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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 11, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 11, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*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 four petitions.

* * *

PROTECTION OF COMMUNITIES FROM THE EVOLVING DANGEROUS DRUG TRADE ACT

Hon. Gary Goodyear (for the Minister of Health) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-70, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its bilateral visit to the Caribbean, to St. George's, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands, April 21 to 26, 2014.

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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 39th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, concerning the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, in relation to its study on the programs and the activities of the Canadian General Standards Board.

[*Translation*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled “Women in Skilled Trades and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Occupations”.

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

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[*English*]

LIVE-IN CAREGIVER ACCESS, RESPECT AND EMPLOYMENT ACT

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-690, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (live-in caregiver).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill would set up a system of regulated entities whose job it would be to recruit caregivers on behalf of families.

This would benefit the families who would be spared the bureaucracy and financial risk they currently endure, and it would benefit caregivers because, in the case of a misfit or abuse, the employer would be able to find an alternative family for the caregiver.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-691, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (business transfer).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to introduce this bill in the House of Commons. It amends the Income Tax Act in order to correct an injustice in the Canadian tax system that affects owners of family businesses.

In these times of economic contraction and high youth unemployment, I am proud of this initiative that will foster the continuity of family businesses, help them create good jobs and enable thousands of families to transfer the fruits of their labour to the next generation.

[*English*]

I thank my hon. colleague John McCallum for his always precious advice, and the vast number of organizations pledging official support, including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Canadian Association of Family Enterprise, who will voice their support at my announcement later today.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

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

The Speaker: I will take this opportunity to remind the hon. member for Bourassa not to use proper names in the House, but use ridings or titles.

* * *

PROPER USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ACT

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-692, An Act respecting a federal framework on the proper use of prescription drugs and establishing National Prescription Drug Drop-off Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to present to the House a bill that would create a federal framework that responds to the need for the proper use of prescription drugs and would create a national prescription drug drop-off day.

This responds to rising trends such as the fact that Canadians are the second largest per capita users of opioids in the world, and that we have rising rates of fatalities and hospital visits relating to improper prescription drug use. This is supported by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and by the national association of pharmacists, and I am pleased to be working very closely with the health minister, the member for Oakville, and the member for Kootenay—Columbia, who all together represent many Canadians who share this concern. I invite all my colleagues to help me get the bill passed.

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

* * *

PETITIONS**PENSIONS**

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 100 or so people from Dartmouth and surrounding communities. The petition is with respect to defined benefits pension plans, and it calls on the government to ensure that employers live up to the promises made in the defined benefits plans and that it recognizes that pensions are deferred promises and deferred wages and that they are extremely important for the future of our communities. It calls on the

government to improve retirement security, because 62% of Canadian workers are without workplace pensions and the Canada pension plan should be expanded.

• (1010)

FIREARMS

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to present petitions on behalf of some 30,000-plus Canadians who call on the government to repeal item 2 of part 2 of the schedule to the Regulations Prescribing Certain Firearms and other Weapons, Components and Parts of Weapons, Accessories, Cartridge Magazines, Ammunition and Projectiles as Prohibited or Restricted.

I also have a petition calling on the government to repeal item 3 of part 4 of the schedule to the Regulations Prescribing Certain Firearms and other Weapons, Components and Parts of Weapons, Accessories, Cartridge Magazines, Ammunition and Projectiles as Prohibited or Restricted.

[*Translation*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present two petitions today.

The first is from my riding, Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The petitioners are calling on VIA Rail to provide passenger rail service, which we lost two years ago. The petitioners want the service to be reinstated. Transportation in our region is difficult, and having passenger rail service available would make our region merely remote, not isolated.

CANADA POST

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting was signed by many people who want better service from Canada Post. They are against the recent cuts and want Canada Post's services to meet 21st-century expectations.

[*English*]

POVERTY

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to present three petitions.

In the first one, the petitioners call on the government to work with community partners to create and execute an anti-poverty plan based on human rights. This plan should focus on issues like income security, housing, health, food security, employment, and early childhood education and care. These concerned citizens recognize the need to establish goals to tackle poverty over the long term.

Routine Proceedings

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the government to pass legislation that bans all flavouring from tobacco products because of the attractiveness of the product to Canadian youth. Flavoured tobacco products are especially marketed to youth because they are easy to use and promote addiction at an early age. The petitioners recognize the need to pass legislation in order to protect our youth from the harmful effects of smoking.

CANADA POST

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls on the government to place a moratorium on cuts to Canada Post services. Under recent announcements by Canada Post, 6,000 employees will lose their jobs and millions of households will lose home delivery. The petition calls for Canada Post to give its customers a chance to have real input into the modernization process.

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is signed by people from my riding of Vancouver Kingsway who want to register their opposition to the government's decision to close Canadian Coast Guard marine communications and traffic service centres across the country, as well as to close Coast Guard marine rescue centres in Quebec City, St. John's, and Kitsilano, B.C.

With the summer approaching, these petitioners point out that closing these centres increases the risk of accidents on sea involving passenger ships, ferries, tankers, and dangerous cargo. The closure of the Inuvik centre weakens our sovereignty in the north and it threatens mariners' safety.

The petitioners ask the government respectfully to reconsider that decision.

CANADA POST

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is again signed by residents of Vancouver Kingsway who are calling upon the government to direct Canada Post to cease its plan to stop home mail delivery.

The petitioners point out that there are myriad reasons why home delivery is necessary, including safety of the mail, assistance for Canadians with disabilities, and the insecurity of super boxes, among other things.

ABORTION

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition on behalf of constituents indicating that Canada is the only nation in the western world, in company with China and North Korea, without any laws restricting abortion and that the Supreme Court has said that Parliament's responsibility is to enact abortion legislation.

The petitioners are calling upon Parliament assembled to speedily enact legislation that would restrict abortion to the greatest extent possible.

[*Translation*]

LAC-MÉGANTIC

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise today to present a petition prepared by the Comité citoyen de la région du lac Mégantic. Many residents of the region have signed the petition, because a number of questions remain unanswered. They are calling on the Government of Canada to call a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the MMA train derailment that took the lives of 47 people and destroyed and contaminated downtown Lac-Mégantic on July 6, 2013.

● (1015)

[*English*]

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I bring forward a petition today that I believe was initiated by youth, which indicates that flavoured tobacco products are marketed to youth by the tobacco industry and that these flavoured and easy-to-use products serve to attract and addict youth to the product at a very early age.

The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to pass legislation that would remove all flavours from all tobacco products.

[*Translation*]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise today to present a petition signed by many residents of the city of Terrebonne, in my riding. They are calling on the government to guarantee stable, adequate, multi-year funding for our public broadcaster so that it can live up to its mandate from coast to coast to coast. Cuts to the CBC have taken a serious toll on the broadcaster's ability to deliver services in French, and the people of Terrebonne are very concerned about that.

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents, who are calling on the government to respect the rights of small family farmers to store, trade and use seeds. They are calling on the government to adopt international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against poverty.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today in support of my climate change accountability act. It is a petition I presented in this House many times before, reflecting the concerns of Canadians with the failure of the government to address climate change, reflecting the concerns of Canadians with actions of the government, such as the cancellation of the ecoENERGY retrofit program, and with the ongoing subsidization of the oil and gas industry.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to support my climate change accountability act, a law that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hold the government accountable.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, due to the numerous time allocations this week and lack of time for petitions, I have three, but I will try to move quickly.

The first petition is from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands who are calling for the end of the winner-take-all voting system in this country, otherwise known as “first past the post”, and calling upon the House of Commons to undertake public consultations across Canada to amend the Canada Elections Act to come up with a fair voting system in which every vote counts.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, again from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, deals with the issue of marine protected areas.

The petitioners are calling for the creation of more marine protected areas, but also for a simplification of their regulation within Fisheries and Oceans. The petitioners point out that there are currently 11 different classifications for MPAs and that they can be regulated by different branches of government.

They ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to work with the government branches to come up with a simplified and more effective system.

HOUSING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition, again from petitioners within my own riding, calls for the government to undertake an affordable housing plan and program, engaging the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; and calls for one particular measure to change the tax regime to encourage the building of purpose-built rental housing that would be affordable.

SEX SELECTION

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today from a number of British Columbians. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to condemn discrimination against girls through sex-selection abortion.

[*Translation*]

DORVAL GOLF COURSE

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition signed by thousands of people in my riding and on the entire West Island who are calling on the Minister of Transport to save the Dorval golf course. These names are in addition to the 12,000 names on the petition I presented last week.

In response to my questions, the minister told me that the decision is up to Aéroports de Montréal, but ADM says it is up to the department. People expect the minister to take part in this debate. This is a green golf course on the West Island, in Dorval, that does not use pesticides or golf carts. Seniors go there to get exercise. It is

a meeting place for seniors, and people want to keep it. A major protest movement is forming because people do not want to see this golf course close. It is important to the West Island.

I am asking the minister to intervene and tell us whether she will protect the golf course because this request has broad support. Thousands of people have come together over this in short order. It is very important to them and to us. I am very happy to support them.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition calling for the creation of a legal ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining. The petitioners find that the voluntary office set up by this government in 2009 has proven to be totally ineffective. It is time to replace it with something that works.

• (1020)

LATIN-AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the petition I am presenting today concerns the designation of Latin-American heritage day. The petitioners are members of the Latin American community and a visible minority. People from that region have settled across Canada and play an important role, especially in the development of the arts, the economy, politics and science and the establishment of community organizations in Canada.

They are asking the members of the House of Commons to support Bill C-635 to designate October 5 as Latin-American heritage day throughout Canada.

* * *

[*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. 1,187 to 1,193, Questions Nos. 1,195 to 1,205, and Question No. 1,207 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 1187—**Ms. Wai Young:**

With regard to government funding in the riding of Vancouver South, 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)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1188—Mr. David Wilks:**

With regard to government funding in the riding of British Columbia Southern Interior, 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. 1189—Mr. David Wilks:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Kootenay—Columbia, 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. 1190—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to the government's search for the lost ships of the Franklin Expedition: (a) what have been the total internal and external costs incurred by the government between 2007 and now; (b) out of the total costs associated with (a), what have been the total associated costs incurred by the Department of National Defense; (c) out of the total cost associated with (b), what have been the total associated costs incurred by the Royal Canadian Air Force; (d) out of the total cost associated with (c), what have been the total costs associated with the utilization of transport equipment, including the associated (i) equipment depreciation costs, (ii) fuel costs, (iii) personnel costs; (e) out of the total cost associated with (b), what have been the total associated costs incurred by the Royal Canadian Navy; (f) out of the total cost associated with (e), what have been the total costs associated with the utilization of transport equipment, including the associated (i) equipment depreciation costs, (ii) fuel costs, (iii) personnel costs; (g) out of the total cost associated with (a), what have been the total associated costs incurred by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; (h) out of the total cost associated with (g), what have been the total associated costs incurred by the Canadian Coast Guard; (i) out of the total cost associated with (h), what have been the total costs associated with the utilization of equipment, including the associated (i) equipment depreciation costs, (ii) fuel costs, (iii) personnel costs; (j) out of the total cost associated with (a), what have been the total associated costs incurred by the Department of the Environment; (k) out of the total cost associated with (j), what have been the total associated costs incurred by Parks Canada; and (l) out of the total cost associated with (k), what have been the total internal and external costs associated with underwater archeological operations, including the associated (i) equipment depreciation costs, (ii) personnel costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1191—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Wild Rose, 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. 1192—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Oxford, 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. 1193—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Chatham-Kent—Essex, 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. 1195—Mr. Larry Miller:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, 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. 1196—Mr. Brad Butt:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, 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. 1197—Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, 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. 1198—Mrs. Stella Ambler:

With regard to government funding in the riding of Mississauga South, 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)

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Question No. 1199—Mr. Larry Miller:

With regard to government funding in the riding of London North 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. 1200—Mr. Romeo Saganash:

With regard to government funding allocated in the constituency of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for fiscal year 2014-2015: (a) what is the total amount of this funding, broken down by (i) department, (ii) organisation, (iii) any other government body, (iv) program; and (b) this funding is directly responsible for the creation of how many jobs that are (i) full-time, (ii) part-time?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1201—Mr. Romeo Saganash:

With regard to government funding allocated in the constituency of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for fiscal year 2013-2014: (a) what is the total amount of this funding, broken down by (i) department, (ii) organisation, (iii) any other government body, (iv) program; and (b) this funding is directly responsible for the creation of how many jobs that are (i) full-time, (ii) part-time?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1202—Mr. Romeo Saganash:

With regard to government funding allocated in the constituency of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for fiscal year 2012-2013: (a) what is the total amount of this funding, broken down by (i) department, (ii) organisation, (iii) any other government body, (iv) program; and (b) this funding is directly responsible for the creation of how many jobs that are (i) full-time, (ii) part-time?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1203—Ms. Christine Moore:

With regard to government funding allocated in the constituency of Abitibi—Témiscamingue, broken down by fiscal year from 2011-2012 to present: (a) what is the total amount of this funding, broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency, (iii) program, (iv) any other government body; and (b) how many jobs are estimated to have been created by this funding, broken down by (i) full-time jobs, (ii) part-time jobs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1204—Mr. Sean Casey:

With respect to advertising for the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for the years 2003 to 2015 inclusively: (a) what was the advertising budget for the CRA, broken down by year; (b) how many different advertising campaigns were created and used, broken down by year; (c) how many different advertisements were produced and used, broken down by year; (d) what was the total cost (design, production, airtime, printing, etc.) for the advertising campaigns in (b); (e) what was the total cost (production, airtime, printing, etc.) for the advertisements in (c); (f) what was the cost to produce the television, radio, print, or online spots, broken down individually by advertisement; (g) what companies produced the advertisements, broken down individually by advertisement; (h) what was the cost of television airtime for the advertisements, broken down individually by advertisement; (i) on which television channels were the advertisements aired; (j) what was the cost of online airtime for the advertisements, broken down individually by advertisement; (k) on which online platforms were the advertisements aired, broken down by (i) free media (i.e. posting to YouTube), (ii) fee media (i.e. online commercials); (l) what was the cost of ad space in newspapers and other print publications, broken down individually by advertisement; and (m) what programs or divisions of CRA were responsible for (i) overseeing and coordinating production of the advertisements, (ii) financing the

production of the advertisements, (iii) financing the purchase of airtime both on television and online, and print space in newspapers and other print publications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1205—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to legal costs incurred by the government: what are all costs incurred for legal services, broken down by services provided internally and services contracted out, relating to (i) Reference re Senate Reform, 2014 SCC 32, (ii) R. v. Nur, 2015 SCC 15, (iii) Quebec (Attorney General) v. Canada (Attorney General), 2015 SCC 14, (iv) Reference re Securities Act, 2011 SCC 66, (v) Ishaq v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) 2015 FC 156 and its ongoing appeal?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1207—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard: (a) are there Environmental Response Caches or Community Packs (Packs) located in sites in coastal Labrador, Nunavik, or along the Hudson Bay or James Bay coastlines of Quebec, Ontario, or Manitoba, and if so, where are they located; (b) were there formerly Packs located in sites in coastal Labrador, Nunavik, or along the Hudson Bay or James Bay coastlines of Quebec, Ontario, or Manitoba, and if so, where are they located; (c) are there any plans to establish Packs located in sites in coastal Labrador, Nunavik, or along the Hudson Bay or James Bay coastlines of Quebec, Ontario, or Manitoba, and if so, where are they located; (d) for sites of existing Packs, when was each such Pack established; (e) are there sites which formerly hosted Packs, specifying in each case, (i) when the Pack was established, (ii) when the Pack was removed; and (f) what are the file numbers, dates, and titles of any and all reports, assessments, records, briefing notes, dockets or any other documents related to (i) the establishment and maintenance of Arctic Community Packs in Nunavut or the Northwest Territories, (ii) the possible establishment of Packs in any of the locations referred to in (a) through (c)?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

● (1025)

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

INDUCED DISPLACEMENT OF MANITOBA FIRST NATIONS

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Winnipeg North. I will hear him now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to consider two things in reaching your decision. One is that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report was released last week. The second is that we are now in the dying days of a session, and my request relates to an event that took place four years ago. It would be an absolute shame if we were not able to provide some of the answers that need to be provided to first nations communities that have been impacted in such a very real and tangible way.

I would like to thank Dr. Myrle Ballard in particular, along with Cindy Woodhouse, for their input and for making sure that I had a better understanding of the seriousness of the issue. I would like to be able to share that with members of the opposition and the government in the hope that they will understand why it is very important that we move ahead with this particular emergency debate.

Government Orders

I will share with the House that in the province of Manitoba in 2011, over 5,000 first nations people living downstream from the Fairford Dam were flooded out from what was called a natural flood. This was, in fact, not a natural flood. First nations were deliberately flooded out. The Lake St. Martin First Nation is still 100% displaced. Half of the 800 members of the Little Saskatchewan First Nation are still displaced.

Induced displacement has left the first nations very vulnerable. Not having a land base leads to cultural genocide, many would argue. The first nations people are scattered throughout Manitoba. The social fabric of their communities has been destroyed. Their homes have been destroyed. Many are homeless and end up on the streets of Winnipeg and elsewhere. Their economic and traditional livelihoods have been destroyed. They are suffering and dying due to the physical, emotional, and mental stress and trauma of being displaced.

Over 10% of the people of the Lake St. Martin First Nation have died since the evacuation. Children are being exposed to racism and are joining gangs and taking part in other activities they were not exposed to when they were living in their own communities. Women are miscarrying and people are committing suicide. People are dying tragically and prematurely. They emphasize these facts in a very bold way. They want to remind members of the House that removing children to attend residential schools was cultural genocide, and the removal and relocation of entire communities in this day and age, they suggest, is also cultural genocide. What is the government going to do to relocate these communities to high and dry land?

In short, there are four points that are really being emphasized: one, induced displacement and loss of land leads to cultural genocide; two, induced displacement is impacting on the health of the evacuees; three, first nations need new and dry land, which they should select for themselves to meet their community needs; and four, induced displacement has led to a loss of traditional and economic livelihoods.

Yesterday I posed the question to the minister, and the minister's response clearly demonstrated the need for the House to debate the issue today.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for raising the question. While there is no doubt that he feels very strongly about this particular issue, I do not find that it meets the test for an emergency debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

JUSTICE FOR ANIMALS IN SERVICE ACT (QUANTO'S LAW)

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Speaker: There being no motions at report stage on this bill, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question of the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Hon. Gary Goodyear (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Gary Goodyear (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be here today to take part in the third reading debate of Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, also known as Quanto's law.

The proposed amendments to the Criminal Code support the Speech from the Throne commitment to bring forward Quanto's law in recognition of the daily risks taken by police officers and their service animals. The proposed amendments would create a specific new offence prohibiting the killing or injuring of a law enforcement animal, a service animal, or a military animal.

I note that the bill defines each of these terms. A law enforcement animal is defined as a dog or a horse trained to aid a law enforcement officer in carrying out that officer's duties. A military animal is defined as an animal that is trained to aid a member of the Canadian Forces in carrying out the member's duties, and a service animal is defined as an animal that is required by a person with a disability for assistance and that is certified, in writing, as having been trained by a professional service animal institution to assist a person with a disability.

Quanto was a five-year-old German shepherd Edmonton police service dog that was fatally stabbed on October 7, 2013, while assisting the police in apprehending a suspect. Quanto and its handler, Constable Matt Williamson, were in pursuit of a suspect in a stolen vehicle. When the vehicle became disabled at a gas station, the man jumped out and fled. Constable Williamson ordered the suspect to stop or he would send in Quanto. When his calls were ignored, Constable Williamson deployed Quanto. Unfortunately, as Quanto caught and held the suspect, the suspect began stabbing the dog with a knife. Quanto was taken for medical treatment, but his injuries, sadly, were fatal.

The Criminal Code has contained offences relating to the treatment of animals since 1892, and the current set of offences has existed since 1953. The penalties in the existing law were increased in 2008. The offence of killing, maiming, wounding, poisoning, or injuring an animal that is kept for lawful purposes, as set out in section 445 of the Criminal Code, was used to prosecute Quanto's killer.

Government Orders

However, the maximum sentence that may be imposed when this hybrid offence is prosecuted as an indictable offence is five years of imprisonment. The law provides that the court may, in addition to any other sentence, on application of the Attorney General or on its own motion, order that the accused pay the reasonable costs incurred in respect of the animal as a result of the commission of the offence.

Finally, paragraph 738(1)(a) of the Criminal Code authorizes the court to order the offender to pay the costs associated with training a new animal as restitution for the loss of an animal when the amount is readily ascertainable.

The person who killed Quanto was sentenced to a total of 26 months' imprisonment on various charges arising out of the tragic events of October 7, 2013, of which 18 months were specifically for killing Quanto. The accused was also banned from owning a pet for 25 years.

Quanto's killing was only the most recent instance in which a police service animal was killed in the course of a police operation. Another high-profile incident involved the death of Brigadier.

Brigadier was an eight-year-old Toronto police service horse killed in the line of duty in 2006. In that case, a driver in a fit of rage, while waiting in a line at a drive-through ATM machine, made a U-turn and barrelled right into the horse and the mounted officer. Both of Brigadier's front legs were broken, one so badly that he could never have recovered. The horse had to be put down.

• (1030)

The person who drove the car was subsequently convicted, including for dangerous driving causing bodily harm to Brigadier's mounted officer.

Members of this House will be aware of the many ways law enforcement dogs assist their handlers in protecting the public. A police dog is trained specifically to assist police and other law enforcement personnel in their work, such as searching for drugs and explosives, searching for lost people, looking for crime scene evidence, and protecting their handlers. Law enforcement canine units, like Quanto's unit in Edmonton, are a common component of municipal police forces as well as provincial police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

When I visited the police service in my region of York, at the invitation of York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe, I had the opportunity to see the canine unit at work. I was given a complete demonstration and was joined by the Minister of Justice of our country. I heard very compelling evidence and support from the police officers who are working with these animals on a daily basis.

In 1995, after an absence of 23 years, a new version of the Montreal police canine unit was established. Today this canine unit has 11 officers and 10 operational dogs. The unit supports Montreal police officers in their investigations and daily activities. It is also called upon to work on certain operations where its specialties are required. For example, the unit will co-operate with police forces throughout Quebec that do not have canine units or will work with dog handlers on other police forces during major events. It participates in media, community, and cultural events, at schools and community meetings, and on television shows to promote the canine unit and the good work of the Montreal police service.

The dogs in the Montreal police canine unit specialize in specific types of work. Some dogs have general purpose training with a specialization in narcotics detection. Other dogs have a specialization in searching buildings, and some dogs have specialized explosives detection training.

On the international front, a number of American states, such as Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, and Oregon, have enacted laws making the intentional injury or killing of a police dog a felony offence and subjecting perpetrators to harsher penalties than those in the statutes embodied in local animal cruelty laws, just as an assault on a police officer may result in harsher penalties than a similar assault on a member of the public.

With respect to law enforcement horses, after they undergo special training, they may be employed for specialized duties ranging from the patrol of parks and wilderness areas, where police cars would be impractical or noisy, to riot duty, where the horse, because of its larger size, serves to intimidate those they want to disperse. Police horses provide the officers who ride them with added height and visibility, which gives their riders the ability to observe a wider area. However, it also allows people in the wider area to see the officers, which helps deter crime and helps people find officers in those instances when they need one.

This bill proposes to extend specific protection not only to law enforcement animals but to trained service animals and military animals. Service animals perform tasks that help their disabled human masters live independent lives. Most service animals are dogs, such as Seeing Eye dogs. However, other kinds of animals may be trained to be service animals. The cost associated with training a new service animal is significant.

• (1035)

The Canadian Armed Forces uses a variety of animals on a contracted basis as required. For example, animals assist members of the Canadian Armed Forces by sniffing for bombs. Each of these animals is required to have received specialized training that enables it to accomplish specific tasks in support of its human handler.

It should also be noted that this offence only applies when the animal is killed or injured in the line of duty. Animals that do not fall within the scope of the new offence are nonetheless protected under the existing animal cruelty provisions of the Criminal Code.

Government Orders

As with the existing section 445 of the Criminal Code, the proposed offence would require the offender to have intended to kill or injure one of these animals. That way, accidental or negligent conduct would not be criminalized. Like section 445 of the Criminal Code, the new offence would carry a maximum penalty of five years of imprisonment or indictment of 18 months and-or a fine of \$10,000 on summary conviction. However, it is important to note that the proposed amendments would also require courts to give primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence as sentencing objectives in respect of the new offence. Furthermore, we must underline that there would be a mandatory minimum of six months of imprisonment where a law enforcement animal was killed in the line of duty and the offence was prosecuted by indictment.

Bill C-35 also includes a provision that would require the sentence imposed on a person convicted of assault committed against a law enforcement officer to be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on the offender for an offence committed at the same time.

The murder of a police officer is classified as first degree murder and is punishable by life imprisonment with a mandatory minimum period for parole eligibility of 25 years. The Criminal Code specifically prohibits assaults committed against police officers in the performance of their duties for a number of offences, including subsection 270.(1), assault on a peace officer; section 270.01, assault with a weapon or assault causing bodily harm on a peace officer; and section 270.02, aggravated assault on a peace officer.

Regrettably, data from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics adult criminal court survey reveals that there are still too many assaults on police officers in our country. From 2009-10 to 2011-12, there were a total of 31,461 charges laid under section 270.(1), 345 charges laid under section 270.0, and 20 charges laid under section 270.02.

In 2009, the Criminal Code was amended to require courts, when sentencing persons convicted of such assaults, to give primary consideration to the objectives of denunciation and deterrence of such conduct.

I am sure that we all recognize that such attacks not only put the lives or safety of the individual officers at risk but that they also attack and undermine the justice system more broadly. Recognizing that the wilful killing or injuring of a law enforcement animal also undermines the justice system more broadly, the bill would require that the sentence imposed on a person convicted of the wilful killing or injuring of a law enforcement animal would be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on the offender for an offence committed at the same time.

I could go on and on about this subject. However, I will close my remarks today by indicating that I am looking forward to the quick passage of the bill at third reading, and I sincerely hope that we can get the bill to our colleagues on the other side of the House and passed before we recess for the summer.

● (1040)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will preface my question by indicating that the Liberal Party will be supporting this legislation.

However, I am concerned that members on the other side seem to feel that every problem can be solved by an amendment to the Criminal Code. The Canadian Police Canine Association indicates that since 1965, 10 police dogs have been killed. Could the member enlighten us as to whether that is the full extent of the problem it seeks to address? Could he also tell us whether there are any measures, other than this amendment to the Criminal Code, the government is taking to deal with this perceived problem?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his good work on the justice committee, particularly with respect to his contribution to the debate on this piece of legislation. I also want to thank him and his party for indicating their support for this legislation.

In response to his specific question, this legislation has been introduced in recognition of the special role these animals play in contributing to the safety and well-being of Canadians. This legislation would make it an offence to kill or injure these animals. I am sure the member will agree that strengthening the sentences imposed on those who would commit such an offence is intended to denounce and deter assaults against these animals.

Training these animals can cost a considerable amount of money. This legislation would send a strong message to those who would consider harming a service animal while it is exercising its duty that there are strict penalties. That is the scope of the bill, and I think it has wide support from Canadians across this country. I have heard from many in my riding and have been the recipient of much communication from Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. I know how important this bill is to him.

In his speech, he mentioned that the existing Criminal Code sections require clear intent. People who commit acts of cruelty against these animals could use negligence or other defences in court. I would like him to explain whether, in his consultations, he saw the need to provide greater protection for all animals. As he already knows, the NDP will support Bill C-35.

I am wondering whether, during his consultations, he identified some gaps in the existing legislation and the sections dealing with cruelty towards other animals, such as domestic animals?

● (1045)

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her work on the justice committee and for her support and the NDP's support for this piece of legislation.

Government Orders

The committee heard compelling evidence from witnesses from across the country, particularly from Stephen Kaye, representing the Canadian Police Canine Association; Troy Carriere, who is head of the canine unit of the Edmonton Police Service and was responsible for Quanto; and Diane Bergeron, who appeared as an individual but who has done great work on behalf of the CNIB.

Law enforcement animals deserve special recognition in light of the dangers they face daily in their efforts to enforce the law and protect Canadians in their communities. Creating an offence specifically prohibiting the killing or injuring of these animals and strengthening the sentences imposed on those who would commit such an offence would specifically denounce and deter assaults against these animals, which are, because of the work they do every day, put in danger every single day.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, Quanto's law is an important step in recognizing the importance of what service animals do.

I agree with my colleague from the NDP that we need better protections under the Criminal Code for animals of all types, particularly because law enforcement agents often say that if they find out that someone has been cruel to animals in a sadistic fashion, it can be a predictor of criminal behaviour. It is very important that we do more to protect all animals and act on acts of cruelty against all animals.

If I have enough time, June 18 is the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. I wanted to share with my friend across the way the gallantry of the British cavalry. A wealthy lord sent an expedition to recover the horses of the Duke of Wellington's army and brought them back to pastures to reward them for their bravery. It was reported that they would spontaneously cease grazing, look at each other, suddenly form a line, and charge.

These service animals are of a different category, and I am happy to support this law.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leader of the Green Party for giving us that brief history lesson today. She makes a very valid point. These service animals are selfless. They are very courageous.

Steve Kaye from the Canadian Police Canine Association said that while officers might think twice about releasing or deploying their animals, that those animals were indeed anxious and ready to go into service without fear.

That speaks volumes as to the degree to which animals can protect humans, particularly peace officers.

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for introducing Quanto's law. It is really a marvellous thing to do and I very much appreciate it.

In my riding of Oakville, when we knocked on doors during the election, on some streets there was a dog at almost every second household. We heard them barking as soon as we hit the door. We grow so attached to animals not only because of their intelligence, but because they also give us companionship. In addition to that, a key reason that so many people in my riding have dogs is because they feel safe at night. The dog helps to guard the house. If prowlers

came around or someone tried to break into the house, they would be scared off by the dog.

These are noble beasts that live with us. They have become part of our families. This high level of training and service that police dogs and horses do is a wonderful thing to behold. It is like dogs with jobs. This higher level of protection is a marvellous thing, and I congratulate the member.

Does the member think that with this extra protection provided to police dogs and horses, they will be given additional duties? Will police forces be able to use them to do more, or will they keep carrying on the way they have been?

• (1050)

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes a very valid point. Those of us who have pets at home know the importance of them as family pets, but there is also an element of protection that many families feel by having a dog at home.

This legislation sends a very strong message to people that if they seek to hurt a police animal, or a service animal or a military animal, there are severe consequences that go along with it. It is important to note that according to the RCMP, it costs upward of \$60,000 to train one of these dogs. That is an awful lot of money to put into the training of an animal. We can appreciate the focus that police and trainers put in to training these animals.

This also sends a very strong message to the police and those who have the need for a service animal that their partner has that additional protection of denunciation and deterrence from criminals.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-35.

I am pleased to support this bill, and I think I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that all forms of animal cruelty are unacceptable.

There is no doubt that to us Bill C-35 acknowledges the importance and value of animals and especially our attachment to these animals, such as police or military dogs and horses and even service animals in general, such as dogs trained to help people with a disability or people who are visually impaired.

I think it is very important to highlight the crucial role these animals play indirectly in our lives. People may not be aware, but police dogs play a very important role.

The name Quanto's law is a reference to an incident that took place in Edmonton, in which a police dog named Quanto was stabbed to death.

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These dogs, like Quanto himself, have played a role in many arrests and investigations. They play a role in our daily lives, and it is very important for us to be here together today to recognize the work not only of law enforcement dogs, but of service dogs who help people with disabilities on a daily basis. These animals support them, help them achieve their potential and accompany them every day.

In committee, we heard very moving testimony that showed us just how close an animal and a person can become and how much we are really all alike. In that sense, it is very important to recognize the merit of the bill, which I will explain in a little more detail.

The bill creates a new Criminal Code offence:

Every one commits an offence who, wilfully and without lawful excuse, kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures a law enforcement animal while it is aiding a law enforcement officer in carrying out that officer's duties, a military animal while it is aiding a member of the Canadian Forces in carrying out that member's duties or a service animal.

This new offence will be added to the section of the Criminal Code on cruelty to animals.

It is important to note that this provision fully recognizes that law enforcement dogs are like police officers. Many witnesses mentioned that in committee as well. Obviously, these dogs do not talk or drink coffee, but they are like police officers because they are trained to do a specific job, such as detecting drugs or tracking a kidnapped child.

These animals are trained to do a job, one that police officers may not even be able to do given humans' limited sense of smell, for example.

• (1055)

These dogs are even trained to do some things that humans cannot do. Because of their special qualities, these animals play an extremely important role in our police forces, and so do service animals. We therefore support that clause because it is well written in that respect.

However, I do want to raise one concern. Numerous organizations and experts have recommended against minimum sentences on the grounds that they do not actually reduce the crime rate. Rather, prevention, education and other approaches solve the problem upstream rather than downstream. Unfortunately, minimum sentences never achieve the stated goal of reducing the crime rate.

The courts are quite capable of judging the severity of a crime and the aggravating factors. For example, in Quanto's case, the court sentenced the accused to 26 months in prison and made sure to mention that 18 of the 26 months were punishment for having stabbed the law enforcement dog to death. The sentence in Quanto's case was two times longer than what is set out in this bill. It is clear that the courts and judges can use their discretionary power to judge aggravating factors and the gravity of an offence. Forcing them to impose a minimum sentence removes that discretion.

Nevertheless, I will conclude my aside and my criticism by saying that subclause 445.01(1) is well written. Here is the first sentence:

Every one commits an offence who, wilfully and without lawful excuse...

This first subsection is written so as to ensure that mandatory minimum sentencing does not apply to those who are defending themselves. Furthermore, in committee, the witnesses said that at

least that clause was written so that it will not apply in cases where people fear for their lives and have to defend themselves, which can happen in extreme situations, and those individuals will not automatically be sentenced to the mandatory minimum. This subparagraph is very well written and limits the cases that will be ultimately affected by mandatory minimum sentencing.

In some situations, we do not know how people will react. The witnesses made it clear that there are times when people fear for their lives and have to defend themselves against an aggressive animal. That clause is very well written. Adding the expression, "wilfully and without lawful excuse" means that only those who kill an animal in bad faith are targeted.

As the parliamentary secretary pointed out, someone could decide to drive their car straight into a police service horse. These people have an abnormal desire to kill an animal, as in the case of Quanto, where stabbing a dog to death was considered an aggravating factor.

Since that clause is actually very well written, the NDP will support the bill. However, I still wanted to raise that concern, because the Conservatives have passed many bills that amend the Criminal Code to impose mandatory minimum sentencing. This has been denounced by the Canadian Bar Association, the Barreau du Québec and many other associations, including defence lawyers associations.

• (1100)

A number of associations are saying that, unfortunately, minimum sentences do not produce the desired effect, which is to lower crime. What is more, they add an extra burden on the provinces and the justice system.

For example, last year, a Quebec justice system report noted an increase in costs associated with the number of mandatory minimum sentences. That is the case not just in Quebec, but also everywhere else, including the United States. The more mandatory minimum sentences are imposed, the heavier the financial burden on the provinces and the resources within Canada's justice system. Unfortunately, we are entering a vicious circle that is long on delays and short on resources. There are not enough judges and crown prosecutors. I think we need to take a balanced approach when it comes to our justice system. It is important to emphasize that, even though we recognize the importance of protecting animals.

That brings me to my second point. I think it is important to note that the witnesses unanimously agreed that the bill was necessary. We too often hear people talking about service animals. As I said, we are talking not just about police or military service dogs, but also service dogs for people with a disability or with reduced mobility. The witnesses unanimously confirmed the importance of recognizing the support these animals provide in our lives and how extremely important it is to protect them.

Government Orders

However, one witness from the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the CFHS, said that Bill C-35 was a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, that is often the case with the Conservatives. They take a step in the right direction, but they never see things through.

The fact remains that the section on animal protection should be revised and improved to protect all domestic animals. Far too often we hear in the news about people torturing animals. Videos on YouTube and even Facebook show puppy mills and mills for other animals. There are really some very troublesome cases of animal cruelty happening. It is important to go a bit further and establish better protection for all domestic animals in the Criminal Code.

That brings me to the initiatives brought forward in the House of Commons by my NDP colleagues. For example, my very hon. colleague from Parkdale—High Park introduced Bill C-232. I know that it is extremely important for her. She has been working very hard for many years to help protect animals and to bring this issue to Parliament's attention. I would really like to thank her for all of her hard work.

Her bill, Bill C-232, would make it possible to move animals out of the property section and create a separate section dealing with animal cruelty. They would not be recognized as people under this legislation, but they would no longer be considered property. Animals are living creatures.

Bill C-35 does this for law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals, but not for all domestic animals. My colleague's bill would address that issue and provide additional protection for animals by moving them out of the property section of the Criminal Code and creating a section for living creatures.

Her bill would also allow the justice system to better define such situations and to deal more effectively with animal cruelty offences, which would increase the possibility of conviction for such offences.

• (1105)

I would also like to thank my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine. I know how much she cares about protecting all of our animals. She has worked extremely hard on this issue since she was elected. I would like to thank her for that. She also introduced Bill C-592, which would provide a better definition of “animal” and would change the definition of “animal cruelty offence” to include the notion of intent.

My colleague, the parliamentary secretary, mentioned this. Unfortunately, the notions of neglect and intent are currently unclear and remain undefined in the section dealing with animal cruelty. This means that people who commit animal cruelty offences can use different forms of defence. We must take this step to define what constitutes intent in the section dealing with animal cruelty offences.

I thank the parliamentary secretary for the interesting statistics he shared. These figures show that this phenomenon is much more common than we think. Unfortunately, when someone pleads guilty to other offences, the animal cruelty offences are often dropped. For example, this is the case when someone pleads guilty or signs a plea bargain with the crown. These measures could also make it possible to see more convictions in cases of animal cruelty.

With respect to sentencing, I would also like to mention that in Saskatchewan, for example, the maximum sentence for animal cruelty and for injuring a law enforcement animal is two years. This bill already has a five-year maximum. Accordingly, we see the legislator's clear intent to punish those who injure, mutilate or kill law enforcement animals during the course of their everyday work. I would like to thank all the police and customs officers who work with these animals. I know how important this bill is to them. We support them in their work and now through the bill being studied.

However, I would like to reiterate the two concerns I described. It is a step in the right direction, but it would now be appropriate to go further and to update the animal protection provisions. Minimum mandatory sentences are not always necessarily the solution for preventing crimes.

We will support the bill. I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for his initiative and the good work he has done, which has allowed us to have this important debate in the House of Commons.

On that note, I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I will now be pleased to answer my colleague's questions.

• (1110)

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her passionate speech in support of the legislation and for pointing out the importance of this legislation to support service animals.

Did the member hear the story just a couple of days ago where a blind person was crossing a street in the United States and an oncoming car, being driven at speed, was not able to stop in time? The service animal, a dog, jumped in front of his partner, the blind person, to protect the person. The car hit them both. Thankfully, they both survived, but that is an example of what the animal did at a time when the dog itself was in danger. He saw the car coming and jumped between the car and the person to protect the person.

It just speaks to the need to put in this legislation to recognize that special service that these animals provide to human beings every day, police officers, people with disabilities and so forth.

I wonder if the member opposite can share with us if she has heard from her constituents how they feel about this legislation and about putting in legislation that would further protect animals, particularly those that are put in service by us.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Péclet: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his question.

Government Orders

Indeed, I did hear about this story. He really got to the heart of this debate: these animals play a crucial role in our everyday lives. Law enforcement animals are responsible for many arrests, and other service animals are also indispensable, as he has shown. People are quite concerned about protecting animals. We are so attached to them. As I said, they should not be considered property in the Criminal Code of Canada. They should be considered living creatures. They are our colleagues and our friends, and we are with them every day.

The people of La Pointe-de-l'Île care very much about protecting animals. I spoke to a number of people about the fact that we need to enact legislation to better protect our companion and service animals. As my colleague showed, service animals are living creatures that care only about helping the people they serve, not themselves. That is a quality that all of us here in the House of Commons should have.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I obviously congratulate the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine for her bill. It is a copy of the bill that was introduced in the House by former Liberal MP Mark Holland.

Does the member realize that her party is trying to scrap this bill? The bill has been on the order paper and the schedule of debate for months and months, and each time the date for debate approaches, the bill gets bumped. As of right now, it will be debated for the first time on June 19, so it is too late to get it passed.

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, it is so typical of the Liberals to play partisan politics with an issue as important as animal welfare. I spoke for 20 minutes about the importance of protecting animals and the importance that the NDP places on this issue. However, the only thing that the member could think of doing is belittle me, belittle my party and disparage my colleague's efforts.

I just wanted to say that I find that completely unacceptable. My colleague stands there and wants to play partisan politics with a bill that the House is going to pass unanimously. Surely, he must have something better to do. Perhaps he should stand up and defend animals and say how unacceptable cruelty to animals is, instead of belittling the NDP, as the Liberals love to do.

•(1115)

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île for her speech, which I listened to carefully and which is especially meaningful now, since Quebec recently introduced a similar bill regarding animal welfare.

Obviously, I do not by any means oppose this bill, and of course I will vote to support it. However, there is one thing that concerns me about this bill, because, once again, the Conservatives are bringing in more mandatory minimum sentences. I wish to take advantage of my colleague's expertise as a member and as a lawyer to ask her whether this is another example of the Conservatives' tendency to confuse the legislative and judicial branches.

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, when the government repeatedly removes the discretion of judges and the courts to judge specific circumstances and the relative gravity of an offence, that removes to some degree the power of the judicial system to make judgments. Mandatory minimum sentences prevent

the courts from making appropriate decisions and striking a balance among several aggravating factors and the gravity of the offence.

More and more mandatory minimum sentences are making their way into the Criminal Code, something that has been criticized by many groups. Even in the United States, state governors in Texas and other extremely Republican states are reconsidering their mandatory minimum sentence policies. They say those policies do not work, cost too much and do not change a thing. It is obvious that we need a balanced approach because, unfortunately, there is no evidence that mandatory minimum sentences reduce the crime rate.

It might be time to do a study or take an overall look at what we can really do to address this problem upstream rather than downstream when it is too late. We would prefer that people not commit crimes, but mandatory minimum sentences are not the way to go.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the bill, as I understand it, would protect all forms of service dogs, both service dogs in the forces of law enforcement, but also service dogs that are helping persons with disabilities, such as the blind, persons who use dogs as therapy, et cetera.

We really appreciate the fact that the government is trying to protect these animals, but we are concerned that the use of mandatory minimums, as always, goes too far with the current government. It could, in fact, result in judges being unable to hand down convictions because they realize the mandatory minimum would in fact be too harsh a penalty.

Would the member like to comment?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the question. I know how important matters related to persons with disabilities are to him.

Diane Bergeron from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind came to committee to testify and said how extremely important the bill is to her because it acknowledges the value of service animals for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility. To her, it is essential that we finally recognize how important these animals are to people's daily lives.

As the hon. member said in the second part of his question, the problem that often comes up in animal cruelty cases is that these offences are withdrawn when there is an agreement between the Crown and the defence lawyers. Offenders often are not prosecuted because the offences are considered less serious than others.

Mandatory minimum sentences could cause a problem. If an agreement is made, a person will agree to plead guilty to some offences, but not to animal cruelty offences because they come with a minimum sentence. As I said, we should take a balanced approach to animal cruelty offences. We must ensure that there are more convictions and not prevent convictions.

Government Orders

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request the consent of the House to share my time with the eloquent and hard-working member of Parliament for Malpeque.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for Charlottetown have the unanimous consent of the House to split his time with the aforementioned member?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for that accommodation.

I rise today to speak on Bill C-35, justice for animals in service act (Quanto's law). As members know, Bill C-35 is commonly referred to as Quanto's law, after an Edmonton police service dog was killed in the line of duty in 2013.

In response to that incident, this bill makes it a specific criminal offence to injure or kill a law enforcement, military or service animal. The Liberals will vote for Quanto's law. We support providing additional protection to law enforcement, military and service animals. They provide tremendous service to society and require significant investment in training. At committee, we heard it was \$40,000 for a police dog.

These animals deserve the full protection of the law, which in the case of police dogs and horses, they assist in upholding. Any attack on a law enforcement animal is an attack on law enforcement. Parliament must rightly denounce such affronts to our system of law and order.

That last point, the purpose of this specific crime, is the main distinction between Quanto's law and our current animal cruelty laws in Section 445(1) of the Criminal Code. A conviction under Quanto's law or the animal cruelty section carries the same maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment. However, morally and legally, language makes a meaningful difference.

A conviction under Quanto's law will carry a special stigma for offenders. We know this because of the outpouring of public condemnation when these incidents occur.

At committee, we heard of this bill's importance to stakeholders. Staff Sergeant Troy Carriere joined us from the Canine and Flight Operations Section of the Edmonton Police Service. He described the stabbing death of Quanto after that police dog was deployed to pursue a suspect, Paul Vukmanich, who had fled on foot from a stolen vehicle and turned out to be wanted on a warrant for armed robbery. Staff Sergeant Carriere also described the public response to Quanta's death.

There was overwhelming response and support from the community and other policing agencies from across Canada. This tragic event struck a public nerve that, in my 22 years of policing, I have never been witness to.

Quanta's death resulted in a charge of animal cruelty. That conviction, together with other charges, resulted in a sentence of 26 months for the offender. However, as we heard at committee and in debate earlier today, 18 months of the sentence were for Quanta's death. That is an important point when we're talking about the penalty provisions in Bill C-35 that I will return to.

The committee also heard from Stephen Kaye, president of the Canadian Police Canine Association, whose own police service dog was shot and killed in 2001. He described the place of law enforcement animals in society in terms that I would like to share with this Chamber. He said:

To suggest that law enforcement has become dependent on these uniquely specialized creatures is simply an understatement. They have become as public a servant and ambassador for us as has any human member or officer. Some people may not care very much for the police, but a service dog always draws a crowd and much attention at public presentations.

The committee also heard from Barbara Cartwright, the chief executive officer of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. Ms. Cartwright informed us that many other jurisdictions have greater protection for police and military animals, including some U.S. jurisdictions, where the intentional injuring or killing of a police dog is a felony.

I would be remiss not to mention the excellent testimony of Diane Bergeron, who is blind and appeared with her guide dog Lucy. Ms. Bergeron had a very moving personal tribute on how much she owes to her guide dogs over the years. She said:

I have gone skydiving, rappelled down the outside of the Sutton Place Hotel in Edmonton, 29 stories ... and driven a stock car. In the last couple of years, I have decided to challenge myself just a little bit more by doing triathlons, including two half Ironmans, and this year, at the age of 50, I am going to compete in my first full Ironman at Mont Tremblant. None of this would have been possible without the starting dog of Clyde. Over the years, my dogs have guided me to so many places, but most of all they have guided me towards my hopes and dreams.

These stories are really what Quanto's law is about, a statement from the Parliament of Canada on the value of the animals that serve our society so well. We were reminded of their service by a story out of the U.S. a couple of weeks ago.

• (1125)

In Mississippi, three men attacked a sheriff's deputy and slashed him with a box cutter. Fortunately, the deputy was able to activate a button that opened the door to his vehicle, releasing his service dog, which bit and repelled the suspects. Really it was quite amazing and there are many stories of this kind of devotion from service animals.

However, in supporting the bill, I do not want to overstate the magnitude of this problem or the frequency of attacks on these animals. At committee we were not able to get a reliable number on injuries to service animals, but the Canadian Police Canine Association indicated that 10 police dogs were killed in the line of duty between 1965 and 2013, with three of those occurring in the last decade.

While the bill is a worthwhile improvement to our criminal law, it does not respond to a trend and is more driven by a particular incident than evidence about where government attention is required. While Liberals support the bill, we want to emphasize our strong objection to the government's policies on criminal justice in general.

Government Orders

One reason comes up when we look at the specific provisions of the bill. As I said, Bill C-35 creates a specific offence for injuring or killing a law enforcement, military or service animal. On summary conviction the penalty is a maximum fine of \$10,000 or 18 months in prison, or both. On indictment, the maximum penalty is five years with a minimum punishment of six months in prison.

Bill C-35 also amends the code to require sentences for assaults on law enforcement officers to be served consecutively to punishments for offences committed in the same course of events. The one provision that caused me pause was the mandatory minimum penalty on indictment as it is in the best interests of society to preserve judicial discretion to tailor particular sentences to particular crimes. However, legitimate concerns are mitigated by the fact that the offence has a summary procedure avenue without the minimum penalty.

It is also relevant that in Quanto's death the judge gave 18 months specifically for the killing of that service animal. We should expect to see similar sentences handed down across the country for these types of incidents on the principle that similar crimes deserve similar penalties and 6 months is well below the 18 months in that case. Therefore, this mandatory minimum is less offensive than most.

Finally, I want to end on a philosophical note. In considering Bill C-35, one issue that I thought about is whether the purpose of this law is to protect these animals merely because of the value they provide to humans. Certainly that is the perspective the Minister of Justice emphasized at committee. I wonder whether the legal purpose of protecting animals is not also because they have some value for their own sake. I think that members of the House would agree that animals do have value independent of our use of them.

As a Liberal, I believe that all animals deserve to be treated humanely and that federal animal cruelty laws should be informed by the best scientific evidence available. I also believe that treating animals humanely is consistent with important cultural and economic practices like farming, ranching, fishing and hunting. That would include a humane, regulated seal hunt that takes into account the interests of affected communities.

As we pass Quanto's law and reflect on the value of service animals, we might also pause and think whether the principles underlying the bill should have other progressive legal applications in the future.

• (1130)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Charlottetown's remarks. He was able to attend the hearings on the bill at committee. During those hearings one of the things the member and others mentioned is that there is an impact through sentencing, by making the sentencing for the killing of a service animal consecutive with other sentences.

Did the member get any opinion from those hearings, either from the justice minister or other legal officials, whether that in fact would stand up if there were a court challenge on the matter in terms of mandatory sentencing?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and fellow Prince Edward Islander for that question.

The minister was asked at committee about constitutional review of the bill and, quite frankly, the question was not answered directly.

What has been emphasized by witnesses through the committee process was the very point I made in my speech. That is, in the most recent case involving a conviction for animal cruelty in the circumstances of the killing of a service dog, there was a global penalty of 26 months, and the judge in that case specifically said that 18 months of the sentence were applicable to the killing of the service dog.

There are two features to the mandatory minimum in Quanto's law. One is that it is a hybrid offence, so the mandatory minimum only applies where the crown decides to proceed by indictment. The second is that the mandatory minimum penalty is six months, which is significantly less than the 18 months that was imposed under the animal cruelty laws in the most recent case.

Although we did not receive any expert legal opinion at committee, those circumstances would indicate that this is likely either to withstand a challenge or to not be subject to a challenge because of those circumstances.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague is to emphasize the important work service dogs provide. We can talk about Canada Border Services or law enforcement agencies. I have had the opportunity to witness first hand just how much our security personnel and others depend on and are proud of their animals. They, in essence, become their partners.

Perhaps the member could provide some further comment as to the true value of these wonderful dogs that contribute in many positive ways to our communities.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, this brings back to me the testimony we heard at committee. We heard from two police officers. One was practically moved to tears when he talked about the attack on the police dog that was his partner. We also heard a very inspirational story from Ms. Bergeron, who has truly been given a new lease on life and has accomplished some amazing things as a result of her service dog.

The testimony at committee was extremely compelling. That is truly indicative of the relationship that exists, the bond that exists, between service dogs and their handlers. It is something that is emotional and inspirational, and it deserves recognition from Parliament through this legislation.

Government Orders

• (1135)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to split time in debates in the House with my colleague from Charlottetown, who is the critic for justice within the Liberal Party. I know it was a difficult negotiation in terms of getting unanimous agreement to split time, especially with the NDP, but we appreciate the fact that those members agreed.

I am pleased to speak on the third reading of Bill C-35, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to law enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals.

The bill would amend the Criminal Code to make it a specific offence to injure or kill a law enforcement, military, or service animal. It would also amend the code to require that sentences for assault on law enforcement officers be served consecutively to punishment for offences committed in the same course of events.

Bill C-35 is an important bill that, to a great extent, recognizes the duty and dedication of animals in doing assigned jobs, whether they be service, military, or law enforcement animals. The loyalty of those animals creates a strong bond between the handler, who I would call the partner, and the service animal itself.

I know that quite a number of people in the House have seen that bond and loyalty. The true dedication to their job, to their duty, and especially to their partner that these service animals give is really something to behold.

I mentioned in earlier remarks that the member for Richmond Hill and I were together in Israel, as was the member for Winnipeg North. While we were there, we saw military service dogs at work, going through vehicles and sniffing the bumpers to see whether there were guns, ammunition, or explosives. It was interesting to see how those animals work and how sensitive they are to be able to find a small bit of explosive within the frame or bumper of a car. We also saw those military service dogs track down people at the border who came into the country illegally for terrorist purposes. These animals are so important in so many ways.

Here at home, I have had the opportunity, while a minister in a previous government, to see how Canada Border Services Agency and police service dogs worked. I would expect most people here have seen them at airports. They can quickly run across baggage coming off the belt and immediately detect contraband or drugs that might be in luggage. As well, we sometimes see a Canada Border Services agent or police officer with a dog on a leash walking through the crowd. They, too, are doing that kind of job. Therefore, service animals are an extremely important part of our security apparatus and policing system within Canada.

• (1140)

When we see these service dogs with people who are blind, and we see how they work and how dedicated they are to their master in that case, we see that they provide a tremendous function to Canadian society. This bill would give those dogs a bit of protection as a result of this new law.

Because of the purpose of these service animals and the duty and dedication they provide to those who handle them, and which they

really provide to Canadian society, we need to ensure that they have protection under the law.

As my colleague from Charlottetown stated, the origin of the bill was the death of a police service dog, Quanto, with the Edmonton police force. The justice committee held hearings and heard from the Edmonton Police Service about that particular animal's death and how important that dog was to the Edmonton police. It is actually becoming increasingly common for criminal sanctions to be imposed on those people who harm service animals in other jurisdictions, and the reasoning is basically the same. These animals provide a service for which they are injected into often dangerous situations, as is the case of police and military animals.

As I stated, in the second reading debate, it is important to place the legislation in context. In the course of the past 48 years, only 10 police dogs have been killed in the line of duty, and 10 is certainly way too many. The RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency and Correctional Service Canada have roughly 310 dogs in service. The point being that the scale of the offence is not as significant as the government has been implying. However, that does not minimize the fact that the protection of service animals should be acted upon.

I want to make a point on the offence not being as significant as the government has implied. We have had 10 long difficult years of the government. We have seen that it is prone to exaggeration and, as a result, is prone to imposing excessive penalties. While it does that within the law, what we are becoming increasingly concerned about is this. It passes a law but it does not apply the appropriate funding so the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, CSIS and others so they have the ability to do the job.

Right now there are charges under the Canada Labour Code against the RCMP for not providing suitable equipment and training in Moncton, New Brunswick. While the government may pass a law, the fact it does not provide the necessary funding really complicates matters. The government has to find balance. Instead of exaggerating the need, it needs to apply the resources, whether for service dogs, officers, training or equipment, so the personnel can actually do its job.

The legislation proposes Criminal Code amendments that would create a new offence specifically to prohibit the injuring or killing of animals trained and being used to help law enforcement officers, persons with a disability or the Canadian Armed Forces.

The U.S. Federal Law Enforcement Animal Protection Act does much the same thing. However, under the U.S. provision, there is no consecutive sentencing provisions nor mandatory minimums as is being proposed under this legislation. The offences against law enforcement service animals are treated as a stand-alone violation. It is important to make that point.

As my colleague said, we will be supporting the legislation. It is needed and is justifiable. Our concern is that once again the government is creating a sense of crisis that is not to the extent it portrays. However, we will support this law. There was a reasonable committee hearing process. I hope others in this chamber do as well.

Government Orders

•(1145)

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member and I shared membership on the public safety and national security committee. He has perpetrated and said things that are not quite founded in fact. This government, the Government of Canada, has increased funding to the Canada Border Services Agency to increase the number of people. As far as the RCMP goes, its budget has been significantly increased over the years of this government.

As we get closer to an election, he become so pathetically partisan. Perhaps the member is afraid of losing his seat, although I do not think he has to worry much. The Liberals say that this is the worst possible legislation, that it is bad, that the government is bad, and that there is not enough money. They take a terrible tragedy and make a political partisan comment on it. If it is that bad, then he should not vote for it. However, he should stop saying things that are just not accurate. My fellow member does not have to do that. He should try to be a bit more collegial as we end the 41st Parliament and try to find it in his heart to say something positive for a change.

Hon. Wayne Easter: I am always collegial, Mr. Speaker. The member for Northumberland—Quinte West really gets somewhat agitated when we lay the facts on the table with respect to what the government is really doing. I am pleased we are having this debate, but the member has to get away from the speaking points that the Prime Minister's Office shoves at those members. He might want to look at doing a bit of independent research.

We said we supported the bill, but do the Conservatives really need to include mandatory minimums in the bill as well? One of the problems with the government is that it gets a little excessive. It exaggerates the problem and then gets excessive with the penalty.

Let me use one fact. The funding for the RCMP was cut in budget 2012. While the House did budget money to the RCMP in 2013, the minister quietly asked the commissioner for a little to be kicked back to the government and the RCMP did that. As a result, the rank and file has been complaining about the the equipment and training it needs. That fact has to be expressed, and I will continue to express it.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will try to bring the conversation back to the bill at hand.

At committee we heard from Barbara Cartwright of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. She indicated that the existing animal cruelty laws were ineffective in part because of the words “wilful negligence” and the difficulty in proving wilful negligence as a barrier to effective prosecution in animal cruelty cases.

In spite of that evidence, in this bill the government has decided to include the word “wilful” in the key clause that deals with the killing of a service animal. Would the member agree with me that the government's insistence on including that word will make the legislation less effective and will result in it having the same problems as those in the present animal cruelty laws?

•(1150)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any question that what the member for Charlottetown has said is true. That is what witnesses said before committee. Putting the qualifier “wilful” in the legislation is such a narrow qualifier that it will make

it much more difficult for the prosecution to attain success at trial. It is again part of the government's history.

If amendments are proposed by either witnesses or opposition parties at committee stage, the government for whatever reason will not take that advice. That is one of the reasons why the government has seen so many legislative measures turned back by the courts. The government needs to learn that we are all part of this place, that we all have ideas, and that amendments made by opposition members at committees can make bills better. The government has again fallen short with respect to this bill.

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women.

I would like to begin my remarks today by acknowledging the broad support Bill C-35 has had, the justice for animals in service act. It has received support not only in the House, but also from Canadians across the country. Commonly referred to as Quanto's law, this bill is evidence of the government's continuing commitment to bring forward criminal justice legislation that would contribute to making Canadian communities safer.

By way of background, it should be noted that the Criminal Code has contained offences relating to the treatment of animals since 1893, and the current set of offences has existed since 1953. The penalties in the existing law were increased in 2008. Currently, an offence is committed under section 445 of the Criminal Code when someone wilfully and without lawful excuse kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures an animal other than cattle. The maximum sentence that may be imposed when this hybrid offence is prosecuted as an indictable offence is five years imprisonment.

As well, paragraph 738(1)(a) of the Criminal Code authorizes the court to order the offender to pay the costs associated with training a new animal as restitution for the loss of the animal where the amount is readily ascertainable.

[*Translation*]

As many members know, Quanto was an Edmonton police dog who was stabbed to death on October 7, 2013, while he was helping to apprehend a suspect. The person who killed Quanto was later convicted under section 445 of the Criminal Code for deliberately killing a dog and for other offences resulting from the incident that occurred on October 7, 2013. This man was sentenced to a total of 26 months in prison, and the judge who sentenced him specifically said that 18 months of that sentence was for killing Quanto. He said that this was not just an attack on a dog. “It's an attack on [our] society and it's an attack on what's meaningful in society.”

[*English*]

The tragic death of this law enforcement animal struck a chord with a lot of Canadians and many in the law enforcement, legal and community groups called for greater recognition and protection of service animals.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Bill C-35 is the government's response to the commitment made in the 2013 Speech from the Throne to pass legislation such as this in order to recognize the risks taken by the animals used by the police to help enforce the law and protect society.

• (1155)

[*English*]

Dogs like Quanto have been employed by Canadian law enforcement agencies for many years. Sadly, from time to time, some of these law enforcement animals have been intentionally injured or killed by criminals in the course of police operations. The loss of such highly trained and motivated members of a law enforcement team not only has a direct operational impact on its ability to protect the community, it has significant financial implications for the affected police service.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has estimated that the cost to train a police dog and its handler as a team is in excess of \$60,000. The government believes that the creation of a specific Criminal Code offence that includes a specially tailored sentencing regime would contribute to the denunciation as well as deterrence, both general and specific, of such crimes in the future.

Bill C-35 proposes the creation of a new specific hybrid offence of killing or injuring a law enforcement animal, a service animal or a military animal. These three terms are defined for the purposes of the new offence. The objective of the amendment is to denounce and deter this conduct.

A law enforcement animal would be a dog or horse which has been trained to aid law enforcement officers in carrying out their law enforcement duties. A service animal would include an animal that has been trained to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. This would include, for example, guide dogs for persons who are blind or have reduced vision and dogs trained to assist persons suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

A military animal would include an animal trained to aid a member of the Canadian Armed Forces in carrying out his or her duties. The proposed sentencing regime for this new offence will be similar to the existing regime of the Criminal Code offence for killing or injuring an animal in section 445, but with the following enhancements.

First, Bill C-35 proposes that the Criminal Code be amended to provide that denunciation and deterrence are the primary sentencing objectives in respect of such offences.

Second, where a law enforcement animal is killed in the line of duty and the offence was prosecuted by indictment, there will be a mandatory minimum penalty of six months imprisonment.

Third and finally, if the offence is committed against a law enforcement animal, the sentence would be served consecutively to any other sentence arising out of the same event.

I would like to say something more with respect to the second and third enhancements, the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment, and the consecutive sentencing.

During the second reading debate of Bill C-35, there were questions raised regarding the constitutionality of the mandatory minimum penalty of six months' imprisonment that would apply to the new offence of killing a law enforcement animal that was assisting a law enforcement officer in carrying out his or her duties. The government's position remains that the mandatory minimum penalty imposed by Bill C-35 would not result in the imposition of a grossly disproportionate sentence that could be found to be cruel and unusual punishment under the charter. If this provision is challenged, the government will vigorously defend its constitutionality.

The requirement that the sentence imposed upon an offender convicted of the new offence of killing or injuring a law enforcement animal, a service animal, or a military animal be served consecutively to any other sentence that might be imposed on the offender arising out of the same series of events is also justifiable.

Our law recognizes that in certain circumstances, the nature of an offence committed is so serious and distinct that it requires the imposition of a consecutive sentence in order to properly denounce and deter such conduct, even though the offence might be committed as part of the same events or series of events. Bill C-35 is consistent with this existing approach.

Bill C-35 would enhance the protection of law enforcement officers through the addition of a section 270.03 to the Criminal Code. Henceforth, the law would require that the sentence imposed on a person convicted of committing an assault on a law enforcement officer, an assault causing bodily harm or with a weapon on a law enforcement officer, or an aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer be served consecutively to any other sentence that might be imposed on the offender arising out of the same series of events.

In closing, I call on all members to support this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

It goes without saying that no one can oppose such a bill. Obviously, we all get emotional when we hear stories about service animals.

However, why did the government not go one step further with this bill and recognize that animals are not property? For many people, some of whom live alone, a pet is also a sort of service animal, since they have an emotional connection with it.

• (1200)

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, the bill is definitely a step in the right direction, a direction mentioned in the hon. member's question.

However, with respect to animal protection, we must also consider and respect provincial jurisdictions. Ideally, if we want to work with the provinces, there must be greater consultation and they must agree.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear my colleague say that the government will vigorously defend any claim of unconstitutionality with respect to the mandatory minimum sentences contained in the bill. My first question is somewhat rhetorical: how that is working for the government so far?

My other question relates to a discussion that we had at committee with respect to the lawful excuse defence. Within the Criminal Code, there is a lawful excuse defence that applies to Quanto's law. However, there was a new lawful excuse defence inserted into the Quanto's law bill that the officials from the Department of Justice said was redundant.

Can the parliamentary secretary explain and defend the reason for inserting into Quanto's law a redundant provision with respect to lawful excuse?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that this speech dealt with protecting law enforcement animals. It was not intended to be a dog's breakfast. We are actually doing pretty well in the constitutional realm. We do, of course, defend all our laws vigorously on a constitutional basis.

With regard to the essence of the offence, it was explained by one of the members of the committee who used to be an RCMP dog handler that when a dog is released to apprehend an offender, there is always the warning "I am letting the dog go." In essence, when the dog is released, the offender knows that he or she is about to be attacked by the dog. The intent is that there not be an additional mental element inflicted upon the crown to try to prove. The RCMP always advises the offender that the dog is going to be released, so it is not necessary to have this wilful and specific intention available as a defence when the offenders are often advised that the dog is coming.

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back to the question posed by my NDP colleague from Trois-Rivières. Although we recognize that this bill is a step in the right direction, my colleague asked why the Conservative government did not go further and protect all animals, thus sending a clear message that the abuse or killing of a companion animal, whether our own or our neighbour's, is unacceptable. The federal government has at its disposal the Criminal Code of Canada, which is outside the provincial realm. I obviously hope that if a bill were brought forward, there would be discussions with the provinces.

Why is the Conservative government not interested in making the abuse or killing of an animal illegal and a Criminal Code offence?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the majority of Canadians would be open to possible changes with respect to animal abuse. In this case, however, we wanted to protect animals used in a very specific context. That does not preclude changes in the future. We know that many Canadians love animals. It remains to be seen. That said, we should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to add my

voice in support of Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, also known as Quanto's law. This is yet another piece of legislation that our government has introduced with the goal of making Canadian communities safer. In this case, the focus of the legislation is on deterring persons from harming law enforcement animals or other service animals as well as from assaulting law enforcement officers.

From the outset, there has been broad support in principle in this House and across the land for this legislation. What concerns there may have been with regard to one aspect of this proposed legislation, the mandatory minimum penalty of six months' imprisonment for the killing of a law enforcement animal that was assisting a law enforcement officer in carrying out his or her duties when that offence is prosecuted by way of indictment, have, I believe, been addressed in the course of the justice committee's study on the bill.

Before I go further, I want to express my appreciation to all the witnesses who appeared before the justice committee and provided their helpful perspectives on the legislation. It is the personal experiences and expertise they share with parliamentary committees that help us to better understand the objectives of proposed legislation and to sometimes improve it through amendments.

The most common type of law enforcement animal in use today is probably a police dog. Police dogs are specifically trained to assist police and other law enforcement personnel in their work, such as searching for drugs and explosives, searching for lost people, looking for crime scene evidence, and protecting their handlers. Police dogs must remember several hand and verbal commands. The most commonly used breed is the German shepherd.

In the United States, anyone who kills a federal law enforcement animal will face fines and up to 10 years in prison. Similar statutes exist to protect police animals from malicious injury in every one of the states in the United States except South Dakota.

It is the sad truth that Quanto's law could have been named in honour of several other police dogs that have been killed in the line of duty. The Canadian Police Canine Association maintains a valour row on its website. Quanto's story is there, as are accounts of how 10 other law enforcement dogs were killed in the line of duty between 1965 and Quanto's death in 2013.

However, as the association's president admitted before the justice committee, the valour row does not present a complete picture; it includes only those animals that have been brought to the association's attention.

Government Orders

Bill C-35 recognizes and honours the important contribution that police dogs such as Quanto make to law enforcement. However, Bill C-35 also acknowledges the very important role that other service animals play. Through the work of the justice committee, we are more aware of the invaluable assistance that service animals provide to persons with disabilities. I am pleased that the bill would recognize the importance of other service animals. Service animals are trained to assist in performing some of the functions and tasks that persons with disabilities cannot perform for themselves. There are several different kinds of service dogs, including guide dogs, hearing dogs, mobility dogs, seizure alert/response dogs, psychiatric service dogs, and autism dogs.

I suspect that the type of service animal with which most people are familiar are Seeing Eye dogs used by individuals who are blind or have low vision. However, there are other types of service animals that assist persons with other kinds of disabilities in their day-to-day activities. These animals require the same type of recognition and the same type of protection from persons who would wilfully cause them harm.

A psychiatric service animal is a dog that is individually trained for people with an emotional or psychiatric disability so severe that it substantially limits their ability to perform at least one major life task. Psychiatric service dogs would be considered service animals under Bill C-35.

Proposed subsection 445.01(1) would create a new Criminal Code offence that would be distinct from the general offence of cruelty to animals in section 445 of the Criminal Code.

In terms of how this new offence would improve the protection of law enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals over the protection offered under the existing animal cruelty provisions of the Criminal Code, I would note that the enhancement is chiefly about sentencing.

While section 445 and proposed section 445.01 share the same maximum penalties whether the crown proceeds by way of indictment or by way of summary conviction, proposed new section 718.03 of the Criminal Code would require the courts to give primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence as sentencing objectives in respect of the new offence described in subsection 445.01(1).

While courts are required to impose a sentence that is proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the offender, this amendment would have a significant impact on the sentence imposed by the court. It is worth noting that courts are currently required to give primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence as sentencing objectives in regard to assaults committed against peace officers or other justice system participants.

• (1205)

Another important aspect of Bill C-35 is its proposal regarding the sentencing of persons convicted of committing any type of assault on a law enforcement officer, whether it is a common assault, an assault causing bodily harm, an assault with a weapon or an aggravated assault. It would require that a sentence imposed on the offender convicted of having committed such offence be served consecutively

to any other sentence that might be imposed on the offender, arising out of the same event or series of events.

For example, there is a report of a break and enter. As the police arrive a suspect is seen running away from the house. A police officer engages in a foot chase with the fleeing suspect. The officer quickly catches up to the suspect and tackles him. The suspect pulls a knife, stabs the officer, wounds him and endangers his life. The officer is taken to the hospital and thankfully survives. Later, the offender is convicted of aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, pursuant to 270.02 of the Criminal Code. In addition to being convicted of breaking and entering into a dwelling house contrary to section 348, in such a case the proposed amendment would require the sentence imposed for the aggravated assault to be served consecutively to the sentence imposed for the break and enter.

In closing, Bill C-35 would be a fitting legacy for Quanto. It is my view that the spotlight that has been placed on the intentional killing or infliction of harm on law enforcement animals as well as service animals will not soon be forgotten. By enhancing the protection afforded to these working animals we would also be making Canada a safer place for all.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

Although the bill is commendable in itself, there are still some issues. My colleague spoke about some service animals that do not belong to a law enforcement agency or government agency. In committee we heard about private service animals. However, that is unfortunately not reflected in the bill before us.

In the speeches made today we heard about the fact that private service animals are just as dear and precious to their owners as animals that provide a service for government institutions.

How does the member explain this omission from the bill, especially considering the fact that this issue came up in parliamentary committee?

[*English*]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Mr. Speaker, I would like to agree that service animals are certainly very important for many people.

We do have a provision. For example, if animals do not fall under the definition of the proposed new offence they would be protected under the existing animal cruelty provisions included in section 445 of the Criminal Code. It provides that anyone who wilfully and without lawful excuse kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures a dog, bird or animal that is not cattle and is kept for lawful purpose, is liable for up to five years' imprisonment when the offence is prosecuted by indictment. Therefore, there are other provisions for other animals as well.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague, the member for London North Centre. She originally talked about some of the crime legislation that has been brought forward for the protection of Canadian citizens, as well as victims.

Government Orders

My question for my colleague is, why is our government introducing the justice for animals service act, known as Quanto's law?

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Mr. Speaker, part of the reason we introduced the legislation is it fulfills our commitment made in the 2013 Speech From the Throne. It is to recognize the daily risks taken by police officers and their service animals in their efforts to enforce the law and protect Canadians and communities. The legislation honours Quanto, a police dog stabbed to death while helping apprehend a fleeing suspect in Edmonton. Quanto had four years of decorated service and had participated in more than 100 arrests. It also recognizes the vital role that service animals play, such as guide dogs, in helping persons with disabilities form a better quality of life and lead more independent lives, or animals used by the Canadian Armed Forces.

This keeps Canada safe. The government is committed to ensuring that people who wilfully harm these animals will face the full force of the law.

• (1215)

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague would comment on a previous question of why not other animals.

Would my colleague agree that in the case of other Criminal Code offences, in offences against a police officer, assaulting a police officer, police officers are human beings? They represent law and order and authority in this country. These service dogs and service animals represent law and authority, and I would suggest that is why we have this law. They are service animals in service of not only the individual but also of their community and their country.

We have also previously heard NDP members talking about mandatory minimum sentences and how Republicans in the United States are reducing their sentences. That is because they are about five times what our mandatory minimum sentences are.

I wonder if my colleague could give some examples of how consecutive sentencing provisions would work.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Mr. Speaker, consecutive sentences are an important part of the bill.

I will give an example. An RCMP car stops a car the officer suspects is operated by an impaired driver. The driver exits the vehicle and assaults the police officer. The driver is convicted of impaired driving.

Under the existing section 718.02 of the Criminal Code, it requires that a court that imposes a sentence for assault on a police officer to:

...give primary consideration to the objectives of denunciation and deterrence of the conduct that forms the basis of the offence.

Under the proposed amendments, the court would be required to order that the sentence imposed for the assault of the RCMP be served consecutively to any term of imprisonment imposed for the impaired driving.

The same thing could be said for a trained police dog involved. If, for example, the perpetrator stabs a police dog, the perpetrator would be charged with injuring the police dog and the sentence would be

served consecutively to the sentence for the break and enter, or whatever the scenario was.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak, for the second time, to Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals), also known as Quanto's law.

Quanto was a police dog in Edmonton that was stabbed to death when trying to intercept a fleeing suspect. That was in October 2013. The suspect pleaded guilty to animal cruelty and other offences, including evading police. He was sentenced to 26 months in prison and banned from owning a pet for 25 years. I want to say that this bill is commendable in itself. I think it sends a message to society that it is unacceptable to stab a police dog and that there will be serious consequences. Once again, that is commendable.

However, I want to get back to the topic of minimum sentences, because I think that is a flaw in the bill before us. Unfortunately this flaw was not fixed in parliamentary committee.

Barbara Cartwright of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies appeared before the parliamentary committee. I will quote her testimony, which shows that we need to amend the Criminal Code.

I will quote her in English because she testified in English.

[*English*]

...Brigadier, a different animal, a police horse that was compassionately euthanized after he and his rider, Constable Kevin Bradfield, were struck in a hit and run incident. The driver of the vehicle was charged with dangerous operation of a vehicle causing bodily harm and failing to remain at the scene of an accident. It is believed that he deliberately struck the horse and the rider. Brigadier sustained fatal neck and rib injuries in the accident.

This is a repugnant act that I think would have benefited from the modifications that we have in front of us to send a clear signal that this is precisely the kind of act that this House and our society in general condemns.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

This bill applies only to animals working for the state. I will come back to that because it is an important point.

As my colleague said in her speech a few minutes ago, this measure was presented by the government in the 2013 throne speech as we began the second session of the 42nd Parliament. Specifically, the government wants to amend the Criminal Code to create a new offence specifically prohibiting the killing, wounding, poisoning or injuring of trained animals working for law enforcement, people with disabilities or members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Government Orders

In the 2013 throne speech, the government alluded to private service animals and people with disabilities. Unfortunately, that is not reflected in the bill before us. Government members said that that is already in the Criminal Code. Section 445 of the Criminal Code sets out penalties for animal cruelty. Some provinces, including Quebec, have recently adopted their own penalties for animal cruelty.

I asked this question the last time I gave a speech on this bill, and I am asking it again: If this is already in the Criminal Code, why are we studying a new bill, considering the severity of the penalties?

Section 718 of the Criminal Code of Canada outlines sentencing principles.

From this section we have seen that appeals have been brought before many courts, on a number of occasions and at many levels, specifically challenging the fact that the sentences are inappropriate, that they are cruel and unusual, and that they go beyond what is acceptable in a free and democratic society.

Just in the past 10 minutes I heard one of my Conservative colleagues suggest that authorities in the United States are seriously backtracking on minimum sentences. He thinks this is happening because their mandatory minimum sentencing went too far in the first place.

However, he failed to mention, or perhaps he does not realize, that in Canada, there are many cases before the courts right now, and that over the past few years minimum sentences have been overturned in many cases in Canada.

We should really look at our own jurisprudence to properly understand why minimum sentencing is very problematic for our courts today. In the most recent cases, trial judges have even refused to apply some elements of minimum sentences, because they felt they constituted cruel and unusual punishment.

We have to ask ourselves the following question: when we impose minimum sentences, why do we not trust trial judges, who should be capable of applying the appropriate sentence according to the circumstances?

We are in no position here in Parliament to presume in advance what sentences should be handed down under the circumstances. That is why the trial court is in the best position to hand down the right sentence according to the circumstances.

In French we refer to the lower court judge. I think it is even clearer in English. It is the trial judge. The appeals courts are superior courts, and the Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court in the land.

Superior court judges do not decide on the facts and the merit of the cases, but determine whether the law has or has not been properly applied. In some cases, the law or certain aspects of the law are overturned. Sentences that have to be imposed under the law are overturned when superior court justices feel comfortable doing so and believe that the sentence is cruel and unusual. It is really up to the trial judge to hand down an appropriate sentence according to the circumstances.

We have to trust our trial court judges because they are capable of handing down a reasonable, fair and appropriate sentence according to the circumstances. When we impose minimum sentences, we are setting aside the role of the trial judge.

I do not understand why the government often, not to say always, focuses on establishing minimum sentences when many experts believe that they will be overturned by the appeal and superior courts.

It seems like Parliament is creating jobs for lawyers, who continue to bill their clients for proceeding with appeal after appeal, and ultimately dealing with an issue that was already, and repeatedly, considered by our courts. I would like to see bills that strike a better balance.

Once again, imposing harsher sentences than those provided for in the Criminal Code is probably commendable. It signals that Parliament considers it unacceptable to attack a law enforcement animal.

In my opinion, sending a very clear message is the right thing to do. By moving to impose harsher sentences, Parliament is expressing, in probably the best way possible, its intention to make it clear that we do not approve and that it is completely unacceptable to attack a law enforcement animal.

● (1225)

However, the minimum sentence is still problematic. I assume that this aspect of the bill will eventually be challenged in court. It will cost the individual in question and the government a lot of money. From the examples that I have seen recently, I seriously doubt that this aspect of the bill will stand up in court. Once again, the government is unfortunately heading for a loss in court. I am wondering why the Conservative government insists on adding minimum sentences when sentencing is the role of the trial judge.

It seems as though the government did not spend a lot of time thinking about private service animals, despite their promise in the 2013 throne speech. The government decided to ignore that aspect and is telling us not to worry because it is already covered by section 445 of the Criminal Code. What is more, I heard the parliamentary secretary saying that we had to respect jurisdictions because privately held service animals fall under provincial jurisdiction. Perhaps I misunderstood, but to my knowledge, the Criminal Code is an area of federal jurisdiction and we have the tools to address that issue.

Let us say that we are infringing on provincial jurisdiction by adopting this minimum sentence. When the guilty parties are given a minimum sentence of six months, they will be sent to a provincial prison at the expense of the provinces.

Once again, the federal government is creating laws and then making the provinces bear the cost and responsibility without any federal assistance. The government is instituting minimum sentences that will cost the federal government nothing but will increase the burden of the provinces, without even consulting the provinces to try to come to an agreement.

Government Orders

The government has done this sort of thing time and time again. The Conservatives like to boast that they want to balance the budget. However, the most recent budget is not really balanced because they helped themselves to \$1.4 billion from the employment insurance fund. They simply found another source of revenue and now they would have us believe that the budget is balanced. Meanwhile, what they have done is imposed heavier burdens on poor people in Canada, while the wealthy reap the benefits. That was just an aside.

Let us get back to the bill. The Conservative government has repeatedly downloaded the cost of its bills onto the provinces even though the federal government should bear those costs. Minimum sentences are an excellent example of that. We have seen this over and over in a number of areas, including health, where provincial transfers have been cut. They say they have a \$54 billion, 10-year infrastructure program, but last year, the Conservatives spent only about \$250 million. Moreover, they took away so many of the eligibility criteria that this has basically turned into another way to transfer the costs to the provinces.

The Conservative government seems to have no qualms about introducing and passing bills with no regard for Canadian taxpayers. It has no problem making them pay, but it would have us believe that the federal government has nothing to do with the fact that provincial income taxes have to go up significantly or their services have to go down significantly to make up for the costs the federal government is forcing them to absorb. That is not a real partnership. A confederation should be a real partnership.

• (1230)

Unfortunately I do not think that is what we have in this country, and the bill before us is a fine example of that. I want to stress once again that the parliamentary secretary is trying to convince us that we cannot help private service animals because that would interfere in a provincial jurisdiction. That is completely untrue. In any case, the government has no problem interfering in other areas of provincial jurisdiction. It makes absolutely no sense that the government would claim today that it cannot interfere in a provincial jurisdiction when it has done so many times.

I want to get back to the bill before us. Those found guilty of such an offence could be sentenced to up to five years in prison, with a mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison, as I mentioned earlier. The maximum sentence is therefore five years and the minimum is six months if a law enforcement animal is killed while helping a police officer enforce the law and if the offence is prosecuted by indictment. If a law enforcement animal is wounded or killed in the line of duty, the sentence imposed for this offence would be served consecutively to any other punishment imposed on the perpetrator.

That is another aspect of minimum sentences that I find difficult to accept. Consecutive mandatory minimum penalties take away the discretion of trial judges, who are the ones in the best position to determine a reasonable sentence according to the circumstances. The goal here is to ensure that society understands that attacking an animal in service to the state is unacceptable. A penalty must be imposed that reflects the circumstances before the court. The judge is the one in the best position to determine the appropriate sentence. If someone is convicted of certain offences and if mandatory minimum

penalties are imposed for any other crime that individual is convicted of, a consecutive sentence means that all of these mandatory minimums would be imposed one after the other, and that individual could stay behind bars for a very long time. Consecutive sentences are very rare in Canada. They are much more common in the United States. We must try to avoid that trend here in Canada. We should not be following the U.S. example and start imposing consecutive sentences. People in the United States can now serve sentences of over 100 years. There is no explanation for how the U.S. got to that point. Perhaps they got there by gradually eroding the trial judges' ability to impose reasonable sentences according to the circumstances. We are not doing Canada's justice system any favours by imposing tougher sentences, tougher than what is considered fair and reasonable in a free and democratic society.

The government should reread section 718 of the Criminal Code, which sets out the principles to be upheld in sentencing. The government has gone astray. I do not believe that it realizes that the purpose of sentences is not just to indicate to people that certain activities are unacceptable in society. Sentences are also intended to ensure that the guilty party can be rehabilitated. We want to find ways to help that person reintegrate back into society. As far as I know, putting someone in prison for years and years can teach him to be a better criminal and commit other crimes in the future. Leaving criminals in crime school is not the best way to run our penitentiary system in Canada. That is why section 718 contains a number of sentencing principles.

• (1235)

I believe the bill before us includes some aspects of section 718. However, I think we got off track when it comes to other aspects of that section. I hope that the government will think about that in future bills. The government failed to include private service animals in this bill. Perhaps it is time to introduce a bill to correct that mistake.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank and commend my colleague for his speech.

I agree with what he said about mandatory minimum sentences and the relationship between the federal and provincial governments and the burden this creates. It is clear that the federal government's actions have consequences for the provinces. However, my question has to do with mandatory minimum sentences.

[English]

We heard the parliamentary secretary indicate that the government will vigorously defend any constitutional attack on the mandatory minimum sentences contained in this piece of legislation. I would be interested in his reaction to that.

Second, in his critique of the mandatory minimums, there is a discretion retained within the prosecution to proceed summarily and avoid a mandatory minimum, or by indictment, in which case the mandatory minimum applies. Does he consider that relevant to his critique?

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and questions.

[English]

Certainly when one proceeds either by summary conviction or by indictment, that is often a question of what the various parties will be able to negotiate, and I would not want to see negotiations go off the rails because of minimum sentences that might colour the negotiations. It is unfortunate that we always have to keep minimum sentences in mind during certain proceedings, and this would be one of those cases.

Regarding the parliamentary secretary's vigorous defence of those mandatory minimums, at justice committee I asked the Minister of Justice how much all of this is costing the Canadian public to continuously be defending what is often indefensible. How much money is being invested to defend the minimum sentences the courts are throwing out on so many occasions? Regrettably the minister did not give us an answer. It would be interesting if the ministry could actually give us the number. How much are these minimum sentences costing the Canadian public, especially when they are so hard to defend?

• (1240)

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's points on the bill. There are two things that concern me. One, there seems to be a loophole in terms of private service animals. I am not exactly sure what the meaning is of privately owned service animals and why they would not apply here, but maybe he could explain what he sees as the problem.

The other problem is the notion of mandatory minimums, particularly six-month mandatory minimums. That dovetails with the recent changes to the immigration law that now found that persons convicted of a crime of six months or more can also be deported, which then contaminates the justice process, in my view, in that judges and prosecutors would have to look at whether or not an additional penalty such as deportation can be applied in the case of a prosecution that is justified on the basis of harm to a service animal or other prosecutions that may take place, in which case the prosecution and the judges would have to take into account the additional penalties that may have to happen as a result of a mandatory minimum, which as the member points out, may be thrown out by the courts.

I wonder if he could comment on those two points.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises a very important point. It is a very clear example of why mandatory minimum sentences often do not work. The penalty should fit the crime, and sometimes the penalty, as he correctly points out, will lead to further repercussions, and one has to wonder whether expulsion from a country is really what is being sought when we are imposing minimum sentences.

Perhaps it is; perhaps it is not. Again, I would leave that to the trial judge to evaluate and determine, with the facts in front of him or her, whether that kind of penalty would actually be justifiable in the circumstances. It is case by case in most instances, and minimum

sentences simply do not afford us the luxury of being able to do a case-by-case evaluation.

As for what a private service animal is, service animals are used in many aspects of society. There are Seeing Eye dogs and many other animals for various private uses. When I say state use of animals, then we are talking about those animals that are actually in state service, and those tend to be animals trained in various services such as airport security, border services, and police services. Those are all state functions, but a private function is where one would normally see an animal in the service of a home.

In both cases, I would underline this. The parliamentary secretary mentioned that it costs \$70,000 to \$80,000 to train a police animal. It costs about the same to train an animal in private service, so frankly, I do not really understand the distinction that is being made by the government side on this point. Both animals are fundamental to running our society. People who need a Seeing Eye dog have every right to know that the Seeing Eye dog and they themselves are going to be protected by society as much as any other person who uses a service animal.

I really would like the government to correct the error. It brought up the question of people who use private service animals in its throne speech and, since then, has decided that it is not worth its time. If anything, I would like the government spend some time on that in the next couple of weeks in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I believe that my colleague did not have enough time to finish his speech and to say everything he wanted to. I would like to give him the opportunity to tell us more. My colleagues and I enjoy hearing the good proposals put forward by the NDP, the next government of Canada. I believe that Canadians watching at home would like to hear more about this. Therefore, I will give my colleague some more time.

• (1245)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and the opportunity he is providing.

It is important to point out some other aspects. I will go back to the evidence of Barbara Cartwright of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. She pointed out that the federation deals with private service animals—not law enforcement animals—which are animals that assist the blind or are used in similar circumstances.

In her evidence, Ms. Cartwright said:

[English]

Many of our member societies have enforcement authorities and appreciate the relationship between officer and animal. As well, they appreciate the value of deterrents and denunciation.

However, they would like to see greater protection for recognition of other services that are offered to society.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

I invite people to carefully read her testimony of April 2015. She really draws attention to the fact that private service animals must be protected. Parliament has a responsibility to send a message that we want to defend these animals and that it is quite simply unacceptable to attack these animals. I do not see that in this bill. It is important to point that out because, once again, this government is taking a step backwards. This was a promise it made in the throne speech. We are now almost at the end of the parliamentary session, and there is still no bill demonstrating that it takes this seriously. It is one thing to say things in speeches, but it is another thing altogether to take action. Unfortunately, the government has not lived up to its obligations in this case.

Quite frankly, I believe that it has a great responsibility in this regard.

[*English*]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Brandon—Souris.

Today, I am happy to speak in support of Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, or Quanto's law. Quanto was an Edmonton Police Service dog who was fatally stabbed on October 7, 2013, while assisting police in apprehending a suspect. Regrettably, this tragic case is only one example of the many animals who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

This landmark legislation proposes to amend the Criminal Code by creating a new offence that would specifically prohibit the injuring or killing of animals trained and being used to help law enforcement officers, persons with disabilities, or the Canadian Armed Forces. A person convicted under this new offence could face up to five years' imprisonment, with a mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison in all cases of indictable offences where a law enforcement animal is killed while assisting an officer in enforcing the law.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the hard work and contributions of my colleague, the member of Parliament for Richmond Hill. It was his original private member's bill that inspired this legislation. The constituents of Richmond Hill shared their concerns with my colleague, calling for a stronger punishment for those who deliberately injure or kill a law enforcement or service animal. Thanks to the efforts of this member, Quanto's law is a reality today.

This legislation recognizes the special role that law enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals play in the lives of Canadians and offers them greater protection in law by creating a specific offence. Second, this legislation would add a provision in the Criminal Code that would enhance the penalty for all forms of assault on law enforcement officers.

As members know, generally, unless the court specifically states that sentences are to be served consecutively, one after the other, or concurrently, simultaneously, to any outstanding sentence, the sentences are served concurrently, if arising out of the same event. This legislation would amend the Criminal Code to direct the courts

that a sentence imposed for an assault committed against a law enforcement officer must be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed upon the offender arising out of the same event.

Attacks on law enforcement officers not only put the lives and safety of the individual officers at risk; they also attack and undermine the justice system more broadly. In recognition of this, in 2009, Parliament enacted section 718.02 of the Criminal Code, which provides that, when a court imposes a sentence for the offence of common assault, assault causing bodily harm or with a weapon, or aggravated assault, the court shall give primary consideration to the objective of denunciation and deterrence of the conduct. Requiring that consecutive sentences be imposed on persons who commit assault against law enforcement officers is consistent with the objective of the denunciation and deterrence of such conduct.

I am pleased to say that Quanto's law contains a provision that provides that a sentence imposed upon a person convicted of killing a law enforcement animal while it is aiding a law enforcement officer in carrying out that officer's duty shall be served consecutively to any other punishment arising out of the same event or series of events. It would send a clear signal to any would-be offenders that an attack on any law enforcement animal, military animal, or service animal is a serious matter deserving of serious punishment.

I would now like to say a few words about the mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison in the case where a law enforcement animal is killed while assisting a law enforcement officer in enforcing the law. In the course of the second reading debate of this legislation, concerns were raised with regard to the constitutionality of the mandatory minimum penalty. As the Minister of Justice correctly pointed out when he appeared before the justice committee on Monday, April 27, the court has not ruled out mandatory minimum penalties as an option for Criminal Code sanctions. As the minister explained, Quanto's law's proposed mandatory minimum penalty is specifically tailored to ensure that it would not result in a sentence that would be grossly disproportionate to the offence committed.

The minister referenced several reasons to support this point. First, the Criminal Code conduct directed at the law enforcement animal must occur while it is aiding a law enforcement officer in carrying out the officer's duties.

● (1250)

Second, the mandatory minimum will only apply when the crown prosecutor elects to proceed by way of indictment. As the minister pointed out, prosecutorial discretion is always exercised with a careful eye to proportionality, constitutionality, and totality, which is the same consideration used by judges. Where the crown elects to prosecute the offence as a summary conviction, the mandatory minimum penalty will not apply.

Finally, in terms of the length of the mandatory term of imprisonment, the six-month term of imprisonment is at the lower end of the range. In this respect, it is worth noting that the court sentenced Quanto's killer to a global sentence of 26 months for a series of offences and made it clear that 18 of those 26 months were specifically for the killing of Quanto.

Government Orders

I will close my remarks by stating that it would appear to me that considerable care was taken in drafting Quanto's law to address the concerns of Canadians and some serious gaps that exist in our criminal law while at the same time being respectful of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I congratulate the Minister of Justice and the member for Richmond Hill for their effort in accomplishing this important task.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the member the same question that I asked his Conservative colleague.

Is the Conservative government open to tightening up the laws on animal cruelty, particularly when it falls under federal jurisdiction? What is his personal position on that?

There are several examples that come to mind. Recently, in my region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, there have been some incidents in which companion animals were killed, hung or even shot with rifles. Given the definition of companion animal, such animals are considered property in Canada. I do not think anyone here is against virtue. Are the member and his government open to tightening up the laws so that killing a companion animal in this manner is considered a criminal offence?

• (1255)

[*English*]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to ensure that when an animal is working in humanitarian services, it is important that the animal be protected. This bill follows the concern for animals that are helping the police. At the same time, companion animals also perform a valuable service. Indeed, when such an offence is committed, many provisions in the Criminal Code could be applied. It is up to the prosecutor to seek appropriate punishment for that kind of offence.

This bill would send a very clear message that Canadians and this Parliament are taking the rights of animals that provide humanitarian services very seriously. It serves as a good example for prosecutors and judges of the intention of this Parliament in reference to companion dogs.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a couple of thoughts regarding the services dogs provide. For many years, dogs have performed very important functions. When we think in terms of the future, these roles will continue to grow. More and more, we are seeing agencies such as the Canada Border Services Agency and different law enforcement agencies turning to dogs to help civil society in everything from issues of terrorism to drug control to assisting war vets.

I would ask the minister what he feels the future role of these dogs could be if we continued to provide proper support.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, let me talk about the importance of Quanto, who unfortunately only spent four years on the police force but was credited with aiding in over 100 arrests. That shows that these animals do work and are essential. Their dedication and the service they provide to human beings is crucial. This bill was brought forward by my colleague from Richmond Hill to ensure that we take their services seriously. However, as he has rightly pointed

out, we must also make sure that we do our part, which is to protect them. That is the intent of this legislation. It protects these animals by sending a very strong message to any offender who would harm them that he or she would face serious punishment, which is why we have included consecutive and minimum sentences.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, also referred to as Quanto's law. I want to thank specifically my colleague from Richmond Hill for bringing forth this important legislation.

I have come to appreciate even more how important this legislation is through the testimony of witnesses who appeared and gave evidence before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. There was uniform support for this legislation from those who are intimately acquainted with the invaluable assistance provided by service animals. In particular, I was profoundly touched by the remarks of Ms. Diane Bergeron, executive director of strategic relations and engagement for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Ms. Bergeron is a person who is blind and who has personally benefited from the assistance of a service animal for many years. When she appeared before the justice committee, her guide dog, Lucy, accompanied her.

As members know, the CNIB provides services to people across this country who are blind or partially sighted and has been doing so since 1918. These services include rehabilitation services, peer support, camps for kids, and a range of counselling and other support to assist the blind and partially sighted to learn about technology, how to get around, and orientation and mobility.

Although the CNIB does not train guide dogs or provide them to its clients, it has a good understanding of their importance and the impact these dogs have, because it sees them in service every day. It appreciates what these animals do to build their clients' confidence, to empower them, and to provide them with independence and freedom. It also sees the impact when bad things happen to their guide dogs.

On behalf of the CNIB, Ms. Bergeron expressed her view that this proposed legislation is very important for the people the CNIB serves across this country of Canada. However, what was even more meaningful, I believe, was her description of what it was like for her to lose her eyesight at a young age as the result of a condition called retinitis pigmentosa and how she was partnered with her very first guide dog, a golden retriever named Clyde, in 1984.

Ms. Bergeron has had a number of dogs since then. She told us that those dogs have given her two things. As one would expect, these guide dogs have given her mobility and safety. They guide her and keep her safe. The second thing they have given her is a clear understanding that not having sight does not mean she cannot have vision, hopes, and dreams.

At this point, I would like to quote directly from Ms. Bergeron's evidence to illustrate just how important her service animals have proven to be:

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With my dog and the dogs since—there have been many—I have travelled from Montreal to Victoria. I've been to the United States, in many of the states. Last year, I travelled alone with Lucy to England, Scotland, and Norway, just with my dog. I have gone through many college campuses and university campuses. I have obtained two college diplomas, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree....

Since 2009, I have gone skydiving, rappelled down the outside of the Sutton Place Hotel in Edmonton, 29 stories—while dressed as a superhero, I might add—and driven a stock car. In the last couple of years, I have decided to challenge myself just a little bit more by doing triathlons, including two half Ironmans, and this year, at the age of 50, I am going to compete in my first full Ironman at Mont Tremblant.

Ms. Bergeron summed up what having a service animal has meant to her with the following profound statement:

Over the years, my dogs have guided me to so many places, but most of all they have guided me towards my hopes and dreams.

● (1300)

While Ms. Bergeron has not personally experienced the loss of a service animal as a result of an attack by a person on one of her guide dogs, she did provide the members of the justice committee an illustration of why it is important that Bill C-35 not only address acts of violence committed against law enforcement animals, but that it also deal with such conduct directed against other service animals.

She recounted what befell her blind friend Judy, who lives in Denver and also relies on the assistance of a guide dog. I know that my time today is limited so I will not go into any details. I will simply state that Judy was obliged to replace her guide dog several times as a result of repeated attacks on her dogs by a person she described as a stalker. The details are quite shocking. I invite members to review the transcript of Ms. Bergeron's evidence.

What these service animals have in common with law enforcement animals, apart from specialized training, is that they are working animals with a job to do. For Ms. Bergeron, her service animal is not just a dog. Rather her guide dog is an instrument that ensures her independence.

Representatives of the law enforcement community also appeared as witnesses before the justice committee. Staff Sergeant Troy Carriere of the Edmonton Police Service Canine and Flight Operation Section, and Mr. Stephen Kaye, the president of the Canadian Police Canine Association, provided valuable insight into the important role played by law enforcement animals, as well as their perspective on the proposed legislation.

Mr Kaye advised the committee that it takes months and months and tens of thousands of dollars to train a law enforcement dog, and once deployed, these animals train every day for their entire career in order to remain as skilled as possible.

Staff Sergeant Carriere spoke of the incident that cost Quanto his life in the early morning hours of October 17, 2013. He spoke of how the loss of Quanto was devastating to every member of the Edmonton Police Service Canine Unit and of the overwhelming response and support they received from the people in Edmonton and other policing agencies across Canada.

Staff Sergeant Carriere also spoke of the crucial role that a dedicated Crown prosecutor had played in ensuring that the individual who killed Quanto received a meaningful sentence.

Looking at Bill C-35, Staff Sergeant Carriere saw the deterrent value in both the five-year maximum sentence when the case is

prosecuted on indictment as well as the consecutive sentence provision. It is worth noting that Ms. Bergeron supported the enhanced sentencing measures contained in Bill C-35 for persons convicted of offences committed in relation to law enforcement animals.

At this point I would like to discuss two provisions in Bill C-35 that are of particular interest to me.

First, you may recall, Mr. Speaker, that when the bill was debated at second reading, some concern was expressed regarding the six-month mandatory minimum term of imprisonment that is to be imposed where a law enforcement animal has been killed by an offender in the course of the commission of an offence and afterwards the matter is prosecuted by indictment. The Minister of Justice addressed this matter directly when he appeared before the justice committee with his officials on Monday, April 27. Referring to the recent ruling in the Supreme Court of Canada in the Nur case, he indicated that the court had not ruled out mandatory minimum penalties as an option for Criminal Code sanctions, he indicated that he was satisfied that this mandatory minimum penalty is a targeted and justifiable measure.

I will close my remarks in support of Bill C-35 by commenting on a provision that has not garnered much attention.

I am speaking of the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code that would create a new section, 270.03, which would require that a sentence imposed on a person for committing any assault against a police officer and certain other law enforcement officers be served consecutively to any other punishment imposed on the person for an offence arising out of the same event or series of events. This provision is intended to deter such criminal conduct.

I support Bill C-35 because it addresses the gap in the Criminal Code. I firmly believe that there is a need to enhance the protection afforded service animals in the law. I also believe that the measures contained in this proposed legislation are measured and reasonable.

● (1305)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine.

Bill C-35 was announced in the 2013 throne speech. It proposes to amend the Criminal Code and create a new offence to specifically prohibit the killing, maiming, wounding, poisoning or injuring of law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals.

Anyone found guilty of such an offence could be sentenced to up to five years in prison, with a mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison. The NDP is opposed to any form of animal cruelty, and we have been defending that position in our legislative work for a long time. By way of evidence, two of my colleagues have already introduced bills on this subject.

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For example, my colleague from Parkdale—High Park introduced Bill C-232, which seeks to move animals out of the property section of the Criminal Code and create a section on animal cruelty. Under the existing legislation and the Criminal Code, a person must own the animal or have some connection to it in order to be found guilty of animal cruelty. That means that if a stranger savagely kills an animal, he cannot be convicted under the law.

For example, the definition of “animal” is inadequate. It must be reviewed and so must the provisions of the Criminal Code. Bill C-232 would allow the justice system to deal more effectively with animal cruelty offences and increase the possibility of conviction for animal cruelty offences. This is a good bill. My colleague met with thousands of people who support this bill. I would therefore like to ask the minister and my colleagues across the way if they will work with us to regulate and enhance animal cruelty offences.

I would also like to talk about Bill C-592, which was introduced by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine. This bill seeks to better define what an animal is under the Criminal Code and define what is meant by intent and acts of cruelty. I would again like all my colleagues across the way to tell me whether the Conservative government will support these bills, which seek to modernize the Criminal Code and better regulate the treatment of animals.

We all agree that Bill C-35 is a step in the right direction, but we need to do more. There is still more work to be done. Something that bothers me a little is that the Conservatives have once again introduced a minimum sentence, which prevents judges from using their discretionary power. In reality, individuals are sometimes sentenced to prison terms that are longer than the minimum. This shows that judges are capable of making a proper judgment.

Bill C-35 is known as Quanto's law, in tribute to a law enforcement dog in Edmonton that was killed when trying to intercept a fleeing suspect. The offender was sentenced to 26 months in prison for animal cruelty. In this case, the judge used his discretionary power and relied on jurisprudence, existing laws and the evidence presented. This is how it should be. It is up to the courts, to an experienced judge, to determine a fair sentence for the offence. With Bill C-35, the government is once again showing its propensity for wanting to take away the courts' discretion.

As I said earlier, New Democrats believe that animal cruelty is disgraceful. We care about protecting these animals that are so dear to so many people. I want to share some examples of dogs that have demonstrated their loyalty to humans. In an exceptional case in France, Zarco was awarded the bronze National Defence Medal, which is normally handed out to human beings.

• (1310)

Very few animals, even those that are faithful law enforcement assistants, have received that honour. Zarco, who was specially trained to find lost people, was amazingly effective.

He began serving in 2002 alongside his master, officer David Monteil. Bearing badge 4637, the dog participated in 145 searches and 54 interventions with the Peloton de surveillance et d'investigation de la gendarmerie in Narbonne. Throughout his seven years of loyal service, Zarco, a French dog, saved lives and helped catch

criminals. In 2006, he found the trail of a 78-year-old man lost in the vicinity of Narbonne, as well as that of a 79-year-old woman with Alzheimer's. She had wandered away from her retirement home and gotten lost. Zarco found her. In July 2007, in the stifling heat, Zarco saved a man with serious mental illness who was intending to commit suicide. The following August, he found the driver of a stolen car who had fled. In January 2008, near Lézignan, Zarco performed another miracle when he helped find a six-year-old child with autism who had left his parents' home. The child was half naked, wet from falling in water-logged ditches, and shivering with cold. In October, in Port-la-Nouvelle, the four-legged police dog found the body of a motorcyclist killed in a traffic accident whose body was submerged in a creek that ran through dense vegetation. On March 26, 2009, as Zarco was nearing retirement, he performed one last deed and found a 73-year-old man with diabetes and Alzheimer's who had left his home five hours before. This is a truly remarkable example.

I would like to talk about an example that is a little bit closer to home. Samba is a hero. This dog saved the life of his owner, Ms. Karin Hennelle, who is 68 and in a wheelchair. One day, when she was on her daily outing with her dog, a truck approached when she was about a kilometre away from home. There was a lot of gravel on the road, so the truck was driving down the middle of the road. Ms. Hennelle decided to get off the road. She moved over to the side of the road at the edge of a ravine. The truck went by, but the wheels of Ms. Hennelle's wheelchair slid on the grass. The wheelchair slid and Ms. Hennelle fell into the ravine. She said: “I felt myself falling. It felt strange.” Ms. Hennelle tumbled five metres down into the ravine until a tree stopped her fall. She had fallen. She would no longer be with us were it not for Samba. That is when the dog took action. Ms. Hennelle said: “I told the dog to go up and get help. Of course, I did not really think he understood me, but he went onto the road and barked as loud as he could.” The dog caught the attention of a farmer, and firefighters then came and rescued Ms. Hennelle. She says that she owes her life to her dog.

Now I would like to give a more institutional example. Until 1981, there was no Canadian guide dog training facility. The MIRA Foundation created the first such school in Sainte-Madeleine in Quebec. In order to get a guide dog before 1981, one had to turn to schools in the United States. However, those institutions provided no services in French. All services were in English. On October 21, 1981, MIRA proudly introduced the first two guide dogs trained in Quebec. Since that time, MIRA has been pursuing its goal to increase the independence of people with disabilities by providing them with dogs bred and fully trained to respond to their adaptation and rehabilitation needs.

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We are talking about service dogs, animals that are already protected under the law. However, we are indebted to these animals, with whom we live every day, animals that are so important in our homes. They joyfully welcome us home after a long day at work. They are often more pleased to see us than our own children are. These dogs can console an adolescent in tears or simply be a good companion for a small child or senior. That is why I urge the government to support the two bills introduced by the NDP on animal cruelty.

• (1315)

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to enter this debate, but I have just listened to my colleague confusing the issue of general animal protection with animal protection for these specific groups included in this bill. It is important for Canadians to realize what we are doing.

The current law, as it relates to cruelty to animals, is covered in section 445 of the Criminal Code:

- (1) Every one commits an offence who, wilfully and without lawful excuse,
 (a) kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures dogs, birds or animals that are not cattle and are kept for a lawful purpose;
 —liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years....

The is when the offence is prosecuted by indictment.

For clarity, I would like my colleague to affirm that this bill directly deals with military animals, law enforcement animals and service animals. All three of these categories are clearly defined within the bill.

It is important for Canadians to know what we are trying to do here. It is a special category of protection for those animals that provide specific protection to Canadians or provide specific help to Canadians who may be blind or need some assistance in that regard.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala: Mr. Speaker, it may have been a problem with the interpretation. I want to stress that I do understand which animals are protected by the law. That is why I am saying that we still have work to do with respect to other animals, which are so important to the lives of many people. I am thinking of an older person's dog, for example. It may not necessarily be a guide dog. It is the little dog that has been with us for years. It is the little dog that will also protect us against a thief who invades our home, because that dog will bark the loudest. Little dogs often bark the loudest. They are not covered by the law. I know exactly which dogs are covered by the law, but I also believe that we need to think beyond that.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. There has been what I hope is just confusion about the scope of the bill.

The parliamentary secretary suggested earlier that privately held service dogs were not covered by the bill. The definition seems to include some but not all. I am not 100% sure. That is one issue.

The other issue is the whole notion of mandatory minimum sentences and consecutive sentences, which contaminates the justice system. Right now we trust our justice system to get it right. We have judges who have immense training and who have the right to make decisions about how laws are to be enforced and what is an appropriate sentence.

By creating a mandatory minimum, we create situations, such as for persons who might face deportation, in which the justice system may choose to back off on prosecuting a charge under Section 445.1, because the threat of deportation is much greater a punishment than should be afforded. Therefore, they cannot, in fact, prosecute.

This notion of these conflicting parts of the new laws that the Conservatives put forward, plus the notion of mandatory minimum sentences, may contaminate our justice system. Would the member like to comment on that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I would say that there is something even more serious. The powers of the state are divided into legislative, executive and judicial powers. I believe that defining what judges should do is very dangerous. They are not allowed to use the jurisprudence and their own judgment to make decisions. That is very delicate.

The government really needs to understand that it is up to the judges to hand down decisions. They are capable of doing so. By forcing them to impose minimum sentences, not only is the government criticizing their work, but it is also filling up the prisons, which have no more room. Therefore, this has an adverse effect in terms of costs and, above all, it undermines the recognition of judges' capacity to make decisions, even though that is what judges do.

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House in support of Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals).

Hundreds of service animals in this country help Canadians in their day-to-day lives and at work. Two weeks ago I was in LaSalle and took part in a Vélo Plaisir activity organized by the Optimist Club. There was a police officer there with her law enforcement dog. It was quite lovely. The dog was seven years old. The police officer talked about the lifespan of her dog, what the dog had done and what her areas of expertise were, and she explained how these dogs are trained. These dogs are very important. Whether we are talking about courageous RCMP dogs or specially trained dogs that valiantly serve members of our armed forces, these animals provide an invaluable service that cannot be overstated.

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Since their job is often dangerous, these service animals can be exposed to risks that pose a significant threat to their lives and their well-being. As members of Parliament, we therefore have a responsibility to do our best to protect the animals that serve us so courageously. The existing laws are inadequate, since too many animals that serve this country and its people fall victim to criminals who show a total lack of respect for the lives of these animals and the services they provide to Canada.

One example of the current legislation's failure to protect them happened in Edmonton in 2013, when a man who was trying to flee from the RCMP stabbed Quanto, a police service dog, 27 times, causing his death. The charges brought against the offender did not fit the brutality of his crime. The man was found guilty of animal cruelty. The current legislation does not provide strict enough penalties for the killing of a police or military service animal. These legal provisions do not go far enough to protect the animals that serve our country and its citizens. Killing a service animal is considered a lesser offence than others that an offender could face. These charges are often dropped as part of plea bargains. It seems to me that killing a service animal while trying to escape police is a serious offence that should carry a tough penalty. The brutal stabbing of Quanto was more than just an act of animal cruelty; it was murder.

Cases like this one clearly demonstrate the need for new legislation on this issue, because current laws have not been enough to deter these crimes, and penalties have not been strict enough for those who deliberately hurt or kill service animals. Accordingly, my NDP colleagues and I believe that if an individual acting in bad faith tries to commit a crime against a service animal, it is reasonable to hold that individual criminally responsible for their actions. Existing legislation fails to give the courts and law enforcement officials the power to properly penalize offenders and protect the service animals who work alongside police officers and military personnel.

• (1325)

[English]

Our party has long stood opposed to all forms of animal cruelty. We have remained committed to the needs of animals and the eradication of cruelty toward them in our policy proposals and party platform. In addition, we have put forward concrete bills that would better protect the safety of all animals.

While we have been disappointed in the past by the government's unwillingness to support us in these measures, we are pleased that it has finally begun to acknowledge the protections that animals should be afforded. It is our belief, however, that all animals should be free from harm, be they dogs in the canine units or animals at large, and that these protections should not be predicated on animal categorization.

Given our long-standing support of these issues, the decision on the part of the government to bring forth legislation that would better protect service animals and punish those who intentionally harm service animals is a necessary and overall well-received action. However, the legislation is far from perfect.

Our party supports the major premise of the bill, namely, the protection of service animals and the punishment of those who would do them harm. We do, however, have major reservations concerning the impact that some provisions of the bill would have on

those in the criminal justice system and the ability of judges to do their job to the best of their ability. In every province across the country, judges comprise a core group of individuals whose actions and expertise have helped to create a legal system that is the envy of countries all around the world. A major part of their job is to make judgments and assessments concerning circumstances of an event when determining the proper sentencing of a crime.

In addition to our concern about the proposed restriction of the sentencing powers of judges, our party believes that, by now, the Conservative government should be acutely aware of the consequences of minimum and consecutive sentencing. Offences that have minimum and consecutive sentences have serious and far-reaching implications for our criminal justice system that should not be taken lightly or brushed aside by the sponsors of this bill. In short, some parameters of the legislation stand to cause unnecessary strains on the Canadian justice system, while simultaneously making it more difficult for judges and other legal experts to do the job for which they are most qualified.

We believe these aspects of the bill require attention so as to ensure criminals can be punished for their actions, while not creating unnecessary burdens on the criminal justice or restricting the sentencing power of judges.

As it currently stands, the bill would serve to undermine these core responsibilities of judges by tying their hands when they are attempting to make decisions that are both legally responsible and fair to the circumstances before them. Forcing judges to hand out minimum sentences to offenders ultimately takes away this freedom and speaks largely to the lack of trust that the government has shown to professionals in our legal system time and time again.

Our party believes strongly that certain provisions of this bill can be rewritten and reworked so as to ensure that service animals across the country are properly protected from harm, that those who would do service animals harm would be effectively punished for their actions, and that judges could retain their powers over sentencing those who willingly break the law. In short, we believe it is the job of a judge, not the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice, to sentence criminal offenders.

Our support for this bill is not therefore unconditional or without some reservations.

Our party has a long and proud history of supporting the protection of animals, whether they are also pets or the service animals that work to protect Canadians every day. We strongly believe that those who senselessly seek to do harm to animals should be punished and made to answer for their crimes.

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We also recognize, however, that judges across the country act as the agents of the legal system. They best understand both the law and the specifics of the case before them. It is our belief therefore that the freedom to determine correct sentencing in this and other cases is one that should remain in the hands of judges. We seek therefore to protect the livelihood and well-being of the animals across the country that do their jobs to keep Canadians safe, but we also believe that the expertise of a judge and his or her ability to properly sentence criminal offenders is similarly something that should be protected.

Overall, we are optimistic that the bill will correct some of the legislative failings of previous laws in protecting our valued service animals across the country, and we hope its provisions will deter and adequately punish those who would do harm to animals like Quanto.

• (1330)

[Translation]

I would like to end my speech by saying that the NDP has always sought progress on the animal protection agenda, be they pets or law enforcement animals.

Just this morning, I met with an animal welfare group. They told me that they like the bill. They think the bill is very good but, as I said, it has some small flaws. In general though, this bill will protect these animals.

Really though, do we want to categorize animals in Canada and say that some are more important than others? I do not know. I am asking my colleagues opposite.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the men and women who train animals—dogs in particular. I know that it is hard work and that training animals to serve takes a lot of patience. These trainers develop such a beautiful relationship with their animals. The least we can do is protect these animals.

I am ready to answer my colleagues' questions.

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's comments, especially when she opened the door to what the real NDP animal agenda is.

In the last debate, on October 27 of last year, the member of Parliament for Nanaimo—Cowichan said, in the same debate on this bill, that she supports legislation in which "...animals would be considered people and not just property."

Similarly, the MP for Gatineau, on the same day, in the same debate, said animals should be treated with "...the same protection that we afford to children and people with mental or physical disabilities."

The NDP actually has a radical animal rights agenda. The member opposite is introducing Bill C-592, which has received broad condemnation from the animal use community right across Canada. The bill contains wording that has been strongly opposed by aboriginal people, the outdoor community, agricultural producers, medical researchers, major colleges and universities, fairs and exhibitions, and even some religious groups.

Would the member opposite admit that the NDP has a radical animal rights agenda that if implemented would criminalize animal use activities?

[Translation]

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, what I find the most unfortunate is that I am being asked questions about other bills when we are supposed to be talking about a bill on law enforcement animals.

I introduced a bill on animal protection because the Criminal Code does not include a definition of animal. My bill seeks to add a definition of animal to the Criminal Code, along with provisions to explain what constitutes animal cruelty and negligence. My bill has received the support of many animal rights groups across the country.

However, what we are talking about today is Bill C-35. The member opposite does not seem too concerned about it because he did not ask any questions about it. Bill C-35 amends the Criminal Code with regard to law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals. That is what I talked about in my speech. It would have been nice for my colleague to show a bit of interest in this bill because that is today's subject of debate.

I hope that this bill will pass because it is a good bill. There are some provisions that I find worrisome, but I hope that we will be able to talk more about them.

• (1335)

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a similar question, although from a different perspective.

Quite frankly, we find ourselves in agreement with much of my colleague's speech. One of the things she said is that her party has a long history of supporting the protection of all animals. Indeed, that has been manifested in the fact that the member has brought forward a private member's bill, Bill C-592, which is really a reintroduction of a private member's bill from Mark Holland, a former Liberal member of Parliament. There are members within this caucus who would like to see that bill go forward to committee, but every time it comes up for debate, it gets traded down or bumped.

Would the member be able to explain to those of us who are interested in a closer examination of that bill whether the NDP does in fact stand behind its long history of supporting the protection of all animals and remove the procedural roadblocks of introducing and debating her private member's bill?

[Translation]

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question, but I find it incredible that, once again, I am not being asked a question on the debate we are having in the House today.

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I introduced a bill and the Liberals have also done a lot of work on animal issues. Unfortunately, I do not know all the riding names by heart, but I could talk about other NDP members who introduced similar bills.

For decades now, we have been introducing bills and nothing happens. Once, a bill made it all the way to the Senate, but it was blocked. It is high time that we did something for all animals and this bill is a step in the right direction.

However, I take issue with this categorization of animals, whereby we are protecting some animals, but not others. We absolutely must add a definition of “animal” to the Criminal Code. I hope this will happen soon in our country, because if we compare Canada to other countries such as Australia, New Zealand and even France, which is currently adopting similar legislation, we will see that we really are not at the forefront of animal protection.

[English]

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand and speak in favour of Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, or Quanto's law.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

This legislation would ensure that those who harm law enforcement service and Canadian Armed Forces animals would face serious consequences. Our government recognizes the special role that these animals play in protecting our communities and improving the quality of life of Canadians.

This bill is aimed at denouncing and deterring the wilful harming of specially trained animals used to help law enforcement officers, persons with disabilities, or members of the Canadian Armed Forces. The introduction of this legislation fulfills our government's promise in the 2013 Speech from the Throne to recognize the daily risks taken by police officers and their service animals in their efforts to enforce the law and protect Canadians and communities.

The legislation honours Quanto, a police dog that was stabbed to death in the line of duty while trying to apprehend a fleeing suspect in Edmonton, Alberta. Quanto had four years of decorated service and had participated in more than 100 arrests prior to his death in October of 2013.

The Prime Minister noted in a press release upon announcing this important bill that:

This legislation honours those faithful animals and emphasizes the special role that they play. Our Government is committed to ensuring that people who wilfully harm these animals face the full force of the law.

In our society, service animals have become an integral part of law enforcement. They assist with search and rescue efforts; tracking criminals; searching for narcotics, explosives, crime scene evidence, and lost property; VIP protection; crowd control; hostage situations; and police community relations.

The RCMP currently has 157 police service dogs in service across Canada. Of these, 135 are general duty profile dogs, and 22 are detection profile dogs. In addition to the RCMP, provincial and municipal police departments across Canada have integrated police

service dogs as part of their everyday service delivery in our communities.

Service animal involvement in law enforcement goes well beyond police. The Canada Border Services Agency has 53 dog and handler teams that help to detect contraband drugs and firearms, undeclared currency, and food, plant, and animal products. Additionally, Correctional Service of Canada uses dogs to help stop the flow of illicit drugs and contraband into federal correctional institutions. They have over 100 dog and handler teams across Canada.

As members can see, service animals are active and indispensable members of our society. With their handlers, they work with dedication to ensure Canadians remain safe in their communities. Not only have they been given important responsibilities, but they also have an unbreakable bond with the officers who have the honour to be their handlers. This is something that makes losing a service animal in the line of duty very difficult.

Constable Matthew Williamson of the Edmonton Police Service Canine Unit, who was Quanto's handler, was shocked by the loss of their friend, along with the entire Edmonton Police Service.

● (1340)

Scott Pattison, spokesperson with Edmonton Police Service Communications, noted the strong connection between the handlers and their dogs, saying, “The dogs go home with the members and they're part of their own families, really. These animals perform their jobs every single night on behalf of the citizens of this city with extreme courage.”

That is why our government was extremely proud to introduce this legislation to ensure that harm committed against these dedicated animals becomes a criminal offence.

Bill C-35 proposes Criminal Code amendments that would create a new offence specifically prohibiting the injuring or killing of animals trained and being used to help law enforcement officers, persons with disabilities, or members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Persons convicted of such an offence could face up to five years of imprisonment, with a mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison if a law enforcement animal is killed while assisting an officer in executing the law and the offence is prosecuted by indictment.

In order to ensure that persons convicted of harming police service animals are sentenced properly according to the crimes committed, Bill C-35 contains measures whereby if a law enforcement officer is assaulted or a law enforcement animal is injured or killed while on duty, the sentence for that offence would be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on the offender arising out of the same event. This will ensure that the punishment matches the nature of the crime.

The justice for animals in service act applies to law enforcement animals, service animals, and Canadian Armed Forces animals. In practical terms, dogs would be the primary animals protected by this new legislation, given the fact that they are the animals most often trained and used to assist law enforcement officers and persons with disabilities.

However, horses are also used by some police forces. Also, other kinds of animals can be trained as service animals to assist people with disabilities. They would all be protected under this legislation.

Our government's tough-on-crime commitment is being met with continued dedication as we work to ensure that our justice system is fair and efficient. The development of the justice for animals in service act is part of the government's plan for safe streets and communities. This plan focuses on tackling crime, enhancing victims' rights, and ensuring a fair and efficient justice.

Enacting this legislation would finally codify an official offence for the act of injuring or killing service animals. We must stand up and protect these animals. They are giving their lives to protect Canadians and ensure that our communities are safe. They deserve nothing less than our gratitude, care, and protection. I strongly encourage the NDP and the Liberals to support this important legislation. I ask them to stand with the government in protecting our service animals from criminals who would seek to harm them. This legislation is something all Canadians can stand behind, knowing that the Conservative government is fulfilling its commitments to make our streets safer and protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the member. It was almost like a call to arms speech with respect to getting tough on crime, keeping streets safe, and so forth.

I suspect that the bill will be passed unanimously by all members of the House. All members recognize the critical and vital role service dogs play today, whether with respect to fighting potential terrorism or with respect to aiding the blind, and the way in which working dogs support different types of services, such as the Canada Border Services Agency, the many different law enforcement agencies, and so forth.

However, what I found striking was how the member talked passionately about keeping our streets safe. My question to the member is this. Would he not recognize, with the type of passion he expressed, that one of the ways we can keep our streets safe would be to invest in finding alternatives for the young people living in our communities who are being drawn in by gangs? That might be another way of keeping our streets safe. Perhaps he could provide comment specifically as to what he believes his government is doing on that particular point.

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Winnipeg North for his support of the bill and his comments.

Prior to being elected to this place, I was the chair of Safe City Mississauga, which is also known as the Mississauga Crime Prevention Association. I spent quite a bit of time working on crime prevention initiatives. One of the things I know from being a past chair of that organization is that the federal government has invested millions of dollars in crime prevention, victim services, and other issues that help not just local police but organizations like Safe City Mississauga to run programs that ensure young people are not recruited into gangs.

Government Orders

I am very proud to be a member of a government that makes sure we have proper legislation and proper measures in the Criminal Code of Canada to get tough on crime, but also one that invests in community-oriented programs that actually stop it in the first place.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I would like to tell the House again that no one is opposed to the bill, and I believe that it may even be adopted unanimously. Every member in the House recognizes the important role that service animals play, whether they work with law enforcement officers or people with a disability, for example.

However, I believe that my colleague may have left something out of his speech, or he did not want to mention it, and that is this government's recourse to minimum sentencing once again. The government seems to be telling our judges that they do not have the discretion to make their own decisions and enforce the law.

I do not have a problem with amending the Criminal Code in order to impose sentences on people who injure or kill service animals.

However, could my colleague explain why his government makes minimum sentences mandatory, and why it does not let judges do their job as they should?

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a member of a government that has brought forward various pieces of legislation to make sure those who commit heinous, serious, and violent crimes do serve a minimum amount of time behind bars for what they have wreaked on their community and on the individual victims.

The New Democrats never talk about victims of crime. They always talk about protecting criminals. They voted against every single piece of legislation we have brought forward to make communities safer, to make sure perpetrators stay behind bars longer, and to make sure communities are safer.

I will always be proud to be on this side of the House, standing up for victims of crime.

We may get unanimous support for the bill, but when we talk about service animals, let us remember that it was our government that first recognized the fact that service animals are an integral part of our law enforcement system and need the same rights and protections as the people who serve our communities to keep us safe.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand before members today and share with them my support for the justice for animals in service act. I applaud the proposition and creation of Quanto's law made by my colleagues to prevent people from bringing harm to police, military, and service dogs and punish people who do so.

Statements by Members

I would like to begin by thanking the member for Richmond Hill, who proposed this amendment to the Criminal Code in 2013. The member has succeeded in bringing this issue to the forefront of our citizens' attention. I would also like to thank the hon. Minister of Justice for tabling the bill, bringing this proposed legislation closer to becoming law, and providing his optimistic public support.

I look forward to the passing of this bill, which would fulfill the commitment made by our government in the 2013 Speech from the Throne. I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the special role played by these animals in protecting our communities and improving the quality of life for Canadians. The Conservative government knows the daily risks taken by police officers and their service animals. Quanto's law is being brought forth in honour and support of them. It is a tragedy that these incredibly trained and intelligent animals are intentionally harmed by people in our communities.

This legislation would recognize Quanto, a police dog serving in Edmonton, Alberta, who gave the greatest sacrifice, which was his life. The story, as I am sure many members know, is that Quanto was stabbed to death in October 2013 during the process of apprehending a suspect on foot. Quanto had served in an impressive number of arrests during his time in service with the Edmonton police. The accused, in addition to his other charges, only received the insignificant charge of animal cruelty for the brutal killing of this canine officer of the law.

This legislation would also honour the police horse Brigadier, who served with the Toronto police until 2006. He had to be put down after the suspect involved is reported to have deliberately struck Brigadier with his car. The suspect was never apprehended following the hit and run. It was the story of Brigadier that inspired the member for Richmond Hill to put forth this bill.

This proposed legislation is aimed at denouncing and deterring the intentional harming of specially trained animals who serve law enforcement officials, disabled persons with special needs, and the Canadian Forces. Currently, there are well over 100 service dogs working in the RCMP right across this great country of ours. These service dogs help police find lost persons; track criminals; and search for illicit substances, such as narcotics, explosives, and crime-scene evidence. Additionally, service animals participate in integral programs that are part of everyday service delivery in our communities. Canada Border Services Agency employs these animals, Correctional Service Canada utilizes these service dogs across Canada, and they are responsible for vital services to our communities.

One of the purposes of this bill would be to single out anyone who knowingly or carelessly harms a service animal. This includes those people who would injure, poison, or kill a law enforcement animal. To my knowledge, dogs are the primary animal this law would serve to protect, given that they are the animal that is most often trained for service. However, as previously mentioned, there are other animals trained and used to assist in law enforcement and to aid those people with disabilities. Horses and other animals can be trained, and they would all be protected under this legislation.

The law would amend the sentencing of people found guilty of animal cruelty to service animals. A minimum sentence of five

months and a maximum sentence of six years is proposed for people guilty of crimes against service animals. The offender must serve the sentence consecutively if found guilty of additional charges arising from the same event. A maximum fine of \$10,000 is an applicable charge, should the accused be found guilty of injuring or killing a service animal under Quanto's law.

Many people would like to see bigger penalties, but our government admits that it is possible to get carried away by emotion sometimes and that there is a difference between human life and animal life. The punishment must fit the crime and still be fair.

• (1355)

The development of the justice for animals in service act, Quanto's law, is part of the government's plan for safe streets and communities, another example of how we are dedicated to getting tough on crime.

There are several organizations across Canada showing their support for this bill, like the Alberta Citizens on Patrol Association of Linden, Alberta, which strongly supports this legislation and has started a support campaign within the organization.

I ask all members to join with these fine people who understand what service dogs and organizations that work with them would gain from Quanto's law. As the Prime Minister said: Quanto's violent death is a powerful and sad reminder of the dangers that law enforcement animals often face in assisting officers to protect Canadians and communities.

We can all agree with the Prime Minister and other supporters of this legislation that this would honour the faithful animals and acknowledge the special role they play in law enforcement. We know the significant benefit service dogs offer people with disabilities to lead a more independent and better quality of life.

This law would serve the important purpose of recognizing and deterring violence toward service animals, to show that violence against these animals will not be tolerated and that those who commit acts deemed to be vicious and careless in nature must pay the consequences.

I thank those who stand with the government in supporting the justice for animals in service act, and I hope the opposition can understand the positive effects this legislation would offer service animals. Please work with us, and please pass this important law.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mario Beaulieu, president and leader of the Bloc Québécois, and Gilles Duceppe were on Parliament Hill this afternoon together with 18 candidates to send a simple message: the Bloc Québécois is making a strong comeback.

Statements by Members

Mario Beaulieu's generosity and selflessness show that separatists believe that the cause is more important than the individuals. It is noble and admirable, as is the decision by Gilles Duceppe to once again serve Quebec and the separatist movement. Congratulations to these two men and to all who put Quebec ahead of their own interests. A new political cycle is starting up in Quebec.

* * *

● (1400)

[English]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the extraordinary life, career and community commitment of Mr. Dave Babbitt. He has been the music teacher Wallaceburg District Secondary School for the past 39 years and is retiring at the end of June. Last night, a packed crowd honoured Mr. Babbitt at a moving concert tribute performed by current and former students.

In addition to being an exemplary teacher, Dave Babbitt is an outstanding musician in his own right. He has freely given thousands of hours of his time over the years to local community groups. He has kept the sound of the big band music alive and his own brass ensemble is known as The Brass Factory.

Every Remembrance Day, we will find Mr. Babbitt at the Wallaceburg Legion honouring our fallen heroes with *Taps* and the *Last Post*.

We thank Dave for all he has done and offer him congratulations in his retirement and all the best.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on March 6, during a citizenship ceremony, a 16-year-old boy from a LaSalle family was unjustly denied his citizenship certificate as he was swearing the oath. An unidentified man arbitrarily decided that the young man had not sworn the oath even though the September 2011 directive stipulating that a candidate had to be seen swearing the oath was removed following Judge Boswell's ruling. The family was a victim of the discriminatory abuses instituted by Conservative ministers of citizenship and immigration and applied capriciously during citizenship ceremonies.

I am asking the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to make reparations to the family by apologizing formally in writing no later than June 23, 2015, on behalf of the Government of Canada for the needless and unjust harm done to them by this whole situation.

* * *

[English]

NATO SPECIAL SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker I rise today to congratulate one of my constituents, Mr. Ed Picher, who recently received a Special Service Medal from NATO for his service in Germany as part of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

The Special Service Medal was created to recognize members of the Canadian Forces who took part in activities and operations under exceptional circumstances and dedicated honourable service within NATO's area of responsibility.

Mr. Picher first joined the Canadian Forces in 1960 and spent nine years in the service. He first joined the infantry ranks to become a paratrooper and joined the 1st Battalion. He also served as a rifleman and APC driver.

Tomorrow night I will have a chance to personally honour Mr. Picher at the Cochrane Legion among his friends and colleagues for his honourable service, and thank him and all Canadian men and women in uniform for helping to keep our country strong and free.

* * *

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY TARTAN

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour Gordon Hansford and the Annapolis Valley tartan.

Thirty years ago the Kingscot pipe band was discussing which tartan to wear, and thought the valley ought to have one of its own. Two of its members then went to work: Mr. Hansford came up with the design, and it was woven by the late Joyce Pickwell. The Annapolis Valley is known for its beautiful landscape, and the tartan captures it perfectly. As Mr. Hansford's poem says:

There's the green of the trees and the crops, the farmers love to grow,
The blue is for the mountains, North and South,
And the silver for the two rivers, that flow down to the sea,
The red depicts the blood, that's been shed to keep us free.

Today marks the one year anniversary of the tartan's official registration with the Scottish Register of Tartans. I call on this House to recognize the great work of Gordon Hansford and the late Joyce Pickwell, as well as clan Donald Canada for its part in getting the Annapolis Valley tartan recognized.

Congratulations to all and thanks.

* * *

● (1405)

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for over a decade, there has been an automated external defibrillator, or AED, in the trunk of every cruiser in the Ottawa Police Service, 145 in total. In 2012, this resulted in nine successful saves of heart attack victims. In 2013, eight lives were saved. That is an average of one life saved per every 17 AEDs annually.

AEDs purchased in bulk cost less than \$1,000 apiece. That means it would cost only \$5 million to place an AED in every one of Canada's 5,600 RCMP cruisers and less than \$4 million to place an AED in every one of the 4,000 cruisers of the Ontario and Quebec police forces.

Statements by Members

Now let us do some math. At one life saved per 17 AEDs, these 9,000 units could save over 500 lives each year. Since an AED lasts 10 years, we could save 5,000 lives over the next decade at a cost of \$2,000 per life.

Saving lives has never, ever been cheaper, so let us make this happen.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to first recognize that we are standing on unceded Algonquin territory.

On this day in 2008, the Prime Minister and Parliament issued an historic apology for the devastating impacts of residential schools. It has been eight years and indigenous peoples are still waiting for action from the government.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations are a road map. As Justice Sinclair said, "Words are not enough. Reconciliation requires deliberate, thoughtful and sustained action." As part of reconciliation, the federal government must close the funding gap between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous Canadians, and we must go further. During the TRC ceremonies, many spoke out online, including the formidable Tanya Tagaq, who said, "#MyReconciliationIncludes abolishment of the myths that keep alive the undercurrent of abject racism."

Together, we must work for true reconciliation that recognizes history, that strives for change and builds a future founded on respect of all.

* * *

PHILIPPINES INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *Mabuhay*.

June 12 marks Philippines Independence Day. Throughout the weekend, Filipinos in my riding of North Vancouver will be celebrating the 117th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine independence with delicious food, lively music, dancing and vibrant cultural presentations.

Canada has strong bilateral ties with the Philippines. We share a mutual commitment to democracy, good governance, rule of law, peace and human rights. Canadians played a leading role following the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 by giving more than \$85 million in eligible donations, which were then matched by our government. These donations helped international aid organizations provide life-saving water, food and medicine on the ground. Our Canadian Forces disaster response team was integral in providing much-needed sanitation and logistical support.

In 2014, our government was proud to make the Philippines one of 25 countries of focus in our international development efforts. On this happy occasion, I have a message for all of my Filipino friends.

[Member spoke in Filipino as follows:]

Maligayang Araw ng Kalayaan.

DECORATION DAY

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last weekend Decoration Day commemorated the sacrifices of Canadian and allied soldiers as they stormed the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. I had the great privilege of attending two such commemorations in my riding over the weekend: one with Branch 15 of the Royal Canadian Legion and one with Branch 609. I have to say it is very encouraging how many cadets came out to those services to honour our brave men and women in the armed forces.

Brampton has a tradition on Decoration Day. Canadian flags are placed on the graves of all of our fallen soldiers and veterans. It was wonderful to see so many people come out and support the community on that day.

I want to personally thank Branch 15 and Branch 609 for making such great efforts to keep this tradition alive and making sure that we do not forget.

* * *

[Translation]

PROMOTION OF LOCAL FOODS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding, agriculture is part of our DNA. Jardins-de-Napierville is known as the garden of Quebec for the quality of its fruit and vegetables.

It was to support our farmers that I introduced Bill C-539, an act to promote local foods. Unfortunately, the Conservative government chose not to vote in favour of my initiative, despite widespread support across Canada from the UPA, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and the 2,000 people who signed my petition.

However, I am still promoting the idea of buying locally, but this time through a documentary on the benefits of eating local foods, which will air on TVCogeco sometime soon.

I want to thank all the farmers, restaurant owners and teachers who agreed to take part in this program. I also want to thank Marie-Ève Rochefort and Nathalie Descôteaux for their invaluable contribution to this project.

Summer is almost here and I invite the people of Beauharnois—Salaberry to encourage our farmers back home by shopping at the local markets in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and Beauharnois, the Huntingdon farmer's market, and the Napierville mobile market, or by discovering the "Circuit du paysan," a nature, culture and gourmet food circuit.

To eat locally is to support the local economy.

•(1410)
[English]

TAXATION

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our Conservative government for standing up for Canada's middle class and not standing in its way.

We introduced the universal child care benefit and family tax cut to keep more money in the pockets of Canadians. I can tell members that our plan is working in Don Valley West and across Canada. We are making sure that 100% of families with children benefit with almost \$2,000 back in their pockets.

The contrast is simple. The Liberals and the NDP believe that bureaucracy knows best when it comes to Canadian families. We believe in keeping money in the hands of the real experts on families: their names are Mom and Dad.

* * *

ALGOMA—MANITOULIN—KAPUSKASING

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, anglers contribute over \$8.5 billion a year to the economy and a lot of that comes from visitors, which is why it is so short-sighted when the government targets tourism infrastructure in cost-cutting exercises. This fact is not lost on the outfitters and businesses that depend on tourism in northern Ontario. This year is expected to be a big season with an exchange rate that will attract more American anglers.

While there is no end of great places to wet a line in Canada, nothing compares to the variety and quality found in Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing. With two Great Lakes and thousands of inland lakes, rivers, and streams, visitors can chase salmon, trout, bass, muskie and walleye with the chance to catch the fish of a lifetime.

When they are not on the water, people can fill their days with memories that will never fade. Festivals, powwows, museums and markets bustle with activity, and our businesses are always ready to greet visitors with some legendary northern hospitality.

I encourage everyone to visit Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, where the only thing better than the fishing is the way we treat our guests.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hard-working middle-class workers of Sault Ste. Marie reject the Liberal leader's plan to impose a mandatory \$1,000 tax hike. By promising to enforce the Ontario Liberals' dramatic hike in payroll tax across Canada, the Liberal leader would hike every middle-class family's taxes and force employers to cut jobs, hours and wages. According to the Meridian Credit Union, the majority of Ontario's small-business owners believe that this could be their greatest challenge ever faced.

Instead of introducing reckless high-tax plans, our government believes in helping families succeed. We lowered taxes to the tune of

Statements by Members

\$6,600 this year for a typical family. We expanded the tax-free savings account so that Canadians can save more tax-free.

Now is not the time for risky high-tax Liberal schemes and untested leadership.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, the Prime Minister of Canada stood in this chamber and apologized to the survivors of residential schools. Today, seven years later, we are concerned that many Canadians are still unaware of this dark chapter in Canadian history.

Achieving meaningful reconciliation is not only the responsibility of elected politicians but of every Canadian. With the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, we have a clear pathway for the essential journey of reconciliation for a policy of cultural genocide that spanned more than a century. The Prime Minister's refusal to commit to implementing the TRC recommendations has been deeply disappointing. I urge him to immediately begin working with survivors, aboriginal leaders, the premiers, and other partners to do so.

As Canadians prepare to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, we must ensure that we begin the next 150 years by completing the unfinished business of Confederation. It is time to build a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with aboriginal communities, rooted in aboriginal rights, treaties, and the principles of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, in a spirit of partnership, respect, and co-operation for mutual benefit.

* * *

•(1415)

[Translation]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the rules have always been clear.

Using parliamentary resources for partisan purposes is unacceptable. However, the House of Commons administration discovered what 68 NDP members did, and they now owe taxpayers \$2.7 million.

Although the NDP refuses to pay back that money, the House administration will make sure that taxpayers are treated fairly; it will begin collecting the money on July 1. Canadians deserve better. The NDP should have some respect for taxpayers, do the right thing and immediately pay back the \$2.7 million it owes Canadians.

Oral Questions

[English]

THE SENATE

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had a good look at the depths of Conservative and Liberal entitlement thanks to the Auditor General, and they are not impressed with what they see.

In the wake of the report on senators' expenses, instead of calling for the transformational change that is needed in the Senate, the old-school parties are defending the status quo. Just like the Liberals and Conservatives joined together to pass Bill C-51 in the House, they have teamed up in the Senate to block independent oversight and to rig the expense arbitration process. Why? It is so senators can keep policing themselves.

It is unacceptable. Canadians want real change. New Democrats know that change is not only possible, it is necessary. Canadians can trust the NDP to fix the damage done by the Conservatives, to end the culture of entitlement of the old-school parties, and to bring real change to Ottawa. On October 19, that is exactly what we will do.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the depraved genocidal death cult of ISIS continues to commit brutal crimes in Iraq and Syria, especially against women and children. ISIS has called for brutal attacks in Canada against Canadians. Ignoring this threat is not a solution.

On behalf of my riding of Provencher, I want to thank the Royal Canadian Air Force for standing on guard for Canada and for standing up to this threat. Our CF-18 Hornets successfully led their third air strike in Syria, hitting an ISIS compound near Al-Hasakah. That followed another successful strike against an ISIS fighting position in Baiji, Iraq.

We thank our men and women in uniform, who are getting the job done.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ETHICS

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have the right to know what the Prime Minister knew about the Senate expense scandal. Instead, the Prime Minister is extending his trip to Europe.

Canadians are sick of seeing their tax dollars wasted. Are we to believe that the Prime Minister would rather defend the status quo in the Senate than answer Canadians' questions?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, it was the Senate that invited the Auditor General in. He has tabled his report, and of course, we expect the Senate to listen to those recommendations and implement them.

As we all know, the status quo in the Senate is not acceptable. That is why we have fought to bring openness and transparency into the Senate. The Supreme Court, in its wisdom, has suggested that we need the unanimous support of the provinces to move forward with any reform. We anxiously await that.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every time we learn more about Conservative corruption in the Senate, the Prime Minister suddenly finds urgent business to do on another continent. When this scandal first broke, he had urgent business in Peru. When the RCMP released the documents about the cover-up, suddenly he had to rush off to Europe.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1420)

The Speaker: Order, please.

The government will have an opportunity to answer the question when the member for Halifax is finished asking it but not before then.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, when the RCMP released documents about the cover-up, suddenly the Prime Minister had to rush off to Europe.

Now we have a devastating report about corruption in the Senate, and the Prime Minister once again is not answering questions. Why is it that whenever there is a scandal, the Prime Minister hops on a plane?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that question just highlights that it is not only the Liberals who are incapable of ever governing this country again and that their leader is in over his head; it is the entire NDP caucus.

It is called a G7, where the world's most powerful nations come together to talk about the economy, come together to talk about security. Our Prime Minister was there leading the G7 with respect to improving the economy and fighting ISIL terrorism. We are proud of that, and we will continue to do that job on behalf of Canadians.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians really marvel at how the member evades questions. Make no mistake, accountability is coming for the Conservatives.

While the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary keeps trying to distract us with make-believe, we are asking questions about real abuse of trust and public money being misspent, and the Prime Minister will not answer a single question.

After promising change, why have the Conservatives now given up on doing anything to clean up the culture of corruption, waste, and entitlement in the Senate?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, obviously the status quo in the Senate is unacceptable. That is why the Auditor General came in and examined the expenses. He submitted a report, and the Senate is taking action on that.

Oral Questions

As I said yesterday, Canadians do not differentiate. When parliamentarians abuse their money deliberately, they want some recourse. There are 68 members of that caucus who owe three times as much as the Auditor General identified in the Senate report. It is absolutely inappropriate. Starting with their leader, who owes \$400,000, they should repay the money they owe Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations has joined the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and thousands of residential school survivors in calling for an official apology from the Catholic Church for the role that it played in this sad chapter of our history.

The Prime Minister met with the Pope today. I have a simple question. Did he ask Pope Francis to apologize, yes or no?

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has written to the provinces, the territories, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Vatican to notify them of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and recommendations. The Prime Minister also drew attention to the letter sent by the minister to the Holy See during his meeting with Pope Francis.

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many residential school survivors have said that an apology from the Pope would help them find closure and healing. They were hoping that the Prime Minister would raise the issue with the Pope during his meeting today.

According to reports, the Prime Minister invited the Pope to visit Canada for its 150th celebration. When the Prime Minister extended that invitation, I would like to know if he also asked the Pope if he would be willing to issue an apology when he comes.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has written to the provinces, territories, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Vatican to inform them of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Prime Minister, when he met with the Pope today, also drew attention to that letter.

We are taking action on the recommendations of the commission and are committed to a fair and lasting resolution of the legacy of the Indian residential schools. We will continue to move forward in the spirit of reconciliation between non-aboriginal and aboriginal Canadians.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives like to thump their chests and brag about trade deals, despite the fact that under their watch, Canada has

experienced unprecedented trade deficits 52 times. They just recorded the two worst monthly trade deficits in history.

The current Conservative government continues to look for scapegoats for its incompetence, blaming others for its inability to close a deal. When will the Conservatives stop the blame game, get CETA properly finalized, and include the federal portion of the \$400-million fund promised to Newfoundland and Labrador?

● (1425)

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no government has done more to advance Canada's trade interests than this Conservative government right here. Our government has concluded free trade agreements with 38 countries, with many more to come.

Had the member actually reviewed the statistics, she would have found, if we factor in the recent decline in energy prices, that our exports are actually up 6.2% compared to last year.

When the Liberals were in power, in 13 years they got three deals done, compared to our government, which since taking office has signed 38 free trade agreements.

* * *

PENSIONS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian boomer now near retirement is more than \$400,000 short of what they need to take care of themselves. Canada has a retirement income crisis.

The Canadian Association of Retired Persons says that the voluntary approach has not worked. Sixty percent of Canadians want the Canada pension plan to be expanded, like Jim Flaherty recommended. Fragmented, optional schemes, mostly designed for tax planning, simply do not get the job done.

Why does the Conservative government keep insisting on failure?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader has confirmed that he would implement the Ontario Liberals' payroll tax on every worker and every small-business man and woman in Canada. That means that for a worker who is earning \$60,000 a year, the Liberal leader would impose a \$1,000 tax hike.

This mandatory tax increase would kill jobs and force small businesses to either cut hours, wages, or in some cases, jobs. By contrast, under the strong leadership of our Prime Minister, we will give—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Wascana.

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unseemly for members of the government to accuse their own finance minister of not telling the truth. The finance minister has been clear: CPP premiums are not payroll taxes; they are investments in long-term individual security. They do not belong to the government; they always belong to the pensioner, and the CPP Investment Board is getting impressive results. That is what the minister said.

At least 60% of Canadians want to build on that success. The provinces want to do the same thing. Jim Flaherty said it is the right thing to do, so why not?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, contrast what we are doing for Canadians with what the Liberals would do.

We have lowered taxes for seniors and pensioners, but the Liberals would raise taxes for middle-class seniors. We created the tax-free savings account and increased the amount Canadians can save tax free, but we know that the Liberals dislike the tax-free savings account and would remove it. They would remove the top-up we have provided for it. We provided pension income splitting for seniors. We know they do not like pension income splitting and would take it away.

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LABOUR

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just this week, the House adopted an important code of conduct for members recognizing the seriousness and unacceptability of sexual harassment in our workplace.

Yesterday the Speaker of the Senate confirmed that Senator Meredith is now under investigation for workplace sexual harassment and bullying.

Harassment of any form should not be tolerated in Parliament. Does the government agree that everyone working for the House and the Senate is entitled to a workplace free of harassment?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, any allegations of harassment against women in the workplace must be taken very seriously.

Our government has been focused on taking significant actions to ensure that Canadians are protected. Many of those, the opposition have voted against. Whether it be those to ensure women are protected or to ensure women are empowered, the opposition parties continually vote against them.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unlike the government's tales of fanciful make-believe, this week the Auditor General reported on real misspending, senators routinely travelling for personal business and billing taxpayers.

In one case, the Auditor General found a senator's spouse spent over \$10,000 on her own personal business, and the senator charged that to the public, too.

How can the members stand here and continue to defend this behaviour? It just defies logic.

• (1430)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the absolute gall of that member, sitting in that caucus, asking that question.

We have said right from the beginning that parliamentarians who deliberately misspend taxpayer dollars ought to do the first thing and pay it back. If it is deliberate, the courts will take action and they will suffer the consequences.

There are 68 members of that caucus who have spend three times as much as the Auditor General found in the Senate. They owe the taxpayer \$2.7 million. Their own leader, who hatched this scheme, owes the taxpayers \$400,000 and is refusing to pay it back.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is more and more fantasy.

Just like the offending senators, Conservatives are completely unrepentant. Conservatives promised to bring accountability and change, but instead they delivered expense claims to meet their tailors and bills for their fishing trips. Senators named in the report for their dubious claims actually set up an appeals process to dispute the Auditor General's findings.

After promising to bring change to the Senate, how can that member stand here and defend the status quo?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not think it is fanciful to want their \$2.7 million back from the NDP. They work very hard for the money they send here, and they want the 68 members of that caucus to send it back.

It is not a fantasy that the member for Compton—Stanstead owes \$142,000. The NDP needs to look at itself, look at Canadians and just pay back the \$2.7 million that it owes, and do it now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, their leader, promised loud and clear that he would clean up the Senate. It was even part of his campaign platform. However, the reality is that today the Senate is still the same corrupt institution.

Fourteen of the senators who the Auditor General found were involved in illegal spending are now refusing to pay back the money that they spent playing golf and attending hockey games, money that belongs to Canadians. That is not all. They are even going to challenge the Auditor General's recommendations.

Does the Prime Minister agree with the senators who are refusing to pay back their expenses or does he accept the Auditor General's recommendations?

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we said, it was the Senate that invited in the Auditor General to examine their expenses. He has tabled a report. As we have said all along, we expect that the senators will work with the Auditor General.

At the same time as the Auditor General found 30 senators who have some dilemmas with their expenses, the House has found that some 68 members of Parliament have problems with their expenses. All 68 of them happen to be NDP members of Parliament. The member who asked the question owes the taxpayers of her riding over \$27,000, and she is refusing to pay it back.

[Translation]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, come on. It is as though the Prime Minister were allowing a minister whose department was investigated by the Auditor General to dispute the recommendations and refuse to implement them. That does not make any sense and it would never be acceptable.

However, the Conservatives do not seem to have a problem with senators appointed by the Prime Minister unscrupulously charging Canadians for their personal travel.

Will the Prime Minister finally set up an independent oversight body—

The Speaker: Order. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a member who on August 22 submitted forms to the House of Commons suggesting that she was going to hire somebody to work out of an office in Ottawa. On September 22, the member confirmed again that this office would be in Ottawa, against the rules of the House, against the wishes of taxpayers. The member then funnelled money out of her constituency to an illegal office in Montreal, along with 67 other members of that party. They should do the right thing and pay back the \$2.7 million that they owe taxpayers.

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been some excellent questions, but the answers have been ridiculous. That is quite clear.

Members will recall that the Prime Minister promised to put an end to corruption and clean up the Senate. He clearly did not keep his promise. According to the Auditor General's report, the Senate is more than dysfunctional, and the problem of illegal expenses is widespread. Canadians are wondering what happened to the Conservatives' promises.

Why do the Conservatives no longer believe in change?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is curious coming from that member because we were both on a

panel not long ago and he was asked how he would pay back the \$170,000 he owed the taxpayers. The member said, "No no no. Well, first off, Peter, those figures, they go for the previous [person] in the office", mainly the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. The member admitted there was a debt and said that it was the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley's debt.

We know the New Democrats tried to rip taxpayers off by only paying back 10% of the debt. They should pay back the \$2.7 million they owe.

* * *

THE SENATE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Here is another fairytale, Mr. Speaker. Once upon a time the Conservatives came to Ottawa and promised so much before they broke all of those promises. They promised to stand up for everyday Canadians to end entitlements, and to fight against waste and corruption. They were going to clean up this place, and a big part of that was making changes to the Senate. Remember the triple-E Senate? That was then and this is now.

Now the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister is reduced to arguing that changing the Senate just is not possible. What has changed? Why did these Conservatives give up all that they stood for? Why have they failed—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that gentleman just called the words that I quoted "another fairytale". Unfortunately for him they are his words. These are the things that he said while he was throwing the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley under the bus. He admitted that there was \$189,000 debt, but it was not his, it was the previous occupant of the House leader's office. It was the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley's debt.

There is one taxpayer. You owe them \$2.7 million. Pay it back.

The Speaker: Order, please. I will once again have to remind the hon. parliamentary secretary to address his comments through the Chair and not directly at other members. Sometimes it leads to a bit of disorder, which we seem to be experiencing now.

The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

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CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have spent \$13 million already on a witch hunt against Canadian charities that disagree with them. Now the Canadian Bar Association is warning that loopholes in the Criminal Code could allow the Conservatives to target legitimate charities and accuse them of funding terrorists.

People are worried that the real target here are the charities that disagree with Conservative policies. Will the government fix the loophole instead of leaving the law open to abuse?

Oral Questions

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency is focused on ensuring that money is not flowing to terrorist organizations that seek to harm Canadians. This is part of our commitment to keep Canadians safe from those who wish to further the goals of the international jihadist movement.

In fact, the Prime Minister recently announced additional resources to further strengthen the CRA's ability to crack down on those who would seek to abuse the generosity of Canada's charitable sector. Unlike what the opposition would have us do, we will not sit on the sidelines; we will address the threat that is upon us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the minister just said is the opposite of the truth.

The Canadian Bar Association says that the section of the Criminal Code on terrorist financing is unclear. Charities that do legitimate work in affected areas could be targeted, and now the government wants to spend another \$10 million to investigate these charities. That borders on McCarthyism.

Will the Conservatives clarify the Criminal Code to ensure that no charities are unfairly targeted?

• (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the rules regarding charities and their activities are long standing and well known. When it comes to the issue of terrorist financing, I am amazed the opposition members would not want us to do the job before us. That job is to focus on ensuring that the money is not flowing to terrorist organizations that mean to do harm to Canadians.

Canada has been named by the international jihadist movement, and the movement remains a threat to Canadians and the safety of our communities. These additional monies will further strengthen our abilities to look at terrorist financing, and we will continue to address this.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today in this chamber, the Prime Minister apologized to the survivors of residential schools. Today, the Prime Minister was given the unique opportunity to take the first step toward reconciliation.

One of the TRC's key calls to action was for the Pope to apologize for the Catholic Church's role in this cultural genocide. Today, at the meeting with His Holiness, the Prime Minister did not ask him to apologize. Apparently, he merely referred to a letter from his Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, which does not even ask for an apology. Why?

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has written to the Vatican to draw its attention to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission. The Prime Minister met with the Pope today and drew attention to that letter as well.

It was our Prime Minister who made that historic apology on behalf of all Canadians in 2008. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that allowed the Indian residential school system to take place.

We will continue to move forward in a spirit of reconciliation to take concrete measures to benefit aboriginal Canadians and non-aboriginals alike.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to scientists, climate change is a huge threat to our planet and to the dignity of the people who often are already among the most disadvantaged and will suffer the worst consequences of this catastrophe.

What excuse did the Prime Minister give to the Holy Father for his government's failure to take action on the growing threat of climate change? Did he simply tell him that it is just crazy to bring in stricter regulations for the oil and gas sectors?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to talk about our record. Canada has one of the world's cleanest electricity supplies in the world, with nearly 80% emitting no greenhouse gases. We were the first major coal user to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation, as coal is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the entire world.

The fact is that emissions have gone down under our government, and per capita emissions remain at an historic low. We are doing this without the job-killing carbon tax.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has completed his photo op tour with a visit to Pope Francis, who took his pontifical name from St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of the environment.

In his latest photo op, Pope Francis did not look too impressed. Having met with the Prime Minister, who is the international laggard in chief on climate change, may explain the Pope's disgruntled appearance.

Could the minister tell us why Pope Francis looked so impressed, and did he call on the Prime Minister to be serious about climate change?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it rich coming from a Liberal member. When the Liberals were in government, they did absolutely nothing to address climate change.

Oral Questions

Our government has taken a sensible approach. We will continue to implement a responsible sector-by-sector regulatory approach that is aligned with our major economic competitors, like the United States, to ensure Canada's economic competitiveness is protected.

We have invested significantly to support initiatives that reduce emissions and improve air quality for Canadians, and we will be investing \$1 billion into transit annually. We plan to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, regulate the production of chemicals and nitrogen fertilizers and regulate emissions from natural—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need to know that the medications they are taking are safe, but the Minister of Health has completely dropped the ball on drug safety, with inadequate inspections and a complete unwillingness to actually enforce the rules.

In fact, the Conservatives are now allowing drug ingredients to enter Canada that come from factories overseas that have never been inspected. They are trusting the companies to inspect themselves.

Why are the Conservatives failing to ensure the safety of prescription drugs taken by Canadians?

• (1445)

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that is not true. Whenever there has been factual evidence in front of us, we have acted and we have ensured that any products or drugs are not allowed into Canada if there are any safety risks.

In terms of ingredients, Health Canada is now beginning to work further to strengthen the screening of drug ingredients.

Let us remember that, in terms of actual drug products that come into the market, all drugs are reviewed for sale to ensure safety. There are also drug safety reviews that are posted online proactively and that can be seen transparently. There are also drug safety inspection summaries posted online transparently.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in order to manufacture drugs the Canadian pharmaceutical industry imports substances from more than 2,000 foreign laboratories. Health Canada itself recognizes that it cannot inspect more than 10 laboratories a year. It therefore trusts the inspections carried out by the laboratories themselves.

How do we know whether these laboratories actually follow Health Canada rules? Will the minister fix the situation and stop playing with Canadians' safety?

[*English*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear that we will not tolerate any drug safety risks, and Health Canada does have a process in place to ensure that any importation of drug ingredients or drug products goes through a

process to ensure the safety and effectiveness of drugs sold. Where our inspectors are unable to be, we use inspectors such as the FDA.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have once again shown that they do not understand the issues that affect Canadians' health.

The Supreme Court unanimously confirmed today that medical marijuana can be consumed in different forms. Thus, the regulations imposed by the Conservatives violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Will the Conservatives stop playing political games and focus on Canadians' well-being when it comes to medical marijuana?

[*English*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, marijuana is not an approved drug or medicine in Canada. It is not approved by Health Canada to be used as a medicine or treatment.

What happened today is what happened 10 years ago. The judges have decided to displace Health Canada as the health regulator and decide that a drug is a medicine. That is unfortunate.

We will continue to remind Canadians that there are very serious health risks with marijuana, particularly for youth. The evidence for youth is irrefutable. That is clear. It can result in very serious mental health issues, like psychosis and schizophrenia.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today there was another unanimous loss for the Conservatives in the Supreme Court of Canada. The court was very clear. The regulations limiting medical marijuana use to smoking had nothing to do with the health and safety of patients.

Unfortunately, when it comes to medical marijuana, the Conservatives continually choose to play politics, rather than respect the health and safety of patients.

This judgment today will help many Canadians who should not have to take up smoking in order to get the medical benefits from doctor-prescribed marijuana. Will the Conservatives abide by the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to remind Canadians that there is a process. Medical treatments need to meet very strict Health Canada requirements so that patients can be assured that they are safe and effective. That means clinical trials, that means scientific evidence, that means safety reviews, and that means a regulatory process through Health Canada.

This is not what happened today. It is not what happened 10 years ago. Unfortunately, judges think they can make decisions where medical experts should be making the decisions.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know that they are safe within their communities. They want to know that their loved ones are protected.

The people of my community want to be able to enjoy life without fear of gang-related violence in their neighbourhoods, and they know that only our Conservative government can deliver on a solid, tough on crime agenda.

Can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness update the House on the situation on the ground in Surrey?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale for his efforts, and I can assure him that our government's priority is to make our communities safer.

• (1450)

[*English*]

I am pleased to confirm that the deployment of the first 20 members committed to Surrey is under way and that boots are already on the ground.

What is clear also is that, while our Conservative government has passed more than 30 new measures to crack down on crime, including new prison sentences for drive-by shooting, investing millions in crime prevention, the Liberals and the NDP oppose those measures every step of the way while we Conservatives are delivering.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SHIPPING

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to transporting oil, the Conservatives are still playing it by ear. The Canadian Coast Guard revealed that the new spill response plan for the St. Lawrence includes only the area from Quebec City to Anticosti Island, even though studies show that the environmental risk index for oil spills is very high all along the river, particularly between Valleyfield and Quebec City.

How can the government justify excluding the Montreal-Quebec City corridor from what it calls world-class safety?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously we are pursuing the most ambitious trade agenda in Canadian history. At the same time, we have to make sure we are ready for that increase in traffic.

After consultations with interested parties along the St. Lawrence with our budget 2015, our government expanded the pilot project area to include traffic along the river from Montreal to Anticosti Island.

If that opposite member had actually read the budget and voted in favour of it, he would have been on the same side of the issue as we now are.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister should at least talk with the other minister about what is really going on. On the one hand, the Coast Guard announced that only that part of the river from Anticosti Island to Quebec City is covered by the emergency response plan, but on the other, Transport Canada is telling us that the corridor really does go all the way to Montreal. Who is right? It is not clear.

When a spill happens, that is not the time to ask questions. The people and municipal elected officials need fast, effective intervention. What will the minister do to clear up this situation and protect people?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this seems to be a case where they cannot take yes for an answer, because clearly I have already just indicated that we have expanded the pilot project area to include the traffic on the river from Montreal to Anticosti Island.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the *Kathryn Spirit* represents another threat to the St. Lawrence.

After four winters moored to a makeshift wharf in Beauharnois, it continues to rust in Lac Saint-Louis, a drinking water reservoir for Beauharnois and the greater Montreal area. The superintendent responsible for the ship reports that there have been several acts of vandalism recently. If the ship were to catch fire, it would be catastrophic for the St. Lawrence ecosystem.

Will the Minister of Transport finally do something and have the *Kathryn Spirit* moved out of Lac Saint-Louis once and for all?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to Canadians' health and safety, that is our top priority, and indeed, vessel owners have to comply with stringent safety and environmental obligations before proceeding with towing operations.

It is for that reason that the *Kathryn Spirit* is under a departure prohibition from Transport Canada, and it will remain in place until the final inspection has been taken out and it confirms that all regulations are being complied with.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, heavy rains caused serious damage in the Eastern Townships on Tuesday, particularly in the municipalities of Coaticook and Compton. Dozens of people had to be evacuated when over 80 millimetres of rain fell in just a few hours. Many residents and business owners suffered serious damage. This represents a lot of money to these merchants and farmers.

What does the government plan to do to help our region, which has been affected by the recent flooding?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, our hearts always go out to communities affected by natural disasters. That is why our government strengthened the framework to help communities through an established mechanism. As members will recall, we did this for Lac-Mégantic. Of course, some factors must be in place to set that process in motion. I would remind my hon. colleague that we also went ahead with an investment in anticipation of natural disasters. Unfortunately, we could not count on our colleagues' support, but we will continue to be there for our communities.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the most predictable thing in Canadian politics. Someone says “Muslim” and a Conservative minister says “terrorist”. Yesterday, when asked about rising hate crimes against Muslims, the Minister of Public Safety felt obliged to talk about terrorists.

We also saw yesterday that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration assumes all Muslim women who wear the veil are terrorists, unless proven otherwise. This is simply unacceptable, so will he apologize to all Muslim Canadians?

• (1455)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course that is not what I said, and if the hon. member wishes to repeat those remarks outside of this chamber, we will have a reckoning with him on the facts of this matter.

The real question is this. Why will the Liberal Party not tell the truth about its sorry record on immigration over decades and its inability and unwillingness to do anything to face up to the real threat of terrorism in this day and age?

Liberals have done nothing to strengthen our measures to fight terrorism, to cancel passports, to take action against ISIL.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious from the minister's previous statement that he equates terrorism with niqabs. When only Muslims face a rise in hate crimes, it is obvious that the government's toxic anti-Muslim rhetoric is a part of the problem. As when he talks about terrorist plots in mosques, this is the only Prime Minister in my lifetime who sinks to attack a whole community for political gain. Will he at least apologize to Muslim Canadians?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are the most outrageous untruths I have yet to hear in this place. This is the only party in this Parliament that is taking action to protect Muslims and other Canadians from the threat of terrorism.

I would invite that member to apologize for decades of racism by his party under Mackenzie King, blocking South Asians from coming to this country, blocking East Asians from coming to this country, blocking Caribbeans from coming to this country.

There was also the injustice of backlogs under the Trudeau regime and the Chrétien era. It is that party that has been the racist party in this Parliament over decades.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a number of airlines have cancelled their contracts with the fuel supplier at the Montreal and Toronto airports.

The dismantling of this consortium is putting 300 good jobs in jeopardy. The union representing those 300 workers has filed a complaint of unfair labour practices. The board needs time to come to a decision before the consortium is dismantled.

Will the Conservatives facilitate an agreement between the parties in order to avoid a labour dispute?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member and will confer with the Minister of Labour on the matter with respect to airlines and regulation labour situations.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us try again, because we have hundreds of jobs at risk here.

Air Canada and other airlines have walked away from long-term contracts for aviation fuel services in Montreal and Toronto, resulting in the mass termination of more than 300 workers.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board is now looking into multiple complaints of unfair labour practices. Again, will the Conservatives work with the companies and the workers to find a resolution, and will they halt the shutdown until the board has finished its investigation?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I think the member knows, the Canada Industrial Relations Board is an independent body and will make its decision in due time.

Oral Questions

What we are doing at the labour program, though, with our mediators and facilitators, is continuing to work with both parties to make sure they come to a resolution of their issues. We know that, when parties work together, they come up with the best solutions for their workplaces, and we intend to help them get to a good solution.

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TAXATION

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition, who are planning to raise taxes, our Conservative government is providing direct benefits to help 100% of families make ends meet.

Could the Minister of State for Social Development please update the House on our plan for tax relief for Canadian families?

• (1500)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently I met Patricia. Patricia is a mom with three children and has a home business in Vaughan. She is a young entrepreneur. She is thrilled about our universal child care benefit expansion and increase, because it allows her to be able to stay home, look after her children, and run her business at the same time.

What does our support do? It helps every parent in Canada, regardless of what kind of job they have, whether they work from home or outside the home, whether they use licensed child care or unlicensed. We will continue to provide direct support to Canadian families.

[Translation]

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a parent who wants to sell the family business to his or her child is penalized by the Income Tax Act. Currently, if that person sold the business to a stranger, he could be entitled to a capital gains exemption of up to \$813,600. However, if he sold the business to his child, there would be no exemption.

At a time when the population is aging and we want to create jobs and promote economic growth, will the Conservative government support my Bill C-691 to correct this injustice?

[English]

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have eliminated the capital gains tax for fishers up to \$1 million, and I hope that the opposition will support this very important measure. Also, we have done the same for farmers.

We will take a look, as we always do, at the private member's bill and make a determination on its merits.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, USW Local 1005 president Gary Howe said, "Our members and our community don't trust U.S. Steel or this government to do what's best for workers and pensioners", and it is easy to see why. Workers, Stelco retirees, and the City of Hamilton are in court yet again to force the Conservatives to reveal the contents of the secret deal they made with U.S. Steel.

We all know that the Conservatives failed to stand up for the workers of Hamilton, but why are they still refusing to give them the details so that they can at least stand up for themselves?

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is against the law for the Government of Canada to release this information without the consent of the company. It is up to the company to make this information public. Our government is the only government in Canadian history to take a company to court in order to ensure that it meets its Investment Canada commitments.

A recent report by the Chamber of Commerce said that 13,000 new jobs will be created in Hamilton, driven primarily by the manufacturing sector, thanks to the great work of this Canadian government and this finance minister on the economy.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with one in five jobs in Canada dependent on exports, our government understands the importance of opening new markets. While the NDP and Liberals want to raise taxes and hurt jobs, we have launched the most ambitious pro-export plan in Canadian history.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade please advise the House as to what is next in Canada's pursuit of trade?

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me first start by thanking the hard-working member for Chatham-Kent—Essex.

Today the Minister of International Trade announced that he will lead a multi-sector trade mission to Israel, focused on supporting small and medium-sized businesses. Canada deeply values its close ties with Israel. As the Prime Minister highlighted during his state visit in 2014, Israel is an example to the world, a nation whose response to suffering has been to build an extraordinary society, a vibrant democracy, and an innovative, world-leading start-up nation. Our government is ambitious about what our countries can achieve together.

Business of the House

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first the government made the unilateral decision to allow supertankers to go through Montreal and Quebec City. Now the federalist parties have agreed to run the oil pipeline through Quebec, whether Quebec likes it or not. It is rather ironic that Quebec has to fight to have a say on what happens on its territory.

Will the Minister of the Environment live up to her title and finally stop imposing all these economic, social, and environmental risks on Quebecers, just to fatten up western oil companies?

• (1505)

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are embarking upon Canada's most ambitious trade agenda, and in doing so we want to ensure that we are able to get our goods to market and are able to receive goods from other markets as well.

That is the importance of the St. Lawrence River to us. It is to make sure that we can flow goods as far into the continent as possible. I am very proud of all the federal ports along the river, from Sept-Îles all the way to the Port of Montreal. They do great service for Canadians and are an important part of our chain.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have good news. Next week will be the last full week in the life of this government before the election on October 19, when the New Democrats will win a majority in the House.

[English]

This week we also saw shocking revelations about both Liberal and Conservative members of the Senate that have led to numerous criminal charges and many police investigations.

Since this is my second-to-last Thursday question, my question for my colleague, the government House leader, is this: what is the government going to do in its last complete week next week to clean up the Senate and what else is going to be on the agenda?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I saw that my friend the opposition House leader was out in the foyer of the House of Commons yesterday having a press conference at which he showcased the incredible productivity of the House of Commons during the 41st Parliament. Of course, these were actually Conservative initiatives he had on display, which were passed thanks to our diligent, hard-working, orderly, and productive approach to Parliament. However, I sincerely appreciate the New Democrats' efforts to associate themselves with the record of legislative achievement that our government has demonstrated.

Before getting to the business for the coming few days, I am sure that hon. members and Canadians will have noticed that we have been bringing forward a number of pieces of legislation in recent days, and we will continue to do so for the days to come.

These bills will give effect to important policy initiatives that the Conservative government believes are important for Canada's future. Together they form the beginning of a substantial four-year legislative agenda that our Conservative government will begin to tackle under the Prime Minister's leadership after being re-elected on October 19.

Thanks to the productive, hard-working, and orderly approach that I just spoke about, we have delivered real results on our legislative agenda. In fact, over 90% of the bills that were introduced by our Conservative government between the 2013 Speech from the Throne and the beginning of last month will become law before Parliament rises for the summer.

Now I will go on to the schedule for the coming days.

This afternoon we will continue debating Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, also known as Quanto's law, at third reading. I am optimistic that we can pass it later today so that the other place will have a chance to pass it this spring.

I also hope that we will have an opportunity to have some debate today on Bill S-2, the incorporation by reference in regulations bill.

[Translation]

Tomorrow, we will finish the report stage debate on Bill S-7, the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act. Early and forced marriages, honour-based violence and polygamy should not be tolerated on Canadian soil, but unfortunately the opposition disagree and are striving to rob Bill S-7 of its entire content.

On Monday, we will consider Bill C-59, the Economic Action Plan 2015 Act, No. 1, at third reading. This bill will reduce taxes, deliver benefits to every Canadian family, encourage savings with enhanced tax free savings accounts, lower the tax rates for small businesses, introduce the home accessibility tax credit, expand compassionate leave provisions—and the list goes on.

Tuesday will see the House debate Bill S-7 at third reading.

On Wednesday, we will take up third reading of Bill S-4, Digital Privacy Act, which will provide new protections for Canadians when they surf the web and shop online.

[English]

On Thursday I will give priority to any legislation to be considered at the report or third reading stages. On that list will be Bill S-2, the incorporation by reference bill, which would help keep our laws up to date in response to emerging scientific and technical recommendations.

Government Orders

Bill C-50, the citizen voting act, will also be considered once it has been reported back from the procedure and House affairs committee. This legislation would play an important role in accommodating the decision of the Ontario Superior Court should we not have the benefit of the Ontario Court of Appeal's decision in time for this year's election.

* * *

•(1510)

[Translation]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to lay upon the table a notice of ways and means motion to introduce an Act to implement the accord between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec for the joint management of petroleum resources in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I ask that an order of the day be designated for the consideration of the motion.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

JUSTICE FOR ANIMALS IN SERVICE ACT (QUANTO'S LAW)

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: I believe when we started statements the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West had just finished his remarks and we are now on to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I missed the member's earlier speech. If he could just go over some of the points again and condense his comments into a short one-minute response, that would be great.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I base my comments on some of the to and fro that has occurred in the House with regard to the bill. There was mention of why we need an increased penalty for cruelty and death to these animals. Quite frankly, it is similar to why we have increased penalties for those who act against police officers or other people doing their job, in the execution of their duties. We have those because of the implication of crimes and cruelty toward those people who represent us. They represent law and order in our society.

So it is with animals that are assisting their owners and trainers in the execution of their duties. The bill proposes to impose a greater penalty for crimes against them because of what they represent, which is law and order in our society.

We also heard why there are mandatory minimums and references were made to our neighbours to the south. If we examine why the U. S. is reducing, not doing away with its mandatory minimums, we would see that they are far greater, sometimes three, four and five times greater than our mandatory minimums and it is just bringing them down to where ours are. Why is that? It is because it just makes sense. Therefore, we as a government have made mandatory minimums at the minimum they should be.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue along the same vein, around the issue of mandatory minimum sentences. The Department of Justice has said that mandatory minimum sentences have not had a demonstrably deterrent effect. Therefore, I ask, what is the use of mandatory minimum sentences?

What they do is take away the discretion of our justice system to enact an appropriate sentence given the circumstances. What we have seen with the government is a really reckless introduction of mandatory minimum sentences for a whole range of crimes. It has taken away the discretion from judges and what we are seeing is an increased prison population, overcrowding and skyrocketing costs that are disproportionately borne by the provinces.

My question for the member is why does the bill really get tainted with the inclusion of mandatory minimum sentences? It really does undermine the overall intent of the bill.

•(1515)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, I tried to answer that, but apparently it is very difficult for some people to understand why we bring in mandatory minimum sentences. It is to send a message to those who would break the law. It is not reducing the discretion of judges.

For the edification of my friend across the way, we have had mandatory minimum sentences in our country for upwards of 15 years. Previous governments brought them in specifically to say that certain crimes, certain actions taken by individuals, require a minimum amount of sentencing. We call those mandatory because we want to impress upon those who would break the law that this is more serious than other crimes. In this case, we brought in some very minimal mandatory sentences.

When my friend says our government has done it, we have actually had mandatory minimum sentences for some time. As a former police officer, I can remember the judgment of several courts saying that the Criminal Code is a living document. It changes. Circumstances change. Societal norms and circumstances change.

It is unfortunate that some people are stuck in a rut somewhere thinking we should not continue along a path of that living document, showing that Canada as a society is changing and we must meet that. I believe our citizens want these mandatory minimum sentences.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-35, an act to amend the Criminal Code, pertaining to law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals. I thank the many colleagues who have had the opportunity to speak to this bill today.

Government Orders

I want to begin by saying that the New Democrats and, I am sure, all members in this House would condemn animal cruelty. Animals obviously are sentient creatures; they feel pain. It is unfortunate that the laws in this country are so archaic when it comes to animal cruelty. Our animal cruelty laws essentially date back to 1896 with a small amendment a few years ago. They essentially treat animals like property, and it is very difficult to get a conviction in this country for animal cruelty. Most thinking Canadians would say today that is really an anachronism because, again, everyone in this House would be opposed to any form of animal cruelty.

I will come back to animal cruelty in general, but I do want to speak very specifically to the bill at hand, Bill C-35. It is referring specifically to service animals and it would create a new offence, that of killing or injuring a service or law enforcement or military animal while the animal is on duty. It has a minimum sentence of six months if the animal is killed while a person is perpetrating the offence; and if sentences are imposed they would be served consecutively.

This bill has been called Quanto's law for a dog that was killed in the Edmonton Police Service in the line of duty. He was stabbed to death while trying to stop a suspect a couple of years ago in 2013. The bill, which my Conservative colleague has introduced, is trying to strengthen the penalties against those people who would attack law enforcement animals or any service animal.

We are in favour of toughening up animal cruelty legislation. We do have a concern about the mandatory minimum sentences. We think that is a problem. I have already spoken about that in my question for the member opposite, whereby judges really have their discretion removed by mandatory minimum sentences. My colleague had talked about the law evolving and being a living thing, and that is why judges reflect the law. It is because they are living judges who reflect the norms of the day and they interpret the law based on all of the circumstances at hand.

We are also concerned about consecutive sentencing for a similar reason, in that it would remove any discretion from the legislative system. The member opposite seemed not to hear the comment that I made, but I clarified for him that the justice department has said that it is not in favour of using mandatory minimum sentences as a deterrent. They do not think it is an effective deterrent, and that has certainly been the practice so far. We are generally in favour of the thrust of this bill.

● (1520)

I remember in Toronto a death that outraged everyone in our city. That was the death of a police horse named Brigadier in 2006. In that situation, the police horse was on duty and a person who had been stopped by the police was angry. He got in his car and intentionally drove it into Brigadier, almost killing him. The officer who had been riding him had to put him down. It was something that horrified our city. Torontonians would agree that this kind of practice, this willful and criminal act of attacking and killing a service animal is unacceptable and it needs to be dealt with.

I am very much in favour of the act itself and creating this offence. It would distinguish between someone who kills a service animal with intent and someone who might do it accidentally. That is an important distinction, because it is quite possible that through an innocent action a service animal could be killed, just as bystanders or

anyone could be killed through an innocent action. The bill is for someone who is held criminally responsible and we would support that.

I remember the outrage in Toronto at the death of the horse Brigadier. I think most Torontonians would support this kind of initiative, with the caveat that we do not think that having a mandatory minimum sentence or consecutive sentences is a really wise move. In a way, it diminishes the bill, which would otherwise have very enthusiastic support. The goal has enthusiastic support, but the bill has been weakened by the inclusion of these measures.

I do want to speak a bit more about the whole issue of animal cruelty. Views have changed about animals over the last more than 100 years. Our laws currently recognize animals as property, not as creatures capable of feeling pain.

Animals can suffer cruelty in a variety of ways. They can suffer cruelty from neglect. One of the things that first got me involved in thinking about animal cruelty legislation was a situation that occurred in my riding in Toronto in the neighbourhood of Parkdale. It was a hot summer day and some passersby noticed a dog that had been left in a car with the windows rolled up. It was evident that the animal was in serious distress. It was really upsetting for everybody around. Ultimately, the window was smashed open in order to rescue the dog. Unfortunately, over the course of a summer, somewhere in this country there are animals that suffer in similar situations and not all of them are rescued. Some animals have died through that kind of neglect.

We have seen other examples of neglect. We have seen companion animals that have been starved or that have suffered from dehydration or inadequate shelter. We live in a very cold country, yet animals are left outside when it is 30 degrees below zero. We have seen animals that are left with parasitic infections, infestations or that are ill or injured, and their owner failed to seek adequate medical care. These are all examples of neglect. I have seen pictures of animals whose nails have not been clipped or their hooves not trimmed, which causes a great deal of pain to the animal.

● (1525)

Then there are situations of absolute wilful cruelty to animals. There are some awful examples of that. There was a situation a couple of years ago where a group of huskies was no longer needed in the north. Tourists had taken these husky teams out on runs. A staff person was assigned to kill all of those beautiful husky dogs. I think the country was horrified by that. It was a terrible situation.

We have also heard about situations where animals have been wilfully burned, or cut or tortured in some way. Obviously people who would do that have a serious problem. It is very upsetting, and I do not know what law would stop that kind of cruelty in 100% of the cases.

Government Orders

Neglecting to update our animal cruelty laws for more than 100 years sends absolutely the wrong message. People have to really be aware that animal cruelty, whether it is neglect or intentional abuse, is wrong and that animals need to be treated with proper care and attentiveness.

I want to salute the work of organizations, like the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, and all the member humane societies across the country, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. They do terrific work in educating Canadians. Certainly, they have called for Canada's laws to be upgraded. They do an admirable job, for example, of trying to deal with puppy mills or getting animals adopted.

I also want to give a salute to the Moosonee Puppy Rescue, the group that takes dogs that are left to run wild, in not great conditions, up north. It tries to find them adoptive homes.

I also want to spend the last few minutes talking about the importance of updating all of our animal cruelty legislation. Back in 2011, I introduced Bill C-232, calling for an amendment to the Criminal Code to improve the treatment of animals.

● (1530)

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder if you could ask the hon. member to get back on track with regard to Bill C-35. I listened, for probably about the last five minutes, where she swayed off with regard to talking about the Criminal Code in general.

This is specific to Bill C-35 and service animals and police dogs, service animals in general.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dan Albas): The member for Kootenay—Columbia has brought up a point of relevance. We give all members of this place a significant amount of space where they can bring forward their views. I would ask the member to continue to speak to the bill.

The member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I trust that does not take away from the time I have been allotted to speak on the bill.

As I was saying, the bill that I have introduced goes further than the bill we are talking about today. For my friend who maybe missed the discussion earlier, that is in fact the relevance of my remarks. The bill we are debating is on a specific aspect of animal cruelty, namely the creation of a new offence for killing service animals. This is certainly a problem in part of a larger problem in the whole field of animal cruelty.

The point I was making, again for the benefit of the member who might not have picked up on everything I was saying, is that given our animal cruelty laws have not been updated in any comprehensive way since 1896, I was attempting, in my more comprehensive Bill C-232, to update the Criminal Code to recognize that animals were thinking, feeling beings and not just property. The bill would amend the Criminal Code, which would lead to a greater likelihood of conviction for animal cruelty offences more broadly against all animals. For the member's benefit, service animals, working animals, would be included in that approach.

There is a great scope of work that needs to be done on animal cruelty legislation. The whole area of puppy mills is certainly one where, to make a quick buck, animals are treated in absolutely terrible and neglectful conditions. Sadly, at the same time, we have puppy mills pulling in consumers who do not really know and are unsuspecting of the conditions that these puppies are coming from. Yet, at the same time, we have an epidemic of overpopulation of companion animals, such as dogs and cats.

I again salute organizations like the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, which has a finding Fido adoption program. I think it is tremendously helpful for people who would truly like to treat an animal with care, attention and love, but who may be unsuspecting victims of puppy mills.

Service animals that are on duty in our country, whether they be police, military or other service dogs, perform an invaluable service for Canadians. The training they receive is absolutely excellent. These are very impressive animals. When someone wilfully exhibits cruelty to these animals, wilfully kills these animals, it is important they be held to account. Those who commit these senseless crimes certainly need to face the judicial system and pay a serious penalty.

However, I would again caution including mandatory minimums and consecutive sentencing in the bill. It would take away the sentencing discretion from the courts. I do not think that is a good direction for the country. We have seen it in so many other bills and laws that have been created by the Conservative government and previous governments. It has been clearly demonstrated by the Department of Justice that mandatory minimums do not really deter crime. Therefore, it begs this question. Why include mandatory minimums and consecutive sentences if they have not proven to be a deterrent?

● (1535)

I see my time is almost up. I could continue at some length. The whole area of animal cruelty is something to which the House needs to devote further attention. It is unfortunate that our animal cruelty laws are not being updated in a comprehensive way. I think that is what most Canadians would like to see. However, the bill on its own is a step forward. Again, I want to thank my colleague for introducing it.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand the passion the member brings forth in her speech and that her party is opposed to mandatory minimums. However, I want to give her an example and get her reaction to it.

On February 24, 2006, the service horse Brigadier was killed. On January 15, 2007, the person responsible was found guilty and received a two year conditional sentence for dangerous operation of a vehicle causing bodily harm and failing to stop at the scene of an accident causing bodily harm. Obviously, the charge of bodily harm was with respect to the rider of the horse, not the horse, as there was never a charge laid in that respect. This is why we need Quanto's law. More succinctly, with respect to the death of the horse, there was no jail sentence given whatsoever. The severity of what was done on February 24, 2006, should be recognized. Could the member respond to that.

Government Orders

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my colleague was here during my speech, but I did speak about Brigadier and his death in my remarks. It was something that deeply shocked and offended people in the city of Toronto. They felt that what happened to that magnificent animal was such a horrible and senseless act. I think people felt that it was gut-wrenching for the officer who not only was injured, but then his horse had to be put down, a horse that had been his companion, his buddy while he had been working.

The member's question pertains to the severity of the penalty. The nub of the issue is that our animal cruelty laws date back to 1896 and really need to be updated. What has been put forward in Bill C-35 is certainly a step forward when it comes to this kind of cruelty and senseless act against a service animal. However, I would also draw the attention of the member to the companion animals right across the country that have faced wilful cruelty, death and neglect as, similarly, there are no consequences. It is extremely difficult to get a conviction under our existing animal cruelty laws.

Therefore, while this one bill does take a step forward, I would urge that we need a broader approach so we toughen up our animal cruelty laws throughout the whole process for all companion animals.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take anything away from the importance of service animals. In fact, I had the opportunity to comment on that earlier today.

We have now been debating Bill C-35 for a good number of hours. I understand that all members, from what I can tell, will be endorsing Bill C-35.

However, I would emphasize, that we are within 10 days of winding up the session and have an election just a few months away, yet we are forcing through the budget bill on time allocation. I attempted to have an emergency debate with respect to the thousands of people in Manitoba who have been displaced for a few years now, which is causing all sorts of issues with respect to culture preservation, death, and so forth. Although we are debating a bill that is an important issue, would the member provide some comments with respect to the way in which we are winding up the session, debating legislation or issues that would concern Canadians? Does the member have any concerns, for example, with the fact that very few members will be able to speak to the budget bill because of time allocation?

• (1540)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, the member makes a point about how we are spending our time in this House. For me, the issue of animal cruelty is an important one, and I am happy to participate in this debate, but I do understand his point.

Yesterday we voted on time allocation for the 100th time in this House. Frankly, it is an affront to democracy. It is more than three times the number of times any other government in the history of Canada has brought in time allocation or closure motions, whether it is on the budget and throwing everything into an omnibus budget bill and really trying to hide from Canadians what it is the government is doing, which is fundamentally an affront to democracy, or whether it is ramming Bill C-51 through this House, sadly, with the support of our Liberal colleagues.

It has been an affront every step of the way. I can only say that I think that a lot of Canadians are really hopeful that this fall there will be a wind of change in this country, because they feel that their democracy has been undermined by these time allocation motions and the refusal to engage in true democratic debate on a broad range of subjects that are of great importance to Canadians.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I point out that the NDP has an atrocious record when it comes to the issue of animal rights.

There is a big distinction between animal rights and animal welfare, but I would like to quote the MP for Nanaimo—Cowichan on October 27. The member was talking about this same bill when we were debating it back then. She supports legislation in which “animals would be considered people and not just property”.

On the same day, the member for Gatineau said animals should be treated with “the same protection that we afford to children and people with mental or physical disabilities”.

The NDP's radical animal rights agenda is being exposed. There are private member's bills. The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine's Bill C-592 has the entire sustainable use community and the medical research community up in arms. This particular bill would unintentionally criminalize all sorts of accepted, necessary, and traditional practices. Everything from food production to hunting, fishing and trapping, research using animals, sports and entertainment, and private ownership would be impacted by this particular bill.

I would like to ask the member why the NDP is embarking on such a radical animal rights agenda that would do so much damage to Canadian society?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting question. I challenge the member. For example, my bill, Bill C-232, is about toughening up our laws on animal cruelty for companion animals.

I ask the member if he is in favour of animal cruelty. Does he think that people who torture dogs and cats should be able to walk scot-free? Does he believe that people who torture service animals should be able to walk scot-free without any penalty? If he does, I think that is an affront to the sensibilities of most Canadians. I do not agree with that.

I think we need to take a law from 1896 into the 21st century. The bill we are debating today certainly takes one step. The point I have been trying to make today is that perhaps we need to look at our overall animal cruelty laws to make sure that we are treating all companion animals fairly and not subjecting them to cruelty and abuse. That just makes good sense. I do not know why the member would stand on the side of people who would want to torture dogs and cats.

Government Orders

• (1545)

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

What is fascinating are all the complaints I hear from opposition members about not having enough time to speak about a particular piece of legislation, and when they actually have the time to speak about legislation, they complain about not having enough time to speak about legislation. It is ironic.

I also want to point out that some young supporters of this piece of legislation from Beacon Christian School, and I will certainly not mention whether they are here, have come all the way from St. Catharines to Ottawa to make sure they give their endorsement and show support for this bill. I just want to make sure that we note that.

I am certainly proud to add my voice in support of Quanto's law. This is yet another piece of legislation our government has introduced with the goal of making Canadian communities safer. Every day, we ask women and men in uniform and service animals to risk their lives. They have an incredibly important role in keeping Canadians safe.

Regrettably, each year, some officers and service animals make the ultimate sacrifice in carrying out their duties. Only a few days ago, Constable Daniel Woodall gave his life in the service of his country and his community in Edmonton. Our deepest condolences go to his family and friends for their loss.

It is out of honour and respect for these individuals and animals that we continue to bring forward legislation like Quanto's law. The specific focus of this legislation is to deter persons from harming law enforcement and service animals and from assaulting law enforcement officers.

From the outset, there has been broad support in the House and in this country for this legislation. What concerns there may have been with regard to one aspect of this proposed legislation, a mandatory minimum penalty of six months imprisonment for the killing of a law enforcement animal that was assisting a law enforcement officer in carrying out his or her duties, have, I believe, been addressed in the course of the justice committee's deliberations and its study of this bill. It is our government's firm position that this legislation will withstand any charter scrutiny.

The most common type of law enforcement animal in use is the police dog. Police dogs are specifically trained to assist the police and other law enforcement personnel in their work, such as searching for drugs and explosives, searching for lost people, looking for crime scene evidence, and protecting their handlers. In the United States, anyone who kills a federal law enforcement animal could face fines and up to 10 years in prison. Similar statutes exist to protect police animals from malicious injury in almost every state in the U.S.

It is a sad truth that Quanto's law could have been named in honour of several other police dogs that have been killed in the line of duty. The Canadian Police Canine Association maintains a Valour Row on its website. Quanto's story is there and accounted for, as are accounts of how 10 other law enforcement dogs were killed in the line of duty between 1965 and Quanto's death in 2013.

Quanto's law recognizes and honours the important contribution police dogs such as Quanto make to law enforcement. However, the bill also acknowledges the very important role other service animals play.

Through the work of the justice committee, we have become more aware of the invaluable assistance service animals provide to persons with disabilities, and I am pleased that the bill recognizes the important role other service animals play. Service animals are trained to assist or perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. There are several different kinds of service dogs, including guide dogs, hearing dogs, mobility dogs, seizure alert and response dogs, psychiatric service dogs, and autism dogs.

I suspect that the service animals with which most people are familiar are the Seeing Eye dogs used by individuals who are blind or have very low vision. However, there are other types of service animals, such as psychiatric service dogs, that assist persons with other kinds of disabilities in their day-to-day activities that require the same type of recognition and protection from persons who would wilfully cause them harm.

Another important aspect of Quanto's law is its proposal on the sentencing of persons convicted of committing any type of assault on a law enforcement officer, whether it is common assault, assault causing bodily harm, assault with a weapon, or aggravated assault. It would require that a sentence imposed on the offender be served consecutively to any other sentence that might be imposed on the offender for the same event or series of events.

• (1550)

For example, there is a report of a break and enter in a dwelling. As the police arrive, a suspect is seen running away from the house. A police officer engages in a foot chase with the fleeing suspect. The officer quickly catches up to the suspect and tackles him, but the suspect pulls a knife and stabs the officer, wounding him and endangering his life. The officer is taken to the hospital and survives. Later, the offender is convicted of aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer pursuant to section 270.02 of the Criminal Code, in addition to being convicted of breaking and entering into a dwelling house, which is contrary to section 348.

In such a case, the amendment in Quanto's law would require that the sentence imposed for the aggravated assault be served consecutively to whatever sentence was imposed for the break and enter.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, every day we ask women and men in uniform and service animals to risk their lives for our safety. We have a duty to ensure that those who would harm them are deterred or punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Bill C-35 will be a fitting legacy for Quanto. It is my view that the spotlight that has been placed on the intentional killing or infliction of harm on law enforcement animals as well as service animals will not soon be forgotten. By enhancing the protection afforded to men and women in uniform and these working animals, we will also be making Canada a safer place for all.

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Let me conclude by stating what I believe to be a very important aspect of this legislation. I said at the beginning of my speech that all Canadians and almost everyone in the House supports this legislation. Regardless of the fact that we often spend a lot of time arguing with each other, from a government or opposition perspective, about legislation, regulation, or policies being debated here or at committee, one thing I do understand is that there are some issues that rise above partisanship.

I am thankful to all opposition members and parties for their support for this legislation. We are moving forward with something that is near and dear to most people across this country. It shows that we can rise above partisanship and actually find a piece of legislation on a goal that is honourable. When pain or death is inflicted on purpose on an animal, there is going to be legislation on the books that puts these individuals in conflict with our legislation, and they will serve time for the crime they have committed.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is connected, yet may seem a bit parenthetical to this. We are talking about the safety of law enforcement agencies and the work they have to do on our behalf. The recent tragic events in Edmonton have brought to mind again what it is that the law enforcement community does on our behalf each and every day.

There has been a move, in terms of safety, to allow and encourage the RCMP to carry recording devices on the front of their cars but also to carry them on their person, which has been instituted in some places. Some municipal forces have begun to do this. The reason it is a safety issue is that sometimes accusations are made or the procedures that follow in a criminal investigation bear only on testimony, testimony from a criminal, in some cases, or from someone who is suggested to be a criminal.

I am wondering if my friend has any comment on the expansion of that program, which has been done by some Canadians, to our national force to allow for greater protection of our men and women who serve in those police agencies.

• (1555)

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question. Actually, in terms of relevance, while it may not be the exact intent of this legislation to deal with that issue, some of my closest friends, whether they be RCMP officers or members of the Niagara Regional Police, have entered into these kinds of discussions not only for tracking events but for safety.

Perhaps the member may be suggesting that it would be an extension of the potential safety and security of both law enforcement officers and animals. Certainly it is something we should all consider, and I think communities across the country are considering this as we speak.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member. I just want to pick up on the idea of service animals and the important role they play in our society, which goes beyond just any local community and is worldwide. We have, in recognition, more and more people around the world who realize that there is a significant role, and it varies.

We can talk about Canada border control, we can talk about our RCMP and different forms of law agencies, and we can talk in terms of the valuable role service animals play in society for retiring

soldiers who have to go through PTSD. We talk about individuals who have the disability of being blind and are able to overcome the disability because of service dogs. Animals around the world play a very important role in our society.

As has been pointed out, it has been a long time since we have seen any tangible change in great detail in terms of the issue of animal cruelty. Many people would suggest that we should have a registry that would be applied for animal abuse and in particular for our pets. Would the parliamentary secretary have some comments in regard to what he would like to see ultimately brought in, going beyond this particular piece of legislation, which from what I understand, everyone is supporting?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would have to state that, in the close to 10 years that I have been here, we have only had one other private member's bill that dealt in any way, shape, or form with cruelty to animals and legislation in law that would pertain specifically to the treatment or unjust treatment by humans to animals. I do not disagree. I hope, from my perspective, that this is the start of what we can do as both the government and as a Parliament. Our legislation in terms of animal treatment and animal cruelty certainly needs to be updated. We have begun that process here.

However, for the member, if there is other legislation that should come forward in terms of the inhumane treatment of animals and the cruelty that is unjustly done to those animals, on this side of the House I will be the first one to stand up and support that. I think there is almost nothing worse than some of the treatment that is done to animals and the almost inevitable stopping of such an individual from having to face any type of penalty from our justice system. This is a great start, and there is more for us to do.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we resume debate, I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate, informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired:

Bill S-224, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day.

[*Translation*]

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, Post-Secondary Education; the hon. member for Ahuntsic, Public Safety.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

*Government Orders***JUSTICE FOR ANIMALS IN SERVICE ACT (QUANTO'S LAW)**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments from the member for St. Catharines.

I support this proposed legislation, and it would have been a good thing had all parties in the House stuck to discussing the legislation. However, the NDP with typical overreach, went overboard last October and again today and extended the discussion to a discussion about animal rights.

We strongly support the notion of animal welfare, but the concept of animal rights, which NDP members strongly implied they wanted to implement, has done so much damage to Canada and Canadian communities that I can barely describe it. We can look at what has happened to coastal Inuit communities because of the animal rights movements against the seal hunt, the effect on the fur trade, and just as important, the effect on medical research.

It is a fallacy that Canada does not have strong animal cruelty legislation. In 2008, Bill S-203 was introduced with the full support of the animal-use community. The bill passed with a vote of 189 to 71, with the support of all Conservatives and some Liberal MPs. I suspect the NDP voted against it.

Bill S-203 substantially increased the fines and penalties for animal cruelty under the Criminal Code from six months imprisonment and/or a \$2,000 fine, to five years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine and the prohibition of animal ownership.

Bill S-203 made a distinction between penalties for two categories of offences. One was for injuring animals intentionally or recklessly, and the second was for injuring animals by neglect. Most important, Bill S-203 did not contain language that would impede or prevent the type of traditional and accepted activities conducted by the sustainable animal-use community.

However, here we have an NDP member of Parliament, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, bringing in Bill C-592, an act to amend the Criminal Code on cruelty to animals. According to the sustainable-use community, which in this particular case is composed of hunting, trapping, and angling groups as well as medical research groups, this particular bill is the latest in a long line of legislative attempts to amend sections of the Criminal Code pertaining to animal cruelty.

There have been, between 1999 and 2014, some 18 bills introduced into Parliament. All of the bills but one, Bill S-203, have been voted on thus far and defeated for very important reasons. Each one of these bills contained wording that has been strongly opposed by a broad cross section of communities, including aboriginal communities, the outdoor community, agricultural producers, medical researchers, major colleges and universities, fairs and exhibitions, and even some religious groups.

This particular bill from the NDP MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine seeks to reintroduce the same wording that has caused all of the previous bills to be defeated. If passed, this particular bill could unintentionally criminalize all sorts of accepted, necessary, and traditional practices, the practices I talked about, which include food production, hunting, fishing, and most important, medical research.

The medical research community is highly sensitized to the wrong kind of animal rights legislation, like the NDP wants to introduce and talks about. Therefore, I would like to make the point most emphatically that there are a lot of people in this country who do not hunt, fish, or trap, but every one of us is affected by medical research, and medical research on animals is what has kept many of us alive. Again, a badly worded animal welfare, or animal cruelty, or animal rights piece of legislation would open the door to the criminalization of those kinds of activities.

When Bill C-35 was first debated back in October 2014, the New Democratic MP for Nanaimo—Cowichan said that she supports legislation in which "...animals would be considered people and not just property."

The MP for Gatineau, on the same day, said that animals should be treated with "...the same protection that we afford to children and people with mental or physical disabilities".

The implications of those statements are absolutely staggering, and this points out where the NDP members are actually coming from.

• (1600)

They support the kind of legislation that would criminalize many traditional, accepted animal uses in this country and, at the same time, would have a very serious effect on animal-based medical research. It is truly unfortunate that they are using this particular bill to expand their agenda, but now their agenda is in front of all Canadians, for Canadians to see and evaluate.

I would make the point that there are about four million people in this country who hunt and fish. I am chair of the Conservative hunting and angling caucus, and we are going to make sure that each and every one of them knows where the NDP is coming from.

I am not going to let the Liberals off either. Back in the late 1990s or early 2000s, the Liberals introduced Bill C-15B. I was working for a hunting organization at the time and had the honour to completely dissect Bill C-15B. That particular bill, similar to the bill by Mark Holland that was talked about earlier, which the member for Charlottetown said he was very sympathetic to—

• (1605)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Malpeque is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I do not want the member to have his facts wrong. It was not the Liberals. It was a private member's bill by that individual. I know I fought against that bill, so he should not call it a Liberal bill. It was a private member's bill.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I am not sure that was a point of order. Nevertheless, we will resume debate with the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, it was a government bill at the time. I fought that bill all the way along with the entire animal-use community in this country. Thankfully, in 2006, there was a change of government and Bill C-15B died on the order paper.

What Bill C-15B would have done was open up traditional animal uses to legislative interference by third-party groups, and that is why Bill S-203 was resoundingly passed in the House, primarily by Conservatives, and has the characteristic of criminalizing and penalizing egregious animal cruelty, something we all support. Egregious, deliberate animal cruelty must be condemned and criminalized, but at the same time, Canada's traditional, historic animal-use practices must be defended and, equally important, our medical research community, which depends so much on animal-based research, must be protected from harm so it can continue to do its important work for all of us.

That is why the Conservative hunting and angling caucus, of which I am chair, is making sure that the entire sustainable animal-use community in this country will know exactly where all the parties stand in terms of the use of animals.

I would like to express my complete support for Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, which I believe would contribute in a meaningful way to achieving our government's goal of making Canadian communities safer. This proposed reform supports the October 16, 2013, Speech from the Throne commitment to bring forward Quanto's law, to recognize that animals used in law enforcement are put at risk while assisting police in enforcing the law and protecting society. I was extremely pleased that the scope of the proposed legislation was expanded to also apply to other service animals, which also play an important role in making it possible for persons with disabilities to lead independent lives.

I am also very pleased to note that the bill proposes to enhance the punishment of persons who commit an assault on a police officer or certain other law enforcement officers. It would do so by requiring that a sentence imposed for any type of assault on a law enforcement officer, whether a common assault, an assault causing bodily harm, an assault with a weapon, or an aggravated assault, would be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on the offender arising out of the same event.

I would now like to walk through Bill C-35 and compare it with the existing general offence of cruelty animals in section 445 of the Criminal Code. The proposed section 445.01 would create a new hybrid Criminal Code offence that is distinct from the general offence of cruelty to animals in section 445 of the Criminal Code. The classifications of animals that this would apply to are:

...a law enforcement animal while it is aiding a law enforcement officer in carrying out that officer's duties, a military animal while it is aiding a member of the Canadian Forces in carrying out that member's duties or a service animal.

This legislation clearly defines the prohibited conduct captured by the new offence. It would be an offence under the proposed legislation to kill, maim, wound, poison, or injure one of those animals. The legislation clearly defines the necessary mental element that must exist at the time of the commission of the offence. An

offender convicted of the proposed offence would be subject to a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment when the offence is prosecuted on indictment and 18 months imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine when the offence is prosecuted on summary conviction. These are the same maximum penalties as in section 445 of the Criminal Code.

I ask all members to reflect on the importance of law enforcement animals and our ability as legislators to improve the protection afforded these working animals that contribute so much to making our communities safer for all of us.

• (1610)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech, but we also know some of the wording that he used in trying to blame the NDP for so much. I just wish that the current government would actually act as fast on other issues. Instead it chooses to discriminate against aboriginal children. We can see that in the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision that was just recently handed down on the government's retaliation on Cindy Blackstock.

I can tell members that one of my colleagues, Evelyne Smit, who has a service dog, has contacted me to say that she wants me to support this measure, but when we are looking at the quickness with which the government seemed to move on this particular issue, I just wish that the current government would move much more quickly when it comes to the well-being of children, especially aboriginal children.

My question is with regard to minimum sentencing. When we are putting this type of legislation forward, we also have to be mindful that there are ripple effects. The first ripple effect is that we would be removing the ability of judges to be able to make those decisions. The other aspect is the resources the government is actually putting in, because this measure would have a negative impact as well upon the correctional service. We need to ensure that there is room there. How much investment is the government making in that area?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, the party of bad ideas and toxic policies wallows forever in self-righteousness and is shocked when it is caught out by its own quotes, because it is so sure that it holds the moral high ground.

The quotes that I gave were right from the NDP. The member for Nanaimo—Cowichan wants animals to "...be considered people and not just property." That is a direct quote. The member for Gatineau said that animals should be treated with "...the same protection that we afford to children and people with mental and physical disabilities."

Some 25 groups wrote to MPs to condemn the NDP member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine's private member's bill, Bill C-592. They condemned it as having the potential to criminalize traditional animal uses in this country. Again, the NDP certainly does not have the moral high ground on this or anything else.

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Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member and I had a little dispute over a bill that was called the Mark Holland bill. On that we agree, in terms of our opposition to it.

However, I do think that the last member of the official opposition who spoke had a point that the member missed in his response. While I agree with the bill to a great extent, the problem of stacking consecutive sentences can be a problem. The United States is not doing that. It takes away authority from the judges to make decisions based upon their experience and based upon the circumstances. Does he not think that section of the bill goes too far?

I spoke on this bill earlier today. There is no question that service dogs, police dogs, and military dogs provide a duty and are immensely loyal to their trainers and to their partners who work with them and that we have to exercise penalties for those dogs that are injured or killed. However, in terms of the sentencing provision, does he really not think that this would complicate the correctional system even more than it already is?

• (1615)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, I do respect the community where the member comes from. I know he is a supporter of animal use in his constituency, where there is harvesting of marine resources and agriculture. As a former president of the National Farmers Union, he has a knowledge of agriculture that I respect.

In terms of the sentencing that would be provided under this particular bill, I think it is wholly appropriate. These animals sacrifice themselves for us, and there should be every extra effort to ensure that justice is done.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly honoured to stand in this place today and give my thoughts on Bill C-35, Quanto's law. I will be sharing my time with the member for Kootenay—Columbia.

As a former park warden and conservation officer, I will be giving my thoughts at the end of my speech on how the bill would have impacted me if I were still an officer today and how it would impact the colleagues and friends I have made over my years of service, as well as on what my intentions are when I stand in my place to pass the bill.

I am happy to speak in support of Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act, otherwise known as Quanto's law. The legislation proposes Criminal Code amendments that would create a new offence specifically prohibiting the injuring or killing of animals trained and being used to help law enforcement officers, persons with disabilities, or members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Persons convicted of such an offence could face up to five years of imprisonment, with a mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison if a law enforcement animal is killed while assisting a law enforcement officer in enforcing the law and the offence is prosecuted by way of indictment.

First and foremost, the legislation recognizes the special role that law enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals play in the lives of Canadians and offers them protection in law through the creation of specific offences that carry with them special sentencing measures.

Second, the legislation would add a provision in the Criminal Code that would enhance the penalty imposed on an individual who assaults a law enforcement officer, whether that assault is a common assault under subsection 270(1) of the Criminal Code, an assault causing bodily harm or with a weapon under section 270.01, or an aggravated assault under section 270.02.

As we know, generally, unless the court specifically states that a sentence is consecutive or concurrent to any outstanding sentence, the sentences must be served concurrently. Consecutive or cumulative terms of imprisonment are served one after the other, which means there is no discount.

Clause 2 of Bill C-35 would amend the Criminal Code to direct that a sentence imposed under subsection 270(1), section 270.01, or section 270.02 for an offence committed against a law enforcement officer would have to be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on the offender arising out of the same event.

Section 718 of the Criminal Code sets out in clear language the purpose of sentencing in the following words:

The fundamental purpose of sentencing is to contribute, along with crime prevention initiatives, to respect for the law and the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by imposing just sanctions that have one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) to denounce unlawful conduct;
- (b) to deter the offender and other persons from committing offences;
- (c) to separate offenders from society, where necessary;
- (d) to assist in rehabilitating offenders;
- (e) to provide reparations for harm done to victims or to the community; and
- (f) to promote a sense of responsibility in offenders, and acknowledgment of the harm done to victims and to the community.

Attacks on law enforcement officers put the lives and safety of the individual officers at risk, and we know the kinds of risks that law enforcement officers face. We saw it this week in Edmonton, where Officer Woodall lost his life in service to his community in the Edmonton Police Service. It is a police service that I volunteered for at the Clareview police station when I was going to the University of Alberta. I have good friends who are serving with the Edmonton Police Service today. They are friends I grew up with in my hometown of Lacombe, Alberta. My thoughts and prayers go to them and the entire Edmonton Police Service family.

Attacks on law enforcement officers also undermine the justice system more broadly. In recognition of this, in 2009 Parliament enacted section 718.02 of the Criminal Code, which provides that when a court imposes a sentence for an offence under subsection 270(1), section 270.01, or section 270.02, the court shall give primary consideration to the objectives of denunciation and deterrence of the conduct that forms the basis of the offence.

This is quite technical, but what it means is that the requirement for sentences imposed on persons who commit assaults on law enforcement officers to be served consecutively is consistent with the objective of denunciation and deterrence of such conduct.

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I am pleased to see that Bill C-35, which is being debated today, contains a similar provision. It provides that a sentence imposed on a person convicted of killing a law enforcement animal while it is aiding a law enforcement officer in carrying out that officer's duties shall be served consecutively to any other punishment imposed on the person for an offence arising out of the same event or series of events. What this means for every law enforcement officer, for every dog handler, and for everyone who rides a horse or uses a service animal is that when it comes to sentencing, the offence against the service animal would be treated in the same way as an offence committed against a colleague on the force.

Bill C-35 also sends a clear signal that an attack on any law enforcement animal, military animal, or service animal is a serious matter, and that denunciation and deterrence of such conduct deserve to be the primary considerations in sentencing in such cases.

• (1620)

Section 718.03 would require that a court impose a sentence for the new offence under proposed new subsection 445.01(1) to give primary consideration to the objectives of denunciation and deterrence of the conduct that forms the basis of the offence.

I would now like to say a few words about the mandatory minimum sentence of six months in prison in cases where a law enforcement animal is killed while assisting a law enforcement officer in enforcing the law and the offence is prosecuted by indictment. In the course of the second reading debate of Bill C-35, concerns were raised with regard to the constitutionality of the mandatory minimum penalty proposed in Bill C-35.

In a decision released on Tuesday, April 14, the Supreme Court of Canada considered the constitutionality of a mandatory minimum penalty imposed on persons convicted of possessing loaded prohibited firearms contrary to section 95(1) of the Criminal Code in *R. v. Nur* and *R. v. Charles*. The court found that the three-year minimum penalty for a first offence and five years for a subsequent offence violated the cruel and unusual provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, as the Minister of Justice correctly pointed out when he appeared before the justice committee on Monday, April 27, the court did not rule out mandatory minimum penalties as an option for the Criminal Code sanctions.

As the minister explained, Bill C-35's proposed mandatory minimum penalty is tailored to ensure that it would not result in a sentence that would be grossly disproportionate to the offence committed. The minister referenced several reasons to support this point. First, the criminal conduct directed at the law enforcement animal must occur while it is aiding a law enforcement officer in the execution of the officer's duties.

Second, the mandatory minimum would only apply when the Crown prosecutor has elected to proceed by way of indictment. As the minister pointed out, prosecutorial discretion is always exercised with a careful eye to proportionality, constitutionality, and totality, which are the same considerations used by a judge. Where the Crown elects to prosecute this offence as a summary conviction, the mandatory minimum penalty would not apply.

Finally, in terms of the length of the mandatory term of imprisonment, the six-month term of imprisonment is at the lower

end of the range. In this respect, it is worth noting that the court that sentenced Quanto's killer to a global sentence of 26 months for a series of offences made it quite clear that 18 of those 26 months were specifically for the killing of Quanto.

I would state that it appears to me that considerable care was taken in the drafting of this bill. Some serious gaps existed in our criminal law at the time, and we have been respectful of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I want to thank the Minister of Justice and my colleagues for what they have done.

I am going to talk a little bit about my personal experiences with this. I spent a number of years wearing a uniform in service to my province and to my country. I was a national park warden in Jasper National Park, where I had the opportunity to witness the great work that national park wardens do, not only in the backcountry search and rescue operations that they do.

I was a backcountry warden. I patrolled a large area of Jasper National Park called the Willow Creek district. I was the Willow Creek warden. My job was to patrol that area on horseback. I had three horses at a time with me. I would go in to the north boundary of Jasper National Park for 15 days at a time, come out for 6, and get showered and rejuvenated before I headed in again.

I was very pleased when this particular piece of legislation was brought forward because I thought to myself about it many times, whether I was riding the horses in the backcountry or in the front country, doing front country operations, because there are front country wardens who do similar things. They were great horses. I had this big thoroughbred named Moberly. He is probably in a green pasture in the sky right now because he was an old trooper at the time. My second horse was Yaeger. He was a mousy grey horse and one of the toughest horses I ever had the pleasure of working with. My third horse was Vim, a small chestnut quarter horse. These were my three horses that I was assigned. From time to time, I would take a different horse, Cowboy, to come out with me. He was a young horse that we were training.

During the time I was there, had something happened to me or had I been in a situation of duress, or had my horses been shot, say, by somebody who was poaching, while I was trying to execute my duties as a national park warden, the horses would not have been given any consideration. There would have been no crime committed by the perpetrator had the horses been injured or killed in the line of duty, serving me as a national park warden.

I was very clear in the committee and I asked questions of the experts who came. Although the bill does not specifically say that national park wardens are covered, it does say "peace officer". Section 18 of the Canada National Parks Act actually defines national park wardens as peace officers, so I want to be very clear to any court that might challenge this at some particular point in time that, when I stand in this place and vote for this bill, and as I am speaking about it today, I am speaking with the intention that every park warden, every conservation officer, and everybody who is in the natural resources field who uses a service animal in the aid of their duties should be considered covered by this legislation, as well as any law enforcement officers and military personnel who are prescribed in that particular way.

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●(1625)

That is my intent for this legislation. I am proud to support this piece of legislation. I am glad the government brought this legislation forward. I thank all my colleagues who are going to support it.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for sharing some interesting personal anecdotes.

I want to ask him to speak a little more about the mandatory minimum sentence included in the legislation. He did speak about it a bit.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder has said; "...too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long, and for no truly good law enforcement reason." He was talking about mandatory minimums.

Then Grover Norquist, Americans for Tax Reform, has said:

The biggest problem from the perspective of the taxpayer, however, is that mandatory minimum sentencing policies have proven prohibitively expensive....The benefits, if any, of mandatory minimum sentences do not justify this burden to taxpayers.

The Americans, who have a longer history of mandatory minimum sentences, have found that this criminalizes, for a longer period of time, a whole section of the population. Ultimately the benefits are not obvious. In fact, it is probably not a deterrent, which is what our justice department also said. It is not fiscally prudent to deal with what in many cases are social issues, and I am not saying in this case, that are deal with by the criminal justice system.

My question to the member opposite is, given the experience of the U.S., which is now turning away from mandatory minimum sentences, how can he justify that in this bill?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I remember, before I was elected to this House the first time in 2006, the outcry every time there was a Liberal leftie sentence handed down for serious offences, where law enforcement officers were killed or people were heinously killed or multiple people were killed, and the offender was to serve concurrent sentences. There was an outcry from the public. There was outcry from the victims. The victims were outraged at the lack of justice that appeared in some of these sentences.

We have changed that. One only has to take a look at cases, like where Travis Baumgartner will now be in jail for at least 42 years before he can even apply for parole for killing three of his colleagues, armoured car drivers; or Russell Williams, the disgraced Air Force officer who murdered two people, will be serving consecutive sentences and be in jail for a very long time.

I do not know why the hon. member wants to bring this up on this particular bill. It is not like a lot of service animals do get hurt, but they do get hurt and they do get killed. The provisions I spoke about in my speech say there are very specific conditions that have to be met. The prosecutor has discretion when he moves to indictment on a trial, an animal has to be killed.

This is very consistent with the agenda that the NDP has. Why would the NDP members question serving consecutive sentences at a

time like this? It makes no sense. Their position is completely hypocritical.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in no way do I want the member to take my question the wrong way.

I believe service animals, as an issue, are very important. The question I have for the member is in terms of overall priority. We will likely spend more time on debate on Bill C-35 than we will on Bill C-59, the budget implementation bill. That is with less than nine days of sitting left, at best, and an election around the corner.

Does the member personally have any issues in regard to spending more time on this bill than on the budget bill?

●(1630)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the member from the Liberal Party is advocating for time allocation so that we can move speedily along.

If he wants to move said motion, I would be happy to entertain it.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today on Bill C-35, commonly known as Quanto's law. I will begin my remarks today by acknowledging the broad support that Bill C-35, the justice for animals in service act has received not only in this House, but from many Canadians across our country.

Commonly referred to as Quanto's law, this bill is further evidence of the government's continued commitment to bringing forward criminal justice legislation that contributes to making Canadian communities safer. It should be noted that it was under this government in 2008 that existing penalties under the Criminal Code relating to offences for the mistreatment of animals were increased. An offence is committed under section 445 of the Criminal Code when someone wilfully or without lawful excuse kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures an animal other than cattle. The maximum sentence that may be imposed where this offence is prosecuted as an indictable offence is five years imprisonment. As well, paragraph 738(1)(a) of the Criminal Code authorizes the court to order the offender to pay the costs associated with training a new animal as restitution for the loss of the animal where the amount is ascertainable.

As many members will know, Quanto was an Edmonton police service dog that was fatally stabbed on October 7, 2013, while assisting police in apprehending a suspect. The person who killed Quanto was subsequently convicted under the existing section 445 of the Criminal Code for the wilful killing of a dog, along with other offences arising out of the same set of events on October 7, 2013. He was sentenced to a total of 26 months, 18 of which were specifically for the killing of Quanto.

The judge stated:

...[the] attack on this dog wasn't just an attack on a dog. It was an attack on your society and what is meaningful in our society.

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The tragic death of this law enforcement animal struck a chord with many Canadians. Law enforcement, legal and community groups have repeatedly called for greater recognition and protection of service animals. I am proud to say that Quanto's law fulfills a 2013 commitment in the Speech from the Throne to enact a law to recognize the daily tasks undertaken by animals used by police to assist them in enforcing the law and protecting society. Dogs like Quanto have been employed by Canadian law enforcement agencies for many years. Sadly, from time to time, some of these law enforcement animals have been intentionally injured or killed by criminals in the course of police operations.

The loss of such highly trained and motivated members of a law enforcement team not only has a direct operational impact on its ability to protect the community, it has significant financial implications for the affected police service. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has estimated that the cost to train a police dog and its handler as a team is in excess of \$60,000. Our government believes that the creation of a specific Criminal Code offence that includes a tailored sentencing regime, would contribute to the denunciation as well as deterrence, both general and specific, of such crimes in the future. Quanto's law proposes the creation of a new specific offence for the killing or injuring of a law enforcement animal, a service animal or a military animal. The objective of the amendment is to denounce and deter this conduct.

A law enforcement animal would be a dog or horse that has been trained to aid a law enforcement officer in carrying out the officer's law enforcement duties. A service animal would include an animal that has been trained to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. This would include, for example, guide dogs for persons who are blind or have reduced vision, and dogs trained to assist persons suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. A military animal would include an animal trained to aid a member of the Canadian Armed Forces in carrying out his or her duties.

● (1635)

I would like to say something more in respect of the second and third enhancements, the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment and the consecutive sentence. During second reading debate of Quanto's law, questions were raised about the constitutionality of the mandatory minimum penalty of six months imprisonment for the new offence of killing a law enforcement animal that was assisting an officer in carrying out his or her duties.

The government's position remains firm that the mandatory minimum penalty proposed in this legislation would not result in a grossly disproportionate sentence and would withstand charter scrutiny. If this provision is challenged, the government will vigorously defend its constitutionality. It is our position that the requirement that the sentence imposed on an offender convicted of the new offence of killing or injuring a law enforcement animal, a service animal or a military animal be served consecutively to any other sentence that might be imposed on the offender arising out of the same event or series of events, is also justifiable.

Our law recognizes that in certain circumstances the nature of an offence committed is so serious and distinct that it requires a consecutive sentence in order to properly denounce and deter such

conduct even though the offences might be committed as part of the same event or series of events. That is what Quanto's law does.

It also enhances the protection of law enforcement officers by adding section 270.03 to the Criminal Code. Going forward, the law will require that the sentence imposed on a person convicted of committing an assault, an assault causing bodily harm, an assault causing bodily harm with a weapon or an aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer be served consecutively to any other sentence that might be imposed arising out of the same event or series of events.

I just want to speak briefly about my own experiences as a member of the RCMP. A good friend of mine, whose name is on one of the markers just to the west of Centre Block, Michael Buday, was killed on March 19, 1985 as he went to apprehend Michael Eugene Oros near Atlin, British Columbia.

He was with his police service dog, Trooper. They had been taken along with the ERT team to apprehend Mr. Oros. Unfortunately Mike did not come home that day. Sadly, we could tell that Trooper missed his handler, missed his best friend, and they had to deal with Trooper in a different way than we would deal with any other type of animal. Trooper only knew one person and that was Mike, and he would go the nth end for Mike.

I remember with some humour putting on their arm guard myself as Trooper would run me down outside of a field. I made sure that I would put the arm guard out first, because if I did not, I was sure that the dog would grab on to some other part of my body that might hurt a little more.

We heard at committee several times from police service dog handlers that the dog is their best friend, and the dog will do what it is told to do with no hesitation, no question. It just does what it has to do. If that means running into a burning building, it will run in. It is just amazing what these dogs will do.

We heard from the member opposite just a few minutes ago with regard to police service animals. The horse, Brigadier, in Toronto, was run over by a vehicle in 2006. It shows that these police service animals will go to the nth end.

With that, I call on all members to stand up for the men, women and animals who risk their lives every day to keep Canadians safe, and support this landmark legislation.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from British Columbia for his speech.

He shared an interesting point of view since he was once an RCMP officer. I really liked the stories he told about the service animals he worked with. I am glad that he was able to protect all of his body parts at the right times.

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However, my question has to do with a more specific aspect of the bill. I imagine that many of my colleagues here know that minimum sentences are somewhat problematic. I heard my colleague ask the member for Toronto a question earlier. He made an interesting point about situations in which an animal was killed and the person who did it could not be sentenced.

However, in cases where the judge has the discretionary power to decide whether a prison sentence should be imposed, why does the member think that it is necessary for this bill to set out minimum sentences? I would like him to explain that further.

[*English*]

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, the best explanation I can provide for mandatory minimum sentences with regard to Quanto's law is that the police service animal has the dedication toward its handler to do what it is told to do, when it is told to do it and how it is told to do it. It questions nobody. It works toward the ultimate goal, which is to apprehend. It has no voice in the judicial system, and it never will have a voice in the judicial system.

Probably the best example I can provide for that member is with regard to Brigadier the horse that was killed in 2006. The person charged and convicted of the offences in December 2007 was convicted of causing bodily harm to a human, but there was absolutely no charge with regard to the death of the horse. In actuality, the horse was the main target in that incident, not the human being.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, as at the second reading stage, I learned a lot.

I want to ask the member if he could follow up a bit on the way he talks about animals not having a voice, saying that he did not expect that the justice system would ever allow a direct voice from animals, for obvious reasons.

Our colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette seemed to be extremely exercised by the idea that animals would have rights of any sort. Yet, the way my colleague speaks of animals suggests that we are in the universe of intrinsic interests, the kinds of interests that are worthy of generating rights that create duties for us to respect. The idea that we only protect animals for instrumental reasons, because the service animal is somehow instrumentally useful to public security, as the reason for a law like Quanto's law seems to me to be completely missing the mark of why this bill has been introduced.

Would my colleague comment on whether he believes that the intrinsic value of animals is part of why this bill needs to be supported?

• (1645)

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, Quanto's law is best described, for me personally, as an extension of the police officer's arm. The service animal, the dog, is instructed by the police officer or the handler to do what that specific animal is charged to do. It questions not who, why, what or when, it just does it. In that reality with regard to the criminal investigations and investigations that pertain to police service dogs and their handlers, the dog is an extension of the handler and the dog will just do what it is told to do.

I believe those are the extenuating circumstances with regard to Quanto's law and why we need to have this law in place to ensure the protection of those specific law enforcement animals.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the past four years, I have had an opportunity to debate a wide range of topics.

Although the matter before us today might seem like a strange blip on the list of government priorities, I do not wish to denigrate it, because it is indeed important. However, it does seem like a strange fixation, to go to the wall defending dogs. Nevertheless, Bill C-35 was even mentioned in the throne speech, which, in my view, is going a little too far.

I would remind everyone that last night, Canadians were treated to the 100th gag order to expedite the debate, because we are supposedly in such a hurry and so many bills need to be rammed through as soon as possible. At the end of the day, we are using our time in the House for time allocation motions and to debate Bill C-35. There is not enough time for the budget or for Bill C-51, but let us talk about animals.

Today we are discussing one aspect of animal rights, more specifically, one very precise category: animals that have been trained to work with law enforcement or military personnel, or those that assist people with a disability.

Under Bill C-35, anyone who physically harms such an animal with the clear intent to act in bad faith will be sentenced to a minimum of six months in prison. If a law enforcement animal is injured or killed in service, the sentence for that offence would be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on the offender.

I am very pleased to say that I intend to vote in favour of this bill, despite the reservations I have about its scope. Bill C-35 is a very kind initiative that no one can oppose, except maybe to say that this issue does not necessarily need to be debated by the entire federal legislative apparatus.

Out of respect for voters, I would therefore suggest that my colleagues quickly express their kindness and their love for animals, which is somewhat boring, so that Bill C-35 can be sent to the Senate as quickly as possible and we do not have to talk about it any more.

In case there is any doubt, I really love animals. I have never felt inclined to crush baby chicks or skin cats. I completely understand that police horses and guide dogs benefit society and that these animals represent a significant financial and emotional investment.

It should also be said that many of these animals often carry out heroic acts under some extraordinary circumstances. After all, there is a tradition of recognizing the courageous war-time efforts of these animals. A commemorative bas-relief adorns the Memorial Chamber located in the Peace Tower in the Centre Block. Dogs often show admirable courage and save lives.

Government Orders

In committee, all the witnesses supported this initiative, but they must have been a little surprised to be testifying in such a formal setting about a topic outside of the usual parliamentary discussions. Animal cruelty is quite frankly deplorable and shameful, and we must combat it.

Bill C-35 amends the Criminal Code and will not so much combat as punish, or avenge, these crimes, which is in keeping with the Conservatives' obsession with the illusory absolute justice that they seek everywhere but do not find. It is not easy to reinvent oneself.

Conservatives believe that judges are always too accommodating and too often forget their discretionary powers. They want to decide for the judges; justice is an election issue. Punishment must always be meted out in an absolute and grandiose manner.

Although I support this bill, I always have a hard time with minimum sentencing. I agree with creating an offence to ensure that offenders who abuse or murder a service animal are punished. However, I think that our judges are capable of determining the most appropriate sentence for those who commit these crimes.

If the judge feels that the criminal should be sent to prison, he can do so. However, once again, setting minimum sentences takes away the courts' discretion.

Bill C-35 also opens the door to a grim topic no one really wants to touch, which is legislating animal rights. Since the dawn of humanity, we have had a hard time accepting that the death of an animal—of any kind—can have an impact on our lives and our future as human beings.

Bill C-35 promotes a specific category of animal to a superior status protected by law. To be legally valid, this new category can only make sense if these animals are considered property with monetary value.

After all, they had to be trained by humans who were paid for their work and their expertise. Otherwise, we will fall into an endless debate on whether animals have souls, which would be extremely difficult, if not completely absurd.

• (1650)

We are legislators and esoteric considerations have no place in our debates.

Bill C-35 presents an interesting solution to the lack of a special category for abusing or murdering animals. Supporting this bill is a good thing, and that is why I will encourage all of my colleagues to support it so that it can move to the next stage.

[English]

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as usual, our colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent has given an incredibly reflective and indeed philosophical speech.

If we ever get to the point of finally considering comprehensive reform in animal protection, mostly in the Criminal Code because of federal jurisdiction, does she feel that one of the problems with legislation that has come to the House, and been resisted over the last decade or so, is lumping animals into one category? Working animals for example, animals that are fished and hunted and also companion animals, all of them tend to get lumped into the same

general language. Does she think that one of the ways forward might be to make some distinctions that would help unblock some of the ships passing in the night on this issue?

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to my colleague from Toronto—Danforth for his question. I have a lot of respect for his intelligence and for what he brings to the House of Commons. He is very well versed in law and has a lot to teach us.

I am sure this will end up heading in that direction. It is not always easy to legislate on this kind of issue and figure out exactly when to draw the line, but there is a way to keep going in that direction and see what can be done with changes to criminal law in that regard.

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague from Toronto—Danforth with great interest as he asked by other colleague the question.

Again, the reason animal rights legislation over the last decade has been so strongly resisted by millions of Canadians from the animal use community, from the medical research world, the hunters, the anglers, the trappers, and I represent a natural resource constituency, is the extreme damage that the animal rights agenda has done to communities. Lives, families and communities have been destroyed because of that kind of advocacy. One only needs to look at the Inuit sealing community.

It is extremely difficult to deal with legislation like this. The legislation that I looked at in a previous life, specifically Bill C-15B, opened the door to prosecution of legitimate animal use. I would also note, as I said in my earlier remark, we already have Bill S-203, which greatly increases the penalties for cruelty to animals. Why does my colleague opposite support the animal rights agenda?

• (1655)

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, that is a pretty strange question. I have a lot of respect for my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette. I know that he is a hunter, and that is something very important to him. However, he has a hard time understanding that people can love animals and that, as MPs or activists, they might want to defend the rights of animals.

Everyone gets that we want to fight animal cruelty. Nobody wants inhumane cruelty. Nobody wants to hurt animals and kill them for no reason. However, it can be done with respect, and people can continue to hunt respectfully. Canadian farmers have tremendous respect for the animals that enable them to make a living. They know how to treat their animals with respect and love. In fact, that is the best way for them to make their farms as prosperous as possible.

I have tremendous respect for all of the people who understand that there is a way to respect and love animals and fight cruelty towards those same animals.

Government Orders

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech very carefully. I think she raised some very interesting points, unlike the members across the aisle who spoke.

I would like to change the subject and ask a question about mandatory minimum penalties. The bill imposes mandatory six-month minimums in some situations. These sentences would have to be served in provincial facilities. Once again, the Conservatives are asking us to pass legislation that would generate costs for the provinces. Once again, they are passing the bill on to the provinces, without having negotiated an agreement with them.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on how this government has so often stuck the provinces with the bill and how it expects the provinces to magically come up with the money.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine for his question. That is one of the most important points, something that everyone needs to remember every time we introduce this kind of bill dealing with the criminal justice system. Basically, I have a problem with mandatory minimums because they take away the discretionary power of our courtrooms and courts of justice. It is really a problem. In a case like this one, it is even more problematic because we really get the impression that the Conservatives just want to prove that they are tough on crime, without really looking at the real consequences of this kind of measure for our communities and the provinces.

My colleague raised an excellent point: these people will be sent to provincial jails, and the provinces are not necessarily willing or able to receive a lot more people. This is not the first time we have seen the Conservatives introduce bills like this one, bills that amend the Criminal Code and that have serious repercussions on the provinces. They passed an omnibus bill at the beginning of their term, Bill C-10, which did exactly that, and which involved huge costs for all the provinces of this country, although the Conservatives dismissed that without a second thought.

I truly think that introducing mandatory minimum sentences in this bill is problematic, even though at the end of the day we all agree on the essence of the bill.

• (1700)

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a more personal question for my colleague. This bill is on a subject that touches people because it is about protecting our animals. I would like to know what her constituents are saying and what their thoughts are on animal cruelty. I would like her comments on that.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île. It is true, I have not really talked about where my constituents stand on this, the people of Louis-Saint-Laurent that I represent here. However, every time we asked them questions, either through mailings or in discussions, my constituents were always deeply affected by the subject. People are always horrified to see acts of cruelty committed against pets.

In the more specific case of the bill we are talking about today, many people were not necessarily aware of the fact that there was a legislative gap. In the case of the police horse that was killed, there is uncertainty, a grey area that does not allow us to impose a specific

sentence on the perpetrator of this crime to reflect the reality that it is not right to kill a police horse or dog. People understand that, but they do not necessarily realize that it is not covered by the law.

All that to say there was generally strong support for this. There is really an appetite for doing more to protect these innocent creatures. It is our responsibility to protect them.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would request that the vote be deferred until Monday at the end of government orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Accordingly the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 15, at the end of government orders.

* * *

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE IN REGULATIONS ACT

The House resumed from June 9 consideration of Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Resuming debate. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The question is on Motion No 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the vote be deferred to Monday, June 15, at the end of time provided for government orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Accordingly the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 15, at the conclusion of the time provided for government orders.

• (1705)

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that we see the clock as 5:30 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND OTHER FORMS OF DEMENTIA

The House resumed from May 27 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will only be a couple of minutes so I can put something on the record with regard to Alzheimer's being an illness. Members on all sides of the House can understand and appreciate the seriousness of the issue.

From my perspective, and I suspect from the perspective of many, particularly in the Liberal caucus, this is an issue for which we need to develop a national strategy, develop some ideas and witness some leadership from Ottawa in dealing with the issue of Alzheimer's. It is something for which many provinces do not have the types of resources necessary to deal with this very serious illness. As a health care critic in the past, I had the opportunity to work with different stakeholders who recognize the importance of the issue.

With those few words, I suspect there might be some movement to ultimately pass this bill.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 575 on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Dementia is an issue that affects a large number of Canadians, so it is important that we have ample opportunity to debate it in the House and ensure that it receives the attention it deserves. I know my colleague, the hon. member for Huron—Bruce, brought forward this motion with exactly that intention.

Motion No. 575 calls on the government to continue to take the necessary measures, while respecting provincial and territorial

Private Members' Business

jurisdiction, to prevent Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and to reduce the impact of dementia for those living with this disease, their families and caregivers. The things called for in this motion will ensure that is done.

Dementia is a complex public health challenge that affects thousands of families across Canada. In fact, three out of four Canadians know someone who is affected by dementia, and it is estimated that the number of Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, now estimated as high as 15%, will double by 2031.

Dementia is a health condition with important social implications. Its effects are wide-reaching and have a significant impact on those living with the condition, their families and caregivers. These can include the loss of independence, stigma and discrimination, as well as social isolation for those affected.

Dementia has no cure, and as the causes are not precisely known, we do not know whether it is preventable. Possible risk factors include physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, environmental influences, genetic factors and severe brain injury.

While the search for a cure continues, there is a need to develop innovative approaches and new models of care and support to improve the quality of life of those living with dementia today. A significant part of this includes addressing any stigma and incorrect assumptions about what it is like to have dementia or to care for someone who has dementia. Our government is making investments to help improve our understanding of dementia and the full scope of its impact. It is important to understand what dementia is and what it is not.

Dementia is often thought of as a disease affecting memory. While forgetfulness and the fear associated with suddenly not remembering people and places is certainly one aspect, it is important to realize that dementia is a neurological condition that affects the whole brain, and not just the memory. The ability to communicate, changes in mood and behaviour, and the capacity for judgment and reasoning are also affected by dementia. Over time, daily and routine tasks become difficult to perform.

By better understanding how dementia affects the lives of people from its early stages onward, as well as the potential risk factors, we can better support people affected by dementia in maintaining their independence and quality of life.

As symptoms progress, people with dementia generally require increased levels of care. With the increase of the number of people living with dementia, it is important for us to develop innovative solutions that can extend the independence of people living with dementia and improve their quality of life.

Most of the care and support provided to persons living with dementia takes place in the community and comes from informal sources, such as spouses, family and friends. Those who provide care for individuals living with neurological conditions such as dementia tend to provide more hours of support and are twice as likely to experience distress compared to other caregivers.

Private Members' Business

As dementia becomes more prevalent, it is increasingly important that caregivers also receive the support to respond to the levels of care they need to give and maintain their own well-being.

These social challenges of dementia are being recognized, and our government is investing in efforts to improve the quality of life of those living with dementia, their families and those who care for them.

• (1710)

The motion calls on the government to focus on education and awareness to reduce the stigma associated with dementia, including the implementation of the Dementia Friends Canada initiative.

I am pleased to see that our government has been moving quickly to support those who are working on this project. Just last week, on June 5, our Minister of Health announced the launch of Dementia Friends Canada in collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of Canada. This program is a national public engagement initiative to support the growing number of Canadians living with dementia. It will engage Canadians in understanding what it means to live with dementia and how to better support those affected in our communities.

Through an investment of more than \$2 million over two years, the government is supporting the Alzheimer Society of Canada in launching this initiative across the country.

An important aspect of Dementia Friends Canada is that we seek to engage workplaces and individuals in a dialogue that will help everyone understand what it means to have dementia and what kinds of steps can be taken to make Canada more dementia friendly. By becoming aware of the actions that can be taken, Canadians can help people affected by dementia feel connected and supported. Larger organizations, workplaces, and communities may find other innovative ways in which they can meet the needs of those affected by dementia. I am very impressed with this program.

The health minister also undertook to raise awareness of it just last night through an open house to encourage all parliamentarians to sign up as dementia friends, learn about what they can do, and commit to making a difference.

People with dementia need our support, kindness, patience, and understanding. Dementia Friends Canada encourages people to make communities and workplaces across Canada more welcoming to those living with dementia, their families, and their caregivers.

The goal is to reach one million Canadians participating in Dementia Friends Canada within the next two years. There is some precedent for success already. Dementia Friends Canada is in fact modelled after similar programs in Japan and the United Kingdom that have helped advance support for those living with dementia in those countries.

Dementia is about people. How we treat those living with dementia can make a difference. Simple, everyday actions can help people living with dementia feel supported, stay connected in their communities, and improve their overall quality of life. Initiatives such as Dementia Friends Canada represent a call to action to work together to make life better for the growing number of Canadians who are living with dementia.

While we are making inroads in addressing the challenges presented by dementia, we are by no means done yet. By working in partnership with other sectors, including the provinces and territories, workplaces, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, other countries, international organizations, and people living in communities across Canada, we will continue to advance our progress in addressing dementia.

I encourage all my colleagues to visit the Dementia Friends Canada website and register as dementia friends. It is through initiatives like these collective and individual actions that we can help to make a positive change today.

• (1715)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today and speak on Motion No. 575, which I think is one of the most important motions that has come before the House in some time. This motion would create a pan-Canadian strategy for dementia.

Alzheimer's and other dementia diseases are a major health care, social and economic issue with enormous negative consequences for seniors, the baby boom generation and younger Canadians who are either living with the disease or living with family members and perhaps working as their caregiver. Some 15% of those affected by this suite of diseases are younger people. The number of Canadians with dementia is expected to double by 2031.

To date, the government has only supported a national research strategy. As important as research is, we on this side of the House believe that there is not the same comprehensive approach in this motion that the bill introduced in the House by my hon. colleague from Nickel Belt would have obligated the government to pursue. That would have been a national strategy to broadly help patients, support caregivers, help the dementia workforce, provide a strategy for early diagnosis and prevention, and provide a continuum of care for people in their homes, the community and formal care.

We in the New Democratic Party believe that respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction is important in health care delivery and any other matter of provincial jurisdiction. We believe that the federal government needs to lead a pan-Canadian dementia strategy than can immediately help the millions of Canadians who are affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias, including the patients, families, caregivers, the dementia workforce and so on. We believe that this will have the additional benefit of freeing up scarce acute care beds in hospitals and helping caregivers who often must give up work to care for loved ones, as well. There is a very important economic and health care resource aspect to this motion.

Private Members' Business

I will not belabour this point, but it is important for Canadians to know that the Conservatives voted down a bill that would have required the Canadian government by law to implement a national dementia strategy just weeks ago. Instead, we are tabling a private member's bill by the Conservative member that would not obligate the government, because a motion is not obligatory on the government at all. We have replaced a New Democrat proposal that would have provided a mandatory legislative framework for a national dementia strategy, which was voted down by the Conservatives, with a discretionary motion that obligates the government to do nothing, only weeks ahead.

The member for Nickel Belt's bill, Bill C-356, would have gone much further than the present motion to guarantee Canadians that the federal government would finally take action to help their loved ones who are suffering from dementia. Despite being disappointed that the Conservatives rejected that opportunity to take decisive action, as the New Democrats' bill would have done, we will support this motion because we support all efforts to move on this important issue, even if they are not all that is needed.

The statistics and the real face of dementia are sobering. According to the benchmark *Rising Tide* study by the Alzheimer Society of Canada, the number of Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias now stands at 750,000 people and will double to 1.4 million by 2031. Canada's health care system is presently under-equipped to deal with that staggering number and the costs associated with it. The combined direct medical and indirect costs, including lost earnings, of dementia total some \$33 billion per year. By 2040, this figure is expected to skyrocket to an almost unbelievable \$293 billion per year.

Pressures on family caregivers, however, are mounting today. In 2011, family caregivers spent 444 million unpaid hours per year looking after someone with dementia, representing some \$11 billion in lost income and 227,000 lost full-time equivalent employees in the workforce. By 2040, they will be devoting a staggering 1.2 billion unpaid hours per year.

Lost in these numbers, perhaps, is the human face of this disease, the moms, the dads, the brothers, the sisters, the friends, the neighbours, the work colleagues, the grandfathers and the grandmothers who are involved in this disease.

● (1720)

While an elderly face typifies most people dealing with dementia, as I said, 15% of those people living with Alzheimer's or related dementia diseases are under 60, so it is important to note that dementia is not an issue that only affects people in their aging years.

The Canadian Medical Association estimates that patients who should be elsewhere occupy about 15% of the acute care hospital beds across Canada, one-third of them suffering from dementia, so we can see that not dealing with this disease in an appropriate national strategic sense is extremely expensive because it is causing us to spend unnecessary health dollars when we could be dealing with it in a better way.

The NDP history on this issue is well documented. At the 2012 NDP convention, delegates from across this country passed a resolution calling for a national dementia strategy. I want to pause

and say that this shows the health of our Canadian political party structure. I can speak particularly of the New Democratic Party, whose delegates come to a convention every two years and put forward ideas from their communities that then make their way into the New Democratic caucus and into this House. I want to congratulate the New Democratic delegates from across the country who played such an important and visionary role in this issue here today.

We have also found strong support, however, among labour members, among seniors, and in all aspects of civil society. Inevitably, the interest is personal. It comes from the direct knowledge or experience of someone living with the disease or burdened and often economically suffering from caring for a loved one with the disease. It comes from personal experience. I think that informs this issue in a very real and direct way.

Internationally, many countries are moving forward with their own national strategies. The Paris declaration in 2006 lists among the political priorities of the European Alzheimer movement the call for national governments to recognize Alzheimer's disease as a major public health challenge and develop national action programs.

It is interesting that this was in 2006. Here we are, nine years later. The current government was first elected in 2006, and nine years after international calls for a national dementia strategy, the government has yet to act.

We are here in the dying days of the 41st Parliament with a backbench motion coming forward that does not obligate the government to do anything. To me, that does not speak of a responsible governmental response on an extremely important medical issue facing our population at this time.

There was also a G8 summit on dementia in the United Kingdom in December of 2013. The call for a national dementia strategy was made there as well. It is clear that Canada today has no national plan and has been lagging behind our closest economic partners—the United States, the U.K., France, and Australia—all of whom have national dementia plans.

Here is what the New Democrats propose. We want Canada to develop a national dementia strategy with leadership from Ottawa. We want a national plan that can and must respect provincial and territorial health care jurisdictions. We want one plan to be developed, a plan that coordinates all of the provincial priorities and is tailored to meet the needs of each province or territory. We think that would be far better than 13 separate plans carried out in isolation from one another. We want a national dementia strategy that includes but goes beyond research to help those now living with the disease, their caregivers, and the dementia workforce.

Quoting some of the many people who work with this issue every day is the best way to close my remarks today.

Private Members' Business

The Canadian Association of Retired Persons said this about the NDP's Bill C-356:

[The NDP plan] calls for a national strategy that includes increasing funding for research into all aspects of dementia, promoting earlier diagnosis and intervention, strengthening the integration of primary, home, and community care, followed by enhancing skills and training of the dementia workforce and recognizing the needs and improving supports for caregivers, all of which CARP advocates for and supports.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has said that "83% of Canadians reported they believe Canada needs a national dementia plan."

The society stated:

As our population ages, Canadians will be at an increased risk of developing dementia or caring for someone with it.

"Everyone owns this disease."

It says:

The approach we're proposing has worked for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Mental Health Commission of Canada. It can work for dementia and ensure that we get the best return on investment and available resources.

● (1725)

The Canadian Medical Association, every single major group across the country that works with seniors, and the medical profession support the cause of a national dementia strategy. The New Democrats support that, and when we are the government in 2015, after October, that is exactly what our government will deliver for Canadians.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss private member Motion No. 575 on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. I would like to thank the member for Huron—Bruce for raising this very important issue in the House. I know there has been much debate on this important issue so far, so I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to how we can continue to help Canadians living with dementia.

As members have said previously, this is not a partisan issue. I hope that today's debate will be a way to bring us together so that Parliament can speak with one voice in calling for a continued focus on helping Canadians.

Motion No. 575 calls on the government to continue taking the necessary measures, while respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, to prevent Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and to reduce the impact of dementia on those living with this disease and on their families and caregivers.

One section of the motion focuses on dementia research in the areas of primary prevention, secondary prevention or treatment, and quality of life. I could not agree more that research plays a pivotal role in improving health outcomes for all Canadians, especially those suffering from dementia. I am proud to say that the government has made significant investments toward dementia research. As a result, Canada is considered a world leader in this area.

What is leading this focus on research is the Government of Canada's health research funding agency, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, otherwise known as CIHR. The government, through CIHR, has already been working to organize our efforts through a dementia research strategy. The strategy supports research on all aspects of the preventive, diagnostic, and treatment approaches

to Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. It consists of both an international and a national component.

Last fall, the Minister of Health announced the creation of the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging. This consortium is a key part of the strategy. It is our premier research hub for diseases associated with aging, including Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The CCNA brings together 20 research teams involving 340 top Canadian researchers in the field of neurodegenerative diseases that affect how the brain functions as it ages.

Research within the consortium is organized around three research themes: prevention, treatment, and quality of life. This approach is key. We are focused on research toward a cure but also on research that is working to improve the quality of life of Canadians today.

As part of this effort, the Minister of Health announced that the consortium is working with the Medical Research Council in the United Kingdom to share large amounts of health and health care data and research expertise. This will help us better understand, treat, and prevent dementia here at home using the latest international evidence. This data will also provide dementia researchers with useful health and lifestyle information from various settings, including nursing homes, which will help researchers address scientific questions over a broader range of dementia-related issues.

As we can see already, the CIHR dementia research strategy supports both domestic and international research on Alzheimer's disease and dementia through a variety of activities.

Today I would like to describe how the government will continue to maintain a strong focus on both domestic and international dementia research in the three vital areas of prevention, treatment, and quality of life.

First, the government is supporting research on prevention. This theme is focused on preventing or stopping the disease from developing. We know that Alzheimer's disease, like many chronic conditions, may develop as a result of complex interacting factors such as age, genetics, environment, lifestyle, and other existing medical conditions. If we can identify which of these risk factors can be changed, we may uncover ways to prevent or delay dementia from occurring.

Prevention is a vital theme for dementia research, and our government has funded many researchers in this area. To illustrate our commitment to this theme of prevention, the government is funding the work of Dr. Sandra Black, from the University of Toronto, and Dr. Vladimir Hachinski, from Western University. Their research is leading to a new approach to dementia treatment that is focused on early prevention based on addressing risk factors for vascular health, such as hypertension, diabetes, and smoking.

● (1730)

These results have been instrumental to the development of the first dementia screening protocol, which assesses stroke, dementia, and overall vascular health.

Private Members' Business

We are also proud of the fact that six research teams of the consortium will be focusing their work on prevention. For example, one team will study nutrition, lifestyle, and prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

The government, through CIHR, is also supporting research under the second vital area of dementia treatment, also known as secondary prevention. Secondary preventions are efforts to reduce symptoms and improve the quality of life until a cure is available. Right now there are some drug treatments that may temporarily relieve symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

While we are committed to researching a cure, these efforts will also help to support Canadians who need help now. For example, the government has funded Dr. Manuel Montero Odasso, of Western University, who studied walking speed and fluctuations as a predictor of dementia's progression. His team studied 150 seniors with mild cognitive impairment, a pre-dementia syndrome, in order to detect an early predictor of cognitive and mobility decline, and progression to dementia.

This research team discovered that walking speed changes were more noticeable in pre-dementia individuals with the worst signs of cognitive decline. These changes may serve as an effective way to predict the onset of dementia, and may eventually help diagnose and treat dementia earlier.

We are also very content to see that seven consortium teams will focus their research on treatment. For example, one of these teams will be looking at cognitive therapy and its effect on the brain.

On the international front, Canada continues to support research on treatment. A good example of this is through the international Network of Centres of Excellence in Neurodegeneration. Under this network, we have partnered with five other countries to develop common standards and efficient methods to validate findings in studies. This partnership resulted in seven international grants being funded by CIHR for a total of \$1.2 million.

Our government plans to continue its work with this international network to better understand how the disease works and provide new avenues for therapeutic development.

Last, I would like to describe the work related to research on the quality of life of people living with dementia and their caregivers. As we all know, as dementia progresses, Canadians have to live with enormous challenges and changes to their everyday way of life. Research in this area is critically important. If we learn how to adapt to these changing abilities, a person will be more likely to have a high quality of life, even with a dementia diagnosis.

The topic of quality of life is essential for improving the lives of people affected by dementia. This is why, in 2014, our government collaborated with the Alzheimer Society of Canada and Parkinson Society Canada to host a high-level meeting on the topic of life with dementia. This event brought together experts and people with first-hand experience to answer questions and share insights on how to move beyond the diagnosis and improve the quality of life of people with dementia and their caregivers.

This event provided the critical perspective of Canadians living with the issue, and has helped to inform research as well as the

dementia friends Canada program that our Minister of Health has been working to bring in.

Working under this motion, I know that we will continue to engage with Canadians to ensure our efforts are focused in the right direction. Before I close, I must address what is really at the heart of today's motion. My colleague from Huron—Bruce has done an excellent job of respecting provincial jurisdiction while at the same time calling for real progress to be made on the development of a pan-Canadian strategy for dementia. I fully support this call, and I am pleased that our government will be working to implement exactly that.

I know that all members will have their own ideas about the best way to accomplish the strategy, but the key part for me is that we get this done for Canadians. That is why I was pleased to see that economic action plan 2015 clearly commits to working with the provinces to develop a national plan.

Supporting today's motion is yet another way that we can ensure this important work is done and that we can build on the good progress that our Minister of Health has already been able to secure with the provinces.

I would like to again thank the member for Huron—Bruce for bringing forward today's motion. I hope all members can come together to support this and have Parliament speak with one voice about the importance of further actions on dementia.

● (1735)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Resuming debate.

Accordingly, I invite the hon. member for Huron—Bruce for his right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House again and talk about Motion No. M-575. I would like to thank members from all sides of the House who have spoken to the motion and to what its intents are.

There was a comment in one of the member's speeches about the power of emotion. If we remember just a few months ago there was a motion in the House on thalidomide and we were able to take action collectively as a Parliament and deliver real results for the victims of that terrible issue. There are lots of cases where motions can move and I think this is one of them.

Another example I would like to mention is something that happened last night. We had the Dementia Friends Canada event here to kick off awareness of this campaign to reach one million friends. I checked the website today and there are about 2,400, so there are a few more to go, but that will be our jobs as parliamentarians this summer to help get the word out about what we are trying to do and what the Alzheimer's Society is trying to do as well.

Adjournment Proceedings

The motion obviously focuses on a number of different issues, a number of different objectives, but the main thing, to boil this down for people at home is that this government is on the world stage working together to try to find a solution to this terrible illness. We are there globally.

At the national level, since 2006, there has been over \$1 billion invested in neuroscience. That is an important number. Since day one of this government, we have recognized this huge issue that is facing this country in specific demographics and we have made those investments. We are there locally and on the world stage for research. In Canada we have invested in research with Dementia Friends Canada and other programs like that and are working to break down the stigma. We are working to help other Canadians understand the issues. We are helping not only the person with the diagnosis but the immediate loved ones, extended families, neighbours and friends, possibly co-workers, understand what this disease is and how all the different dementias affect individuals differently.

We are there on the awareness piece as well as on surveillance. In order to really understand if we are making improvements and further understand how we are changing the issue, we need to be able to properly take the information and have a proper surveillance program. That is what we are doing. We are respecting provincial jurisdictions, which is vitally important.

The motion takes a number of different steps. I want to thank all members for taking the time to listen and read about the motion. The motion will likely be one of the last pieces of business we deal with next week before our four-year mandate comes to a close and hopefully for many more years.

Since 2006, the government has taken tremendous actions on the file of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. We are at the table. We are going to continue to push forward. Once again, on behalf of all members of Parliament, our hearts go out to Canadians who have been affected by this terrible disease.

The numbers that are important that Canadians need to remember are: there are 750,000 Canadians who currently have it and nearly 1.4 million Canadians who will have it in a few years. There are over 40 million people worldwide who have the disease. It costs the Canadian economy. It costs Canadians in general \$33 billion a year in direct and indirect costs. If this disease is not dealt with, it is going to cost Canadians over \$200 billion in the next few decades. We need to take action. We have taken action. We need to continue to push the bar forward. We look forward to the vote next week.

• (1740)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 17, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, decades of poor public policy in the post-secondary sector has created a generation of debt slaves and perpetuated inequality in our society. The Conservative approach to funding higher education has created a lost generation of students with high tuition fees, saddled with lots of debt, unable to buy a house, unpaid internships and a bad job market. What a combination. Skyrocketing tuition fees and loan-based financial assistance have pushed student debt to historic levels. Education costs continue to grow faster than inflation. The economy is a lot weaker than it was in the early 2000s. The capacity of graduates to repay their loans has quickly diminished.

When our finance minister was in university, the average price of tuition was about \$500, and adjusted for inflation that would be about \$3,000 today. In stark contrast, the average Canadian student pays over \$6,000 dollars per year now, and students in Ontario pay \$7,500 a year. This skyrocketing cost of tuition has outpaced inflation by a wide margin, more than double.

By September 2010, the total amount of student loans owed to the government reached \$15 billion, the legislated ceiling set by the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act. This figure does not even include provincial or personal loans, lines of credit, or education-related credit card debt. The government altered the definition of "student loan" to exclude over \$1.5 billion in federal student loan debt, and still it surpassed that \$15 billion limit. Therefore, in response, our government amended the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act again in order to increase that limit to \$19 billion, while at the same time dramatically reduced parliamentary oversight of the program.

Adjournment Proceedings

This past year almost a half a million students were forced to borrow funds in order to finance their education, resulting in student debt increasing by \$1 million per day. The Treasury Board's proposal to write off nearly \$300 million in unrecoverable student loans brings the total spent on writing off unpaid student debt to more than \$1 billion in only four years. Clearly, financing higher education through tuition fees and debt is unsustainable and irresponsible.

In the past 15 years, tuition fees for students in Thunder Bay—Superior North and across Canada have grown to become the single largest expense for students. The dramatic tuition fee increases during this period were the direct result of cuts to public funding for post-secondary education, and to a somewhat lesser extent by provincial governments as well.

Public funding currently accounts for an average of approximately 57% of university and college operating funding, down from 80% just two decades ago. During that same period, tuition fees have grown from 14% of operating funding to over 35%, more than double. This constitutes a huge shift in Canada's post-secondary education system away from a publicly funded model toward a privatized user fee system favouring the rich. Rapidly increasing tuition fees have caused post-secondary education to become unaffordable for many low-income Canadians.

The Conservative government is writing off nearly \$300 million in unrecoverable student debts this year, but, according to the IMF, it has also subsidized big oil to the tune of \$34 billion this year. Ottawa must change its approach. The Conservatives must change.

When will the government learn that investing in young Canadians, the future of our country, is a better investment than the corporate welfare cheques the Conservatives are handing out to their friends to big oil, gas and coal?

• (1745)

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member that we understand, as a government, the importance of investing in our young people. That is why we are doing precisely that.

I invite the hon. member to take a look at the numbers. I think he will find that the evidence is clear and overwhelmingly supports the actions our government is taking.

Although I hope the hon. member is aware of the difference between federal and provincial jurisdiction, if he had done his research, he would understand that tuition rates are in fact a provincial issue. If he would like to discuss high tuition rates and bigger taxes, I suggest he speak to his premier, Kathleen Wynne.

I am happy to say that Canada's economic action plan is working for students.

Consider the following. Economic action plan 2015 proposes to provide \$184 million over four years, starting in 2016, to expand eligibility for Canada student grants to students in short duration programs. The Prime Minister made that announcement in my riding of North Vancouver. Expanded eligibility for the low- and middle-income Canada student grant is expected to help approximately 42,000 additional students per year.

Economic action plan 2015 proposes to provide \$119 million over four years, starting in 2016, to reduce the expected parental contribution under the Canada student loans program needs assessment process, making it easier for students to get those loans. The reduction of the parental contribution in the Canada student loans needs assessment is expected to provide increased support to approximately 92,000 students.

Economic action plan 2015 proposes to provide \$116 million over four years, starting in 2016, to eliminate in-study student income from the Canada student loans program needs assessment process. We were asked by students to do this, and we are now doing it. The elimination of the in-study income from the needs assessment is expected to increase loan amounts for an estimated 87,000 students.

In case the member opposite was not listening, let me repeat those three important points. First, expanded eligibility for the low- and middle-income Canada student grants is expected to help approximately 42,000 additional students per year. Second, the reduction of the parental contribution in the Canada student loans needs assessment is expected to provide increased support for approximately 92,000 students. Third, the elimination of in-study income from the needs assessment is expected to increase loan amounts for an estimated 87,000 students.

No government has done more than ours to help students. At the same time, we have shown that we can do this in a fiscally responsible manner. We have balanced the federal budget, and we want to help students balance theirs. That means staying true to our commitment to keeping taxes low and supporting families, as we have done year after year since taking office.

Now that our fiscal house is in order, our new challenge is to ensure that the gains we are seeing are truly long-term and sustainable. We need to stay the course to protect the economic interests of Canadians and the security of Canada. Through a series of specifically targeted measures, we are laying the underpinnings of a strong and robust economy.

In case the member was wondering, we are not just helping students short term, either. We will help students stay on top of labour market information to find jobs that are aligned with their particular skills and abilities. We will spend \$14 million a year on a new survey that will provide accurate information on demand and wages by occupation and region.

The worst thing we could do for students is follow the NDP/Liberal plan to increase taxes. Our low-tax plan is working and creates jobs for students through trades, training, and tax cuts.

Adjournment Proceedings

Here is our record. We ended the Liberal practice of taxing scholarships and replaced it with a tax credit for textbooks. Student loan debt has declined by 10% in real terms. We created apprenticeship grants and loans, and over 500,000 have been given out.

Those are just some of the things we have done for students. There are many more I could list, but I see that my time is up.

● (1750)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, Roman Jakubowski, the student president at Lakehead University, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and the Green Party actually believe that the feds do have a role in reducing student debt in Canada.

Statistics Canada reports that students from low-income families were less than half as likely to go to university than those from high-income families. Students with little or no debt were more than twice as likely to finish their degrees than students with high levels of debt. The completion rate for students with under \$1,000 of debt was 71%, while the completion rate for those with over \$10,000 in debt was 34%.

A post-secondary education has never been more necessary in Canada, and it has never been less accessible. Canadian youth are now the most indebted generation in the country's history. This debt will have far-reaching implications for Canada's economy and socio-economic equality.

When will these Conservatives start funding higher education for students across Canada and in Thunder Bay—Superior North and make Canada fairer and more effective with a more dynamic society and economy?

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Mr. Speaker, we are, in fact, funding higher education for students, to the tune of \$10 billion every year with our transfers to the provinces and territories. Again, I invite the hon. member to review the facts and start getting onside to help students, as we have been doing.

The expanded eligibility for low- and middle-income Canada student grants is expected to help over 42,000 students. The reduction of the parental contribution in Canada student loans is expected to help 92,000 students. The elimination of the in-study income from the needs assessment is expected to increase loans amounts for an estimated 87,000 students. The worst thing we could do for students, again, as I mentioned, is to follow the Liberal and NDP plan to increase taxes on Canadians, which would kill jobs and hurt students' ability to find jobs once they graduate.

Here is our record. We ended the Liberal practice of taxing scholarships and replaced it with a tax credit for textbooks, and the student loan debt has declined by 10% in real terms. We created apprenticeship grants and loans and over 500,000 have been given out; trade, training and tax cuts; and more jobs for students.

Let me reassure the hon. member that helping students remains the top priority of our government, but it is clear that our record is on one issue. When will the member opposite get on board and help support our initiatives?

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today to the question that I asked the Minister of Public Safety about the actions of Alpine Canada and the RCMP in the Bertrand Charest case.

I will briefly outline the case. Mr. Charest coached Alpine Canada's women's development team between 1996 and 1998. The incidents occurred at least 15 years ago. Apparently, Alpine Canada was informed of allegations of sexual misconduct at the time. Alpine Canada suspended Mr. Charest, who subsequently resigned.

We have learned that Alpine Canada then transferred the file to the RCMP. The organization is said to have informed the RCMP of the allegations and even collaborated with the RCMP. However, Alpine Canada says that it is not aware of the results of the RCMP investigation. We have also learned that, at the time, Alpine Canada allegedly asked parents not to go to the police, to let the organization handle it and, above all, to think of the sponsors. Can you believe it. That is some kind of protection for the young women they were responsible for.

One has to wonder whether Alpine Canada took any action after firing Mr. Charest. Did it take measures to ensure that he could no longer coach? All I have to say is that I do not think that Alpine Canada took any such measures, because about 15 years later, one of the victims saw him working as a coach at a ski hill.

Of course, that victim must have been horrified to see that he was still a coach. She pressed criminal charges against him for an assault that occurred 15 years ago. These incidents occurred in Mont-Tremblant, Europe and Calgary and there were a number of victims. In March 2015, the first charge was laid against Mr. Charest. For what? For the sexual assault of a minor. On May 22, we learned that there had been another victim. There were at least 12 victims. In 2015, 12 victims suddenly came forward. Mr. Charest is facing 57 charges of sexual assault involving minors between the ages of 12 and 18 who were in his care.

Here is the big question: What happened when Alpine Canada gave Mr. Charest's name to the RCMP? Did the RCMP question the victims? Was there an investigation? If there was an investigation, why were there no charges 15 years ago but there are charges now? Fifty-seven charges is not nothing.

In order to shed light on this matter, I asked the Minister of Public Safety to order an administrative investigation of Alpine Canada to find out what happened, and also to order an investigation of the RCMP, to find out why no charges were laid 15 years ago and why it started laying charges in March 2015 against this man, who was still a coach in a ski organization. He was still coaching young kids. I look forward to my colleague's response to this.

● (1800)

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Ahuntsic for her question.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

Crimes committed against children or other vulnerable populations are some of the most deplorable crimes that one can commit.

The question from the hon. member for Ahuntsic is specific to a case that is currently before the courts. I have been advised that the RCMP in British Columbia continues to support various police services of jurisdiction in Canada where the allegations took place as they continue their investigation. It would be inappropriate for me to comment further until such time as this matter reaches its conclusion in the justice system.

I can, however, speak to some of the many ways that the RCMP works within Canada and with our international partners to investigate and combat sexual offences against children.

Investigations of sexual offences against children are not easy. Offenders commit these crimes and transfer information across borders, both nationally and internationally. That is why this government tabled Bill C-26, the tougher penalties for child predators act. Should Bill C-26 be adopted, it will bring new obligations for child sex offenders who travel outside of Canada to notify a national sex offender registry registration centre of the date of the departure and return, and of every address at which they expect to stay for any trip of any duration.

The new legislative amendments will also include changes to information sharing between the RCMP and CBSA. These changes will not only help the RCMP in the prevention and investigation of crimes of a sexual nature, but also assist in the verification of registered offenders' compliance to their obligations.

Investigations into sexual offences against children also take a toll on the investigators who see images and videos that can only be described as sickening. Even working in this environment, they do not waver in their pursuit of bringing the perpetrators to justice. These investigators go to work each day, doggedly pursuing some of the world's most heinous offenders, knowing that they are making a difference in the lives of victims, while showing an unbelievable amount of compassion and caring when interviewing or taking statements from victims.

The RCMP ensures that its police officers receive adequate training in sexual assault investigations and have continual access to resource and training material to combat sexual offences against children. The RCMP has developed case management strategies to deal with more complex investigations or offences involving multiple victims, including investigations of sexual offences against children.

The RCMP is the police force of jurisdiction in many different regions of Canada. RCMP divisions have developed directives in consultation and co-operation with their respective attorneys general, health and social service agencies, and child protection workers to ensure that provincial and territorial requirements are fully and accurately reflected in investigational procedures and protocols.

Outside of investigational avenues, individuals applying for employment or volunteer work in positions of trust or authority over children, seniors or other vulnerable persons may have to undergo a vulnerable sector check. These checks verify whether an individual

has a criminal record, as well as any record suspensions, formerly known as pardons, for sexual offences.

Our Conservative government wholeheartedly supports the RCMP in its ongoing efforts to find, investigate and bring the perpetrators of these heinous offences to justice. I hope the member will finally get on board and support us with our bill, as well as the RCMP.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify that I asked the Minister of Public Safety to investigate Alpine Canada and the RCMP, not Mr. Charest. We know that he is already in court.

What we and the victims want to know is why there does not seem to have been an RCMP investigation 15 years ago resulting in charges and convictions and why it is happening now. Why did Alpine Canada and the RCMP fail in their role and their duty to protect the young people they were responsible for? That is what we want: an investigation into Alpine Canada and the RCMP, not Mr. Charest.

When the minister tells me that he does not want to investigate Alpine Canada or the RCMP, what I hear is that he is not interested in finding out what the problem was. That means there could well be pedophiles in similar organizations and other international, Olympic or professional sports organizations. Those guys are still assaulting kids.

We want to find a solution to the problem, while the Conservatives seem to want to do nothing, which is too bad. This really goes to show that the Conservatives do not care about the victims.

• (1805)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member could not be further from the truth. As I said earlier, we have cracked down on perpetrators by introducing new, tough laws. As I have already mentioned, this case is still before the courts and of course we cannot interfere in a case that is before the courts.

The hon. member heard already about our government's plans to introduce tougher penalties for travelling child sex offenders in Bill C-26, which is currently before committee in the other House.

Let me add that the bill also proposes the creation of a public website on high risk offenders. High risk child sex offenders would be identified in the national sex offender registry, which is administered by the RCMP. That information would be made available on a publicly accessible database.

High risk offenders are those who have committed offences identified through the public interest disclosure process, which is administered by the provinces and the territories.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government will continue to work with the RCMP and partners at all levels to protect Canada's young people from sexual exploitation. I urge that member to finally get on board with any of our tough on crime measures that put criminals where they belong, and stop voting against them. We want to put criminals behind bars where they deserve to be.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:06 p.m.)

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