order.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, it would help the debate if our NDP colleagues would stop interrupting the debate with points of order that are irrelevant. If it is relevant to question the Duffy scandal, it is certainly relevant to question the NDP scandal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would agree with the member that endless points of order do interrupt the debate, and the Chair ruled on this already.

Would the hon. parliamentary secretary quickly move to the question?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the New Democrats are very touchy over the fact that they owe \$2.7 million to the Canadian taxpayers and are refusing to pay it back.

However, my specific question for the member is this. The New Democrats have proposed a constitutional conference and opening up the Constitution. They proposed a referendum. If their referendum on the constitutional amendments, which is a priority of the NDP, fails, what are the New Democrats' next steps to abolishing the Senate?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, but I did not mention a referendum in my speech.

What I said was that when the NDP takes power this fall, on October 19, it will consult all provincial and territorial premiers, as well as the first nations.

In any case, I do not need to think about what will happen, since I know that Canadians are on our side. I sent messages to my constituents to let them know what was going on in the Senate, and I was surprised by how many people took action, signed petitions and responded to tell me that they support our position on abolishing the Senate. They see the Senate as a bottomless pit in which taxpayer money disappears.

There are so many problems in Canada. As I meet with people who are unemployed and who have a hard time making ends meet, the government is spending incredible amounts of money to fund the Senate. I know that Canadians will be on our side and will support our position to abolish the Senate.

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• (2120)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. However, if I have understood correctly, she wants to reform the Constitution, but she does not want to hold a referendum. Is that her position?

To abolish the Senate, the Constitution must be amended, and in order to amend the Constitution, it seems to me that a referendum must be held. It is not the Constitution that requires it, but rather Canadian democratic practice. Amending the Constitution requires a referendum, which requires a majority of the votes in all the provinces, since every province has a right of veto over the abolition of the Senate.

Does she understand this, yes or no?

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, the NDP's position is very clear and it has been the same for a long time: we want to consult Canadians.

We already have a very clear idea of what they think, because we have held consultations and toured the country. Some of my colleagues have travelled from coast to coast to coast to find out what Canadians want, and that is what they told us—the NDP is listening to Canadians.

This is our strength. We care about our citizens, we go out into the field, we go door to door and we consult with Canadians. We want to consult with Canadians and hold a dialogue with the premiers of the provinces and the territories and with the first nations. This is what the NDP will be doing when it forms the government in October.

[*English*]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and speak to the motion that is before the House.

Let me make it very clear that the motion we are debating is with respect to the government's giving \$57 million to the Senate. The average hard-working Canadians, the taxpayers who keep our institutions going, must be really wondering why, in light of the media frenzy, we have a government that is saying that we should give that House \$57 million more. I am opposed to that for a number of reasons.

To put it into perspective, we have a Prime Minister who absolutely believed in the abolition of the Senate and failing that, wanted to make it more accountable and all of those things. Yet, the Prime Minister has carried on the Liberal tradition of appointing senators. The Prime Minister has appointed 59 senators.

As we read reports in the media, the reports we get and the information that is before us right now, those appointments are very partisan. Not only that, once they are appointed, the senators are doing partisan party work.

My colleagues at that end of the aisle, the third party, their leader decided that the Liberal senators would no longer be members of their caucus. They can call a thorn any name they want or they can change the name, but unless they change the substance, a thorn is still a thorn. I will argue that the Senate has become a thorn in the side of Canadians.

It was interesting that when the senators met, they named themselves the Liberal senators. They still have a caucus that is very Liberal, and carries the name Liberal. My understanding is they still attend some of the partisan events. They are still running around collecting money. They have learned well from the Conservatives. They have learned well from each other.

They are going around doing all of these things. I hear from the party at the end how committed they are to reform and how we should make the Senate more accountable. When it comes to that party, however, I have always looked at their actions rather than the promises they make. They always make these grandiose promises, but once they are in government, and now in opposition, they suddenly do not reflect what they want to reflect when they are outside of the House.

With the media, the televised debates and social media, it is getting more and more difficult for members of that party to hide from the positions they take in this House.

There is a motion that was moved by my colleague, the hard-working member for Toronto—Danforth, on October 22, 2013. This will show that we are not dealing with a new problem. This has been going on and on. I am not going to expand on everything that has happened with Mr. Duffy, because all of that is out there. I just want to focus on what we needed to do.

The NDP is a pragmatic party that knows how to compromise when it has to, and then sticks to something that is good for Canadians and does not compromise on that. Our position on Bill C-51 is one example. Canadians' freedoms and privacy, and the invasion into their privacy, cannot be compromised away just because it is convenient for electoral purposes.

• (2125)

Let me get back to the motion that was voted on in this House on October 22. This is what the motion that was brought forward by the NDP said:

That, in the opinion of this House, urgent steps must be taken to improve accountability in the Senate, and, therefore, this House call for the introduction of immediate measures to end Senators' partisan activities, including participation in Caucus meetings, and to limit Senators' travel allowances to those activities clearly and directly related to parliamentary business.

It can hardly be argued that this was a revolutionary motion. This was a very well thought out motion that was put forward to address some very specific concerns. This is the kind of motion that would pass the nod test. Quite honestly, I think this would even pass the kindergarten or grade one test. If we were to explain to the children that these are the senators, this is what we do not want them to do and this is what we want them to do, kids are smart and they would say, "That's good, isn't it", but not my colleagues across the way.

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What really shocked me after all the public grandstanding was that the third party—and I want to be very clear on this—would not support a motion that would limit senators' partisan activities. The Liberal senators were kicked out of caucus, so to speak, but that is just window dressing. The Liberals were not willing to end senators' partisan activities, so they formed a coalition with the Conservatives to vote this down, just as with Bill C-51, the Liberals formed a coalition with the Conservatives in order for that bill to pass through the House. This makes me wonder what the difference really is between the third party and the party in government. I see very little difference these days.

The New Democrats wanted to limit senators' travel allowances to those activities clearly and directly related to parliamentary business. Surely, nobody in the House would have voted against that. However, the Conservatives did and, guess what, they were supported by the third party, their new-found friends across the way, the new Liberal-Con coalition.

When I look at all of this, nobody can say that the NDP, with the long-standing position of getting rid of the Senate, has not attempted to bring about accountability. I know the government across the way is allergic to accountability, transparency and answering serious questions, but it opposed the pragmatic solutions we put forward. If that motion had carried and the government and the Liberal Party of Canada had supported it, we might not be in this grandiose—I do not know what word to use, but I will say it is a crisis that we are in right now. It is an absolute embarrassment to be in my riding and try to explain to people all that is going on.

The leader of the NDP has been very clear. He is a lawyer. He knows how constitutions are changed. He also knows agreement is required from all the parties. I have not seen Mr. Harper meet with all the premiers that often, never mind consult them. We are prepared to consult them and move forward, but in the meantime, pragmatic solutions are required to fix the grandiose mess that exists in the Senate.

• (2130)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would remind all hon. members not to reference other members by their given names.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about what first graders or young people would know. I want to let her know that I suspect most Canadians would know that when New Democrats are asked where an office is and they say Ottawa, it would not be appropriate to then funnel money to Montreal to support an illegal partisan office, like the NDP did, to the tune of \$2.7 million. I suspect most Canadians would get that, but apparently not the members opposite.

The member referenced the fact that the leader of her party is a lawyer. I suggest that he probably, being from Montreal, knows the difference between Montreal and Ottawa, and that it would be inappropriate to funnel money to that office.

The member talked about having the support of Canadians to abolish the Senate, that members of her caucus have consulted with Canadians and this is the path forward. Every single member has

been asked by me and a Liberal member of Parliament what the NDP process would be to abolish the Senate.

I am asking very clearly again. If you cannot get the support of the provinces for your referendum and the Canadian people turn their backs, what is the next step to abolishing the Senate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Again, I would remind all other members to reference their questions to the Chair, not directly to their colleagues.

The hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague across the way for his question. He has been on a kind of gerbil's cage treadmill, because what I hear is the same preface to almost every question he asks.

Let me make it very clear to him. My kindergarten students and grade 1 students would understand that a kangaroo court is where two parties collude behind closed doors and give nobody a chance to present evidence or to present their case. Let us not go there.

Let me go on to say this. Our leader has been very clear about the process. We have a grandiose mess over there. What we need to do, and our our leader has made it very clear, is consult with Canadians and meet with the premiers of the provinces and territories. At least we are prepared to do something, not like that government and that party and just sit—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. There are two or three voices I have been hearing repeatedly who do not have the floor, so I would ask those members, if they would like to have a conversation, to do so anywhere but in the chamber while one of their colleagues has the floor.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. member say that there was nothing wrong with the offices the NDP opened in Montreal. Does that mean that an NDP government would reopen those offices at taxpayers' expense?

I would like to come back to the main point of the motion. The NDP members have been saying over and over that two key problems with the Senate are that the appointments are patronage appointments and that the senators are too partisan. Would the NDP like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Liberal Party on showing some leadership on those two issues?

We know now that the NDP wants to open the Constitution and have constitutional negotiations, which is something my constituents do not want. I do not know about the member's constituents. How would the member and her party limit the discussion to one topic, or would she allow the discussion to be open to additional topics? Where would she draw the line? Would she draw the line—

• (2135)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether to thank the member for that question, but I was really hoping that the member would ask me a question very similar to this.

Government Orders

We had all the scandals that existed during the Liberal government, and now we have the Senate scandals involving both Liberal and Conservative senators. To me, it is more of the same.

I think the question the Liberal member of Parliament has to answer is why his party, in 2013, voted to improve accountability in the Senate. It did not support the introduction of measures to end senators' partisan activities or to limit their travel allowances to those activities clearly and directly related to parliamentary business. For him to then stand and make that kind of grandiose speech and be self-congratulatory, while their senators, Liberal senators, are still out there doing partisan work is disingenuous at best.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the honourable member for Sherbrooke.

I am really very happy to be able to express my views on this motion. It is funny because the government is trying to tell Canadians that the reason we are here this evening is because the opposition wants to debate its motion. I would like to remind the parliamentary secretary for the Prime Minister that this is not an opposition motion by the NDP, but rather a government motion. What we want is simply to vote against the votes in the main estimates.

As they say, "That's it, that's all."

We are here because of the government. That is fine because it gives me an opportunity to say just how outraged I am that the Liberals and the Conservatives are accusing us today of debating a subject that is not important to Canadians and are saying that Canadians have other things to worry about. There is nothing more fundamental than respect for the Canadian values of integrity, transparency and ethics. People vote for us and send us here, to Parliament, to make policies and pass bills that will help the most vulnerable, for example, and families.

Let us talk about the Conservative Party. The RCMP has told us that the Prime Minister's Office was directly involved in altering reports on senators' expenses. We know, thanks to plain facts, that Conservative members used the services of Conservative senators to raise funds in their constituencies at taxpayers' expense. We have a Conservative government that tells us that it tried to reform the Senate and that it wants an elected Senate with term limits. However, the Supreme Court ruled that the Conservatives' plan was unconstitutional. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister rose to talk about this plan and added that, unfortunately, because the plan is unconstitutional, the government will leave things alone and allow senators to continue to travel at the expense of taxpayers and the people of La Pointe-de-l'Île, who pay for Conservative senators to fundraise in Conservative ridings. That is unacceptable. The Conservative Party wants to continue sending \$57 million to the Senate, but it does not know how to reform it.

Then there are the Liberals. I can hear them laughing behind me. The Liberals think this is awfully funny. They are saying that they are going to create a committee made up of unelected people. They do not know who will sit on that committee. Will the committee members be appointed by the Prime Minister or by the government? We do not know. They are going to create a committee to appoint

senators. The Liberals' plan involves saying that the Prime Minister will have to appoint senators and take responsibility for them. However, the Liberals are now rising in the House to say that the Liberal senators are no longer members of the Liberal Party and that they are no longer responsible for them. They are trying to tell us that they are going to take responsibility for their future appointments, but they are not responsible for any appointments they made in the past 30 years. Honestly, that is ridiculous. It is just ridiculous.

The Liberal Party wants the status quo. It is going to create a committee to appoint people to appoint people. It is ridiculous to think that a new layer of bureaucracy is going to solve the problems with the Senate. Whether senators are elected or not, they are not accountable to Canadians. That is the first problem. None of the parties here has been able to come up with a solution that will ensure that senators who pass bills will be accountable to Canadians.

• (2140)

Not only do they have the nerve to point fingers at the opposition and say that we have no solution or that our solution is ridiculous, but the Conservatives also have the nerve to come here and say that they have solutions, but they cannot implement those solutions because they would not work. That is ridiculous.

We have bills on the environment and LGBT rights that have been held up by the Senate. There are even bills that were passed by Conservative members. For example, there is the party reform bill. Remember that one? It is in the Senate. Even some Conservative bills have not been passed by senators. Never has a senator voted against his or her party and truly represented the people in his or her district. The Senate's constitutional role is to represent the regions because it was created to counterbalance regions with less representation in the House of Commons.

No senator has ever come to my riding to meet the people of La Pointe-de-l'Île, to say hello and tell them that he represents them in the Senate, to find out what matters to them, to talk about their rights. No senator has ever done that. For someone to tell me that the Senate is a democratic institution is ridiculous.

On top of that, we have senators who do not show up for work in the Senate, but who go to the ridings of government MPs to help get them re-elected. Senators who represent Canadians do not even bother to meet with them, and yet those senators go and meet people in other ridings who have the fortune or misfortune to be represented by a Conservative member.

The reform proposed by the Conservatives is impossible, because it is unconstitutional. The reform proposed by the Liberals is the status quo. They are proposing adding a small selection committee, but they have no idea what will come of that. Basically, it is the status quo. They have no plan.

The only concrete plan to reform our democratic institutions is our plan to abolish the Senate. That is precisely why we are here in the House this evening—to vote against funding the Senate. Right now, we are about to allocate millions of dollars to an institution that is extremely corrupt and, unfortunately, no longer works. Bills passed by Parliament, even those that pass unanimously, are sent to the Senate and are blocked by unelected senators who travel at Canadians' and Quebecers' expense.

Government Orders

We cannot allow this to continue. We need to take action and do something about it. If we listen to the Conservatives or the Liberals, the Senate will stay the same, and that is unacceptable. We are here today to try to put an end to this undemocratic system that is stealing money directly from Canadians to fund the parties in power.

• (2145)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really odd to hear this member talk about taking money out of the pockets of Canadians, when she owes the people of La Pointe-de-l'Île \$27,711. Those were monies meant for her constituents that were taken away and funnelled to an illegal partisan office in Montreal.

Again I will ask, for maybe the tenth time tonight, and perhaps one member of the NDP can give this answer to Canadians. After you have finished consulting Canadians, if you are given the honour of serving Canadians in government, what specific legislative steps will you take to abolish the Senate? If a referendum is one of them and it fails, what steps will you then take to abolish the Senate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Again, I will ask the hon. member to direct his questions to the Chair rather than directly to his colleague.

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for asking me that very interesting question.

The first thing we will do is consult the provinces, something the Prime Minister has refused to do since being elected. The Conservative Prime Minister has never met with all the provincial premiers at the Council of the Federation. The first thing my leader will do is attend the first ministers' meeting.

Then, there will indeed be a referendum. I am looking the hon. member in the eye to assure him that the will of Canadians and Quebecers will be respected.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for finally uttering the word "referendum". We wondered whether our NDP colleagues got a memo asking them not to use that word. Maybe she got the memo and forgot.

Indeed, if people vote for the NDP, there will be a referendum. Thank you very much for saying so. Now it is a matter of determining whether the only topic during these constitutional negotiations will be the Senate, or whether, as some of her colleagues said today, they would want to talk about all sorts of other things as well. The list was long. Some in the NDP caucus are nostalgic for the Charlottetown agreement.

Does the hon. member want a discussion on the Senate only? How will she convince the Premier of Quebec to stick to a discussion on the Senate if that requires reopening the Constitution and holding a referendum?

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, it is so funny to see the two old parties continuing to use the same arguments they have been using

for 30 years, the same arguments that discouraged Canadians from voting. They discouraged young people from becoming interested in politics.

We are going to respect the wishes of Canadians. We are going to consult Canadians and respect their wishes, something those two parties have never done. They got voted in and then they broke their promises. It is very easy for them to attack me personally as a member and to come to the House and repeat the same old arguments they made in the past.

We want to work with the provinces and Canadians, something those other two parties never did. The Liberals stole millions of dollars from Canadians in the sponsorship scandal and the Conservatives did the same in the in and out scandal and the Senate scandal. They stole millions of dollars from Canadians. We want to change things. We want to bring real change to Ottawa.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise to speak to this motion, which seeks to give the Senate \$57 million or so in funding.

I will be honoured to vote against that motion, so that we do not send millions of dollars more to an institution that, as we know, is not very good with its money. What is more, as we speak, this spending is being examined and called into question by several authorities, and rightly so.

I urge all of my colleagues to do as I am doing and vote against the motion to ensure that no more money is wasted by the Senate or spent in a questionable manner by senators. This obviously brings me to talk about that institution. I would therefore like to provide some background on the institution we are talking about today.

The Senate is an unelected body made up of senators who were obviously never elected by the Canadian people. They are accountable to just one person: the person who appointed them. The current Prime Minister has appointed over 59 senators. These senators are accountable only to the current Prime Minister, the Conservative Prime Minister. They are not accountable to anyone else. When they spend money and that spending is called into question, the only person they have to answer to is the Prime Minister. They do not have to answer to Canadians.

It is obvious how deeply involved the Prime Minister's Office is in Senate affairs. We know that on several occasions, the Prime Minister and his office tried to erase parts of Senate reports and change the content. The institution is clearly archaic, and we cannot allow it to go on. The people of Sherbrooke cannot stand it anymore either.

Often when I am in Sherbrooke, I hear people say that they are tired of seeing that institution vote on our laws without being elected or accountable to anyone. It is a relic. The current Prime Minister said the same thing a number of years ago. That institution is a relic of the 19th century that should be abolished or reformed. This same Prime Minister has appointed 59 senators, 10 of whom were Conservative candidates who were defeated in elections.

Business of Supply

In the election in 2011, some senators who had resigned from their duties as senators to run in the election lost. This means that the people in the ridings in which they ran said that they did not want those people as their MP. A few weeks later, the Prime Minister shamelessly turned around and reappointed them as senators.

Some people will argue that senators are eminent Canadian intellectuals, when we all know that these appointments are simply partisan. Of course, it is hard to beat the Liberals on that, but I do not think that any other prime minister has gone as far when it comes to appointing senators. This is despite the fact that he once called the Senate a relic of the 19th century.

What I mainly gather from the debate of the last few hours is that two parties are acting like cowards. Leaders, party leaders and MPs are cowards and are afraid of constitutional discussions—

● (2150)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville on a point of order.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that accusing one's colleagues in the House of cowardice is parliamentary.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Chair was distracted for a moment and did not hear the exact comment that the hon. member made. Again, I would take the opportunity to remind all hon. members to speak to the matter before the House in appropriate terms.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I will use other terms and say that they have no political courage because they are afraid of constitutional debates and consulting Canadians.

It is like the Leader of the Liberal Party going to a boxing match and, upon seeing that his opponent is too big, too tall and too strong, quitting even before the match starts. He refuses to try anything. We can also imagine a Liberal or Conservative MP competing in a 100-metre race, but quitting even before hearing the starting pistol because he does not have the courage to confront his 10 opponents, who seem too big and too strong, or the challenges he faces. He lacks political courage.

The NDP has political courage, unlike the other two parties we have heard from today. The solutions presented by the other two parties who have exchanged power over the last 150 years lack any kind of political courage. They are, quite simply, ignoring the problem. When the Conservatives realized that their reform was not possible without consulting the provinces, they simply gave up and continued to appoint partisan senators who are accountable only to the Prime Minister.

The Liberals' idea is no better. They want to transition from an unelected Senate appointed by the Prime Minister to an unelected elitist Senate. At the end of the day, the Prime Minister will still be the one who appoints the senators. The Liberals say that an independent committee would be responsible for selecting the unelected officials, but this Canadian political elite would still not be elected and would also not be accountable to anyone other than the

person who appointed them—the Prime Minister. In short, this solution is no different than the status quo and certainly will not have the support of Canadians.

The only remaining solution is the one that we are proposing. I will admit that it is a courageous solution because it will take political courage. Here we have one party that has such courage and others that do not. In order to come up with such a solution and vote against the motion, it takes political courage and a party leader with vision who will not be afraid to consult and listen to the provincial premiers once he is elected.

I think that that is what is missing in politics today. I am therefore happy to be part of a political party whose members have been rising in the House all evening and who are prepared to raise less popular topics. That is the difference between our party and that of the current Prime Minister, who is still up to his elbows in the Senate scandal and is trying to control everything, as the Auditor General's report to be released tomorrow will show.

Obviously, the Senate is not independent and the Liberals' solution will not change anything. There is therefore only one other solution. The first step is the easiest, and we are going to take that step tonight by voting against the motion and taking back that \$57 million. Canadians are hoping that it will be spent responsibly. I therefore invite all of my colleagues to oppose this motion.

* * *

● (2155)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NUTRITION NORTH CANADA

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. It being 10 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

● (2215)

The Speaker: The first question is on the opposition motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Northwest Territories.

● (2225)

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

(*Division No. 421*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi

Business of Supply

Brison	Brosseau	Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Caron	Casey	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Cash	Charlton	Galipeau	Gallant
Chicoine	Chisholm	Gill	Glover
Choquette	Christopherson	Goguen	Goldring
Cleary	Comartin	Goodyear	Gosal
Côté	Cotler	Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Crowder	Cullen	Hawn	Hayes
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Hiebert	Hillyer
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day	Hoback	Holder
Dewar	Dion	James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kent
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé	Kerr	Komarnicki
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Dusseauit	Easter	Lauzon	Lebel
Eyking	Foote	Leaf	Leitch
Fortin	Freeland	Lemieux	Leung
Freeman	Garneau	Lobb	Lukiwski
Garrison	Genest	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	MacKenzie	Maguire
Godin	Goodale	Mayes	McColeman
Gravelle	Grogueh	McLeod	Menegakis
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)	Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Hsu	Hughes	Nicholson	Norlock
Julian	Kellway	Obhrai	O'Connor
Lamoureux	Latendresse	Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	O'Toole	Payne
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie	Perkins	Poillievre
Liu	MacAulay	Preston	Raitt
Mai	Marston	Rajotte	Reid
Martin	Masse	Rempel	Richards
Mathysen	McCallum	Ritz	Saxton
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Schellenberger	Seeback
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Shea	Shiple
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Shory	Smith
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Sopuck	Sorenson
Mourani	Mulcair	Storseth	Strahl
Murray	Nantel	Sweet	Tilson
Nash	Nunez-Melo	Toet	Trost
Pacetti	Papillon	Trottier	Truppe
Péclet	Pilon	Uppal	Valcourt
Plamondon	Quach	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Rafferty	Rankin	Vellacott	Wallace
Ravnigat	Raynault	Warawa	Warkentin
Regan	Rousseau	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia	Sky Country)	Wilks
Scott	Sellah	Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-	Williamson	Yelich
sor)		Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaesan	Young (Oakville)	Zimmer— 148
St-Denis	Stewart	Yurdiga	
Stoffer	Sullivan		
Toone	Tremblay		
Trudeau	Valeriot		
Vaughan— 125			

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION MOTION — EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The next question is on the opposition motion relating to the business of supply.

● (2230)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 422*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreesen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Egliniski	Falk

Government Orders

Bevington	Blanchette	Devolin	Dreeshen
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Borg	Boulerice	Eglinski	Falk
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi	Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Brisson	Brousseau	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Caron	Casey	Galipeau	Gallant
Cash	Charlton	Gill	Glover
Chicoine	Chisholm	Goguen	Goldring
Choquette	Christopherson	Goodyear	Gosal
Cleary	Comartin	Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Côté	Cotler	Hawn	Hayes
Crowder	Cullen	Hiebert	Hillyer
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Hoback	Holder
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day	James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Dewar	Dion	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kent
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Kerr	Komarnicki
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Lauzon	Lebel
Dusseault	Easter	Leaf	Leitch
Eyking	Foote	Lemieux	Leung
Fortin	Freeland	Lobb	Lukiwski
Freeman	Garneau	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Garrison	Genest	MacKenzie	Maguire
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Mayes	McColeman
Godin	Goodale	McLeod	Menegakis
Gravelle	Grogulé	Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)	Nicholson	Norlock
Hsu	Hughes	Obhrai	O'Connor
Julian	Kellway	Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Lamoureux	Latendresse	O'Toole	Pacetti
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Payne	Perkins
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie	Poilievre	Preston
Liu	MacAulay	Raiit	Rajotte
Mai	Marston	Reid	Rempel
Martin	Masse	Richards	Ritz
Mathysen	McCallum	Saxton	Schellenberger
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Seeback	Shea
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Shiple	Shory
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Smith	Sopuck
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagog)	Sorenson	Storseth
Mourani	Mulcair	Strahl	Sweet
Murray	Nantel	Tilson	Toet
Nash	Nunez-Melo	Trost	Trotter
Papillon	Péclet	Truppe	Uppal
Pilon	Plamondon	Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Quach	Rafferty	Van Loan	Vellacott
Rankin	Ravignat	Wallace	Warawa
Raynault	Regan	Warkentin	Watson
Rousseau	Sandhu	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Scarpaleggia	Scott	Weston (Saint John)	
Sellah	Sgro	Wilks	Williamson
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)		Wong	Woodworth
Sims (Newton—North Delta)		Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis	Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Stewart	Stoffer	Zimmer — 149	
Sullivan	Toone		
Tremblay	Trudeau		
Valériote	Vaughan — 124		

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2015-16

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—SENATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The next 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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (2240)

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

(Division No. 423)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Bélangier
Bennett	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinoooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Casey
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cotler	Crockatt
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dion
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eglinski
Eyking	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Footé	Freeland
Galipeau	Gallant
Garneau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
Hsu	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lamoureux
Lauzon	Lebel
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Payne
Perkins	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt

Rajotte	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Seeback
Sgro	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Smith	
Sopuck	Sorenson
St-Denis	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vaughan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 178

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bellavance
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseauit	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scott	Sellah
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Toone
Tremblay— 95	

PAIRED

Nil

Government Orders

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC) moved:

That the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016, except any vote disposed of earlier today and less the amount voted in Interim Supply, be concurred in.

[*English*]

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (2245)

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

(*Division No. 424*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinoooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent	Kerr

Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Payne	Perkins
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	Williamson
Weston (Saint John)	Woodworth
Wilks	Young (Oakville)
Wong	Yurdiga
Yelich	
Young (Vancouver South)	
Zimmer— 149	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Freeman
Gameau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen

Government Orders

McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Tremblay
 Valeriotte

McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mourani
 Murray
 Nash
 Pacetti
 Pécelet
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Toone
 Trudeau
 Vaughan — 124

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Tony Clement moved for leave to introduce Bill C-66, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016

(Motions deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: 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.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you shall find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 425)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander

Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Fortin
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kent
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 149

Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Ashfield
 Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooige
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreshen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 O'Toole
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trotter
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bellavance
 Bevington

Andrews
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Blanchette

Government Orders

Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseauil	East
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravnignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Valeriotte	Vaughan— 124

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly this bill stands referred to a committee of the whole and I do now leave the chair for the House to go into said committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)

(On clause 2)

• (2250)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Chair, can the President of the Treasury Board confirm that the supply bill is in its usual form?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Chair, the presentation of this bill is identical to that used during the previous supply period.

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 2 carried)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 3 carried)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 4 carried)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 5 carried)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 6 carried)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 7 carried)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 1 carried)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 2 carried)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Government Orders

(Clause 1 carried)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble carried)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title carried)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill carried)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: 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.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it you shall find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 426)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Ashfield

Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Fortin
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kent
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 149

Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeschen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leaf
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 O'Toole
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trotter
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bellavance
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison

Andrews
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Bouleric
 Brahm
 Brosseau

Government Orders

Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogg	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Pécelet
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Valeriotte	Vaughan— 124

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.*[Translation]***Hon. Tony Clement** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.**The Speaker:** 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.*[English]***Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you shall find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.**The Speaker:** Shall we proceed in this fashion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

(Division No. 427)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Payne	Perkins
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet

Government Orders

Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer— 149

Trottier
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	St-Denis
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stoffer
Sitsabaiesan	Toone
Stewart	Trudeau
Sullivan	Vaughan— 124
Tremblay	
Valeriotte	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
 (Bill read the third time and passed)

● (2255)

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2015-16

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC)
 moved:

That the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016, be concurred in.

The Speaker: 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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

● (2300)

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

(Division No. 428)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback

Government Orders

Holder	James	MacAulay	Mai
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Marston	Martin
Kent	Kerr	Masse	Mathysen
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	McCallum	McGuinity
Lake	Lauzon	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Lebel	Leef	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Leitch	Lemieux	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Leung	Lobb	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Lukiwski	Lunney	Mulcair	Murray
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Nantel	Nash
Maguire	Mayes	Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
McColeman	McLeod	Papillon	Péclet
Menegakis	Miller	Pilon	Plamondon
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson	Quach	Rafferty
Norlock	Obhrai	Rankin	Ravignat
O'Connor	Oliver	Raynault	Regan
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole	Rousseau	Sandhu
Payne	Perkins	Scarpaleggia	Scott
Poilievre	Preston	Sellah	Sgro
Raït	Rajotte	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Reid	Rempel	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Richards	Ritz	Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Saxton	Schellenberger	Stewart	Stoffer
Seeback	Shea	Sullivan	Toone
Shipley	Shory	Tremblay	Trudeau
Smith	Sopuck	Valeriote	Vaughan— 124
Sorenson	Storseth		
Strahl	Sweet		
Tilson	Toet		
Trost	Trottier		
Truppe	Uppal		
Valcourt	Van Kesteren		
Van Loan	Vellacott		
Wallace	Warawa		
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wilks	Williamson		
Wong	Woodworth		
Yelich	Young (Oakville)		
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga		
Zimmer— 149			

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Lavardière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Tony Clement moved that Bill C-67, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016 be now read a first time.

(Motion deemed adopted, and bill read the first time)

[Translation]

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

[English]

The Speaker: 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.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you shall find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

(Division No. 429)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Payne	Perkins
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 149	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McCallum	McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Valériote	Vaughan — 124

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)

(On Clause 2)

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Chair, could the President of the Treasury Board please confirm to this House that the supply bill is in its usual form?

Government Orders

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the form of this bill is the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 7 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall Schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Bill agreed to)

• (2305)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Bill reported)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you shall find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 430*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra

Government Orders

Eglinski	Falk	Garneau	Garrison
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher	Giguère	Godin
Fortin	Galipeau	Goodale	Gravelle
Gallant	Gill	Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Glover	Goguen	Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Goldring	Goodyear	Hughes	Julian
Gosal	Gourde	Kellway	Lamoureux
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn	Latendresse	Laverdière
Hayes	Hiebert	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Hillyer	Hoback	Leslie	Liu
Holder	James	MacAulay	Mai
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Marston	Martin
Kent	Kerr	Masse	Mathysen
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	McCallum	McGuinty
Lake	Lauzon	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Lebel	Leef	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Leitch	Lemieux	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Leung	Lobb	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Lukiwski	Lunney	Mulcair	Murray
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Nantel	Nash
Maguire	Mayes	Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
McColeman	McLeod	Papillon	Péclet
Menegakis	Miller	Pilon	Plamondon
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson	Quach	Rafferty
Norlock	Obhrai	Rankin	Ravignat
O'Connor	Oliver	Raynault	Regan
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole	Rousseau	Sandhu
Payne	Perkins	Scarpaleggia	Scott
Poillievre	Preston	Sellah	Sgro
Raitt	Rajotte	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Reid	Rempel	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Richards	Ritz	Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Saxton	Schellenberger	Stewart	Stoffer
Seeback	Shea	Sullivan	Toone
Shipley	Shory	Tremblay	Trudeau
Smith	Sopuck	Valeriote	Vaughan— 124
Sorenson	Storseth		
Strahl	Sweet		
Tilson	Toet		
Trost	Trottier		
Truppe	Uppal		
Valcourt	Van Kesteren		
Van Loan	Vellacott		
Wallace	Warawa		
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wilks	Williamson		
Wong	Woodworth		
Yelich	Young (Oakville)		
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga		
Zimmer— 149			

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Footo
Freeland	Freeman

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Hon. Tony Clement** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.**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.**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 431)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Fortin
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kent
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 149

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Ashfield
 Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeshen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Nicholson
 Ohrai
 Oliver
 O'Toole
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trottier
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bellavance
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Freeland
 Garneau
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Kellway
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Tremblay
 Valeriotte

Andrews
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulanger
 Brahm
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Côté
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Foote
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 Mathysen
 McGuinity
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mourani
 Murray
 Nash
 Pacetti
 Péclet
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Toone
 Trudeau
 Vaughan — 124

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

YUKON AND NUNAVUT REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The House resumed from June 5 consideration of the motion that Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion at third reading of Bill S-6.

• (2315)

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

(Division No. 432)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Fortin	Freeland
Freeman	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hughes
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Latendresse
Lavergère	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin

Ravnat
Regan
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffler
Toone
Trudeau
Vaughan— 125

Government Orders

Raynault
Rousseau
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valeriot

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Payne
Perkins	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace

Government Orders

Warawa
 Watson
 Sky Country
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer— 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment 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:

• (2320)

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

(Division No. 433)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Ashfield
 Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeschen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James

Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kerr
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 O'Toole
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trotter
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Sky Country
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leaf
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Tilson
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 Wallace
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Allen (Welland)
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 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bellavance
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Fortin
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai

Andrews
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulerice
 Brahm
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Foote
 Freeland
 Garneau
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Grogulé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Kellway
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston

Martin
 Mathysen
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
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 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
 sor)
 Sitsabaesan
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Tremblay
 Valeriotte

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is never too late to rise in the House and defend the great city of Toronto, particularly the waterfront. The waterfront, as we know, is one of the great Liberal legacies to the city of Toronto. The gift of Harbourfront Centre by Pierre Trudeau in the mid-seventies started the rejuvenation of Toronto's waterfront. It laid the groundwork for not just an industrial port, but a recreational place to live and a place to work. The transformation of that waterfront was continued when Jean Chrétien gathered with the premier of the day and the mayor of the day in Toronto and started Waterfront Toronto, a \$1 billion-plus investment that has now led to the Queen's Quay being reopened.

I rose in the House about a month and a half ago to discuss this, because the next phase of Waterfront Toronto funding is required. The next phase will transform this great city's waterfront into an even better place to live, to work, to play. Unfortunately, the federal government chose to neglect the waterfront in the last federal budget.

There has been a stated request from all three orders of government to continue this project, but the funding is required and it is time for the federal government to lead.

Therefore, the question I have tonight for the federal government is very simple. The Unilever site is a site almost as big as Canary Wharf in London, millions of square feet of new commercial and residential space, new parks, new retail. There is the opportunity for two new transit lines to be built with the revenue that would come from redeveloping this site.

Adjournment Proceedings

However, to do it, the flood plain, the naturalized mouth of the Don River has to be invested in. It is about a \$1 billion project. All three levels of government have been talking about putting about \$325 million each into this project. If they do this, it not only kicks starts and opens up the lower Don to redevelopment and naturalization, and a beautiful opportunity to clean our water and also deliver a clean, green waterfront to the citizens of Toronto, but it also opens up the southern Portlands for the next phase, the third and final phase of the waterfront revitalization.

The question is a very simple one for the federal government and a very important one to the city of Toronto. Is the government, despite the fact it failed to do it in the budget, prepared to put the \$325 million being requested by the other two levels of government into this project, into the city to trigger this next stage of waterfront development, or will it withhold that money or play games with that money and try to force the province into spending its transit money all in one site in downtown Toronto and stop waterfront development, turn its back on this great project and actually put the city in harm's way?

What we know about floods in major cities, and we saw it in Calgary, is that if we do not do the flood protection, if we do not do the investment in naturalizing waterways and managing the runoff, we have huge challenges that come to the city. They cost billions of dollars later if we do not put the hundreds of millions of dollars in right now. We learned that lesson in Calgary. I hope we will learn it in Toronto. In the last six years, Toronto has had six storms of the century, and we cannot afford to lose the downtown core to a flood. We certainly cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

Will the government commit tonight to putting in the \$325 million into Waterfront Toronto, to partner with the province to match those funds and have the city contribute its share as well? Is the federal government prepared to say yes tonight and talk about specifically this one particular project, flood proofing the lower Don, nothing else, just the Don. Is it prepared to do it, yes or no? We can go home early.

● (2325)

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that this Conservative government remains very concerned about and committed to the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront. That is why this Conservative government invested \$500 million, as did both the provincial and the municipal levels of government. This funding has resulted in significant improvements, including modern housing in that part of the city, parks and play areas.

We continue to have productive conversations with the city of Toronto with respect to next steps, including dealing with the importance of flood mitigation.

Adjournment Proceedings

I might also add that all Canadian municipalities, including the city of Toronto, have access to unprecedented levels of federal funding for infrastructure in more ways than ever before. Through the new building Canada plan, Ontario will benefit from more than \$11 billion in dedicated federal funding, including more than \$2.7 billion under the new building Canada fund and an estimated \$8.12 billion under the federal gas tax fund.

While Toronto can count on its federal allocation through the gas tax fund, which has largely, as my colleague knows, been directed to public transit on the wish of the officials of the city of Toronto, we would be pleased to consider investing in other projects that the city deems important and that the province identifies as a priority.

Our government is committed to creating jobs, promoting growth and building strong, prosperous communities across Ontario and across this great country.

● (2330)

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, those are encouraging words, but just short of a yes. I will take it as a good sign that the government is prepared to engage with the city council of the city of Toronto and the mayor, and deliver on a clean green waterfront. It will also, when it does that, ensure that we do not upset the balance that is also protected by the tripartite agreement and protect the tripartite agreement, which balances the commercial, residential and environmental needs of the city of Toronto.

The other issue is the takedown of the Gardiner. I hope, as we debate this issue, that the will of the people prevails along the waterfront and that a clean green waterfront, a waterfront for all and not just for some, is pursued.

If we cannot get a yes on this tonight, the question to follow is this. Will the government of the day commit to sustaining the vision that Waterfront Toronto has for this stretch of the lake? Will the government support and renew the mandate for Waterfront Toronto and continue that fine agency's good work on behalf of the citizens of Toronto, who are after all hoping not just for dollars but for political support as well?

Mr. Peter Braid: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, our Conservative government has made significant investments across Canada to build roads, bridges, public transit and other public infrastructure. Since 2006, our government has dramatically increased average annual federal funding for thousands of provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure projects across Canada. We are building on Canada's historic investments, with \$80 billion for infrastructure over the next decade. This includes the \$53 billion new building Canada plan.

Canadian municipalities have unprecedented ways in which they can put federal funding to work in their communities. Toronto can count on its federal allocation through the gas tax fund. We look forward to considering investing in projects that the city identifies, that the province of Ontario prioritizes, just as we will for all other projects from across the province and across Canada.

Our government is committed to creating jobs, promoting growth and building strong, prosperous communities across Canada.

[Translation]

HOUSING

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak further about a question that I asked on May 25 about the Conservatives' cuts to social housing.

For decades, the federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, supported up to 620,000 social housing units through long-term agreements ranging in length from 25 to 50 years. These agreements allow social housing providers to support their low-income tenants so that they do not have to spend more than 25% to 30% of their income on housing.

These agreements have been gradually expiring since 2006. The minister continues to say that once the mortgage has been paid off, government support is no longer needed. However, she is forgetting that, in reality, after 25 to 50 years, the buildings need major renovations, and a number of groups can no longer support low-income tenants. The result is that many units are no longer viable.

The most conservative estimates indicate that between one-third and one-half of housing units will not be viable when the agreements expire. At the end of 2014, there were only 553,700 of these units. This year alone, another 25,000 units will lose this funding, and if the government does nothing, there will be another 91,000 units in the same situation by 2018. The situation is urgent.

I have asked the question many times in this House. I have asked the government again and again to renew the \$1.7 billion in funding that had been allocated to social housing. I also moved Motion No. 450 calling on it to do so. There has been no response from the other side.

When I speak to the minister about social housing, she replies by talking to me about affordable housing or access to home ownership. I always ask my questions in French, but I very much doubt there is an interpretation problem. Instead, I think the minister simply refuses to respond directly to my questions and to all those families who already have to pay or will have to pay \$200, \$300 or \$500 more every month because of her inaction on this issue.

The last time I asked the minister this question, she replied:

[English]

"Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely wrong. There are no cuts to the housing investments".

[Translation]

Is the minister mocking us?

The budget tabled on April 21, 2015, states the following:

...Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation will invest \$1.7 billion annually to support 570,000 households that depend on social housing support, both off and on reserve.

Many people believed that the government had finally listened to reason. It was not long before our bubble burst.

Adjournment Proceedings

On April 29, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada issued a joint statement regarding the housing commitments contained in the 2015 federal budget:

The 2015 federal budget committed an annual investment of \$1.7 billion for the next four years, for both on and off-reserve social housing, in support of 570,000 households.

Our organizations interpreted this as a small, but much-needed increase to federal investment in social housing...However, subsequent communication with officials from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) indicated that those projections had not changed, essentially a status quo situation. They declined to provide details as to what would increase in the envelope to total the \$1.7 billion promised in the budget.

In the absence of renewed funding for social housing, these vulnerable households, often with fixed incomes, will face rent increases that they cannot afford in non-profit, co-operative and public housing in communities across the country.

The statement is signed by Judy Ciuffo, the executive director of the CHRA, and Nicholas Gazzard, the executive director of CHF Canada. Who is telling the truth?

● (2335)

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, the minister is telling the truth. I welcome the opportunity to respond to the hon. member for Hochelaga.

Ensuring that low-income families and other vulnerable Canadians have access to affordable housing is a matter of great importance to the government. That is why we have made unprecedented investments in housing over the past nine years. Working with our partners, some 940,000 individuals and families have benefited from these investments. This includes those living in existing social housing units.

Through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, our government has invested almost \$19 billion in housing since 2006, and we will be continuing this important work. This year, CMHC is providing approximately \$2 billion in housing investments on behalf of the Government of Canada. It is funding that includes support for nearly 600,000 Canadian households living in existing social housing, including on reserve.

We have also ensured the continuation of federal funding for housing programs through the investment in affordable housing initiative, a collaborative effort with the provinces and territories to reduce the number of Canadians in housing need. This initiative was launched by our government in 2011 and has been renewed until 2019, with total funding of close to \$2 billion over eight years.

The hon. member will be pleased to know that one of the ways the provinces and territories can use this federal funding under the investment in affordable housing initiative is to support projects after the long-term housing agreements with CMHC have matured. That is their choice.

As I have said on previous occasions, the majority of non-profit and co-operative housing projects are expected to be financially viable and mortgage-free when these agreements mature. For projects that may face financial difficulties when the federal

subsidies end, CMHC is taking action to help them prepare for the end of their ongoing operating agreements. For example, in 2013, CMHC changed its lending program to allow non-profit co-operative housing groups to prepay closed CMHC mortgages with a penalty that is consistent with private lending institutions.

In addition, social housing providers whose operating agreements allow for the establishment of a subsidy surplus fund can now retain any money they have in this fund and use it after the operating agreements mature to continue to lower the cost of housing for households living in existing social housing. These are changes that support exactly what the member opposite is talking about.

Building on the prepayment flexibility announced in 2013, economic action plan 2015 proposes further support for social housing providers by allowing them to prepay their long-term non-renewable mortgages without any penalty at all. This will enable eligible social housing providers to access private sector loans with more favourable interest rates, significantly reducing their mortgage expenses. Lower mortgage expenses will help housing providers undertake capital repairs and renovations to help them improve the condition and quality of the affordable housing units.

I would also like to remind the hon. member that Canada's economic action plan 2009 included an investment of \$1 billion to protect and revitalize the existing social housing stock off reserve. This funding supported the renovation and retrofit of more than 12,600 social housing projects across Canada, ensuring that these homes will continue to be available for years to come.

● (2340)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I still did not get an answer.

Let me try in English this time by quoting Steve Pomeroy, who is a housing guru. He released a paper just after the budget, which states:

The statement that over the next four years the federal government "will invest \$1.7 billion annually to support 570,000 households that depend on social housing support..." does reflect planned CMHC spending levels. However, it does not relate to the more specific issue for which many advocates have been campaigning: reinvestment of scheduled reduced spending. Once the smoke has cleared it is apparent that, indeed, the Budget was too good to be true.

The leader of the NDP already committed to maintaining federal funding for social housing after the election of an NDP government. What is the minister's plan to help the most vulnerable Canadians living in social housing to make sure that they do not have to choose between paying their rent or putting food on the table, like paying \$500 more a month?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, I would say again that our government recognizes the need for low-income families and other vulnerable Canadians to have access to quality affordable housing. We have made unprecedented investments in housing over the past nine years and we will continue to work with the provinces and territories to deliver funding where it is needed most and will have the greatest impact on reducing the number of Canadians in need of housing.

As an example, the investment in affordable housing has already supported close to 225,000 households across Canada and tens of thousands more will be helped through the renewal of this initiative in 2019. This is the type of respectful, collaborative and flexible approach that our government favours and that should be supported by the hon. member on the other side.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to further debate the question that I asked regarding the funding allocated to the fight against terrorism in this government's budget.

As I mentioned before, when it comes to public safety, the government unfortunately has not made any investments in prevention. However, let us talk about where it has made investments. A total of \$292.6 million has been allocated to the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency and CSIS.

When we break down that amount, we see that \$18 million has been allocated for 2015-16 and \$92 million—a large part of the budget—has been allocated for 2019-20. However, we know full well that our law enforcement agencies, whether it be the RCMP or CSIS, are actively fighting against terrorism and violent extremism. We have even learned that the resources allocated to the fight against organized crime have been transferred to national security. There have been a couple of additions in that regard, but otherwise there is nothing in the budget.

CSIS confirmed before the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence that there would be a 50% increase in the number of young Canadians who will join terrorist groups such as Daesh in Iraq and Syria, and approximately 145 such cases had already been identified as of October 2014. This is therefore a growing phenomenon.

As I said earlier, unfortunately there is nothing in this budget for prevention, whether we are talking about prevention targeting families and young people or research. We even found out that the Kanishka project will not be renewed, which is too bad because it helped accomplish wonderful things.

We also see that families do not know where to turn when their children are arrested. For example, some young people were intercepted at the Montreal airport as they were getting ready to leave the country. What do we do with those young people once they have been identified, when they have not committed a crime? These families are totally without resources, and there is nothing in place to help them. That is what these families are calling for, and a number of them have called me, in fact.

No prevention programs are currently being funded, except for those that the police forces take great pains to implement themselves. No budget is allocated to research or fighting online radicalization and recruitment. Nothing is being done to counter the messages on the Internet and in virtual places where these young people are being recruited. There is no “deradicalization” program. I am anxious to hear—

• (2345)

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Ahuntsic for allowing me to rise to discuss our Conservative government's strong record of keeping Canadians safe.

It is important to note, and I would like to remind the member opposite, that the international jihadi movement has declared war on Canada and its allies. Jihadist leaders have singled out Canada by name to carry out attacks here on Canadian soil against Canadians simply because they hate our values. These are the very same values that make Canada the very best country in the world in which to live, work, and raise a family.

Tragically, as we all know, we have seen that Canada has been the target of these types of terrorist attacks. On two terrible days this past October, two members of the Canadian Armed Forces were killed simply for wearing their uniforms.

That is why our Conservative government has put forward the anti-terrorism act, 2015. It will create new tools for our police to protect us from jihadi terrorists. It is also why we have increased resources to our police forces by one-third since we formed government. It is also why in our economic action plan we have allocated nearly \$300 million more to those very same police forces.

The member opposite mentioned radicalization in her question, and she went on to say that there is nothing in the budget or that we have done with regard to Internet recruitment. I absolutely disagree with that statement. I would also like to point out and remind her that the anti-terrorism act, 2015 actually includes tools that will allow authorities to take action to prevent radicalization, including taking down material that is promoting terrorism and being used to radicalize individuals.

We heard from witness after witness when we studied Bill C-51. They talked about the need to deal with that very situation. That material that is put on the Internet is actually what is radicalizing our youth. We heard from some very credible witnesses at committee.

Ray Boisvert, former assistant director of CSIS, said C-51 will be an “effective tool to get that [jihadist propaganda] material off the Internet”.

David Cape, of The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said,

seizure of terrorist propaganda...would empower the courts to order the removal or seizure of vicious material often encouraging the murder of Jews. Removing this heinous propaganda, particularly from the Internet, would limit its capacity to radicalize Canadians and inspire attacks.

Adjournment Proceedings

Tahir Gora, of the Canadian Thinkers Forum, said, “The government's proposed Bill C-51, when passed by Parliament, shall help Canadian Muslims to curb extremist elements”.

The experts agree and Canadians recognize that it is our Conservative government that is on the right path to tackle terrorism and also on the right track to put the tools in place to tackle radicalization as well.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, this government's major problem is that it does not understand that when we talk about fighting radicalization or violent extremism, call it what you will, we are talking about having budgets, resources, and money. We are not talking about passing legislation. We have laws; the Criminal Code is full of them.

If the government wants to make more laws, it can do so. However, it should provide the money that goes along with them because we cannot just start arresting people if nothing is done about prevention. There is no prevention program. We know so little about this here in Canada. We need research. That is how to really fight this type of criminal phenomenon. That is how we can ensure real national security.

The member said that Daesh has declared war on us. She is right, but what I am afraid of is that they may perhaps win this war. The government must take action.

● (2350)

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the member who is asking the question today is actually running for the NDP in the next election. It is also interesting to note that the NDP voted to extend Canadian citizenship to terrorists. It actually believes that it is somehow un-Canadian to strip citizenship and a passport from someone who is a terrorist. It also voted to keep CSIS operating with analog tools in a digital world.

The NDP voted to allow people to travel abroad for terrorist activities. It is fundamentally opposed to stopping these very same youth the member opposite is talking about from travelling overseas. It is fundamentally opposed to stopping them. It thinks they should be able to go freely. It also obstructed and opposed the widely supported changes in the anti-terrorism act, 2015.

Canadians know there is only one political party in the House, the Conservative government, that will keep Canadians safe.

The Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 11:51 p.m.)

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