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(HANSARD)

Monday, September 19, 2011

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 19, 2011

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

• (1105)

[*English*]

VACANCY

TORONTO—DANFORTH

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation in the House of Commons for the electoral district of Toronto—Danforth, in the province of Ontario, by reason of the passing of the hon. Jack Layton.

Pursuant to subsection 28(1) of the Parliament of Canada Act, on Friday, August 26, 2011, I addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy.

[*Translation*]

I understand that there have been discussions among representatives of all the parties in the House to allow certain members to commemorate and pay tribute to our colleague.

* * *

[*English*]

HON. JACK LAYTON

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House beside an empty chair. In it sat a great Canadian, a great leader and a great parliamentarian.

In this chair sat a friend, and I know that many hon. members on both sides of this esteemed House called him the same.

[*Translation*]

This House of Commons and this country have suffered an incredible loss, and it is with great sadness that we begin this new parliamentary session by paying tribute to the very hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, Jack Layton.

I know that all members join me in offering our sincere condolences to the family of our late colleague: to his wife and soulmate, the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina; to his mother Doris; to his brothers and sisters, Bob, David and Nancy; to his son Michael, his daughter Sarah and his granddaughter Beatrice, a mere mention of whom would bring a sparkle to the eyes of the hon.

member for Toronto—Danforth. I want to let each of them know that they will always have our love and endless support.

[*English*]

I believe that the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina, Jack Layton's own member of Parliament, deserves particular recognition by the House today for her courage, grace and composure in these most difficult times. She has my utmost admiration and love.

[*Translation*]

Last week, Jack Layton's family presented me with two eagle feathers. These were feathers that he kept in his office and that were sacred to him. He often held these feathers when he had to make important decisions. They reminded him to think of the people and nature around him and to think about the impact our decisions will have on future generations.

These feathers were given to me as leader of the New Democratic Party so that Jack Layton's spirit and the wisdom that guided him may also guide our party. When I accepted these feathers, I made a commitment to his family, as I am now making a commitment to all Canadians, to always follow the path that he set out for us.

[*English*]

Rarely, if ever, has the House seen as passionate, tireless and committed an advocate for the less fortunate as Jack Layton. Day after day he fought for the little guy. He strove to give a voice to those without power and wealth and to ensure that as this country moved forward no one was left behind or found himself or herself homeless. In his memory, we will carry on this work.

All who knew him knew the strength of his belief that young people held the key to the gates of a better Canada and a better world. He worked tirelessly to reach out to young people, to engage them in politics and to ensure their perspectives and their best hopes for our country were reflected in our national dialogue. In Jack Layton's memory, we will carry on this work.

[*Translation*]

He was also just as determined to ensure that all new Canadians receive a warm welcome in our country and to build better relationships with our first nations communities, relationships based on respect. In Jack Layton's memory, we will carry on this work.

Tributes

The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth was motivated by an unwavering belief that, by respecting the hopes and dreams of the residents of his province of birth and by focusing the debate on what unites the people of this country and what we can accomplish when we all work together, we could build a stronger and more united country with the help of Quebecers.

His faith in this principle remained unshaken, despite the cynicism that has crept into federal politics over the past 20 years. In Jack's memory, we will carry on this work.

Jack was motivated by the goal of leaving our children and grandchildren a greener world; a world free from climate change; a world with clean land, clean rivers and fresh air; a world where people interact with nature in a sustainable manner. In Jack's memory, we will carry on this work.

● (1110)

[*English*]

Jack Layton believed so much in the power of democracy and of this Parliament. I invite all hon. members of this House to join with me in picking up his torch and making this an institution of which Canadians can be proud.

Jack Layton improved the tone of the debate in Parliament. He firmly believed we could have passionate disagreements without being disrespectful or disgraceful to each other. Let us all honour his memory by conducting the next session of Parliament in this spirit. Let us always put the interests of Canadians before our own partisan interests, as Jack Layton would want us to do.

Never was Jack more proud than when he was able to work with others across the aisle to serve Canadian families. He considered his work with his Liberal colleagues to pass a better balanced budget one of his greatest legislative legacies. He was equally proud of his work with the members opposite in securing help for more than 90,000 out-of-work families in their time of need and in making the apology for residential schools a reality. By his own words, Jack Layton was always more interested in proposition than opposition.

Let this spirit live within each of us as we get down to work for Canadians in these very tough times.

[*Translation*]

Canadians' response to Jack Layton's death demonstrated the great love they had for him. In Montreal, where he was born, in Toronto, where he lived, here in Ottawa and all across the country, Canadians gathered to celebrate his life.

The stories they shared and the messages they wrote in chalk on the pavement all had a common theme, and that theme was hope. Hope that it is possible to build a better Canada. Hope that, by working together, we can face the challenges before us. Hope that it is possible to build a stronger and more united country. Hope that, although none of us is perfect, together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

I hope that this will be Jack Layton's greatest legacy and that we will all commit to making his vision a reality.

[*English*]

There is a code which has been inscribed into the hearts of many Canadians. I would like to have it inscribed into our official records today. Let it be a motto for this country and for this esteemed House now and forevermore.

My friends, love is better than anger, hope is better than fear, optimism is better than despair; so let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic and we will change the world.

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late leader of the official opposition. I do so as Prime Minister, as leader of my party and as a member of the House, in memory of our friend and colleague, the hon. Jack Layton.

[*English*]

One of the pleasures of serving in this place is the friendships that develop and sometimes the surprise of friendships that grow between opponents, the affections that develop in spite of our strongest partisan instincts. In the case of Jack Layton, I believe that all of us developed this affection inexorably. His passion, perseverance and ability to be at once tough and cheerful would eventually win over even those who most strongly disagreed with him.

[*Translation*]

The affection and respect we had for him were rooted in his ability to mobilize others and unite them around a single cause. It was that part of his personality that made him a true leader. And the courage, dignity and optimism we witnessed during his battle with cancer only served to increase our fondness and respect. Those feelings grow even stronger when we consider the rigours of an election campaign—which I know all too well—and when we think about what he accomplished during the 2011 election.

[*English*]

I cannot think of another leader, at least not in our time, whose campaign was described as gallant. However, Jack's campaign inspired and merited that description. So too did his approach to his high parliamentary office. His commitment as leader of the other side to pursue more civil discourse in the House and to seek a constructive approach to opposition won well-deserved praise from all Canadians.

Of course it did not detract in any way from his ability to forcefully advocate a different position from that of the government. Hon. members will recall such a great parliamentary battle at the end of the spring session. As I have said before, I remember at one point near the end crossing to sit with Jack in the midst of it to discuss a few things, some political, some personal. Really, that was not very long ago. Now, when I look across the floor, it is hard to believe he is not still there.

However, I will always remember that conversation because, notwithstanding the personal challenges in front of Jack and regardless of the personal combat going on between us, as always, he was still full of optimism and goodwill.

Tributes

[*Translation*]

His admirable personality made him a shining example. The civility he brought to debate as Leader of the Opposition and his sincere commitment to proposing constructive solutions set the bar high for us here in the House in terms of the work we do for Canadians.

[*English*]

It is well known that Jack and I did not always agree. In fact, it might be said that we did not often agree. However, he loved this country and devoted himself to the well-being of its people. In this, we were united, as indeed are so many men and women of different and contradictory political persuasions. In the heat of our debates we too often forget that people of goodwill share the deepest motivations and the highest aspirations. We differ only on how we believe we should act on these in order to address the practical problems that lie before us.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Our democracy and our work in the House exist so that we can take stock of all potential solutions and decide which path to take. Through his election victory, Jack Layton contributed to the renewal and strengthening of Canada's political life.

[*English*]

I conclude my remarks by also offering, for myself and on behalf of my colleagues, a special word of encouragement for the hon. member who was Jack's partner in life as well as in politics. She, too, has won our affection and our respect. In recent weeks she, too, has displayed the courage and dignity which we can only hope would emerge in us were we to suffer such a loss.

[*Translation*]

To her, the family and Jack's caucus colleagues, we offer our deepest sympathies and we, along with them, celebrate a truly extraordinary life.

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a little personally about Jack. He was a person I came to know over many years through my long-time association with the New Democratic Party and my leadership of the provincial party in Ontario.

My first conversation with Jack was on the telephone asking him to support me in my bid for the leadership which, for my colleagues opposite, he declined to provide me at that particular moment. Perhaps he guessed something that even I was not aware of at the time.

In the course of the last few months, the last two months in particular, as a country we have gone through a political celebration in the midst of great sorrow and great loss. I am sure there have been parallels in time when this has occurred. We are told that when D'Arcy McGee was assassinated, only a few hundred yards from this spot, over 100,000 people attended his funeral service, lining the streets.

As Canadians, we can say that in the course of our history there have been moments when we have surpassed partisanship and have come together.

[*Translation*]

There are times in our lives when we must admit the partisan reality of our political lives. Political life is a decent life. It is a public life that has earned the respect of Canadians, even though not everyone will completely agree with the positions taken by a political leader like Mr. Layton.

[*English*]

Jack believed fiercely in the country and he wanted to take a positive and constructive attitude to achieving what he needed to achieve, but Jack was a very tough partisan. He was a very committed member of the New Democratic Party. He was also someone who, as the Prime Minister has said and as the Leader of the Opposition has said, because of his personality, because of what Laurier once described as the importance of having sunny ways, he managed to attract the support and the affection of a great many people who did not necessarily share his point of view.

Particularly the outpouring we saw in Toronto was a reflection of the fact that Mr. Layton started out his life and his career as a local politician. He was very proud of his work in the city of Toronto and he provided leadership that was of a unique nature. While there are political parties, more or less, at the city level, in order to get things done people have to work together. It is not a deeply partisan framework in which they work. They work by talking, by engaging, by trying to find compromise, and that is where Jack excelled. He loved to make a deal and to do a deal even when, as some of us discovered there was no deal to be done, he still wanted to try to get it done. I think we all respected that spirit.

When I think of the work he did on housing, and as premier I worked very closely with Jack on that issue, he really did provide leadership, not only for the city but for the province and then for the country. I think of the work that he did on AIDS. I think of his advocacy for the gay, lesbian and transgender community, which he continued to do right up to the end. I think of the courage he displayed on a number of issues where not everyone was with him at the time, but eventually more people came to see the merits of that position.

We have lost a colleague and a friend. The country has lost an important political leader, an important political presence, and my colleague from Trinity—Spadina has lost a husband and a partner. We offer her our warmest condolences. She has shown great courage and above all great natural dignity in the face of Jack's struggle and in the face of all the attention to which that has given rise. From this side of the House, and for some years Jack occupied seats not too far away from where we stand today, as an adversary and as a friend we shall miss him.

Tributes

I cannot help but recall the famous words of the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, when he said in his famous poem, “death shall have no dominion”. He was really describing in that poem, and I think this has been the experience of Canada over the last little while, that while Jack has passed away, the things he stood for, the values he had and the warmth, strength and quality of his personality will never die or disappear because the spirit and the soul with which we come into life will carry on, and I think all of us of different religious beliefs strongly believe that. That spirit carries on in our children. It carries on in the work that we all decide to do, whether we come at it from the same perspective or from the same philosophy. There are a great many Canadians who, over the last while, have thought more about politics, about public life and about what that public contribution is all about because of the life that Jack chose to live, the way in which he chose to live it and the way in which he chose to leave it.

● (1125)

I close with the words of Dylan Thomas:

Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

● (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were deeply saddened this summer to learn of the passing of the leader of the New Democratic Party, Jack Layton, after a hard-fought battle with cancer.

We were all impressed by the strength of character and determination Jack Layton showed throughout his battle against the disease. The fact that he found the strength to run an election campaign, despite his illness, to defend his values and promote his ideals exemplifies his courage.

Jack Layton was a passionate and honest parliamentarian. He was also approachable and easy to be around on a daily basis. We especially appreciated his dedication to the homelessness issue and how he promoted workers' rights, battles that we fought by his side here in the House of Commons.

Jack Layton's unwavering commitment to ordinary people is undoubtedly one of the biggest contributors to his immense popularity. That is also what made him an example to anyone who works in politics.

He was a principled man, a man who was courteous and respectful of his adversaries, and also extremely competent and effective. He was also a man of ideas. He brought a number of initiatives to this chamber, in order, as he often said, to do politics differently. As an expert negotiator, he was willing to make compromises to advance matters that were important to him. One of his guiding principles was that taking a small step towards achieving his objectives was better than stubbornly wanting to accomplish everything all at once.

And how he battled in the House of Commons! I will always remember one very intense day, to say the least, in this chamber. During question period, he used his oratorical skills to put a minister

on the defensive, to an extent we have rarely seen in this House. That evening, at a cocktail party, I greeted the minister in question, and remarked that it had not been an easy day and that Jack had been in fine form. The minister replied that there was something special about that man. Even though he had been lambasted, the minister still wanted to shake Jack's hand when leaving the House.

That was Jack: he fervently defended his ideals, respected his adversaries and earned their respect. That is a feat not easily achieved, but Jack knew the secret.

I also remember that when I arrived in the lobby of the House after his great victory of May 2, Jack came over to me to ask about my colleagues who had been defeated. There was no hint of arrogance, just kindness and compassion.

Farewell Jack, the exceptional human being; farewell Jack, the dedicated and attentive MP; farewell Jack, the talented and effective party leader. Thank you for contributing so much to the development of our democracy. Thank you for all the memorable moments in this House of Commons.

In closing, on behalf of Bloc Québécois MPs and party members, I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to his wife, Olivia, his children, and all his family, friends and colleagues.

The great French writer Alexandre Dumas once said that those we have loved and lost are not where they used to be, but they are with us always wherever we may be.

Farewell, Jack.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise, as other leaders have risen, with a great deal of sadness. I also knew Jack for a very long time and this has been a very rough summer for so many of us.

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

I want to offer my sincere condolences to everyone in Jack's caucus and to his wife, the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina in particular. She is an extraordinary woman with unparalleled courage.

[*English*]

I also recognize that many of us last saw each other, not in this place, but in Roy Thomson Hall for the state funeral. I would like to particularly thank the right hon. Prime Minister for his generosity in deciding to give us that opportunity collectively to mourn the loss of a great Canadian.

It was, in the best sense of the word, less a funeral than a true celebration of life. Celebrating together, I think we experienced, as partisans, a moment of our true shared humanity. We experienced together what it means to lose a friend and a colleague. We also saw, and we must always remember, that at the heart of everything we are all Canadians and we all love this country and we would do better to remember it.

Tributes

We are all, in the end, human. We share the commonality that we are all born, we all die and that the measure of our lives is what we do with the time in between, no matter how short it might be. Jack did a lot in his time. Some of us die in ways that are almost anonymous, as the vigil outside and the walk for justice remind us of the aboriginal women. However, Jack died at the height of his powers. Jack died at the moment he had achieved something so long sought after that our hearts broke for that loss. He worked so hard. He faced, as many colleagues have mentioned, an election campaign, which is always gruelling, at a time that he was also fighting a serious illness, more serious than many of us knew.

That speaks to other words from that same Welsh poet, quoted by my friend, the leader of the Liberal Party. It was Dylan Thomas who talked about how we face death and how we must not give into it, how we must not go gentle. Jack Layton fought harder than anyone I have ever seen. He put more into that last gasp, that last effort, to take his party to where he knew he could lead it. He gave so much of himself.

I will also close with the words of Dylan Thomas who wrote:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

It was in dying that I think Jack most clearly saw and then seized that light.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank you and all members of the House for this opportunity to respond to the remarkable tributes to the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart.

[*English*]

I will take this opportunity to express both my gratitude and my renewed resolve first to the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and Canada's New Democrats. I wish to express my gratitude for her faith and trust in assuming stewardship of our party at this crucial time. I thank her for her support and friendship and, most of all, for her leadership.

I wish to convey my heartfelt gratitude to the Prime Minister for the honour he showed, not just to my family and New Democrats, but all Canadians, by declaring a state funeral.

I thank both the Prime Minister and Laureen Harper for the comfort and support they provided to me and my family, both publicly and privately. I thank him for his eloquent tribute in the House today.

I thank all other leaders for their thoughtful tributes.

I also wish to thank members of the House of all parties who have been so supportive and who have passed on condolences from their constituents in every part of this country.

The generosity of Canadians has been a source of great strength for me and for our family in these past weeks. Among the condolences, our family has heard from so many other brave and courageous people who have been living with cancer or who have lost loved ones to the disease. Like them, and like millions of

generous Canadians, I am resolved to carry forward with hope and continue fighting this disease until there is a cure.

As I was doing the Terry Fox Run yesterday, I was filled with optimism that with tens of thousands of Canadians participating together we can outrun cancer.

I have been overwhelmed in the past weeks and days by so many inspiring messages everywhere, in condolence books, in cards and tributes, in letters to the editor, in emails, in blogs and twitters, and, for me, most memorably in chalk at Toronto's City Hall where both Jack and I served on council.

I have been overwhelmed with messages from youth and children, women, immigrants, our first nations, Québécois, maritimers, westerners and Ontarians, so many messages that were inspired by Jack Layton and his message of hope, optimism and love, and so many messages that he himself would have been inspired by, especially those from youth, especially the ones who looked beyond the grief and saw the possibility of moving forward and building a better Canada and a better world.

The chalk at city hall has washed away but those messages will be with me forever. They are part of my renewed resolve, my resolve to continue and build on Jack's legacy, a resolve built on values that were the guiding light for Jack Layton, values shared by so many in the House and across the country of fundamental Canadian values of generosity, justice and equality.

Of course, it was easy for us to be hopeful and optimistic when Jack was around. The tough part is now. What makes it easier for me, what makes it even possible, is that so many people have understood the message and been inspired. What makes it possible is that so many are prepared to give politics and politicians a chance again, and they will be watching us as we move Canada forward.

What makes it possible is the knowledge that the House of Commons, which was so important to Jack, is more representative of Canada and its diversity than ever before, and that is, in large part, due to his leadership and his unending quest for equality and justice; for giving a voice to the voiceless, to the people who thought they were on the margins; for empowering people who thought they had no power; for remembering that all of us who have the privilege to serve in the House are empowered by those very people we serve; and for remembering that together we have power to make positive changes that will benefit all Canadians.

● (1140)

We do have that power. I am resolved to move forward to help make the dreams that Jack and I shared for 30 years a reality for future generations.

[*Translation*]

It is possible. It is still possible.

Government Orders

[English]

We saw evidence today of our shared humanity. We heard words rarely spoken in the House of hope, optimism and love. That suggests a better Canada is possible. It is possible to move Canada forward and make Canada a better and more prosperous place where no one is left behind.

●(1145)

[Translation]

My friends, let us work together.

[English]

And do not let them tell you that it cannot be done.

The Speaker: The loss of Jack Layton leaves our Parliament missing much more than just one member.

[Translation]

We all know that Jack had deep partisan convictions, as every member of this House does, but he truly wanted Parliament to work for Canadians.

[English]

Here in the House, Jack's voice was a tireless voice. He was a worth adversary, an inspiring leader, a kind heart and a loyal friend.

I now invite all hon. members to stand and observe a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my job to launch with the pedestrian business of the House. I am doing that with a motion to deal with the upcoming visit of the Prime Minister of Great Britain. It is a motion that I believe has the support of all the parties. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, on Thursday, September 22, 2011, the House shall meet at 10 a.m. and proceed to government orders; at 11 a.m. members may make statements pursuant to Standing Order 31; not later than 11:15 a.m. oral questions shall be taken up; at noon, the House shall proceed to the ordinary daily routine of business, followed by government orders, at 2:30 p.m. the House shall stand adjourned to the next sitting day;

that the Address of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to be delivered in the Chamber of the House of Commons at 5:30 p.m. that day before Members of the Senate and the House of Commons, together with all introductory and related remarks, be printed as an appendix to the House of Commons *Debates* for that day and form part of the records of this House; and

that the media recording and transmission of such address, introductory and related remarks be authorized pursuant to established guidelines for such occasions.

The Speaker: Does the hon. Government House Leader have the unanimous consent to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

●(1150)

[English]

PREVENTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS FROM ABUSING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT

The House resumed from June 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): We are resuming debate. When this matter was last before the House, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis was speaking. He has 12 minutes remaining in his presentation, which will be followed by 10 minutes of questions and answers.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Lac—Saint-Louis.

[English]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to pick up where things left off in June. Right before the long debate on back-to-work legislation I had the opportunity to speak to this bill for eight minutes. At that point I was making three general observations.

The first is that refugees are not queue jumpers. There is a misconception across the land that when refugees come to Canada and claim refugee status, they are depriving others who would like to come to Canada of their right to do so. I say sadly that it is the government that has actually fostered this notion. Do not take my word for it; I will quote from an editorial in the *Ottawa Citizen* which stated the following:

Back in 2010, [the] Public Safety Minister...said the government needed to crack down on human smuggling because "we know that jumping the immigration queue is fundamentally unfair to those who follow the rules and wait their turns to come to Canada."

This is the opposite of what is true about refugees.

Of course, no one likes queue jumpers. We all have a natural aversion to the idea of someone cutting into line. However, refugees are not queue jumpers. By letting a refugee into Canada, we are not slowing down or otherwise causing a regular immigration application to be sidelined. It is very important to make that point.

The second point I would like to make is related to the first point. There is a process for determining who is a legitimate refugee and who is a person whose claim is without proper merit. That process goes back at least 20 years, if I am not mistaken, or maybe a little less than 20 years. We know that that process is embodied in an institution of government that we call the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Government Orders

The third point I would like to make is related to the first two. The reason there is a refugee crisis in this country, the reason there is a backlog of refugee claimants, has a lot to do with the way the government, unfortunately, has undermined the refugee determination process that is embodied in the Immigration and Refugee Board.

We all know that the government failed to fill vacancies on the Immigration and Refugee Board for quite a long time, to the extent that the lack of desire to move in terms of appointing new members to the IRB was having an impact and creating the backlog in refugee claims. In fact, the Auditor General in 2009 expressed her concerns about timely and efficient appointments and reappointments to the IRB when she looked at the matter of the refugee backlog.

What has happened is the government has politicized the process of appointing people to the IRB which has made the backlog even worse.

• (1155)

It is very important that the government own up to this. First, it must admit that refugees are not queue jumpers. Second, it must admit that it has made the problem of the refugee backlog slightly worse because it failed previously to act quickly in terms of appointing members to the board.

There are problems with this bill. It creates two classes of refugees. One class would be the regular refugee stream. The second class would be denoted by the minister as designated arrivals, which, upon being designated accordingly, would be treated differently. They could be held in detention for up to 12 months.

What is really happening is the government is categorizing refugees. It is creating classes of refugees for different treatment based on, if we really look at it and read between the lines, the mode of transport the refugee claimants have used to get here. Refugees who come by plane typically would not come in big groups and would not receive the ministerial designation of designated foreign nationals and would not receive the different treatment that is being reserved for designated foreign nationals in this bill. Refugees who come in groups who will be designated as designated foreign nationals under the act typically will come by ship in squalid conditions. If they come by plane, they are not considered to be designated foreign nationals under the law.

The government is creating different classes of refugees based on how the refugees come to Canada. Following that logic, there should be a class of refugees for those arriving by minivan. It is very unhealthy when we start to distinguish and create categories of people from what is essentially a group of people with the same characteristics, people who are fleeing persecution or misery for a better life.

This brings me to another point. Back in June when I first spoke to this bill, I said that the government seems to make legislation based on the latest headlines. Instead of analyzing a situation over the long term and coming up with a solution that has some merit, it will react very quickly to news, especially before an election. It will bring in rushed legislation which obviously will have flaws because any legislation that is rushed will have flaws. It will bring in legislation to try to show the public that it is acting quickly to solve a problem,

which sometimes is very complex and requires more reflection than it is receiving.

When the government introduced Bill C-49, which is now Bill C-4, it had already brought in Bill C-11 about a year before. Bill C-11 was meant to attack the problem of the growing refugee backlog the government itself had contributed to making worse. Under Bill C-11, the government implemented something that had been created by a Liberal government. It brought in a refugee appeal division to speed up the process whereby when a claimant is refused by the IRB, he or she may appeal to the Federal Court. The government said it would implement something that a Liberal government came up with, which was the refugee appeals division.

I should mention that has not yet been implemented, as far as I know. Bill C-11 tried to remedy this situation but there have been more delays in terms of creating the refugee appeal division. In any event, Bill C-11 was attempting to deal with the problem. We still do not know if Bill C-11 would deal effectively with the problem because the appeals division has not been created. Why did the government not let things be and allow Bill C-11 to work its way through to implementation to see if it was able to resolve the matter before introducing Bill C-4? That is quite indicative of the fact that the government prefers to rush into things, sometimes with measures that are half-baked or not called for.

• (1200)

A major problem with Bill C-4 is that it probably violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is what happens when legislation is rushed: we get legislation that is not thought through and is not properly put together. It means the legislation could be challenged and if it is challenged, it may be struck down. That would create more problems down the line. A government should really do things properly or it may find itself with problems down the line.

Bill C-4 possibly could violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because of the fact that a person may be kept in detention for up to 12 months. We have seen jurisprudence by the Supreme Court find that time far too long and in violation of at least two sections of the charter.

I will stop on that point and take the opportunity to move an amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

'this House declines to give 2nd reading to Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act, since the bill fails to achieve its stated principle of cracking down on human smugglers and instead targets legitimate refugee claimants and refugees, and because it expands the Minister's discretion in a manner that is overly broad and not limited to the mass arrival situation that supposedly inspired the introduction of this legislation, and because it presents an imprisonment scheme that violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protections against arbitrary detention and prompt review of detention, and because its provisions also violate international obligations relating to refugees and respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection.'

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my understanding that the amendment is in order.

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

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•(1205)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis has moved an excellent amendment.

I wish to share that over the course of the summer holidays I had a brief conversation with the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism at the Calgary Stampede. I pointed out the same failing: the illogical focus on ships when most refugee claimants come to Canada by airplane. He said that he could, in his discretion as minister, designate it as an unusual entry by plane, bus, car, or any means. In other words, we could see this bill creep in and expose all refugee claimants, whether men, women or children, to a year of imprisonment.

I wonder if the member for Lac-Saint-Louis has any comments on that statement.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, the fundamental problem with this bill is that it would make victims of people who in many cases are already victims in other countries.

We all get a little frustrated in traffic and do not like to be held up in it. When arriving home after a long trip from work or wherever we say that it was a hellish drive because we were stuck in traffic for an hour and a half. We should think about the person who agrees to pay a large sum of money to board an over-crowded boat to cross whatever sea or ocean to attempt to make a new life in a country like Canada. We should think how desperate they must be to go through all of those steps and all of that suffering. I do not think we should be targeting them as designated foreign arrivals and putting them in detention for 12 months.

Again, we are punishing the victim. I do not think it is very good public policy and I do not think that Canadians agree with that kind of public policy.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was rather intrigued by my friend's comments that somehow this bill creates categories of refugees.

I wonder if the member is aware that many of the boats that bring refugees are inherently unsafe. Does the member think that we should try to discourage unsafe passage to Canada?

I wonder if the member is aware that there are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of people around the world, real legitimate refugees who have been waiting in very poor conditions in refugee camps and following the procedures that we set out with the UN to get them into Canada, who get pushed back to second place when we have unexpected arrivals and mass arrivals of large boatloads of people?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, indeed these boats are unsafe. This is really the point I was trying to make. Despite the fact that these are dangerous journeys, people are so desperate that they are willing to risk everything and risk their lives to make that journey.

The question is, why are they treated like criminals when they get here? These refugees are not the ringleaders. They are not the ones promising that they will be admitted to Canada if they pay a certain sum of money. These refugees are desperate and are willing to do anything.

What about someone being brought over who has no knowledge of the fact that the person who is organizing the trip is doing something illegal? For example, what about the dozens of Polish and Ukrainian welders allegedly spirited into Canada by the Alberta priest recently accused of running an immigration scam?

According to the media, if those charges are proven in court, by the minister's logic the welders should be detained and punished as part of a human smuggling scheme.

The wrong people are being targeted.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on a fine speech that sets out the myriad significant and profound problems with the bill before us.

We have heard that the bill is likely unconstitutional, not in one way but in a number of ways. We have heard that the bill, without any doubt whatsoever, violates international conventions and treaties to which Canada is signatory.

Perhaps most striking of all is what the Canadian public and groups that actually work with refugees have identified very clearly: that the bill will prove absolutely ineffective in targeting the real problem that we all agree is necessary to be targeted, the human smuggling. That is because the bill targets the attention on the refugees, not on the human smugglers.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would expand a little bit on whether or not he feels the bill is misdirected and misguided in targeting the penalties and myriad discriminatory practices on the refugees and not the smugglers themselves.

•(1210)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I really do think that is the problem.

The bill is responding sensationalistic images in the media of large numbers of people falling off the sides of a boat off the coast of British Columbia. That is what the bill is responding to.

The bill is trying to respond to an image that has been communicated through the media. The image itself is not reflective of what is going on. It is not reflective of the complexity of the situation.

I am just astounded by how the government, knowing the Supreme Court decision in the Charkaoui case, could go about creating such an arbitrary detention.

I will read from the legislative summary of the Library of Parliament for Bill C-4. This is not Liberal researchers writing this. This is from neutral, professional public servants. Page 8 of the legislative summary says:

The mandatory waiting periods before first and subsequent reviews of reasons for continued detention set out in Bill C-4 for "designated foreign nationals" could raise some Charter concerns. They mark a significant departure from the timelines in the existing detention review regimes applicable to other persons detained under the IRPA.

It goes on and on.

The Supreme Court says:

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Whether through habeas corpus or statutory mechanisms, foreign nationals, like others, have a right to prompt review to ensure that their detention complies with the law.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one rather surprising aspect of the bill is the powers that would potentially be granted to the minister. One of the goals we set when introducing a bill is to make one clear rule that applies to everyone.

I want to thank my colleague for his speech because it illustrated to what extent this could become a problem. Can the hon. member elaborate on the discretionary power the minister would have?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right to raise this aspect of the bill. In a democracy we have to set parameters to ensure that no party, no government, no minister has unlimited power. That is the principle behind democracy. A democracy is more than just elections and votes, which are obviously necessary. It also takes parameters and structure to protect the public from excessive and absolute power. Accordingly, this aspect of the bill is problematic and just another reason we want to prevent this bill from moving forward.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and give a speech on what is a highly symbolic piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that will illustrate to Canadians the very clear differences in the approach to governing between the government and the official opposition.

Bill C-4 purports to deal with preventing human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system, but in reality it is directed almost solely at refugee claimants who arrive in Canada utilizing whatever means are at their disposal. It is fair to say that it reflects a style of government that reacts quickly to exploit fear in our society, to take people's misery and exploit it for political purposes and to proceed with knee-jerk legislation that is not based on fact, not based on law, not based on reason and not based on fairness.

I am going to go through some of the major aspects of the bill so that Canadians can see exactly what the essence of the bill really is.

Bill C-4 would give the Minister of Immigration the power to designate, in his sole discretion, a group of refugees as "irregular arrivals". He could do that based on mere suspicion and based on the definition of a group that is not specified in the act, but presumably means any gathering of two or more people.

Once designated claimants receive that title, they are then subject to all kinds of special rules and, as we will hear during debate on the bill, discriminatory rules. I will start with some of them.

Once designated as irregular arrivals, designated claimants, including children, will be mandatorily detained on arrival or upon designation for up to one year. There will be no review of their detention by the Immigration and Refugee Board for one year. Release will only be possible if they are found to be refugees, if the IRB orders their release at the expiry of a year, or if the minister decides that there are exceptional circumstances. Mandatory conditions set out in the regulations will be imposed on all designated claimants released from detention, subjecting these

people to special conditions that do not apply to any other refugee claimant.

Designated arrivals will have their right to apply for permanent residency suspended. Under this legislation a designated claimant will be prohibited from applying for permanent residency for five years. If the person fails to comply with any of the conditions or reporting requirements, that five-year suspension can be extended to six years.

To show how arbitrary and ill thought out the legislation is, the five-year ban on applying for permanent residency applies even to someone who is found to be a legitimate refugee. Someone who comes here could be designated, satisfy the IRB within a year or two that he or she is a bona fide legitimate refugee, and still be prohibited from applying for permanent residency for five years.

A designated person cannot make a humanitarian and compassionate application or apply for a temporary resident permit for five years.

In terms of refugee travel documents, a designated person cannot receive travel documents. This means that designated refugees cannot travel outside of Canada for at least five years after they have been accepted as a refugee.

If we take these three things together, they mean that a designated refugee claimant, even if he or she is a legitimate, bona fide legal refugee, will be separated from his or her family for at least five years. He or she cannot travel to see family for at least five years. That is how Canada, under the Conservative government's legislation, is purporting to treat a bona fide refugee.

The legislation contains retroactive provisions so that the minister can make a retroactive designation for arrivals in Canada since March 31, 2009. Again, it has not been common in Canadian legislatures or in this Parliament to reach back in time and render illegal something that was legal at the time, but the Conservative government wants to do that in this case.

● (1215)

Bill C-4 is deeply unfair to refugees. It fails to honour obligations under Canadian and international law. It deprives individual cases from the independent review that justice requires. It would involve huge costs and unnecessary detention. Perhaps most pressing of all, Bill C-4 would do nothing to prevent human smuggling. The bill is unclear, arbitrary, discriminatory and ineffective.

More laws directed at refugees will not catch human smugglers who are overseas. Mandatory minimum sentences will not deter human smugglers who are overseas. Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, smuggling is already punishable by life imprisonment and mandatory minimums have been shown not to work as deterrents. Refugees know little or nothing about the laws before they arrive in the country of asylum and, even if they know, desperate fear for their lives often forces them to do whatever they must to flee persecution.

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Australia recently tried a very similar regime to punish refugees to try to deter them. It did not work there and there is no reason to think it would work here.

I will go through some of the major problems with the bill. Bill C-4 punishes refugees. The bill has been presented as legislation targeting smugglers but most of the provisions punish not smugglers, but the refugees themselves. I have already said that refugees, including children, would be mandatorily detained for a year without the possibility of an independent review. Under Bill C-4, refugees would be victimized three times: first, by their persecutors; second, by their smugglers; and finally, by Canada.

Bill C-4 violates the charter and our international human rights obligations, including the convention related to the status of refugees, commonly known as the Refugee Convention, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Bill C-4 is discriminatory and it would create two classes of refugees with one class, those designated based on their mode of arrival, treated worse than the other. This again is discriminatory and contrary to the charter.

Once again, the measures imposing arbitrary detention are not only likely to be unconstitutional, they have already been found to be unconstitutional. In security certificate cases, the Supreme Court of Canada has already found that mandatory detention without review violates numerous sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill C-4 denies the right to equal access to justice. The bill denies designated persons the right to appeal a negative refugee decision to the Immigration and Refugee Board's Refugee Appeal Division. An appeal is a fundamental safeguard in refugee decision making where a person's life and liberty may be at stake. By eliminating the opportunity to correct errors at the first level, the bill would put Canada at risk of violating its most fundamental obligation toward refugees, which is not to send them back to persecution.

I have talked about how Bill C-4 blocks family reunification, which has been described by the government as its key objective. The bill deprives some refugees of the right for five years to apply for permanent residence and, therefore, reunification of families, including their children. This is a violation of the right to family life guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The bill also prevents consideration of the best interests of the child. The bill denies designated persons, including children, the opportunity for five years to make an application on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. This application is often the only avenue for consideration of best interests of the child under refugee law. Under the terms of the bill, however, children could be deported from Canada without consideration of their best interests, again in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I would like to focus on Australia's example because it is instructive to the House. Australia had policies to lock up refugee claimants long-term and to deny them permanent status even when granted refugee status in an attempt to stop refugees coming to that country by boat. It is exactly what is happening here. The policies

resulted in refugees, including many children, being traumatized by their experiences in detention.

● (1220)

The Australian Human Rights Commission, an organization created by the Australian parliament, conducted a national inquiry into children in immigration detention and found that children in Australian immigration detention centres had suffered numerous and repeated breaches of their human rights.

Far from deterring people, depriving refugees of the right to family reunification appears to have caused some people to arrive by boat, later bringing the wives and children of refugees in Australia who were unable to bring their families through legal channels. This was a deeply divisive policy, with many people in Australia unclear as to what was the best approach. However, we do know that in the past three years Australia has moved away from its policies of detention and temporary status for refugees.

I want to chat a bit about history because there is the old adage that those of us who forget history are doomed to repeat it. Canada's history with respect to immigration and refugees is not perfect. The Chinese head tax and the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War are both relative and old discredited philosophies, sadly, of our past. Another event from our undistinguished past is the Canadian government's refusal to admit a boat load of Jewish people fleeing Hitler's Germany, a refusal that forced the *MS St. Louis* back to Europe where many of the passengers perished in the Holocaust.

The individuals on that boat were not Canadian citizens or even permanent residents. However, many Canadians feel, and the Minister of Immigration himself has expressed, a sense of responsibility for the passengers on the *St. Louis* and a fundamental ethical obligation to help people in desperate situations fleeing for their lives.

In the minister's words at the unveiling of the monument to commemorate the *MS St. Louis* just this year, the monument was described as a "concrete perpetual expression of regret". The minister went on to remind us that we must learn from the lessons of history in order to apply them in the future, and said:

Canada will never close its doors to legitimate refugees who need our protection and who are fleeing persecution.

The official opposition agrees with that sentiment. That is the reason we will profoundly oppose this bill until the many problems are cleared. Otherwise, history will continue to judge Canada on the way we treat victims of international crisis. It is a bill that creates two tiers of refugees, violates our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and violates Canada's obligations under international law.

I will read a section from the UN convention relating to the status of refugees, which Canada has signed. Article 31 states:

The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

The bill does exactly that. It violates that section because it is imposing penalties on account of people's illegal entry or presence on refugees who are directly fleeing persecution.

Last summer and the summer before, we saw two boats come to this country containing refugees fleeing what is agreed by every state in this world to be a terrible civil war in Sri Lanka. There were approximately 478 people on one boat and there were approximately 80 people on another boat. These were people who risked their lives to come to a country where they could be safe.

I would ask all Canadians what they would do if the country in which they found themselves threatened their lives and the lives of their husbands, wives and children; if armed people were coming to get them and draft their children into child armies; if armed thugs were coming to sexually assault wives and young girls or boys; if armed men were coming to kill them, what they would do. I dare say that all Canadians would answer that question the same way. They would do whatever they had to do in order to save the lives of their loved ones and to escape to safety. That may even include paying someone.

Another big problem with the bill is that confuses human smuggling, criminal organizations engaged in inappropriate criminal acts, with the irregular movement of refugees, which often involves the payment of money in order to have an organized subversive way to escape a country.

• (1225)

I also want to spend a moment talking about the nonsense of a queue. There is no queue when it comes to refugees. The government should be ashamed of itself for going out in public and confusing Canadians that these are queue jumpers.

There are two ways refugees come to this country. The first way is under the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. There are refugee camps where they are safe and they can make quarterly applications. The second way is refugees who are directly fleeing a well-founded fear of persecution. Those people fleeing a war zone cannot stop and make an application. Those people do not present themselves to the nearest authorities and queue up. Can anyone imagine the Jewish people in Nazi Germany showing up at German authorities and saying that they want to make an application to claim refugee status? That is absurd, and international law recognizes that.

The idea that refugees are coming here and some are jumping in front of others is absolutely false. People who are trying to muddy the waters for political purposes by confusing those two concepts ought to be ashamed of themselves. At its fundamental base, Canada has an obligation. We have signed treaties to be a mature country on the world stage and we have agreed to accept our obligations, and one of those is to do our fair share to accept refugees.

The definition of a refugee is clear. Refugees must show our country that they have a well-founded fear of persecution. By definition, we are talking about a profoundly serious situation where someone risks death, injury, torture or some unacceptable conduct or treatment that violates the common norms of civilized society. Those people need our help and Canada needs to have fair rules to adjudicate such claims.

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Canadians of course do not agree with human smuggling. We want to do our fair share to ensure that criminal organizations that are trafficking in people or who are involved in the international sex trade are punished and stopped. Those are criminals. That is very different from refugees fleeing persecution and the whole network that has surrounded that activity of people who help them.

This act would criminalize the whole process. It would even criminalize those people who help refugees. Church groups, faith groups and refugee organizations all risk being deemed to be in violation of this act and being deemed criminals because they help and assist refugees. That has to be misguided. That has to be wrong. That has to be bad legislation.

Under the government, since 2006 there has been a concerted drop in the number of family-class visas that have been issued. There has been a dramatic drop in the number of refugee visas issued by the government. These are not New Democrat official opposition numbers. These are numbers published on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website that just came out in June.

The government needs to restore Canada's reputation on the world stage by not only treating the refugee claimants who come to this country but by improving our system so that we allow more refugees to get to Canada and be settled, and so that we let more of those millions of people who are in refugee camps and in dangerous situations all over the world get to places of safe haven and safety.

I have seen members of this House from every party show up at commemorations of the *Komagata Maru* or the *MS St. Louis*, as I just pointed out. We all bow our heads and remember those days when Canada sent away boatloads of people who came to our shores seeking freedom and safety, only decades later to find out that we were sending those people back to their deaths.

Canada deserves fair and balanced refugee legislation. This legislation is not fair and balanced and the official opposition will work hard to amend this until it is or defeat it.

• (1230)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always listen, often with amazement, to some of the things my friends across the way say. I want to begin by saying as emphatically as possible that the suggestion that this legislation will result in any boat being sent away from Canada's shores is complete poppycock. That is the most polite word I can think of for that. The suggestion that any church group would be found criminally responsible for helping a refugee is again poppycock.

The fact of the matter is that recently Canada let some 35,000 refugee applicants into our country in a single year. No one can suggest that Canada is not doing its fair share around the world.

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I am interested in my friend's old adage. However, there is another adage, that being that the very definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Canadians want us to do something different.

Canada cannot possibly solve all of the refugee problems of the world on its own. Would my friend join me in calling on the United Nations to get its act together and properly deal with the worldwide refugee crisis?

● (1235)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition will always call on the United Nations to do its share and improve its ability to assist refugees around the world with finding places of safe haven.

The world is a very dangerous place. There are terrible situations occurring in many countries of the world wherein people awaken every morning potentially facing the end of their lives or the lives of their loved ones. Generally, that is not something we deal with in Canada, so of course I would join my friend in calling for that.

My hon. colleague points out that this legislation will not result in any boat being turned away. However, it is worse than that. It purports to result in boats never actually getting here. Specifically, that is what it aims to do. The minister has said that. Through the use of draconian rules, he hopes to dissuade anyone from actually attempting to get on a boat or plane to get to Canada. That will result in the ultimate price to be paid, that being more refugees facing persecution if they are unable to attempt to escape to a safe haven like Canada.

I want to say one last thing. When refugees are fleeing a place, they will go wherever they can. Canada is not immune to that. We expect countries around Sri Lanka to accept refugees. We should be no different in this country.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway whether he had a chance, as I did, to meet with members of the Tamil community after the arrival of the refugees to the west coast shores to hear of the shock, trauma and vulnerability experienced by the families in detention.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I have in fact met on many occasions with representatives from the Tamil community.

While watching the final days of the civil war in Sri Lanka, we saw the Sri Lankan government prohibit international journalists as well as the Red Cross from entering the country. We heard stories of war crimes and atrocities, including the use of phosphorus bombs and the bombing of hospitals. We heard of extrajudicial killings. In fact, recently there has been some authenticated film footage showing summary executions of Tamils taking place on the side of the road by regular Sri Lankan army officials. It was a bit of a glimpse into the seriousness of the problems that had happened in that country.

Then we had the two boats which came carrying refugees from that war-torn country. We have to put this in perspective. We had slightly over 500 people come to these shores. It is a country of 34 million people, the second largest country in the world by land mass. There is no reason for people to jump to knee-jerk reactions because

we had 500 people come to our shores from a civil war. That represented less than 2% of the entire refugee claimants of that year.

Earlier my friend from the government side said that we had let in 34,000 refugees last year. That is 10,000 visas fewer than were issued five years ago. Therefore, the trend is getting worse, not better.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for highlighting some of the draconian provisions in this bill. One of the things I am really concerned about is the detention of children. As a father of two children, one 5 and the other 15, I cannot imagine kids being brought up in a war-torn country, then travelling a month or two on a very crowded boat, and on top of that being detained for over a year in Canada. That is not acceptable.

Is my colleague aware of the long-lasting impacts it can have on children being detained for a year in Canada?

● (1240)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, from the Australian experience there is data on that very question. In particular, there was a government-mandated commission that looked into the effects upon children being detained. We must remember the context by which these people arrive in Canada. Most have suffered intense trauma. We need not be psychologists to know that those who have escaped brutal civil wars and/or witnessed episodes of unspeakable violence have been traumatized. It would be traumatic for any of us and is particularly traumatic for children.

When people come to this country and are then locked up for a year without having their cases reviewed on a regular basis, it adds to that trauma. This bill would be draconian and unfair to anyone and is particularly unjustifiable when we think of the effects it will have on children, especially those fleeing places of unspeakable violence and horror.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Vancouver Kingsway made a point earlier in his excellent presentation that the statement frequently made by government members that somehow refugees are jumping the queue has no reality. I certainly agree with that. However, I put that very question to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and his response was that there is a queue for refugees, that they should go to an international refugee facility run by the United Nations and wait there.

We have heard a government member say that the UN should get its act together. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is entirely funded by voluntary donations from governments. It is already stretched beyond its limits and was not created as a holding room for political refugees. It responds to crisis situations. Therefore, the notion that refugees should first find their way to a camp run by the UNHCR shows a complete absence of understanding of the political refugee situation.

I wonder if the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway would comment on this misapprehension of the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism on how refugees arrive in this country.

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Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. It is easy to be generous when asking someone else to pay the freight and carry the load. The statement by the minister presumes that it is other countries that must have the UNHCR refugee camps, not us. Canada does not have one. For instance, if people are fleeing Sri Lanka by boat, I guess we expect Sri Lanka's neighbouring countries, such as Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, to welcome and support those people in international refugee camps. However, we do not have one. Internationally, what kind of position is that?

It is worse to think that, unlike Canada, many of the countries surrounding Sri Lanka have not signed international covenants on the treatment of refugees. It is even worse to think that a first world and wealthy country such as Canada has far more resources for settling refugees. Perhaps Canada should open some UNHCR camps in Canada. If members opposite think that the UN should be doing its share and picking up the slack, maybe Canada could lead the way by offering to do more in that regard.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this issue this morning and have the chance to listen to my hon. colleague. I congratulate him as a critic at our committee. I look forward to working with him and his party as we work through a number of issues at citizenship and immigration, including this bill dealing with public safety.

I am very grateful for the chance to rise and support Bill C-4 and its legislation therein. It will allow Canada to crack down on dangerous and illegal human smuggling operations while still maintaining our long and proud tradition of providing a safe haven for refugees.

As several of my hon. colleagues have noted, Canada is a compassionate country that welcomes immigrants and refugees from all over the world. In fact, every year we welcome about 250,000 newcomers to our country, which includes granting asylum to more than 10,000 persecuted persons each year and resettling another 12,000 refugees from abroad. In 2010, we welcomed close to 280,000 new immigrants to our country, one of the highest numbers in post-war history.

Let me point out, when we passed the refugee reform legislation in the last Parliament, Bill C-11, contingent upon the passing of that legislation was that we as a country would accept on a yearly basis an additional 2,500 refugees to our country. It speaks to the compassion, care and concern this government has for refugees across the world. Quite honestly, that bill passed with unanimous consent. My congratulations to everyone in the House who chose to do what was right for our country, what was right for refugees and to ensure that we passed a piece of legislation that is good for Canada as well as those refugees who see Canada as their new home. In helping refugees begin a new life Canadians are helping to ensure that we maintain our international obligations and at the same time build stronger and safe communities and fulfill the promise of Canada, the most welcoming nation in the world.

Our government is committed not only to preserving but also strengthening this already impressive track record. As I noted, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, which received royal assent on June 29, 2010, will allow us to help more people and do it faster. We have

committed significant dollars to ensure that this process and program is implemented to the best of our ability as a government and the best of our ability as a civil service. We have set aside that funding and the person power in order to implement the changes to the asylum system as well as to resettle an additional 2,500 refugees on top of what we already accept as a nation.

The government and many Canadians believe that Canada's generosity should not be extended to criminal smuggling. There is a significant difference when one talks about human compassion and treatment of refugees and the sick and utterly despised human smuggling system on which the government is prepared to take action to ensure it is lowered and lessened. Unfortunately, it will be difficult to get rid of it entirely. However, we strive to lower and lessen the opportunity for human smugglers to make money off the backs of other people in this world.

One of the strongest commitments our government made to Canadians when we were first elected in 2006 was that we would take action to make our streets, our homes and our communities safer for everyone. We delivered on that commitment in a number of ways. Again, when it relates to illegal smuggling operations of all kinds that are of concern to law enforcement officers, as well as all Canadians, the government has taken action to crack down on such increasingly dangerous and violent operations.

Shutting down these organized criminal networks is vitally important to both protecting the health of Canadians, as well as their safety and security. Our message in dealing with illegal smuggling operations has been crystal clear. Canada will take decisive action to protect our borders, as well as the safety and security of the law-abiding citizens who are proud to call this great country home.

Human smuggling poses significant risks to our borders and to all Canadians. It is a criminal activity that calls out for action both domestically, which we will implement with C-4, and internationally. That is what Canadians want. It is what they have asked for and that is what our government will do.

● (1245)

The bottom line is that human smuggling undermines Canada's security. Large-scale arrivals make it difficult to properly identify those who arrive, including the smugglers. They hide on these ships. They dress themselves exactly the same way as the potential refugees. It is almost impossible, and it takes a tremendous amount of work of both the CBSA, Canada Border Services Agency, and our RCMP officers to try to determine who will apply for refugee status and who is a smuggler.

Human smuggling is not just a profitable business; it is also dangerous and it puts the lives of those being smuggled in jeopardy.

I was in Vancouver, British Columbia to see the ship that brought those poor individuals to our country. It is one thing the opposition may not like to talk about, but the fact is these ships are not cruise ships, they are literally containers to stuff human life into. The ships are put out to sea in the hope that it shows up on the shore of a country that will accept it. This trip is probably the most dangerous trip that these individuals will have to face.

Government Orders

To do that to individuals, including children, is abhorrent, unacceptable and the government will ensure that it stops in our country. Under the Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act, our government is cracking down on human smugglers in a number of different ways.

The proposed legislation will enable the Minister of Public Safety to declare the existence of a human smuggling event, making those involved subject to the act's measures. It will make it easier to prosecute human smugglers. It will impose mandatory minimum prison sentences on convicted smugglers. It will also hold the shipowners and operators to account for the use of their ships in human smuggling operations.

These are proposed reforms which our government is proposing. They will help the safety and security of our streets and our communities by providing for the mandatory detention of participants for up to one year or until a positive decision by the immigration and refugee board regarding their refugee claims, or whichever comes sooner, in order to allow for the determination of identity, the identity admissibility and illegal activity.

It is unfair, unwarranted and unacceptable that in this day and age ships like these come into port and the individuals on those ships are simply allowed to move into the general population of our country. We cannot have that happen. We do not know who is on those ships. We have no idea whether there are serious criminals, smugglers or shipowners on them.

The process to determine the history of the individuals, the potential criminal activity of some of those individuals and the fairness upon which some of those individuals will receive refugee status in our country has to be done properly and right to ensure the safety of all individuals on the ship and all of the 34 million Canadians in our country.

Under the proposed act, our government is also reducing the attraction of coming to Canada by way of illegal human smuggling operations. We will prevent those who come to Canada as part of human smuggling events from applying for permanent residence status for a period of five years, should they successfully obtain refugee status, and prevent such individuals from sponsoring family members for a period of at least five years. These are not easy decisions to make. They are difficult ones to make in terms of how we will process individuals and families ending up on these ships.

Whether it is the United Nations, or international bodies or governments in our country, we have to stop the smugglers from doing this. It is not enough just to try to attempt to go after them internationally. We have to let smugglers know that it will be difficult for them to fill those ships, because individuals will not want to risk what may happen to them in the process of coming over.

● (1250)

Furthermore, after the passage of the act, our government will also make administrative changes to ensure that participants in a human smuggling events do not receive health care benefits that are any more generous than those that Canadians receive now. From my perspective, having gone across the country holding town hall meetings with a number of my colleagues, this is one of the principle

parts of what it is to be Canadian, and we exude that with the principle of fairness.

Canadians accept and understand our role from an international perspective to help those who need it most. We have shown that during tragic incidents, such as what happened in Haiti. We have shown that in our acceptance and our obligation, punching above our weight in terms of the number of refugees that we accept from the United Nations to come to our country each and every year.

What we cannot do, and what Canadians do not want us to do, is to move beyond the principle of fairness. If those who come to our country receive health care benefits that exceed the benefits Canadians receive, then we need to act, and Canadians have asked us to act. We are doing just that in this legislation.

As the minister has noted, the reforms that our government is proposing are tough. We are not saying anything else about that. They are tough, but they are fair.

While Canada has a proud history and a tradition of welcoming immigrants who wish to start a new life here, Canada's generous immigration system has become a target for human smuggling operations. We must take action to end the abuse of Canada's immigration system by human smugglers because it is not acceptable. The majority of Canadians do not accept it and the majority of people in the House of Commons do not accept it. However, to do so we must have laws and measures in place that will deter and prevent these operations.

Canada's refugee resettlement program is one of the most generous in the developed world. As I mentioned, there is no country, on a per capita basis, that accepts more refugees than Canada. We continually punch above our weight when it comes to showing care and compassion for those who need it the most. Canada is one of the most generous countries in the developed world. On average, we take one out of every ten refugees from around the world who wants to resettle here, and it is a big world.

That speaks to the acceptance that we have as Canadians and it speaks to what we as a government believe must be maintained and be continued in the future. However, we must do so under some principles, issues, laws and measures that make sense to us as a government, but also meet the common sense rule and the principle of fairness rule that Canadians have asked us to do.

The critic for the NDP mentioned the issue of a queue not existing. Individuals in refugee camps have lived in squalor and have done so for the last five to ten years. They have been determined by the UN to be refugees. We as a country have an obligation to accept our fair and higher percentage than that which has been slated for us.

We are shutting the doors on individuals and potential families coming here when a boat with 500 individuals on it comes in. It may slightly open the door for the opportunity for a new life for those individuals who have been smuggled here, but it shuts the door on those who are already refugees who have been waiting for that same opportunity to begin a new life.

Government Orders

I beg to differ with my hon. friend. We have a process when these ships come here. It sets in place what we have determined is an acute problem with queue-jumping. When those ships cannot rest in any port across our country, then we do not have queue-jumping. Instead we have a fair process that has been determined by the United Nations to be an extremely good one.

● (1255)

All sides of the House of Commons determined that reform was necessary in our refugee legislation, and that was passed unanimously. We are now coming close to the end of the implementation point where this process, the new refugee act, will now begin. It has been hailed across the world as a system that will improve what has already been considered by many to be one of the best systems in the world.

It is unfair to those who have patiently waited, through legitimate means, to come to our country to have human smugglers illegally bring people into our country. It is that simple and the Canadian public understands this. In every town hall meeting, whether they were in total support of the legislation or had some difficulty with parts of it, one point individuals did not argue with was the fact that Canada had a principle of fairness that it acted upon when it came to all of its international obligations, specifically in dealing with refugee reform.

Queue jumping is not fair. It is not fair to people in our country and it is not fair to those who have been determined to be refugees to come here. That principle upon which fairness exists has to start and this legislation would help do that. When this happens, Canada's immigration system becomes less fair. More than that, our safety is actually threatened by criminal or terrorist organizations that can and often do use proceeds from human smuggling operations to fund other more violent activities, which pose a significant threat to our way of life.

No one in the House can tell me that these individuals who pay \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 and sometimes upwards of \$50,000 for a place on what is deemed to be a boat have it in their pocket to do so. There is an obligation, in fact a price, that is on each one of those individuals to repay the exorbitant fee, the rip-off. The human smugglers could care less whether these individuals survive, only that the demanded payment is made in order to get these people from their country of origin. Those individuals spend their lifetime trying to repay that loan and they live in fear doing so. They have no idea what recriminations will be put upon them if they are unable to do so.

This circle of human smuggling has to stop. We have to find a way to erase the circle and not have it exist in the fashion that it has with Canada being a haven for these ships. Human smugglers cram individuals onto a ship and let it sail into a Canadian port. We will not let that happen in a way that Canada is seen across the world as the place to do this, or that Canada is a place for them to take a chance with hundreds or thousands of lives. It will not happen anymore. We are determined as a government to put a stop to it.

Canadians have told us en masse across the country. We just fought an election over a number of issues and this was one of them. Canadians sent us back to govern. They sent us here to implement

this bill because they believe it is right legislation and it is timely. Perhaps it should have been implemented decades ago.

Under the legislation, the very ship that my hon. colleague from the NDP spoke about would not have been turned away. It would have had an opportunity. There would be a process in place with legislation and regulations that would work.

I look forward to getting the bill to committee. I look forward to getting this bill back for second reading and implementing the legislation.

● (1300)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with the concept of queue-jumping.

I wonder how the parliamentary secretary thinks that people who have fled for their lives, who have been victims of violence, who have lost all of their property, their homes and with no ability to communicate, would know about Canadian regulations. How do they know there is a queue in Canada? It presumes a kind of world that does not exist out there for refugees who have fled for their lives.

They are not shopping for a country; they are fleeing to safety. The kind of penalties that the bill would place on these refugees would doubly victimize them. For those who have been victims of violence, who have lost everything, a year of detention would be imposed on them. They would be given an extra penalty for arriving in Canada.

How does the parliamentary secretary think refugees shop for countries to go to when they are in the business of fleeing for their lives?

● (1305)

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I certainly see the differences that we have on this side of the House, based on the question that is being asked.

First and foremost, these individuals who want to flee their countries do not shop. They are forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars to get on a ship. It is the human smugglers who do the shopping.

We are going to stop that. No longer are they going to take advantage of individuals who have basic human rights taken away from them by individuals who demand huge sums of money, who take those hundreds of individuals and stuff them on a boat, push it out of port, and hope it lands somewhere. Not only do these smugglers not have the nerve to show themselves, but they also actually dress themselves as potential refugees who are coming to this country to try to hide within them, to try to get the same kind of treatment that the individuals who are trying to flee their country are attempting to get from Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I were to canvass my constituents and Canadians today, I am sure they would be somewhat surprised that here we are on the first day of the session talking about the number one priority bill for this particular Parliament when the number one issue for Canadians is the issue of the economy, jobs, and so forth.

Government Orders

Having said that, as the critic for this particular bill I am very much concerned in terms of the direction that the government continues to want to push on this particular issue. I think it is very telling that in one of the newspaper articles I have received, we have a picture of the *Ocean Lady* and what appears to be the Prime Minister and the Minister of Immigration. For the Conservative government, that is what this has all been about. It is a wedge issue the government is using to try to demonize immigration, immigrants, and refugees and leave a bad taste for Canadians, when it should in fact be promoting tolerance, education, and so forth.

The government, the minister and the parliamentary secretary say we are after the human smugglers. The parliamentary secretary should recognize that, and I would ask him to acknowledge that going after these human smugglers means the people who are really going to be paying the price are the individuals who need and who are looking for asylum. Will the government not recognize that at least indirectly, if not directly, it is making a victim of the individuals who are seeking asylum?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, there are two points I want to make very quickly.

The first point is that those individuals who seek asylum in this country and who deserve asylum as refugees will receive it. There is absolutely no question. This legislation would not change any of that from happening. It will not, it cannot and it shall not.

The second point is this. I know the member was elected in a byelection in the previous Parliament, so he was here for part of it. We introduced this legislation in the last Parliament. We literally begged the opposition to support it, at least at second reading, so that we could get this legislation to a legislative committee to study it and try to work with them. I can explain to members that on two occasions both Bill C-35, the crooked consultants act, and Bill C-11, the refugee reform legislation, ended up coming back to the House and after negotiation and work passed unanimously. Every member sitting on the opposite side who was here in the last Parliament said no to that opportunity.

We are not going to say no to Canadians. It is back in the House. It is a priority. We said it was a priority. Those on this side of the House keep their word.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the parliamentary secretary's comments. I am sure most of us in this House, if not all of us, have had opportunity to work with refugees. In my situation, our church has sponsored refugees, and many of these people have become close friends.

Through the last number of months, the parliamentary secretary went on a tour and actually came to my area and conducted a round table there. The interesting thing I am finding is that it is not just the long-standing Canadians who want us to move on this issue; it is actually some of the most recent immigrants to this country who are the strongest supporters of the measures in this piece of legislation.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary would care to comment about that, because I think it is somewhat counterintuitive to our way of thinking. We think that maybe the most recent refugees do not want us to close these loopholes. However, I think we would find that they want us to follow the rules.

● (1310)

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for hosting the event. Two of my colleagues also attended the event held in the member's riding. It was well attended. It was a very fascinating and interesting discussion. We were there for a good part of the evening and made many notes.

The member makes a perfect point that in the last federal election those who believe we are moving in the right direction include all Canadians, whether they be Canadians who sought and received permanent residency and citizenship in the last 12 months, the last 12 years or the last 80 years.

Across the board this legislation speaks to what Canadians have said is the right thing to do. I come back to the point that the member refers to, which is the principle of fairness. The principle of fairness suggests that when we have achieved it, a vast majority of Canadians, regardless of how long they have had the honour to be Canadians, agree with the direction we are moving.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary gave a passionate defence of the people coming on these boats as victims, saying they were forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars to come here and that they are victims.

If that is the case, I would like the parliamentary secretary to explain how depriving those people of the ability to sponsor their families for five years, depriving those people of being able to apply for permanent residency for five years and preventing those people from getting travel documents issued by the Canadian government for five years helps them. If those people are truly victims, why is the government re-victimizing them and punishing them again?

In terms of who is supporting the bill, I have a list of about 100 different groups across the country that oppose the bill, including Amnesty International, the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C., the Centre for Refugee Studies, Christian Reform World Relief Committee, Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, the Jesuit Refugee and Migrant Service, the Quaker Committee for Refugees, and so on.

The vast majority, if not the unanimous community, of groups that work with refugees in this country are diametrically opposed to the bill.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I have tried. I have repeated time and time again, whether in Vancouver, Kitchener, Halifax, or the House of Commons, that the bill is everything about ensuring that we assist victims and that we go after smugglers.

While I appreciate what the member is saying in making large assumptions about an individual who eventually is qualified for refugee status, I do not think true refugees fleeing for their lives from their countries of origin come to this country and are concerned.

What they are concerned about is their ability to achieve refugee status and to start a new life. The five-year period to ensure that we are doing this properly still allows us to keep our arms as wide open as we ever have as a country in welcoming those who need our assistance, but at least it is telling human smugglers that they are not going to take advantage of our country anymore.

Government Orders

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-4, the Conservative government's bill to address human smuggling.

We in the official opposition and key stakeholders from across Canada from all walks of life are very concerned about the approach the Conservative government is taking with the bill.

The Conservatives claim that the bill cracks down on human smuggling, but in reality, as the bill has been written, it will concentrate too much power in the hands of the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and unfairly penalize the would-be refugees.

New Democrats would rather attack the criminals, the smugglers and the traffickers. Instead of doing that, the bill will hurt legitimate refugees and people who try to help them. The proposed process is unclear. It is arbitrary and it is very unfairly discriminatory.

The House approved a strong and balanced refugee law in the last sitting. Instead of the new, flawed approach proposed by the bill, we need to have better enforcement of the old bill that was passed in the last Parliament.

Conservatives should be less focused on photo ops and more focused on enforcing the laws that we already have against human smuggling. The government's approach to human trafficking and human smuggling should be focused on providing law enforcement agencies and the Immigration and Refugee Board with the resources they need to get the job done instead of playing politics with refugees.

Bill C-4 takes the wrong approach in a number of ways. I would like to highlight some of the concerns of the official opposition today.

First, regarding designated claimants, the bill allows the minister to designate a group of refugees as irregular arrivals in a fashion that creates two classes of refugee claimants. This poses a possible violation of charter equality rights and the refugee convention.

Second, designated claimants, including children, will be mandatorily detained for a year on arrival or designation, without even a review by the Immigration and Refugee Board. This is an even more clear violation of the charter, as the Supreme Court of Canada has already struck down mandatory detention without review on security certificates. It seems that this could imply that indefinite detention is on the basis of identity, with no possible release until the minister decides that identity is established.

As I am sure members are aware, arbitrary detention is also a violation of a number of international treaties to which we are signatories.

There is also a concern with the release conditions imposed by Bill C-4, as the mandatory conditions set out in regulations will be imposed on all designated claimants released from detention. It is very troubling that the conditions are not specified, making this very unclear. On principle, though, mandatory conditions would be unfair, as they are unable to take into account individual cases.

The problem also extends to the appeal process, since under Bill C-4 decisions on claims by designated persons could not be appealed

to the refugee appeal division. This is discriminatory and again risks violating provisions and the refugee convention.

The government has tried this approach before, and all parties opposed the previous bill that was introduced in the last Parliament, Bill C-49 when it was brought to Parliament because there were concerns about the undue amount of power it handed to the minister and because it would likely contravene Canadian and international law. Those concerns are still part of the new Bill C-4.

We can look at other international examples. My colleague from Vancouver Kingsway pointed this out earlier, and I will highlight it again.

● (1315)

When we look at what has happened elsewhere in the world, similar laws have been met with opposition by Amnesty International, which has started a campaign to tackle the same misinformation surrounding refugees who arrive by boat. The campaign highlights the fact that it is legal under international law to arrive by boat and that the vast majority of those who go to another country by boat are in fact legitimate claimants. This bill ignores this information.

There was a high court ruling in November 2010 in Australia that ruled in favour of two Sri Lankan refugees who claimed that laws barring them from appealing in Australian courts were unfair. The approach taken by the Conservative government in this bill makes it very possible that the same situation could arise in Canada if the bill is passed.

What is really happening is that the Conservatives are playing politics with refugees. That is the real optic of this bill. They are claiming this is a public safety issue and the bill was introduced by the public safety minister, but the issue is clearly one that primarily deals with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. This is an immigration and refugee issue, not a public safety issue.

The official opposition recognizes and respects responsibility for refugees, unlike the Conservatives who have taken an approach that would damage Canada's standing in the international community and violates its commitment under the conventions relating to the status of refugees and the rights of the child. The process proposed by Bill C-4 is unclear, arbitrary and, ultimately, very discriminatory. Even more telling is that research and studies from other countries have shown that the bill would not curb human smuggling at all.

Government Orders

It is not just the official opposition that has concerns about this bill. There are many key stakeholders across our country with questions and concerns on this issue. They are outright worried about the approach that the government is taking to tackle this problem. The Canadian Council for Refugees has called for this bill to be scrapped entirely. Amnesty International Canada says that Bill C-4 falls far short of Canada's international human rights and refugee protection obligations and will result in serious violations of the rights of refugees and migrants. A program director with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association has issued a very scathing attack on the Conservative government's attitude toward refugees generally and Bill C-4 in particular stating that there was no need for this draconian measure contemplated by the Conservative government.

Another organization that has spoken out against this particular bill and the one previous to this, the Canadian Bar Association, stated that it did not support the legislation in its previous form as it violates charter protection against arbitrary detention and prompt review of detention, as well as Canada's international obligations respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection. An expert panel at the Centre for Refugee Studies has called this proposed bill draconian.

As we can see, many organizations that come from various walks of life have spoken against this bill being proposed by the Conservative government.

It is clear that the bill takes the wrong approach. I will speak more specifically to why the bill is a wrong approach for Canada to take. First, current legislation already allows for a life sentence for human smuggling. Bill C-4 may be contrary to section 15 of the charter regarding equality under the law. Bill C-4 would create new second-class refugees who are denied permanent residency, temporary resident permits, denied on humanitarian and compassionate grounds and denied applications for permanent residence.

● (1320)

Many legal scholars and constitutional experts argue that this would create inequality under the law simply because the minister has designated immigrants due to their mode of arrival.

Bill C-4 may be contrary to section 9 of the charter, "arbitrary detention". Bill C-4 would also impose a mandatory detention on designated foreign nationals for up to 12 months.

Bill C-4 is contrary to the UN convention relating to the status of refugees. In particular, Article 31 states:

The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

In summary, given all the information, the official opposition, key stakeholders and many concerned Canadians across this country are asking why the Conservatives are taking this approach. What answers does the government have for questions about the unconstitutionality of this bill, in particular the arbitrary detention measures? Even more concerning is how the government can justify the mandatory detention of children.

My friend across the aisle talked about how Canadians have been compassionate about our immigration and refugee policies over the years. I would have to agree with that because I am an immigrant myself. I came here 31 years ago and it was this country's generosity that allowed me to migrate here.

However, I would ask my colleagues across the aisle if they are changing the definition of "compassion". How can they justify putting children in detention? In my dictionary, the dictionary that Canadians have, compassion is not defined by putting children in detention centres. That is very troubling to me. Surely the Conservatives cannot justify putting children in detention.

This summer, I had an opportunity to attend a soccer tournament in my riding. I saw a program where new immigrant students were playing soccer matches with one another. The program was helping youth integrate into society. That is the kind of Canada that I envision. I do not envision a Canada where we put children in detention centres before we allow them to prosper in this country. Canada's compassion is why I am proud to be a Canadian. We need to ensure that children who come here from different countries where they were persecuted are treated with compassion and not put into detention centres.

I cannot understand how the government can justify the detention of children for over a year without any review at all. Refugees often arrive by plane. Does the government have any explanation as to why it is targeting the refugees on board boats? It is totally unclear what criteria the government would use to designate irregular travellers. Is arriving by plane possibly irregular or is it only by boat? It is even more unclear what would be defined as a group. Could two or more people be considered a group? This would mean that nearly all refugees would be designated simply because they do not travel alone. Is that fair?

The bill would block family reunification. As we heard previously, it would take five years after refugees have come here for them to be reunited with their family. That is not acceptable. It prevents some refugees from applying for permanent residency for up to five years. Why prevent family reunification? That is the question I have for my colleagues opposite in this House.

● (1325)

Bill C-4 would give the government the power to arrest and detain any non-citizens, including permanent residents, based on mere suspicion of criminality. Why is the government attacking the rights of newcomers?

The final question I have for the government side is as follows. In view of all the information, the concerns from key stakeholders, refugee groups and so many Canadians from all walks of life, would the minister tell us why the government did not decide to go after just the criminals and not the legitimate refugees?

Government Orders

• (1330)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come from a riding that is one of the most diverse in the entire country. In fact, some of the individuals who, unfortunately, were on one of those ships actually ended up in my riding. Many have remained in hiding. They are in fear of the people who smuggled them here. They have a huge debt that they have to somehow try to pay off. These individuals are not enjoying their Canadian experience because of the way in which they came to this country.

When talking about compassion, it would be compassionate to have a refugee reform process that was changed unanimously by the House. It would be compassionate to change the immigration system so that a million people are not waiting to come to this country by cutting it in half. It would be compassionate to increase settlement services for immigrants, including those in my riding, and in my community, which is one of the fastest growing communities in the country, so they can have access to local services to help them find jobs, help them learn English and help them improve and be like my parents who came to this country in the 1960s and who worked very hard.

Unfortunately, the Liberals do not understand that when the immigration system and the refugee system are improved, we are actually looking after the economy because immigrants, people who come to this country, are an important part of helping make this country as great as it is and as great as it will be.

I have a question for the hon. member. Why, when we see the devastation that these people coming over on these boats have suffered, will the member not simply join with us in attacking the people who deserve to be attacked, the people who force these poor people onto ships and force them into a life of debt, the criminals, the smugglers? The member should work with us to pass this legislation so we can get the smugglers out of the system and have a better refugee system so people who come here can enjoy their Canadian experience and will not need to live in hiding across this country.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, this is all smoke and mirrors. I have seen this double-speak from the Conservatives over and over again.

Can the Conservatives look Canadians in the eye and tell them that people who are smuggling refugees into Canada are on those ships? The smugglers will not be on the ships. Only the refugees will be on the ships. Smugglers will not knowingly jump on these ships to come to Canada along with the refugees.

In talking about compassion and how we have evolved over the years, I migrated to Canada 31 years ago and it took two years for our family reunification application to pass at that time. Under the Conservative government, we have seen family reunification times grow every year.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative member recognized that immigrants do contribute to the economy. I want to kind of twist that comment around to this particular bill.

Would the hon. member agree with me that the longer legitimate refugees are held in settlements the longer they are prevented from

being able to become active in the Canadian economy and that not allowing for a faster process does have a negative impact on those who are here legitimately and who are not allowed to participate but are locked up for greater periods of time under this administration? Would that not make some economic sense as well?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. The best way to help our refugees is to integrate them into our economy and into our country as soon as possible. The way to do that is through the process we have in place. We have the Immigration and Refugee Board that deals with refugees. We have a system that works.

However, we do need to provide more resources to our law enforcement agencies and to the Immigration and Refugee Board so these individuals can be processed quickly and become productive citizens of this country and contribute to the economy.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, foreigners accepted as refugees cannot become permanent residents for five years, so they are not able to study. Earlier, members were talking about the economy. If these refugees have to wait five years to receive recognition of their education equivalency or to have access to university for those who already have a degree, this means that we lose out. We cannot retrain these newcomers and they end up trapped in poverty or being economically dependent.

Does my colleague not think that there is a contradiction when we say that we must stand up for the Canadian economy, yet we are closing the door on these people for five years, not allowing them to retrain or to contribute their professional skills to Canadian society? Is that not a contradiction?

[*English*]

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has asked a wonderful, very sensitive question.

The Conservatives always talk about one thing and then do another. If they were really concerned about helping immigrants and refugees integrate into our communities in this wonderful country and to help our economy, they would be putting procedures in place to do just that. They would be helping the Immigration and Refugee Board to process them faster so we could get them into our system and become productive citizens. However, the way the Conservatives have this set up it will take five years.

My colleague is absolutely right. The people that are coming here may want to go to university or college to upgrade their education so they can integrate into our society and get the jobs that will help them and their families. Certainly that does not seem to be where the Conservatives want to go on this.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, we heard just moments ago the question from the Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage in which he referred to this bill as assisting refugees in “enjoying their Canadian experience”. I wonder, how is jailing refugees—men, women and children—in Canada for a year somehow an enjoyable Canadian experience?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I talked about this earlier in the House and I will repeat it. I am the father of two children and I cannot imagine my children being subjected to this sort of Draconian measure that is being brought in by the Conservatives.

Children and their parents are persecuted in the countries from which they come. They are persecuted by the smugglers on their journey to a safe country. And the Conservative government wants to put in place a Draconian law that would detain these young people for over a year.

The Conservatives are redefining compassion. Their definition of compassion is to put children in detention centres in this country.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments about the number of groups that are opposed to this measure. What our colleague fails to understand is that this was a clear part of our last campaign. It was one of our platform measures. It had been discussed prior to the House rising. Canadians knew what they were voting for when they supported this measure.

I would like to ask my colleague, why is he not willing to accept a strong mandate for this reasonable and fair approach that deals with this? Would he actually want those who have been sitting in the queue for years to take a back seat to those who are now jumping the queue by getting on boats that are operated by illegal smugglers?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, there is a consistent way the Conservatives ask questions. They keep reinforcing that. My colleague said that we have already talked about queue jumping. When a person is being persecuted in a country where, for example, there is a war going on, there is no queue. The person gets on a plane or some other mode of transport and goes to whichever country will provide a safe haven. There are no queues. We should get that straight.

• (1340)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of Bill C-4, a bill which would prevent human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system.

[*Translation*]

Human smuggling is a nefarious industry, one that exists around the world. Unfortunately, thousands of people die each year because of illegal migration and the smugglers who facilitate this migration.

Parliament needs to take action to put an end to the activities of human smugglers who have chosen Canada as a destination for their business, which is the dreadful exploitation of human beings.

[*English*]

Every year thousands of people around the world die in illegal smuggling operations organized by human smugglers. These people

are not humanitarians. They do not assist people to become bona fide refugees and protect them from persecution. They are profiteers.

In the particular context with which we are dealing, namely those smuggling syndicates that are targeting Canada and which managed to bring two large shiploads of illegal migrants to our west coast in the past two years, our intelligence agencies and security and police partners in Southeast Asia all told us that these syndicates of human smugglers are essentially the gunrunners, the smugglers who helped to fuel the civil war in Sri Lanka by illicitly bringing contraband arms, bombs and guns into a theatre of conflict leading to the death of tens of thousands of innocent civilians. Since the end of the hostilities in Sri Lanka, these smuggling syndicates have been looking for a new business model, and instead of moving guns and bombs, they have switched to moving people for a very high price.

We know that those who have enlisted these smuggling syndicates to try to come illegally to Canada in violation of our immigration laws, in violation of our marine laws, in violation of international law, in violation of every principle of safe migration, have been willing to commit to pay up to \$50,000 to the illegal smuggling syndicates. Typically, they pay about 10% of the fixed price as a down payment. A typical down payment to the smuggling syndicate is in the range of \$5,000. The balance is typically payable over the course of time after arrival in Canada and very often through coerced participation in criminal activity.

As I mentioned, every year around the world thousands of people die in smuggling operations, whether they were migrants who suffocated in shipping containers crossing the English Channel or whether they were people who paid smugglers to go to Australia in dangerous shipping boats that crashed up against the shore.

We must act to send a very clear message that Canada is the most open developed country in the world to immigration, to newcomers, to refugees who need our protection and seek new opportunities. In order to maintain that remarkable openness, which by the way represents in Canada the highest level of immigration per capita in the developed world wherein we add .8% of our population per year through legal immigrants, and the highest level of refugee resettlement in the developed world through the 20% increase in our targets for refugee resettlement, by next year we will be accepting some 14,000 resettled refugees. Last year we welcomed 280,000 new permanent residents and we are increasing our program for refugee resettlement.

In order to maintain that generosity, that openness, and the public support which is necessary to maintain that attitude of openness, we must demonstrate to Canadians that our system is characterized by fairness and the rule of law.

One of the reasons that Canadians are so understandably upset when they see large scale smuggling operations is that it violates their sense of fairness and their belief that our immigration system is characterized by the application of fair rules.

Government Orders

Millions of people have come to Canada through our fair and generous immigration or refugee resettlement programs. In my experience they are those who most profoundly resent those who would pay illegal criminal networks to be smuggled to Canada illegally, avoiding the legal system.

• (1345)

My friend opposite and others have said that there is no so-called queue for refugees. First, I do not know how he knows that all or most of those who pay smuggling syndicates are refugees. We constantly hear from the critics that when we talk about our efforts to stop smugglers from targeting Canada we are talking about refugees. How do they know that? We know that many of the people in the two vessels who came to Canada most recently were coming from India transiting through Thailand, both democracies, both with the rule of law and protection for human rights. Perhaps colleagues opposite did not see the CBC report from Chennai in Tamil Nadu in India. Tamil Nadu is a region of southeastern India where tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Sri Lankan Tamils migrated during the conflict in Sri Lanka, where they sought temporary protection or new opportunities.

The CBC interviewed a group of several young Sri Lankan Tamil migrants in Tamil Nadu, India who said they had made down payments of up to \$5,000 to these syndicates to be transported to Canada. They were not in a war zone. They were not subject to persecution. They said they wanted to come to Canada because they had heard about our “free monthly salaries”. We have to be very careful. We cannot and should not prejudice newly arrived migrants as to their prospective refugee claims. Some may be refugees; some may not. Many may just be seeking economic opportunity and heard that Canada is a soft target and therefore they are willing to pay smuggling syndicates.

What this bill seeks to do is maintain Canada's commitment to our domestic and international legal obligations with respect to refugee protection and to respect our humanitarian obligation to protect bona fide refugees fleeing persecution while at the same time changing the business model of the criminal smuggling syndicates. That is the objective of this bill.

We seek, first, to increase in the bill penalties for smugglers so that there will be a mandatory minimum prison sentence of 10 years for those who are found to participate in a human smuggling event which involves at least 50 individuals or in which there are exacerbating circumstances such as loss of life. We also massively increase the monetary fines for the owners of ships involved in these voyages. It is typically ships, but I should point out that the bill could address non-marine human smuggling events which have occurred in Canada.

That is an important message, but let us be realistic. I have studied this issue very closely. In fact, just last month I was in New Zealand and Bangkok, Thailand meeting with international partners and our own security agencies, as well as international police forces. I was trying to get a better understanding of the nature of these smuggling enterprises. It is very clear that we cannot impose Canadian law in terms of these sanctions on smugglers who operate overseas. The kingpins of these syndicates very rarely come to Canada. They are

most typically jumping around between transit countries in Southeast Asia beyond our legal reach.

Having said that, there is an important dimension of our fight against human smuggling which is not formally in the legislation. It is an operational dimension whereby our government, through the good leadership of my colleague, the hon. Minister of Public Safety and the security and police agencies under his ministry, have dispatched additional resources for investigation and co-operation with the governments, police and intelligence agencies in the transit countries. Thanks to the additional resources that we have put into the region, we have managed successfully to prevent any of the planned voyages that were to target Canada. We know, without getting into operational or confidential details, that several voyages were planned for Canada that have been successfully interrupted, thanks in part to the co-operation of Canadian security forces in the region.

• (1350)

Having said that, let us be clear. In any black market there will always be someone willing to provide the contraband good or service if there is sufficient demand at a sufficiently high price point, because we are talking about profiteers. If they are able to get commitments of up to \$50,000 to come to Canada, they will continue to try to find the vessels and put together the complex logistics to bring people from Southeast Asia to Canada. Therefore, in this legislation we must reduce the price point that people are willing to pay to be illegally smuggled to Canada through these criminal syndicates. That is the objective of the bill.

I think some opposition members have not studied the issue in all of its subtlety, or perhaps they do not understand how we are trying to disincentivize people from being willing to pay up to \$50,000 to the smuggling syndicates. That is what the bill seeks to do.

For example, by reducing some of the privileges that normally exist for asylum claimants in Canada, should someone who has arrived in a designated smuggling event under this bill be found by our legal system to be a bona fide refugee in need of our protection, we will not send them back to their country of origin. We will therefore respect and conform with our international and domestic legal obligations. However, there is no obligation on Canada to grant such persons immediate permanent residency, which is normally the case for successful asylum claimants.

What the bill would do would be to say that we would grant people who are deemed to be bona fide refugees who have arrived in a designated smuggling event a temporary residency status in Canada for up to five years, after which we would then reassess the conditions in their country of origin to determine whether the country conditions have improved and whether the risk that was determined at their refugee hearing still continues.

If at that point there is a determination that conditions have improved significantly in that country, that they would no longer face risk if removed, they could then face removal back to their country of origin. However, should conditions in that country not have improved after five years, they would then have access to permanent residency in Canada as a further reflection of our humanitarian instinct.

Government Orders

During those initial five years, here is the key disincentive. Such individuals would not be entitled to the privilege of sponsoring family members to Canada because here is the key aspect of the bill. We know that people are prepared to commit to up to \$50,000 based on a calculation that they subsequently will be able to sponsor family members, so the \$50,000 price point is really not associated with just the migration of one individual, the smuggled individual, but indeed all subsequent family members who may follow that successful claimant. There is a commercial calculation being made here that the \$40,000 to \$50,000 price point may lead to permanent residency for the primary migrant and then subsequently permanent residency for members of the family who in turn could help to pay off the debt to the smuggling syndicate.

In the bill we are seeking to create a doubt, a question mark in the minds of those who constitute the market for the smuggling gangs. Will they be able to get permanent residency in Canada? That would no longer be a certainty. Will they be able to sponsor family members and help pay off the debt? It would no longer be a certainty. We are very strongly persuaded that this is a balanced approach.

Thirteen months ago, when the last large vessel arrived off the west coast with some 500 illegal migrants, Canadians were understandably disturbed with this large scale violation of the integrity of our immigration law and with this mass human smuggling voyage. At that time public opinion polls consistently said that about two-thirds of Canadians thought the government should prevent such vessels from even entering Canadian territorial waters. About 55% of Canadians, and an even higher percentage of new Canadians, immigrants to this country, said that if people who arrive in such a vessel get access to our refugee system and are deemed to be bona fide refugees, they should be immediately returned. That is what the majority of Canadians said.

• (1355)

As a government, we do not believe that approach would respect our legal or humanitarian obligations. Let me be clear. Contrary to some of the demagoguery we hear from critics of the bill, we would continue, notwithstanding that public opinion environment, to allow illegally smuggled migrants who file the refugee claim access to our asylum system, which is the fairest asylum system in the world, bar none. They would continue to have access to that system. We would not send back a single person who is deemed by our legal system likely to face danger of persecution or risk to their lives in their country of origin.

This bill exceeds our international and domestic legal obligations with respect to non-refoulement of refugees. The opposition says that this is like refusing to allow Jewish refugees to come here during the second world war. Nonsense. This approach would allow any refugee, or even a false refugee claimant, access to our asylum system. It would simply reduce some of the privileges that normally are provided to asylum claimants in order to reduce their willingness to pay tens of thousands of dollars to a smuggling syndicate.

One of the contentious aspects of the bill is the enhanced detention provisions. I would invite members of the opposition, perhaps at committee, to ask members of our Canada Border Services Agency and lawyers from my ministry about the difficulty of processing

hundreds of smuggled asylum claimants who are seeking release from detention, because we have to do detention reviews under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act every two, seven and then subsequent 30 days. This means that with several hundred people we have a non-stop revolving door of detention reviews which is massively inefficient.

I would also point out there has been a red herring created by the opposition about mandatory detention for up to a year of all smuggled migrants. The minister, under the bill, would have the authority to release people in exceptional circumstances, such as children. Under the new asylum system adopted by Parliament last year in Bill C-11, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, bona fide asylum claimants will receive a positive protection decision and therefore permanent residency within about three months of making their claim. Such smuggled migrants in the asylum system who are bona fide refugees would be automatically released from immigration detention when they receive a positive asylum decision, and permanent residency in about 90 days.

Let me point out by way of comparison, because there is a lack of perspective in context here, that most of our peer democracies, most other liberal democracies, including those governed by social democratic parties such as the Labour government in Australia, have mandatory detention for all or almost all asylum claimants, not just illegally smuggled asylum claimants, but all or almost all asylum claimants.

That was the law adopted by the United Kingdom under the previous social democratic Labour government. That is the law in Australia under the social democratic Labour government.

I remember Prime Minister Gillard of Australia congratulating the NDP on its 50th anniversary. She actually defends a policy that puts under permanent detention all asylum claimants until their status is resolved. This is, by comparison, a radically more modest approach which only addresses illegally smuggled migrants for a limited period of time until they receive status, which under the new system would be three months.

In closing, the bill constitutes a balanced and humane approach to combatting the scourge of human smuggling. It would allow access to our refugee protection system for bona fide victims of persecution. It would reduce the massive pressure on our system when we face hundreds of people arriving at the same time. It would provide disincentives for people to pay tens of thousands of dollars to criminal networks to be smuggled illegally to Canada, and it would encourage them rather to seek regional resettlement opportunities or protection, if they are indeed refugees.

• (1400)

This is a bill that Canadians expect and demand. We must stand up for our tradition of protection of refugees and our legal and generous immigration system by combatting those who would abuse our country's generosity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Questions and comments for the minister will have to wait until the House returns to this matter.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that on September 22 players of the Moose Jaw Warriors will play their home opener in an unfamiliar setting to them and to their fans. I am speaking about a landmark facility featuring a hockey rink, an eight-sheet curling rink and much more. About 250,000 people will pass through the doors each year, bringing tourism dollars to Moose Jaw.

The Government of Canada contributed through the building Canada fund. Other major donors include the Government of Saskatchewan, the City of Moose Jaw, Moose Jaw Soccer Association, Moose Jaw Warriors and JGL Livestock.

Mosaic, a potash company with its Canadian headquarters in my riding, secured the naming rights through a donation for operational funds.

I am pleased to inform members that Moose Javians made this project a reality through their remarkable generosity and community spirit. I am honoured to be part of this community.

It is game on at Mosaic Place in Moose Jaw.

* * *

STANLEY CUP

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in June all Canadians watched with heartbreak as Canada's team, the Canucks, lost the final game of the Stanley Cup to the Boston Bruins.

Being from the beautiful city of Vancouver, I made a few friendly wagers over the outcome of that series, most notably with my friend, the member Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.

I rise today to honour that wage by standing in the House to praise the victorious team.

As it turns out, this is an easy task because the essence of the Bruins' victory lies in the heart of British Columbia.

Milan Lucic, the magnificent Bruins' power forward, is a product of, members guessed it, Vancouver. Mr. Lucic was born in Vancouver and learned his craft in the rinks of East Vancouver, including in the great riding of Vancouver Kingsway.

The incomparable, recently retired Mark Recchi, holder of three Stanley Cup rings, was also born in beautiful British Columbia, in Kamloops.

Therefore, as I rise to praise the Boston Bruins, I do so proudly with the full knowledge that their victory was only made possible through the contribution of outstanding British Columbians.

Statements by Members

ROSALIE HALL

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to thank my constituents for placing their trust in me. Scarborough Centre is right in the heart of Scarborough and it is a great privilege to represent such a diverse and vibrant community.

Since being elected to office, I have visited a multitude of different organizations and I am humbled to have met so many wonderful people who make up the very fabric of this great riding.

In fact, just last week, I was fortunate to be able to visit Rosalie Hall, a young parent resource centre situated right beside the Scarborough General Hospital. Serving the community for nearly 100 years, Rosalie Hall has focused in on the health, educational needs and the overall well-being of both young mothers and their children.

I would like to applaud and congratulate Mr. Alan Nickell, executive director, his staff and all of the remarkable volunteers at Rosalie Hall for serving the community and for their outstanding work in providing support and opening up new avenues for so many deserving young women and their families.

* * *

[Translation]

CHILD NUTRITION

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, students across Canada recently returned to school. When I was a school board trustee, I saw, first-hand, children who had nothing to eat. We now know that this situation is only getting worse. A growing number of children are starting their school days on empty stomachs. We all know that being hungry makes it impossible to maintain the concentration needed for learning in order to pursue one's education, which is crucial to Canada's future.

Despite local community organizations' superhuman efforts to help these schoolchildren, too many of them still do not have anything to eat. We need to do a great deal more. Is it too much to ask this government to introduce a national nutrition program that could help these victims in our society?

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

UKRAINE

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently we have seen some very troubling events take place in Ukraine. The persecution, arrest and continued detention of Yulia Tymoshenko, along with many others, are cause for great concern both in Canada as well as in the international community. Also, we deplore the murder of the journalist Georgy Gongadze and the harassment and intimidation of Ukrainian historians who draw attention to Ukrainian national resistance during Soviet rule.

Statements by Members

These apparently politically motivated actions undermine the rule of law and human rights, which are at the core of all democracies. The Ukrainian people, having long lived under the rule of regressive and undemocratic Soviet policies, will not accept a return to darker times. Ukrainians deserve to live in a peaceful and prosperous society, where they can enjoy the same freedoms and safeties seen across other western nations.

I stand with the 1.25 million Ukrainian-Canadians, many of whom reside in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, who urge the Ukrainian government to strengthen judiciary independence free of political interference.

Slava Ukraina.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WAPIKONI MOBILE

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Wapikoni Mobile, a project involving two travelling studios that have visited over a dozen first nations villages every year for the past seven years.

To date, 2,000 young people have learned to create and produce movies and music and develop basic skills, life skills and even survival skills.

This program is for marginalized youth who are not reachable in the more traditional ways: youth at risk for dropping out of school, addiction or suicide.

Wapikoni Mobile restores their confidence and their appetite for learning and helps them prepare to enter the workforce.

The proof is in the pudding: the project creates local jobs and has won 44 Canadian and international awards. What is more, these contemporary works help break down stereotypes and promote aboriginal culture across the country and throughout the world.

Long live Wapikoni, in spite of the recent unexpected cuts to the program.

* * *

[*English*]

SARNIA LABOUR DAY PARADE

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in our nation's House of Commons to call attention to the 2011 Sarnia Labour Day parade, an annual tradition in my riding of Sarnia—Lambton since 1902. Cool weather and little rain could not dampen the spirits of the marchers, and the crowds lined the streets numbering in the thousands and cheered on the 57 separate entries that formed the parade's floats.

Sarnia—Lambton has a strong tradition of support for the local labour force, and this was evident on September 5 as local unions were joined by the St. Clair Drum Line, members of the Sarnia Sting and Sarnia Braves baseball team and the mayor's 2010 honour list recipients. Eight trophies were presented to participants, including the Save the Sarnia Jail committee that won for best overall union float.

I send my congratulations for such a great success to the president of the Sarnia District Labour Council, June Maruschak, and the chief organizer for the 2011 parade, Penny Jakubowski.

On behalf of Sarnia—Lambton, I extend my thanks.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the leader of the Palestinian Authority confirmed what had long been rumoured: the Palestinians intend to seek full membership and state recognition at the United Nations during this week's general assembly meetings.

I was proud to hear the Prime Minister say a very short time later that Canada would vote against such a move, calling it "not helpful" to the cause of peace. This is an attempt to circumvent the negotiation process. It will make a resumption of peace talks more difficult, raise expectations, yet not change the facts on the ground or improve lives and could lead to heightened frustrations. The result could be mass demonstrations or even another intifada. This will only contribute to regional instability.

Our government believes the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is through negotiations between the parties. It is our hope negotiations can resume as soon as possible.

I am confident the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs will make Canada's views widely known in New York this week. Hon. members should be prepared to consider all options if this unilateral action succeeds.

* * *

● (1410)

WILLIAM COMMANDA

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on August 3, Algonquin elder William Commanda passed away at the age of 97 at his home in Kitigan Zibi, near Maniwaki.

[*Translation*]

William Commanda was a pillar of our community. He was generous in sharing his wisdom. He was a visionary and an exceptional man. He leaves behind a legacy that will forever inspire us.

[*English*]

I extend my deepest condolences to Chief Gilbert Whiteduck, the grandfather's family, the Algonquin nation and his followers in Canada and abroad.

[*Translation*]

His wisdom, patience and sense of humour will be missed and, although he is no longer with us, his memory will help guide us as we pursue his quest for justice and peace in the world.

[*English*]

We thank Grandfather Commanda for his contributions.

Miigwetch.

*Statements by Members***ARCTICNET**

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to tell the House about our government's latest commitment to northern environmental protection, a five-year renewal of funding for ArcticNet.

Last week the Minister of Industry announced a \$67 million contribution toward ArcticNet's research, which is focused on sustainable development, marine ecosystems, clean air and other challenges facing our north. Thanks to this commitment to ArcticNet, researchers and communities will be able to work together to better understand our northern environment, which is key to building a prosperous and environmentally protected north.

After years of neglect by the previous Liberal government, and despite the anti-development opposition of the NDP, our government, led by our Prime Minister, is acting to ensure that the north fulfills its true potential as a healthy, prosperous, environmentally protected and secure region within a strong and sovereign Canada.

* * *

JACK LAYTON

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my late friend and colleague Jack Layton, Leader of the Opposition and member of Parliament for Toronto—Danforth. He was my friend and my family's friend, but he was also every family's friend, especially those who long for social justice, economic security or simply recognition of their value in society.

We each have our own memories of Jack: how he reached out to us and touched us by his humanity; how he inspired us by his commitment and dedication; how he showed his compassion for people and his passion for showing others that there is a better way to do things. We remember how he loved people and how people loved him back.

In his letter to Canadians, he offers us the watchwords of “love”, “hope” and “optimism”, his belief in young people and the future they can help us to create, and the conviction that we can succeed.

By his own life and his political career, he has shown us that it can be done, and now it is up to us to make it happen.

* * *

*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since taking office, the Conservative government has been focusing on what matters to Canadians—creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

I am pleased that Canada has been ranked as having the soundest banks in the world for the fourth year in a row, and that nearly 600,000 net new jobs have been created since July 2009, the strongest growth record in the G7.

Our economic recovery remains fragile and too many Canadians are still looking for work. That is why we are firmly focused on the implementation of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan—a low-tax plan for jobs and growth. We want to keep the Canadian

economy on the right track with measures such as the hiring credit for small business.

* * *

*[English]***CHILD NUTRITION**

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian children have returned to school, but many of them are going to class hungry. Forty per cent of elementary students and 62% of secondary school students do not eat a nutritious breakfast. One in five Canadian children lives below the poverty line, which may lead to poor nutritional status and poor child health outcomes.

However, Canadian children from all income brackets are vulnerable to inadequate nutrition. Hungry children cannot learn. Their learning capabilities are affected by how recently they have eaten. Malnutrition in early life can limit long-term intellectual development.

Fortunately, school nutrition programs are highly effective in providing children with nutritious diets, better cognitive abilities and health. Unfortunately, Canada is one of the few developed countries without a national nutrition program.

Access to adequate food is a right of every individual. We must therefore fight for a national school nutrition program for all our children.

* * *

●(1415)

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this September, we commemorate the 71st anniversary of the Battle of Britain. As the first major battle fought primarily in the air and a turning point in the Second World War, the Battle of Britain remains a critical event in our past.

Britain looked to the skies for support and Canadians and the Royal Canadian Air Force were there. Our valiant airmen worked with British and allied forces to save Britain from invasion and pave the way for the liberation of Europe. When it became clear that the Royal Air Force would not buckle, the battle ended and Britain was safe.

Today, Canada remembers its heroes. We pay tribute to our history and honour the generation of Canadians who bravely served this country, as well as those who wear the Canadian uniform with pride today.

Not long ago, we revived the memory of Churchill's 'Few' as we reintroduced the Royal Canadian Air Force to Canada and our allies.

Oral Questions

As Canadians, we owe it to our veterans to honour their legacy, and watching the Hurricane and the Spitfire slip the surly bonds of earth over Ottawa on the weekend provided a beautiful and poignant reminder of that history and heritage.

Today, Canada remembers the veterans of the Battle of Britain. Lest we forget.

* * *

[Translation]

WILLIAM COMMANDA

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on August 3, 2011, a great man passed away. William Commanda, the spiritual leader of an international peace movement, the Circle of Nations, died at the age of 97.

In my riding of Pontiac, he was the chief of the Kitigan Zibi reserve from 1951 to 1970. He dedicated his entire life to protecting the environment and staunchly defending the rights of aboriginal peoples.

William Commanda was a trapper, a guide, a birch bark canoe craftsman, a chief and a spiritual leader who travelled around the world.

Mr. Commanda received a number of distinctions, including the lifetime achievement award from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

My NDP colleagues and I offer our sincere condolences to Mr. Commanda's family and to the entire Algonquin nation.

Rest in peace, Ojigkwanong.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters: helping to create jobs and promoting economic growth.

Canada's economy has created nearly 600,000 net new jobs since July 2009. It is the strongest job growth record in the G7. What is more, both the IMF and the OECD forecast Canada's economy will be among the strongest in the G7. Moody's recently renewed Canada's AAA credit rating due to our economic resiliency, very high government financial strength and a low susceptibility to event risk.

However, the global economic recovery is fragile and the last thing Canada's economy needs now is the NDP and Liberal massive job-killing tax hikes. Staying the course with our prudent low-tax plan will support Canada's economic recovery and help create jobs for all Canadians.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is still looking at the economy through rose-coloured glasses. Just as in 2008, he is refusing to see the signs. Scotiabank is warning that Canada is on the verge of another recession. Moody's is sounding the alarm about household debt. Investments are down and the government's solution is to slash services.

When will the Prime Minister take action to create jobs and avoid another economic crisis?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Hull—Aylmer on her first question as Leader of the Opposition.

The government's position is clear—the economy is our number one priority. The global economy is very fragile, as I said many times last year. We need to continue focusing our work on creating jobs through measures such as investing in research, all while keeping taxes low.

● (1420)

[English]

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last month, unemployment rose in Canada. Our economy shed over 5,000 more jobs.

More and more Canadians are giving up because of the lack of job opportunities. To reach the same proportion of working Canadians as before the recession, we actually need to create 420,000 new jobs.

Canadians need a job strategy now. Where is the job plan?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition to get her facts correct. There are more people working in Canada today than before the recession, the only advanced country where that is the case, and that is because the government remains focused on jobs. We are making targeted investments in the Canadian economy, in things like research and innovation, keeping taxes low, opening trade markets and, of course, ensuring we do not see the kind of deficit and debt problems in Canada that have caused this global recession throughout the world.

[Translation]

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister created a structural deficit by giving the gift of tax cuts to big business, and he has not changed course. Contrary to what he says, these companies are not investing and are not creating jobs. A full \$500 billion is sitting in corporate coffers and could be used to create jobs. The Conservative strategy does not work.

Where are the investments? Where are the jobs?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more Canadians are working now than before the global recession. Canada is practically the only industrialized country to have achieved this, and that is because of our commitment to keeping taxes low, not only for companies, but also for individuals and families. This government clearly understands that raising taxes does not create jobs.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to face reality: unemployment is on the rise. Some 1.4 million Canadians are unemployed. The student unemployment rate this summer was over 17%.

Instead of wasting money on gifts for large corporations, when will the government introduce a job creation program?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly deal with my colleagues in the G7 regularly. We have a serious situation in Europe and some weakness in the U.S. economy.

However, the plain fact is that we are the envy of the advanced economies in the world with respect to job creation. We have created almost 600,000 net new jobs since the recession ended. More than that, 80% of those jobs are full-time jobs for Canadians. Our job record is second to none.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives have created is the largest deficit in Canadian history and they have still fallen short on job creation. Their strategy of something for nothing corporate tax giveaways has failed Canadians. Another 420,000 jobs would need to be created just to keep the same proportion of jobs we had before the 2008 recession.

Why will the finance minister not stop these reckless corporate giveaways? Why will he not target support for the real job creators?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know who the member opposite thinks the real job creators are other than small businesses in Canada that pay taxes. Does the member opposite think governments create jobs by hiring people in the public sector? It is the small businesses, which is why we have a hiring credit for small business in the budget this year. I hope the member will support the budget.

Our record with respect to job creation is among the best in the developed economies. We realize that our unemployment rate is still too high and that we need to keep working at it, but the way to get there is not to have a \$10 billion tax increase on business, which is what the opposition has suggested.

• (1425)

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through all the rhetoric, a few facts emerge which I think Canadians will all understand. The first fact is that 1.4 million people are officially unemployed and there are many hundreds of thousands of others who have been discouraged from working.

The second fact is that the economy contracted in the last quarter and the economy right now clearly is not growing. Those are undeniable facts.

Last year, the government produced an economic statement on October 12. Would the Prime Minister commit that he will introduce

an economic statement and that it will deal directly with the jobs crisis in Canada?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member will know well, we just had an election where the government made it very clear that it will continue with its priorities on the economy. Its priority is to create jobs and growth.

Obviously, we have a fundamental difference here with the opposition of all stripes. We understand that jobs cannot be created by raising taxes. We will keep taxes low in this country as part of our job creation strategy.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister refuses to face the facts, which are very simple: the state of the economy is not what it was back in June or what it was in May. The economy is currently contracting here in Canada, in the United States and in Europe.

I will ask the Prime Minister again: will he commit here today to ensuring that Canadians receive a clear economic statement from the Minister of Finance before October 12?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has a very clear economic policy that is recognized around the world. As I have repeated many times, the global economy, the global recovery, remains very fragile. Of course this means that Canada does face some serious risks and this government will act appropriately at all times. Once again, we cannot create jobs with the kind of debt that exists in other countries, in Europe and the United States. These debts are one of the major problems causing the global recession. We do not want to have such policies here.

[English]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government leaked the other day the fact that the deal on the perimeter security deal has now been inked between the United States and Canada. We now have just learned that President Obama's plan for reinvestment in the United States includes several buy American provisions that will cost Canada tens of thousands of jobs when it comes to infrastructure in North America.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister how the government could possibly have signed any kind of agreement or come to any kind of agreement with respect to perimeter security and at the same time allow the administration in the United States to carry on direct discrimination against our country?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I have inked a deal with the United States I certainly do not remember doing it.

The fact is that this is an important initiative to sustain, not just our security but obviously our access to the American market on which so many Canadian jobs are based.

Oral Questions

The member will also know that the Minister of International Trade has been very strong in saying that we certainly do not support the protectionist measures that are included in the latest American bill as we have opposed those in the past and will continue to do so. When we do so on this side, we do so as the only party that has an unadulterated record of commitment to free trade.

* * *

G8 SUMMITS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians trust the Auditor General to protect their hard-earned tax dollars. After all, it was the Auditor General who exposed the Liberal sponsorship scheme.

I have a simple question for the President of the Treasury Board. If any bureaucrats, political staffers or even ministers attempted to keep the Auditor General in the dark or mislead her about the spending and misspending of money around the G8, would the minister not agree that would constitute a very serious breach of public trust?

• (1430)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again we have from that member and from the New Democratic Party the same old, same old.

Let me tell you this very directly, Mr. Speaker. Canadians spoke out against this type of politics and these types of attacks in the last election. They voted for a government that would make job creation and economic growth a priority and that is exactly what this government is doing.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Auditor General tried to investigate the \$50 million in pork barrel spending in Muskoka, she was unable to find a paper trail because she was not told that the projects were run through the member's constituency office and was not told that senior bureaucrats participated. It was NDP researchers, with the help of honest municipal councillors in Muskoka, who broke the code of silence.

Who directed these bureaucrats to keep silent and who told them to show such disrespect for the Canadian taxpayer?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new here. What I can say is that 32 projects were funded by Infrastructure Canada. There were 32 different contribution agreements for each project. All of these projects were finished on time and on budget and every dollar was accounted for.

We appreciated the good advice we received from the Auditor General on ways we could be even more transparent and do things better.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that some deputy ministers provided inaccurate statements to the Auditor General.

The Foreign Affairs summit management office said it was not involved in examining project funding and yet we have learned today that this is not true. One senior deputy minister was a member of the local area leadership group.

Did the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Foreign Affairs instruct their officials to hide their involvement in managing the fund?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the 2008 election campaign, the current President of the Treasury Board chaired meetings of the local area leadership group. He headed up a group that would spend considerable amounts of money in his riding, at a time when he was running for office.

Can the minister explain why he felt it was appropriate or even normal to chair meetings of the local area leadership group in the middle of an election campaign?

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the same old, same old. There is nothing new here whatsoever.

The Auditor General came forward with her report, and we thank her for her work. She came forward with specific recommendations on how we could be even more transparent to Parliament, specific recommendations on improving program administration. The good news is that 32 public infrastructure projects were all constructed. They all came in on or under budget and they are all public infrastructure benefits that will benefit the people of that region for many years to come.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General was kept in the dark about the minister's homemade funding process. Deputy ministers signed off on inaccurate statements. The summit management office was misleading about its involvement with funding meetings and the minister went ahead with these slush fund meetings, in the middle of an election campaign. Allocating funding out of the backrooms of constituency offices is not ethical government.

Will the minister finally apologize to Canadians for this abuse of their trust?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I only have 35 seconds and I could not possibly go through every inaccuracy in the member's question.

There were 32 different contribution agreements all signed to support 32 infrastructure projects. All of those infrastructure projects are public. They all came in on or under budget and they will benefit the people of that region for many years to come.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, FedNor employees were involved in the \$50 million personal spending project of the President of the Treasury Board.

The minister asked the region's mayors to provide feedback on the funding criteria.

Let us be clear: the mayors were asked to set the criteria for money they would receive.

Will the minister clarify his involvement and that of FedNor employees in the management of this slush fund?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government provides infrastructure support to every province and territory and to all kinds of municipalities from coast to coast.

The good news is that because of those infrastructure projects we saw economic growth, more jobs, more hope and more opportunity, which is why Canada is leading the world in the G7, why our economy is among the strongest of the industrialized nations and why the Minister of Finance was named the best minister of finance last year.

* * *

• (1435)

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservative ministers are developing quite a passion for the use of high-flying government jets. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Defence make particular liberal use of the jets. The Prime Minister says that everything is fine because he pays the paltry equivalent of a commercial airline ticket.

Why have the Conservatives abandoned their commitment to respect taxpayers dollars when it comes to jetting around the country?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to throw a few facts into the mix, the policy for the Prime Minister and all ministers requires that commercial travel be utilized for public business, the government aircraft being used when commercial travel is not available.

I would remind the member opposite that when it comes to the liberal use of this aircraft, the Conservative government has reduced the average annual spending of the ministers' Challenger flights by approximately 80% over the previous Liberal government.

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Conservatives like to fly. Unlike them, few Canadians have the opportunity to fly to Boston to watch a hockey game or to Tim Hortons for a coffee. In the case of some ministers, travel by private jet has increased by 50%. We would prefer to see such an increase in the use of public transportation.

Can the government come up with a better excuse to justify this use than saying that the Liberals did worse?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there they go making things up. The reality is that the jets are used for government business. They are used when commercial flights are not available. We have reduced the amount of time in which the jets are being used. They are used for another very important purpose, which is for medevacs for the Canadian Forces.

Oral Questions

These were aircraft that were purchased in the 1980s. The most recent aircraft was purchased in the 1990s. These aircraft are part of a fleet of aircraft owned and operated by the government but operated under the auspices of the Canadian Forces.

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CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the cost of the Chief of the Defence Staff's recent taxpayer-funded trips to events such as football games, hockey games and the Calgary Stampede have shocked Canadians. The government is now planning significant cuts to the Canadian Forces.

Will the Conservative austerity plan only apply to soldiers, sailors and airmen and women and not to the brass? Why did the Minister of National Defence approve over \$1 million of flights to be taken by the Chief of the Defence Staff?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has outlined the rules under which ministers use government aircraft. I have spoken to the Chief of the Defence Staff. He understands what those expectations are and is certainly prepared to live according to those rules.

As members know, the Chief of the Defence Staff does fly very frequently on government business, but obviously where there are alternatives we will look into that usage.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that 1.4 million Canadians are out of work, which is 300,000 more unemployed Canadians than just three years ago. That does not include the Canadians who have given up on looking for work altogether.

With so many Canadians out of work, will the finance minister use the opportunity of the fall economic statement to introduce a real plan to create and save Canadian jobs?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite and his party will support the budget measures that include the hiring tax credit for business in Canada. That would give 525,000 small businesses an opportunity to hire more people in Canada, which is important. We have put a limit on the rate of increase of the employment insurance payments by employers.

Our tax reductions introduced in 2007 continue. That helped create jobs. We have continuing infrastructure programs, plus work sharing. There is a lot of government activity in the economy today, and that is why we have 400,000 net new—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Guelph.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the results of the plebiscite make it clear that farmers want the Canadian Wheat Board to stay. From the Regina *Leader-Post* in 2009, I quote:

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Well, farmers have spoken. We recognize that, at this time and place, this is what farmers are asking for and we'll certainly work to make sure that the board delivers for them in the best way possible.

Who said that? It was the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

The law is clear, and farmers have spoken again. Why does he not honour the will of farmers, heed his own words and keep the Wheat Board?

• (1440)

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers in western Canada always love to hear someone from Ontario, which has a voluntary board, give them advice.

I will quote the CWB director for district 2: "It's a glorified survey. We've admitted that it's not binding. We accept that."

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am from the prairies. The prairie grain farmers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta have indeed spoken. They want to retain the Canadian Wheat Board.

I appeal to the Prime Minister, who claims to be an MP from the prairies. Why will he not stand up for the prairie farmers and guarantee that we will have the Canadian Wheat Board well into the future?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is interesting to have a question from a member who does not have, to my knowledge, a single farmer in his riding.

Let us talk about the facts. In this so-called plebiscite, not only did a significant portion vote against the Wheat Board, but it did not include those tens of thousands of farmers who have walked away from that institution.

The Wheat Board gets to pick its own voters. I guess if they could do that over there, the Liberal Party could even win an election in the west.

The fact of the matter is that western farmers voted for marketing freedom, and that is what they are going to get.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is planning to spend billions more on corporate tax giveaways, but it cannot find money to help address the crisis of crumbling infrastructure. Just this summer, Montrealers were shocked when a section of Highway 720 collapsed. Luckily, no one was injured.

It is long past time to act. Canadians are at risk. Why is the government now cutting back on infrastructure spending?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, never in the history of the country has a government invested more in infrastructure than this one. Most of the time, this MP's party voted against it, so it is very interesting to hear this now.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the government is cutting infrastructure spending.

[*Translation*]

The government has to stop shirking its responsibilities and start taking the necessary measures to help the greater Montreal area. Modernizing Montreal's infrastructure cannot wait. The city's economic future depends on it.

Will the government take this opportunity to promote sustainable development, carpooling and public transit?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, something that is very important to our government is respecting jurisdictions. My colleague should know that in Quebec, every decision to invest in infrastructure is the responsibility of the Government of Quebec, except for when it comes to the three bridges that are owned by the federal government. We will talk about that again later I am sure.

When the time comes to invest in Quebec's infrastructure, we will do so by respecting municipal priorities and the provincial government, as we do in every province in the country. And we will continue to do so.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to prove that the economy is indeed its priority. The infrastructure problems in the greater Montreal area are having a major economic impact. The Champlain Bridge has reached the end of its life. Yet the government is looking for excuses not to replace it.

Will the government do its duty and protect the city's economy? This is a national issue. Will the government announce the construction of a new bridge immediately?

• (1445)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2009, we have invested \$379 million in Montreal bridges, mainly in the Champlain Bridge, to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and further enhance the safety of this infrastructure. The majority of the party opposite voted against this. It is interesting to hear what they have to say today.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we now know that, from 2008 to 2011, the people who were using the Mercier Bridge were in real danger even before the bridge closed this summer. This is not only an economic issue but also one of public safety. It is irresponsible to play with the safety of motorists, truckers and public transit users.

Will the government do the right thing today so that people can travel safely?

Oral Questions

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify. A total of \$135 million has been invested in the federal part of the Mercier Bridge. Work that had been planned for several years was completed this summer. The Government of Quebec is continuing to do its work. The comments today pertain to the provincial part of the Mercier Bridge. We will continue to ensure that federal bridges in the Montreal area are in good condition and meet the needs of the population.

* * *

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the serious and ongoing issue of anti-Semitism in the international community.

The Conservative government has been a global leader in combating anti-Semitism. It has, for example, been the first government anywhere in the world to announce that it would not participate in the commemoration of the Durban declaration.

My question to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism is the following: could he advise the House as to any other actions the government is taking to fight anti-Semitism?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank that member, as well as the member for Mount Royal and Mr. Silva, the former member for Davenport, for their leadership in the parliamentary coalition for combating anti-Semitism and their excellent work, as well as for helping us to coordinate the global summit of parliamentarians here in January, which led to the Ottawa Protocol.

I am pleased to announce that this evening the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I will, on behalf of Canada, be the first government in the world to sign the Ottawa Protocol, indicating that Canada will continue to take a leadership role in combating all forms of anti-Semitism, including the scourge of the new anti-Semitism, which seeks to target and vilify the collective Jews of the state of Israel.

We stand in solidarity with the Jewish people and their democratic state.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is no business case for abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board. It is an ideological crusade, plain and simple.

Now a clear majority of Canadian grain producers have voted to keep the single desk monopoly of the Wheat Board.

I argue that the minister is both duty bound and honour bound to uphold the democratic will of prairie grain producers and to respect the very act that defines his ministry, which guarantees a vote of prairie producers before the government interferes with their ability to market their grain.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the plebiscite that the Wheat Board undertook left out a glaring hole in the middle: the right for farmers to voluntarily choose where they should market their grain.

That is a right that we have campaigned on. May 2 saw a result, giving us the authority to move forward on that.

We certainly intend to do that and to give those farmers the right and the opportunity to market their commodities at a time, place and price that they see fit, the same as their cousins in Ontario.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our American neighbours certainly see the benefit in the Canadian Wheat Board to Canadian farmers, because 13 times they have gone to the WTO and trade tribunals to complain that it is an unfair competitive advantage.

Now our Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board will do the Americans' dirty work for them.

My question is simple: what side is the minister on? Why is he standing up for the American agrifood giants and not standing up for Canadian grain producers, who benefit from the Canadian Wheat Board?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote one of the farmers from western Canada:

It is no accident that North Dakota has five pasta plants whereas Manitoba and Saskatchewan have none. We will continue to export jobs from the prairies unless entrepreneurs are given the chance to buy grain freely from farmers.

That is the crux of this. We saw the Australian model opening up their wheat board some three years ago. When I met with the Minister of Trade from Australia at the Cairns Group last week, he said that the only mistake they made was not doing it sooner.

We look to that model. It has been very positive for the farmers in Australia. We know the farmers in western Canada will follow that same model and have a much better chance of prosperity.

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● (1450)

MEMBER FOR MISSISSAUGA—ERINDALE

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs serves a very important position which requires professionalism and discretion.

Recent events have become a distraction. There are unanswered questions about the parliamentary secretary's judgment and potential security concerns.

My question is, will the parliamentary secretary step aside from his responsibilities until the situation is investigated?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Mississauga—Erindale has denied any inappropriate behaviour. We, of course, have found no information to suggest otherwise.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, foreign affairs must be taken much more seriously. While the Minister of Foreign Affairs is looking after portraits of the Queen and his parliamentary secretary is looking after his personal life, who is looking after this country's foreign affairs? In the case of the parliamentary secretary, we have been told that an investigation took place behind closed doors and that the member did nothing wrong.

Could the opposition have a copy of the report that was produced?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not entirely sure what this has to do with government business and I do not know what inquiries into people's personal lives have to do with the new tone of decorum.

The member for Mississauga—Erindale has been quite clear in his statement. He denied any inappropriate behaviour. There is no information to suggest otherwise.

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*[Translation]***QUEBEC**

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with his hand on his heart, the Minister of Industry promised that GST harmonization with Quebec would be resolved by September 15. It is now September 19 and the government has pulled the plug on the new unit in Bagotville, there is no more funding for the Saint-Rédempteur viaduct in Lévis, and we are still waiting for a new Champlain Bridge.

Why has the government written off Quebec? Is it because Quebecers did not vote the right way, or is it the influence of the Prime Minister's new communications director? Why are they turning their backs on Quebecers?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think that question should go back to the member for Bourassa. Nothing happened for 10 years. That government created a fiscal imbalance and always refused the possibility of tax harmonization. We gave Quebec a seat at UNESCO, we resolved the fiscal imbalance that they created, and we recognized the Quebec nation. And there is more to come, unlike what the previous government did.

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G8 SUMMIT

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not understand how money allocated by Parliament to improve border infrastructure could have been used to build gazebos and washrooms that had nothing to do with the G8 summit. Even the Auditor General agrees that this matter is very troubling.

Since the Conservatives like to boast about accountability and claim to have nothing to hide, will they allow the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates to review how the funds were allocated?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact we have done more than that. We have had a review of this issue by the Auditor General. She came forward and made several recommendations on how we can be even more transparent to Parliament. We have accepted all those recommendations.

I would say to the member opposite that this is the same old type of tactic that Canadians rejected in the last election. Canadians want their parliamentarians and their government to be focused on jobs, economic growth and economic opportunity. That is exactly what this government will continue to focus on.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today Canadians learned that the Minister of the Environment has had second thoughts about regulating the oil sands industry. It turns out he needs more time to consult with the oil industry.

Will the minister explain to Canadians why he has decided to take his sweet time, when the government is already set to miss its own inadequate 2020 emissions targets by a whopping 75%?

• (1455)

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague's question.

We do have a plan, and our plan is working. As my colleague knows full well, we began with a sector-by-sector regulatory approach a year ago, starting with the transportation sector, which is the greatest emitter of greenhouse gases. I have just posted in *Canada Gazette*, part I, new regulations for the coal-fired electricity sector, and we will proceed sector by sector from here around the wheel of priorities.

[Translation]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government had nothing better to do this summer than to cut 800 jobs from Environment Canada. Those cuts were made in a sector of strategic importance to our economy, our social development and our future. They will have serious repercussions on Canadians.

What analyses were used to measure the impact of these cuts on Canadians?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I must correct the hon. member's numbers.

[English]

There has been a great deal of misreporting and uninformed comment on this issue. There is a great difference between 776 permanent employees who might be affected, 300 positions which will be declared surplus, and the much smaller actual number of employees who may eventually be separated from the department. None of the core services of Environment Canada will be compromised. The environment remains—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

AIR CANADA

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on September 16, the union representing Air Canada flight attendants served 72 hours' notice to strike, a strike that could take place at 12:01 Wednesday morning.

Because Air Canada plays such a vital role in the Canadian economy, could the Minister of Labour please give the House an update on the status of the labour negotiations at Air Canada?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in cases like this the best solution is always the one that parties reach themselves. To that effect, both officials and I have been engaged with the parties.

We have received strike notice, as the member said, and we are very concerned that a disruption of the air service will damage Canada's economic recovery. Canadians gave our government a very strong mandate with respect to the economic recovery, and they want us to focus on the economy. That is why, if there is a work stoppage, we will act to protect Canada's economy.

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SERVICE CANADA

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives intend to cut 120 Service Canada processing centres down to 22 over the next three years. The government's plan to shift jobs out of rural areas with high unemployment into urban centres makes no sense. Canada's economy remains fragile, while the government remains illogical. The Service Canada cuts will result in the loss of well-paying jobs in rural Canada, jobs we cannot afford to lose.

At a time when Canadians need their government most, why does the government continue to cut, cut, cut instead of focusing on jobs, jobs, jobs?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of aspects to that. During the global recession, the number of applications for employment insurance really spiked. To ensure Canadians got their EI payments in a timely manner, we hired additional temporary workers. Those workers knew that the jobs were temporary and so did their unions.

The good news is that thanks to our economic action plan, we are leading the world in job creation. There are not as many applications for EI, so we do not need those temporary workers anymore.

Therefore, we are honouring our commitment to taxpayers to use their dollars wisely.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have learned about these cuts to Service Canada, and we know that these jobs are very important in terms of speeding up the processing of employment insurance claims. We know there continues to be a backlog in many areas around Canada.

Therefore, will the minister explain to out-of-work Canadians why the Conservatives are making it harder to access a program that Canadians have paid into?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that

Oral Questions

Canadians do access the services to which they are entitled in an effective and efficient manner. We have a mandate from the Canadian people to ensure we provide our services efficiently. Up until now, it has been mostly done by paper. Therefore, we are trying to take a giant leap forward into the 21st century and we are automating a lot of this because it is a more responsive and responsible way to deal with things.

No Service Canada in-person services are being cut through this program because we want to ensure we are responsive to Canadians so they get their payments quickly, accurately and in a responsible way regarding their taxpayer dollars.

* * *

• (1500)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast were horrified when Kienan Hebert was abducted from his home in Sparwood in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia. No family should ever have to endure the kind of fear and uncertainty felt by the Hebert family when its son was taken from it. To the great joy and relief of everyone involved, Kienan was returned safely.

Our government is committed to keeping our streets and communities safe and to protecting our most vulnerable. Would the Minister of Justice please inform the House on how the government is acting to strengthen Canada's justice system and keep Canadians safe?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia for his interest in this. We all join in wishing Kienan Hebert safety now that he is back with his family.

We have taken concrete steps to protect Canada's most vulnerable. We have raised the age of consent from 14 to 16, strengthening sentencing provisions for dangerous offenders. We believe those who commit violent crimes should serve sentences which reflect the severity of their crimes.

I am proud to be part of a government that puts victims first. Canadians know they can count on this government.

* * *

WATERFRONT TORONTO

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, the Governments of Canada, Ontario and Toronto jointly created and funded the agency Waterfront Toronto for the purpose, in part, of developing Toronto's Port Lands in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

Waterfront Toronto's plan is ready for implementation after rigorous consultation with the citizens of the city. Now the mayor of Toronto is seeking to take control of the agency and implement his own plan.

Routine Proceedings

Could the Minister of Finance confirm his commitment to Waterfront Toronto and to sticking with its current plan for the Port Lands?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only can I confirm the commitment of the federal government, in fact, the commitment was \$500 million and about \$492 million of that money has been spent. In fact, most of the projects that have gone ahead, including Mimico Park, Canada's Sugar Beach and the Sherbourne Park, were done primarily with federal money on the Toronto waterfront. Therefore, we have supported the Waterfront Toronto project throughout its time of advancing.

I understand that the mayor of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto are having some discussions and I expect that they will come to an amicable resolution.

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[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Government said this week that he fully intends to reintroduce the bill to change the composition of the House of Commons by increasing the number of seats, describing Quebec's concerns over its decreasing political weight as “horse-trading”.

Does the Prime Minister agree with his House leader? Is that how much respect the government has for the nation of Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, each Canadian vote, to the greatest extent possible, should carry equal weight. We will be taking reasonable and measured action to restore fair representation in the House of Commons, including protecting Quebec's constitutionally-enshrined representation.

Unlike the opposition, we are governing for all Canadians and we will pursue what is fair and principled.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Finance in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 28 of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, it is my duty to present to the House the report of the Ethics Commissioner on an inquiry into Helena Guergis, former member for Simcoe—Grey.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1505)

[English]

SHARED VISION FOR PERIMETER SECURITY AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, two reports summarizing consultations on the Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness. These reports were made available to the public on August 29, 2011.

* * *

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 22 petitions.

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POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-266, An Act to establish Pope John Paul II Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville to introduce my first private member's bill in the 41st Parliament. The bill is an act to establish Pope John Paul II day.

Pope John Paul II was born in Poland on May 18, 1920 and died in Rome on April 2, 2005. He was elected as the 264th Pope and Bishop of Rome on October 16, 1978. He was a pope who was hailed as the people's pope. He visited Canada in 1984, 1987 and in 2002. He established World Youth Day in 1985. Despite his increasing age and frailty, Pope John Paul II continued to travel and visited 129 nations during 104 trips abroad.

Pope John Paul II humanized the papacy and managed to connect with thousands from different religions that gathered wherever he visited. He helped end communism in eastern Europe and made a great contribution to world peace and freedom.

At his end, millions, including many Canadians, went to Rome affirming the last time how greatly he had altered the nature of the papacy and the world's expectations of a pope.

His Holiness John Paul II was a people's pope and this bill recognizes this and his contribution to Canadians and all people in the world.

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

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CANADA WATER PRESERVATION ACT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-267, An Act respecting the preservation of Canada's water resources.

*Routine Proceedings***FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT**

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-270, An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Passport Services Fees Regulations (passports for veterans, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their spouses or common-law partners, and seniors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, throughout the years, many members of the military and the RCMP have asked if it would be at all possible to have their passports and those of their immediate spouses issued free of charge as a benefit for their service. These individuals travel across the country and serve abroad many times. It would be a wonderful benefit to our men and women of the service and the RCMP. Allowing them to obtain a passport free of charge would go a long way toward thanking them for their invaluable service to this country.

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

* * *

INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHY PREVENTION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-271, An Act to prevent the use of the Internet to distribute pornographic material involving children.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the genesis of the bill goes back to 1995 with the hon. Chris Axworthy, who was a New Democratic Party member of Parliament and who then became the justice minister and attorney general of Saskatchewan.

We have noticed that the government recently adopted small parts of this bill into its crime legislation, which we greatly appreciate, but it honestly does not go far enough.

What is on the Internet right now when it comes to the abuse of our children is unconscionable. I am sure I speak for all members of Parliament when I say that using the Internet to persuade and attract children for nefarious means for the pedophile industry is simply unconscionable. We must do all that we can to ensure that the Internet is not an evil means by which these people can perpetrate their deeds.

This bill, which has great support from police officers across the country, would go a long way in deterring that action in this country.

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

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● (1515)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-272, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code (compassionate care benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think this is the third time I have introduced this bill, going back a few years. I am hoping that this time it will make it through the legislative process. Essentially, it is a bill to enable the federal government, along with the provinces, to become part of the process of making water in Canada a public trust. More specifically, it is a bill that would keep water in its natural basin thereby preventing large diversions of water from one basin to another in Canada and, by extension, outside of Canada.

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

* * *

● (1510)

EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-268, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (no GST on funeral arrangements).

He said: Mr. Speaker, every family in this country goes through the death of a relative, a loved one or a friend. The average cost of a funeral in this country is \$10,000 and it is simply unconscionable for the federal government to tax that.

I have been reintroducing this bill since 1998. It is now 13 years in the making. I hope the federal government will understand this time that a tax on funerals is simply unconscionable, un-Canadian and immoral.

I am asking the federal government to remove the GST portion on all funeral and crematorium services.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-269, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (community service group membership dues).

He said: Mr. Speaker, no government can do everything for all of its citizens.

I could not help but notice that His Honour, the esteemed Governor General of Canada, stated yesterday in the media that we needed to do more for community service groups and volunteers in this country.

The basic premise of the bill would allow volunteers of an organized group, such as the Lion's Club, the Legion, the Kiwanis Club, rotarians, volunteer firefighters, et cetera, who provide 250 hours or more of service a year to claim a \$1,000 tax deduction at the end of the year. We believe this would help offset some of the costs faced by volunteers across this country.

I should remind the House that in Nova Scotia alone, volunteerism equates to \$2 billion of assistance to our economy. We can imagine what it is like in Ontario, Quebec and other larger provinces.

This is a repetitive bill that I have had in the House for over 13 years. I am hopeful that this time the government will see the merits of this legislation and pass it almost immediately.

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

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, you and your wife have children and, if you both work outside the home, one of you can take a year off in maternity or paternity leave. What happens if a couple has a seven-year-old child who is diagnosed with cancer and has four months to live? What are parents prepared to do? That is a very difficult decision. Do they leave their places of employment to care for their loved ones? Of course they do. Will their employers keep their jobs for them when they return? We do not know.

The fact is that no one should have to go through that alone. We in the NDP believe in using the unemployment insurance system for what we call eternity leave for up to six months to allow someone the opportunity to take time off work to care for a dying relative on a compassionate basis or on a severe rehabilitative basis.

I notice that the hon. Jane Stewart, the former minister of social services back in 1999-2000, adopted part of this bill for six weeks and then the hon. Belinda Stronach extended it to eight weeks. We believe that is just not enough time. If it were increased up to six months, it would go a long way in assisting families when dealing with a very serious crisis in their lives.

We believe that of all the bills I have introduced, this one should pass immediately. It should be passed this afternoon, go to the Senate, over to the Governor General and be in law by tomorrow.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-273, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cyberbullying).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to reintroduce my private member's bill, which is an act to amend sections 264, 298 and 372 of the Criminal Code in order to clarify that cyberbullying is an offence. Cyberbullying is a problem that touches over half of Canada's youth, whether they witness bullying, are victims or are bullies themselves.

In a recent study by the University of Toronto, 50% of surveyed students reported that they had been bullied online and this insidious form of online bullying can follow youth through their whole lives.

This bill has the support of the Canadian Teachers' Federation and most media and other levels of communication are included under sections of this bill. It is time to add electronic communication.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-274, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (animal cruelty).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce this important legislation that would amend the Criminal Code by consolidating animal cruelty offences and increasing the maximum penalties for this type of offence.

For over 10 years Parliament has debated this issue and has never adequately addressed it. This bill reflects the contribution of animal welfare groups, many in the animal use industry, and members from both Houses. This bill, in previous incarnations, has been passed in the House on two separate occasions. I look forward to working with all parties for its swift passage.

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

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HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS ACT

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-275, An Act to amend the Hazardous Products Act (recreational snow sport helmets).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce for the fourth time my private member's bill entitled An Act to amend the Hazardous Products Act (recreational snow sport helmets), which would ban the advertising, sale and import of unsafe ski and snowboard helmets in Canada that do not have CSA approval.

This is not only a good medical and safety issue, it is good public policy. It is estimated that recreational head injuries cost Canadian taxpayers over \$100 million each year. Fifty per cent to 88% of acquired brain injuries happen because of this kind of unsafe helmet use.

My bill would ensure that Canadians have the headgear protection that is actually safe. This does not need to be debated in the House. It just needs an order in council to allow for CSA-approved helmets to be used.

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

* * *

● (1520)

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-276, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity and gender expression).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill entitled An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity and gender expression).

Routine Proceedings

The bill adds gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code sections regarding hate crimes and sentencing provisions providing explicit protection to transgender and transsexual Canadians from discrimination in all areas of federal jurisdiction. It would give transsexual and transgender Canadians direct access to the protections provided for in the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code of Canada.

As many of my colleagues may know, the bill was passed by the House in the previous Parliament when it was sponsored by former MP, Bill Siksay. Given that the House has previously approved the legislation, I look forward to working with my colleagues to once again pass this urgently needed legislation, as Australia has recently done.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-277, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a bill that would further amend the Criminal Code to add a new section for animal cruelty offences. Laws on animal cruelty have not been updated substantially in this country since the Victorian era. It is time that we close the loopholes in the Criminal Code that allow perpetrators of animal cruelty crimes to go free because we know that these crimes are also linked with other crimes against humans.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**FINANCE**

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations on the following motion. I move:

That, during its consideration of matters pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to adjourn from place to place within Canada and to permit the broadcasting of its proceedings thereon, and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 28, 32, 38, 44, 46, 51, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 66, 68, 71, 73, 76, 77, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 97, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 108 and 109.

[Text]

Question No. 1—**Mr. Bruce Hyer:**

With regard to corporate taxation, what is the total amount of deferred corporate taxes for the tax years 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA.

The CRA is unable to provide a response in the manner requested.

Deferred corporate taxes, reported on corporations' financial statements, are captured in CRA's CORTAX database. The database is used to capture information from T2 corporate income tax returns and to administer corporate income tax.

However, corporations are able to file amended returns and financial statements to request a reassessment, and this may include a revision to their financial statement data, including deferred income taxes. This type of taxpayer-requested adjustment can initiate changes on multiple tax years. Therefore, there is no definite point at which data can be considered final for any given tax year.

A data analysis of the amounts presently captured in the CRA's database determined that a representative amount of deferred corporate taxes by tax year cannot be provided.

Question No. 16—**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to declining fish stocks in Atlantic Canada, especially in the Gulf Region, and the predatory effects of seals thereon: (a) does the government intend to increase the quota for the culling of the harp seal and the grey seal herds to mitigate the seals' impact on fish stocks; (b) what are the numbers of harp and grey seals harvested during this year's hunt in (i) the Gulf Region, (ii) off the waters of Newfoundland; (c) what do the numbers in (b)(i) and (ii) represent as a percentage of the total allowable catch (TAC) for both areas; (d) given declining levels of sea ice in the Gulf Region, does the government intend to allow seals to be hunted on land in the future; (e) what is the projected TAC for the 2012 seal hunt; (f) what is the best price for seal pelts in 2011; and (g) what is the expected best price for seal pelts in 2012?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in recent years, the government has been examining the impacts of seal predation on Atlantic fish stocks. In 2010, a workshop was held that provided data on the correlation between grey seal diets and the recovery of cod stocks in the southern gulf. Findings from this Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat exercise showed that in area 4T, grey seals are considered a significant source of mortality for large cod over 35cm. More studies need to be done to assess the impact seals are having on fish stocks in other areas.

In response to (a), the current management objective is to maintain the seal population at 70% of the largest population seen. Seal populations will continue to be managed accordingly.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (b)(i), in the gulf region, 2,547 harp seals and 195 grey seals were harvested this year; and in response to (b)(ii), in Newfoundland and Labrador, 35,483 harp seals were harvested off the Front, eastern Newfoundland, including gulf Newfoundland, western.

In response to (c), as a percentage of total allowable catch, (b)(i) the gulf region, that is Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, harvested 6% of their allocation, not including Gulf Newfoundland quota, for harp seals and less than 1% of the total allowable catch for grey seals. In response to (b)(ii), Newfoundland and Labrador harvested 10% of their allocation, gulf and Front/Labrador quotas.

In response to (d), it is current practice that grey seals can be harvested both on land and in the water in the Gulf Region. Grey seals haul out on ice or on land to birth their pups, and commercial harvests of grey seals take place on various islands and along the coast around the Maritimes.

In response to (e), the total allowable catch for the 2012 season for all species of seals has yet to be determined. The herds are currently quite healthy. The quota is determined based on science advice, socio-economic concerns and through consultations with regional advisory committees as well as an Atlantic-wide advisory committee meeting, which typically is held in early January to discuss the upcoming harvests. The recommendations of science and stakeholders are then provided to the minister to make a decision on upcoming total allowable catches for the year.

In response to (f), processors set the price for seal pelts, which averaged between \$20 to \$25 for the 2011 season. This price is set according to market conditions and the quality of the pelts.

In response to (g), Fisheries and Oceans Canada has no means of knowing what the price for pelts will be for the 2012 season. Prices for pelts are set by the market and based on demand and availability.

Question No. 19—Mr. Malcolm Allen:

With regard to the next phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan: (a) how much funding will be allocated from April 1, 2011, until April 1, 2015; (b) what departments and agencies will be responsible for the Plan's implementation; and (c) how much money will be allocated to each department and agency to implement the next phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, the annual net fiscal cost of new measures announced in the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, as well as savings measures with positive fiscal impacts, can be located in table 5.5 and table 5.6 on pages 191-192 of the budget 2011 document. Note: the period in question, April 1, 2011 to April 1, 2015, corresponds to fiscal years 2011-12 to 2014-15. For more information, please visit the Government of Canada website on the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, www.budget.gc.ca. The next phase of Canada's economic action plan involves the work of numerous federal departments and agencies to implement the announced measures. Specific details of departmental appropriations related to budget 2011 measures are determined following the tabling of the budget, as departments come forward to Treasury Board and, ultimately, to Parliament to seek spending authority.

Question No. 20—Mr. Malcolm Allen

With regard to the operating budget freeze at the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid off as of April 1, 2011; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees have been hired since April 1, 2011; and (e) what programs received funding cuts as of April 1, 2011?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, closely monitored all operating expenses and reported on them monthly to the senior management of the department.

Budget 2010 announced two significant actions to reduce the rate of growth in operating expenditures.

First, any salary and wage increases set in the Expenditure Restraint Act and in collective agreements for fiscal year 2010-11 until the end of fiscal year 2012-13 are to be absorbed by organizations. No moneys were provided to AAFC to fund the 1.5 per cent increase in annual wages for the federal public administration. AAFC is required to reallocate the resources from its operating budgets to fund these increases. Funding that was already provided in the department's reference levels for these increases was returned to Treasury Board Secretariat through supplementary estimates.

The department has a staffing realignment board that reviews and approves all external staffing requests to ensure that people are matched to priorities within available financial resources.

Salaries are monitored monthly by each branch against established maximum salary budgets. Second, operating budgets for fiscal year 2011-12 have been frozen at the 2010-11 levels. A subsequent freeze of operating budgets at those same levels is anticipated for fiscal year 2012-13.

To this end, additional measures were instituted that focused on travel, hospitality, and conferences. Employees have been advised of best practices related to travel in an effort to reduce the associated costs, for example, encouraging the use of video conferencing, use of the online booking tool, and booking of travel well in advance to take advantage of reduced-rate tickets.

In response to (b), during the 2010-11 fiscal year, 483 indeterminate employees, 462 full-time and 21 part-time, were lost to attrition at AAFC.

In response to (c), during the 2010-11 fiscal year, no employees were laid off at AAFC.

In response to (d), between April 1, 2011, and June 12, 2011, 71 indeterminate employees, 71 full-time and zero part-time, were hired at AAFC.

In response to (e), as previously mentioned in paragraph (a), the spending measures resulting from the budget 2010 announcement are affecting operating budgets in 2011-12 and apply across all programs.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 23—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With regard to Telus violations of the Do Not Call List and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) Alternate Case Resolutions processes: (a) why was it decided that Telus should make a donation to the Carleton University School of Public Policy and Administration as opposed to paying Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) to the government that would benefit all Canadians, and who made this decision; (b) what was the amount Telus agreed to pay the Carleton University School of Public Policy and Administration; (c) what would have been the maximum possible AMP for the violations alleged to have been committed by Telus; (d) what was the process that led to this decision; (e) why was the Carleton University School of Public Policy and Administration selected to be the recipient of this donation, as opposed to any other institution (e.g., Dalhousie University School of Public Administration); and (f) are any of the Commissioners, the Secretary General or any staff member of the CRTC currently an instructor, lecturer, part-time staff member or in any other way connected to the Carleton University School of Public Policy and Administration?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following is the response from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. With regard to Telus violations of the do not call list and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's, CRTC, alternative case resolutions processes, and in response to (a), Telus acted swiftly after being contacted by the CRTC and immediately volunteered to cease making the types of calls that were under investigation to its prepaid mobile customers. There was neither an admission of fault by Telus regarding its use of automated calling devices nor a formal finding of liability by the commission.

The chief telecommunications enforcement officer of the CRTC has been delegated the responsibility to perform negotiated settlements on behalf of the CRTC, and may consult with the vice-chair telecommunications where warranted.

In response to (b), Telus agreed to pay \$200,000 to the regulatory governance initiative at Carleton.

In response to (c), as set out in subsection 72.01(b) of the Telecommunications Act, "every contravention of a prohibition or requirement of the Commission under section 41 constitutes a violation, and the person who commits the violation is liable, in the case of a corporation, to an AMP of up to \$15,000."

Telus acted swiftly after being contacted by the CRTC and immediately volunteered to cease making the types of calls that were under investigation to its prepaid mobile customers. There was neither an admission of fault by Telus regarding its use of automated calling devices nor a formal finding of liability by the commission.

In response to (d), at any time during the course of an investigation, a telemarketer is welcome to discuss with the CRTC potential corrective actions that the telemarketer can take to bring itself into compliance with the rules. The outcome of these discussions could be a signed agreement with specific undertakings to implement immediate ongoing corrective measures and may include the payment of an AMP. The CRTC may enter into an agreement that would include a payment in lieu of a notice of violation setting out AMPs. This payment may be made to the crown or may take the form of a donation, as is the case across governments. A negotiated settlement avoids the cost and the time of an investigation while achieving the primary goal of compliance with the rules.

It is important to distinguish between the types of settlements in which the commission has the discretion to engage. In some instances, especially the most egregious cases, a notice of violation, which equates to an admittance of guilt, is required. In others, where circumstances warrant, a settlement with a payment is sufficient.

In response to (e), as is the case in all negotiations, Telus was provided with the terms for settlement and negotiations ensued. The regulatory governance initiative at Carleton was selected and mutually agreed upon as part of the discussions. The money is intended to support graduate studies in the areas of policy and regulations as they relate to the mandate of the CRTC and the responsiveness of regulatory programs to consumer and business needs.

In response to (f), while one of the almost 500 staff members teaches a course at Carleton, this was not known at the time of the negotiations. This individual has no connection to the regulatory governance initiative and was not in any manner involved in the investigation or the discussions with Telus. Further, the commission has entered into two more negotiated settlements, with Bell and Rogers, where payments were made to Concordia University, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and Université de Montréal. All funds are directed to initiatives that relate to telecommunications or Internet studies that support regulatory policy development. In addition, these initiatives will assist in improvements in the CRTC's ability to be responsive to the needs of businesses and consumers.

Question No. 24—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With respect to the National Do Not Call List, as of May 31, 2011: (a) what is the total number and dollar value of Administrative Monetary Penalties that have been imposed to date by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission; (b) what is the total number and dollar value of AMPs that have been paid to date; (c) what is the total number and dollar value of negotiated settlements that have been reached to date; (d) what is the total number and dollar value of negotiated settlements that have been paid to date; and (e) what is the number of companies who have refused to either pay an AMP or reach a negotiated settlement?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the national do not call list, as of May 31, 2011, in response to (a), as of May 31, 2011, the commission has issued 31 AMPs for a total of \$2,005,000.

In response to (b), the commission has received three complete payments and five partial payments for a total value of \$1,823,871.80.

In response to (c), there have been four negotiated settlements reached for a total value of \$2,541,000.

In response to (d), the four negotiated settlements have been paid in full.

In response to (e), no company has refused to either pay an AMP or reach a negotiated settlement.

Question No. 28—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to each meeting of the Treasury Board since April 1, 2009: (a) what was the date of the meeting; (b) where did the meeting occur; (c) who was in attendance; and (d) what was the agenda of the meeting?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this information is protected as a cabinet confidence according to section 69 of the Access to Information Act.

Question No. 32—Mr. Claude Gravelle:

With regard to the death of two workers at Vale's Stobie Mine in Sudbury: (a) what actions has the government undertaken to investigate the deaths; (b) which department led the investigation of the accident in the mine; (c) what are the preliminary results of that investigation; (d) what corrective measures have been recommended to prevent the recurrence of such an accident; (e) what sanctions, if any, does the federal government intend to impose against Vale; and (f) when was the last federal safety inspection conducted at the Vale mine in Sudbury and what were the conclusions of this inspection?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Government extends its condolences to the families, co-workers and friends of the two miners who lost their lives. Our government's top priority remains ensuring the health and safety of workers and the public.

Natural Resources Canada offered to provide any assistance required to the community and authorities in charge. However, the health and safety of mining activity falls exclusively within the jurisdiction of provinces and we will continue to provide any assistance required.

As this matter is now subject to an investigation, we are unable to comment further at this time.

Question No. 38—Hon. Ralph Goodale:

With regard to the ongoing disputes between the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and one of its former employees, Dr. Chander Grover, between January 1, 2004, and October 31, 2010: (a) how much money has the NRC spent on legal services and costs for services provided by external legal counsel; (b) how much money has the NRC spent on legal services and costs for services provided by the Department of Justice; (c) how much money has the NRC spent on external communications advice; and (d) how much has the NRC spent on external consultants?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the ongoing disputes between the National Research Council Canada, NRC, and one of its former employees, Dr. Chander Grover, between January 1, 2004, and October 31, 2010, NRC claims solicitor-client privilege regarding the amount of legal fees, and waives the privilege in a limited way only to the extent of divulging the amount while retaining the right to claim privilege over bills of account that contain detailed information.

In response to (a), NRC has spent a total of \$890,478.92 on legal services and costs for services provided by external legal counsel. These expenditures represent costs that were incurred for legal services provided, as required, over a period of six years and nine months and were necessary because of the nature of the requirements, which could not be met by the Department of Justice legal staff.

In response to (b), NRC has spent a total of \$40,071.01 on legal services and costs for services provided by the Department of Justice.

In response to (c), no expenses were incurred for external communications advice.

In response to (d), NRC has spent a total of \$65,619.45 on external consultants in order to augment its internal capacity.

Question No. 44—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to the planned reduction in human resources for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada listed in the 2011-2012 Report on Plans and Priorities: (a) what is the estimated number of employees who will be affected; (b) how many reductions are estimated to be dealt with through attrition; (c) which positions are being eliminated as a part of this reduction, distributed by employee status, title, and program activity; and (d) what is the planned human resources commitment to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy for fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a) and (c), the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, AANDC, 2011-12 report on plans and priorities, RPP, identifies a declining trend of full-time equivalent positions, FTEs, estimated potentially up to 770, over a three-year planning period from 2011-2012 to 2013-2014. These potential reductions are projected to reflect a number of programs that are sunsetting or coming to an end as part of the natural program lifecycle. These estimates do not presume or attempt to project future decisions, such as the extension of a sunsetting program, but merely reflect the current status in a program's life cycle. As such, it is not possible at this time to identify specific positions, program activities or employee status in relation to these potential reductions.

In response to (b), according to the Treasury Board Secretariat, attrition, often referred to as "natural attrition," refers to separations, exits or departures, of employees from the public service other than departures under existing incentive programs or due to devolution and privatization.

Based on trends observed over the past three years, the projected rate of attrition within the department as a whole would be 10.21%. Note that this does not relate to reductions in the RPP as per the answer to (a) and (c), but rather to the normal attrition rate across the entire department.

In response to (d), the five year authority to implement the urban aboriginal strategy expires March 31, 2012. The department is currently working towards renewal of the strategy and until a decision is made by cabinet whether to extend this initiative, we are unable to comment on the human resource commitment for fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Question No. 46—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to the maternal and child health of Aboriginal people in Canada: (a) does the government collect data on the rates of maternal and infant mortality, disaggregated by Aboriginal population and, if so, (i) what is the most recent data, (ii) which departments and agencies are responsible for the collection of this data, (iii) what programs do they provide, (iv) what is the annual expenditure per program; (b) what efforts are being made to improve the collection of disaggregated data regarding the maternal and child health of Aboriginals; (c) what community-specific programs exist to improve the maternal and child health of (i) Status Indians on-reserve, (ii) Status Indians off-reserve, (iii) non-Status Indians, (iv) Inuit, (v) Métis, (vi) urban Aboriginals; (d) what is the percentage of pregnant Aboriginal women who receive maternal care (i) within their own community, (ii) outside of their own communities; and (e) what culturally-specific programs are available to support women who give birth outside their community?

*Routine Proceedings***Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the collection of maternal and infant mortality data falls within provincial-territorial jurisdictional responsibilities of health care.

Maternal mortality rates among aboriginal populations at the national level are not available due to the lack of ethnic identifiers in provincial-territorial vital statistics databases.

Information on maternal and infant mortality rates is maintained within the provincial-territorial vital statistics databases; the federal government liaises with the provinces and territories to roll up this information to the national level. The federal government funds within existing reference levels.

In response to (b), the federal government continues to work with its aboriginal and provincial-territorial partners at the regional level to improve access to aboriginal health data on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis. Examples of this work include the participation in the joint working group on first nations, Indian, Inuit, and Métis infant mortality data, which recently produced a report on data gaps in infant mortality rates, <http://journal.cpha.ca/index.php/cjph/article/view/2370>.

Efforts have been made at the federal level to improve the collection and quality of infant mortality data nationally. The joint working group on first nations, Inuit and Métis infant mortality data was initially brought together under the umbrella of Public Health Agency of Canada's Canadian perinatal surveillance system, and supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, and Health Canada, to advise on data development related to aboriginal perinatal health. The joint working group, composed of representatives from PHAC, Health Canada, Statistics Canada, and some national aboriginal organizations, focused on developing an aboriginal identification question that could be included in P/T vital statistics records to facilitate the collection and capture of aboriginal data across Canada. Implementing the collection of identifiers will require co-operation within and across jurisdictions, including aboriginal communities. PHAC and Health Canada continue exploring ways to facilitate this fundamental step to allow provision of information on national maternal and child health data specific to aboriginal populations.

In response to (c), information about Health Canada supported, community-specific programs that exist to improve maternal and child health of status-Indians on reserve, including the maternal and child health program, the Canada prenatal nutrition program, and the aboriginal head start on reserve program, can be found on Health Canada's website within the first nations and Inuit health community program's compendium, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihah-spnia/pubs/aborig-autoch/2007_compendium/index-eng.php.

The Public Health Agency of Canada supports community-specific programs to improve maternal and child health of status Indians off reserve, non-status Indians, Inuit, Métis, and urban aboriginals through programs like the aboriginal head start urban and northern communities, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/ahsunc-papacun/index-eng.php>; the community action program for children, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog->

[ini/capc-pace/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/cpnp-pcnp/index-eng.php); and the Canada prenatal nutrition program, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/cpnp-pcnp/index-eng.php>.

In response to (d), we have information on the program reach of maternal and child health programs funded by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada. The maternal child health program provides home visiting by nurses and family visitors to 2,221 women and families with young children in 225 first nations communities.

The first nations and Inuit component of the Canada prenatal nutrition program, CPNP, currently reaches over 9,000 first nations and Inuit women per year at approximately 450 project sites, which serve more than 600 communities. The fetal alcohol spectrum disorder program funds approximately 36 mentoring sites across Canada, reaching more than 6000 women. In addition, there are 17 community coordinator positions to help increase families' access to multi-disciplinary FASD diagnostic teams and related services and support. The aboriginal head start on reserve, AHSOR, program serves over 9,000 children in over 300 first nations on-reserve communities across Canada.

As indicated in PHAC's "Maternity Experiences Survey", 2006-2007, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/rhs-ssg/survey-eng.php>, the provinces and territories are responsible for health care delivery for all Canadians and are therefore critical partners in maternal and child health.

In response to (e), Health Canada supports a number of initiatives directed at returning safe birthing options closer to home and to increase accessibility to midwifery for first nations and Inuit families. CPNP funds community-based groups and coalitions to provide access to culturally specific programs and services for pregnant women most at risk, including aboriginal women. CPNP aims to improve the health of pregnant women and their infants, reduce the number of babies born with unhealthy birth weights, and promote and support breastfeeding. A summative evaluation of CPNP, http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/about_apropos/evaluation/reports-rapports/2009-2010/cpnp-pcnp/index-eng.php, found that CPNP projects are serving approximately 50,000 women annually in over 3,000 communities across Canada, with 22% of CPNP new entrants identified as aboriginal in 2008-09. They included 3,670 women. The highest proportion of aboriginal participants was found in Saskatchewan, 79%; the territories, 66%; and Manitoba, 52%. Many CPNP projects serve rural, remote and/or isolated areas where there is reduced access to health services, and strive to link vulnerable children and their families in these areas to additional community supports.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 51—Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and, more specifically, the decision to close the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre located in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador: (a) what are the estimated number of jobs being displaced and what costs are associated with the closure, including (i) wages or salaries, (ii) operational costs; (b) what additional resources will be added to the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centres in Halifax, Trenton or other locations throughout Canada to compensate for the closure; (c) when and how was the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador first notified of this possible closure; (d) what consultations were held with any stakeholder groups and individuals concerning the possible closure and when did they take place; and (e) what groups and organizations have submitted their objections concerning the closure to the Minister and any of his officials in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the St. John's marine rescue sub-centre, MRSC, will be consolidated into the joint rescue coordination centre, JRCC, in Halifax.

In response to (a), 12 positions at MRSC St. John's will be affected by this consolidation (I, ii). The cost associated with this consolidation cannot be determined until the implementation plan is rolled out, along with measures to deal with affected staff. It is expected that there will be training, accommodation and refit costs.

In response to (b), to enhance operations at JRCC Halifax following the consolidation, six new full-time search and rescue mission coordinator positions will be created.

In response to (c), the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans made a public statement to the press advising of the MRSC/JRCC consolidations on June 7, 2011. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was not advised of the closures through a process separate from this public statement.

In response to (d), this consolidation is part of the Government of Canada's strategic review exercise, which requires that federal departments make reductions of 5% to their operating budgets by finding efficiencies. The strategic review was an internal exercise. To respect cabinet confidentiality, public consultations were not conducted.

In response to (e), the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has received emails, letters and petitions regarding this consolidation from various organizations, levels of government, and private citizens, including the Union of Canadian Transportation Employees, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the St. John's Board of Trade, the St. John's East NDP Riding Association, and the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Question No. 54—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and, more specifically, the terms of an agreement with the government of Newfoundland and Labrador to transfer the delivery of Employment Insurance-funded employment benefits and support measures through the Labour Market Development Agreement effective November 2, 2009, what are the specific terms and conditions of this agreement?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement, LMDA, was implemented on November 2, 2009. The LMDA falls within the scope of part II of the Employment Insurance Act and involves programs/services that are similar to those established by the Employment Insurance Commission. It is open-ended in duration

and provides the province with customized allocations based on precise funding formula calculations.

Details on the LMDA are available through the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website at <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/partnerships/pdlmndanfld.shtml>.

Question No. 56—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With respect to trade agreements: (a) what is the number of negotiators, if any, that have been retained from outside the government to represent Canada in current trade negotiations; and (b) has the government considered or implemented plans to undertake a review of the Canada-Peru Free Trade Agreement in 2014 to evaluate the trade implications for Canada?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), all trade negotiators representing the Canadian government are Government of Canada employees; no outside negotiators have been retained.

In response to (b), our government continually assesses its trading relationships to ensure Canadian workers, farmers and businesses in all regions of Canada benefit.

The Canada-Peru Free Trade Agreement is part of our government's free trade plan that is creating jobs and economic growth for Canadian workers and their families. The agreement with Peru is creating new opportunities with this key Latin American country.

Canadian workers, farmers and businesses are benefiting from eliminated and/or reduced tariffs on many exports. When the Canada-Peru Free Trade Agreement came into force on August 1, 2009, many agricultural exports, such as wheat, barley, lentils and peas, received immediate duty-free status.

Question No. 57—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With respect to the June 2001 report entitled "Coastal Impacts of Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise on Prince Edward Island": (a) have there been any updates to the study since the release of the report in June 2001; (b) has the government conducted any separate studies since June 2001 on the impacts of climate change and rising sea-levels on Prince Edward Island; (c) what programs have been implemented to deal with rising sea levels affecting Prince Edward Island; and (d) what advice or assistance has been provided by the Government of Canada to the Government of Prince Edward Island to deal with the impact of rising sea levels on the province?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), scientists at Natural Resources Canada, NRCan, have published various peer-reviewed, scientific papers based on the original data collected for the report entitled "Coastal Impacts of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise on Prince Edward Island" since its release in June 2001. These include the following:

Webster, T.L., Forbes, D.L., Dickie, S., and Shreenan, R. (2004). Using topographic LiDAR to map flood risk from storm-surge events for Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Remote Sensing*, 30 (1), 64-76. Forbes, D.L., Parkes, G. S., Manson, G.K., and Ketch, L.A. (2004). Storms and shoreline retreat in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. *Marine Geology*, 210, 169-204. O'Reilly, C.T., Forbes, D.L., and Parkes, G.S. (2005). Defining and adapting to coastal hazards in Atlantic Canada: facing the challenge of rising sea levels, storm surges and shoreline erosion in a changing climate. *Ocean Yearbook*, 19, 189-207. Webster, T.L. and Forbes, D.L. (2006). Airborne laser altimetry for predictive modelling of coastal storm-surge flooding. In: *Remote Sensing of Aquatic Coastal Ecosystem Processes: Science and Management Applications* (Richardson, L.L. and LeDrew, E.F., editors). Springer, Dordrecht, 157-182.

NRCan has not updated the actual report entitled "Coastal Impacts of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise on Prince Edward Island" since its release in June 2001.

In response to (b), NRCan has monitored closely the conditions in Prince Edward Island and has conducted field reconnaissance following some major storms. These activities provided the basis for public presentations in Prince Edward Island during 2009 and 2010.

In December of 2010, NRCan and university partners deployed two temporary wave and tide gauges offshore of Brackley Beach, Northern Prince Edward Island, to measure waves under sea ice in support of a doctoral research project. An attempt at recovery of these instruments was made in April 2011, but was unsuccessful. Another attempt is planned in the summer of 2011. These results could provide insight into near-shore sediment transport under conditions of reduced sea ice and changing storminess, important considerations under changing climate in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

In response to (c), in December 2007 the Government of Canada announced that funding would be provided for climate change adaptation. In 2009, NRCan implemented a \$30M Regional Adaptation Collaborative, RAC, program that brings together provincial and municipal governments as well as other important regional decision-makers. The goal of this national program is to advance climate change adaptation decision-making locally to deal with regionally specific challenges and thereby increase Canada's resilience to a changing climate. The Atlantic RAC was established as part of this program and is addressing a variety of climate change impacts, including sea level rise.

Through the Tools for Adaptation Program, NRCan is working in collaboration with the Canadian Institute of Planners, CIP, to ensure that scientific research and information on climate change impacts, including rising sea levels, will be considered in planning practice Canada-wide.

In response to (d), in March 2009 the Hon. Richard Brown, Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry for the Government of P.E.I., attended one of the NRCan public presentations referenced in part (b). Following the presentation, the minister commended NRCan for the value of the event, noted the importance of

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comprehensive information on the subject, and requested that NRCan be available to offer future advice. Since that time, NRCan has, when asked, offered incidental technical advice to the P.E.I. Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Question No. 58—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With respect to Canada's airports: (a) what is the total amount of federal funding, announced in March 2011, for the Jean Lesage Airport in Quebec City; (b) under what programs was the funding in (a) awarded; (c) what is the total amount of federal funding, announced in February 2011, for the Charlottetown Airport; and (d) under what programs was the funding in (c) awarded?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), on March 16, 2011, the Government of Canada announced it will invest up to \$50 million for the long-term expansion and modernization of the Jean-Lesage International Airport in Quebec City, a \$225 million initiative.

In response to (b), an amount of \$21.6 million, under the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund, was awarded at that time for three specific projects submitted by the airport authority. The work includes the extension and widening of two paved strips on airport grounds, the upgrading of underground utilities, and the construction of an additional taxiway to connect the Delta and Golf taxiways. Discussions are under way with the Jean-Lesage International Airport in order to identify eligible projects with respect to the remaining funds of \$28.4 million.

In response to (c), on February 21, 2011, the Government of Canada announced it will invest up to \$1.2 million to expand Charlottetown Airport's existing terminal, a \$3.5 million project.

In response to (d), the \$1.2 million was awarded under the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund.

Question No. 59—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With respect to the government's decision not to implement recommendation nine from the June 2009 report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled "Shared Experiences: Comparisons of Veterans Services Offered by Members of the Commonwealth and the G8": (a) what criteria were used to arrive at this decision; (b) what was the policy rationale for the decision; and (c) is the government considering any other information sharing arrangements to better identify veterans and their families in order to ensure that they receive the benefits available to them?

*Routine Proceedings***Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, recommendation 9 from the June 2009 report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled "Shared Experiences: Comparisons of Veterans Services Offered by Members of the Commonwealth and the G8", reads: "That the Department of Veterans Affairs explore with Canada Revenue Agency the possibility of modifying income tax returns to allow veterans and their families to identify themselves so that they can receive information on the financial benefits and support services available to them." Veterans Affairs Canada implemented the recommendation by consulting with the Canada Revenue Agency. These consultations resulted in Canada Revenue Agency's confirmation that the focus of Canada Revenue Agency forms is on tax and benefit programs administered by the Canada Revenue Agency only. The criteria used in the decision not to pursue the inclusion of a veteran identifier on tax forms were privacy, legal authority, effectiveness, and sustainable development commitments.

Question No. 62—Mr. Andrew Cash:

With regard to the G20 Summit ex gratia payments: (a) to date, how many applications have been approved and paid to claimants; (b) how many applications have been approved but not yet paid to claimants; (c) of the approved applications awaiting payment, what is the reason for payment not being made; (d) how many applications have been rejected; (e) of the applications rejected, what was the reason for rejection; and (f) what are all applications for compensation, the amount of compensation requested, and, if approved, the amount of compensation that was approved?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the government is not legally bound to pay compensation for losses suffered as a result of international meetings held in Canada, commercial businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals can be and have been compensated for loss of net profits, loss of net revenues and/or extraordinary costs stemming from the implementation of extraordinary security measures during the course of these meetings. The assessment of the claims is an independent process and made in close cooperation with Audit Services Canada, a special operation agency reporting to Public Works and Government Services Canada.

The guidelines used for the G20 Toronto summit have been in place since 2001, and are the same as those applied successfully at previous summits, including the Summit of the Americas, 2001; the G8 in Kananaskis, 2002; and the Sommet de la Francophonie in Québec City, 2008.

In response to (a), to date 196 G20 claims have been assessed as eligible under the guidelines for payments on an ex gratia basis. Of those claims, 149 claims have been paid.

In response to (b), 47 eligible claims have not yet been paid to claimants.

In response to (c), the Department of Foreign Affairs has processed all payments to eligible businesses that have signed the waiver they received. Of the claims that have not yet been paid, all that is outstanding are signed waivers. As soon as these are received, payments will be processed.

In response to (d), to date 166 G20 claims have been assessed as ineligible under the guidelines for payments on an ex gratia basis.

In response to (e), it is important to note that under section 8(g) of the guidelines, claimants have the onus to demonstrate that they qualify as eligible. The guidelines, frequently asked questions and claim form have been available on the DFAIT website, and a toll-free line was activated by the summits management office. Clauses 8 and 9 in the guidelines provide explanation for the ineligibility of claims. The website is <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/g20/exgratia-guidelines-titregracieux.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>.

In response to (f), the total value of the 367 claims submitted for the G20 is \$11,093,518.20. The total value of the amounts assessed for payment by Audit Services Canada is \$1,932,052

Question No. 66—Hon. Bob Rae:

With regard to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's (DFAIT) recent announcement of an engagement strategy with Africa, as outlined in the department's Report on Plans and Priorities: (a) what briefing notes has DFAIT received or produced regarding its proposed engagement with Africa; (b) what scenarios has DFAIT prepared for a Canadian role in the African continent; (c) which African countries are included in the proposed engagement strategy; (d) what is the projected cost of this engagement strategy with Africa; and (e) what is the timeline of DFAIT's engagement strategy with Africa?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade regularly receives and produces briefing notes on a variety of topics related to Canada's international relations. Three briefings notes were prepared in relation to engagement in sub-Saharan Africa.

In response to (b), DFAIT continually reviews policy options in all aspects of Canada's international relations, and its work in all regions. The Report on Plans and Priorities represents ongoing work in the Department, and while the 2011-2012 document notes that an "engagement strategy with Africa will be developed", it is not in itself an announcement of a new strategy.

In response to (c), DFAIT continues to work with all countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

In response to (d), any engagement strategy will be realized within existing resources.

In response to (e), over the past two years, the department has continued to review its work in sub-Saharan Africa in light of the continent's economic and political transformation, characterized by improvements in governance and democracy and economic growth.

Question No. 68—Mr. Sean Casey:

With respect to the lump sum disability awards under the New Veterans Charter: (a) how many eligible recipients received the maximum amount; (b) what is the percentage of eligible recipients who received less than \$50,000; (c) what is the percentage of eligible recipients who received between \$50,000 and \$99,000; (d) what is the percentage of eligible recipients who received between \$100,000 and \$149,999; (e) what is the percentage of eligible recipients who received between \$150,000 and \$199,999; and (f) what is the percentage of eligible recipients who received between \$200,000 and \$249,999?

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Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), 245 recipients have received the maximum disability award amount.

In response to (b), 72% of eligible disability award recipients received less than \$50,000.

In response to (c), 19% of eligible disability award recipients received between \$50,000 and \$99,999.

In response to (d), 6% of eligible disability award recipients received between \$100,000 and \$149,999.

In response to (e), 2% of eligible disability award recipients received between \$150,000 and \$199,999.

In response to (f), fewer than 1% of eligible disability award recipients received between \$200,000 and \$249,999.

Question No. 71—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:

With regard to the corporate asset review announced in the 2008 Economic and Fiscal Statement: (a) how many assets have been reviewed; (b) which assets were reviewed; and (c) were assets sold and, if so, (i) how many, (ii) what were they, (iii) what were the purchase prices, (iv) who were the buyers?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a) and (b), page 209 of budget 2009, found at www.budget.gc.ca/2009/pdf/budget-planbudgetaire-eng.pdf, announced the launch of the corporate asset management review would begin with the portfolios of the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

In response to (c), no assets have been sold as part of the corporate asset management review to date. As stated in budget 2009, the government will take a considered approach to the sale of any asset, including taking into account the condition of markets, to ensure that fair value can be realized by taxpayers and the transaction will generate additional economic activity. Assets will not be sold if such sales do not meet these tests.

Question No. 73—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to the Department of Natural Resources, are there any unlicensed low level radioactive waste storage sites in Canada and, if so, where are they located?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr Speaker, on behalf of Natural Resources Canada, NRCan, the low-level radioactive waste management office, LLRWMO, manages six unlicensed low-level radioactive waste interim storage sites: the Passmore Avenue mound in Scarborough, Ontario; three small unlicensed consolidation sites in Port Hope, Ontario; the Beacon Hill landfill mound in Fort McMurray, Alberta; and the Fort Smith landfill cell in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories.

These storage sites contain historic low-level radioactive waste for which NRCan has accepted responsibility. These are not licensed due to the fact that the activity concentration is below the unconditional clearance level as per Schedule II of the Nuclear Substance and Radiation Devices Regulations of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission continues to oversee the management of these sites by the LLRWMO.

Question No. 76—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:

With respect to proficiency in the second official language: (a) what is the language proficiency level of each of the chief executives of federal institutions; and (b) when did each chief executive obtain this level?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office responds that the second official language proficiencies of deputy ministers, chief executive officers of crown corporations and heads of agencies are not monitored, as there is no statutory requirement to establish a proficiency level for these individuals who are appointed at the discretion of the governor in council.

However, all governor in council appointees have an obligation to support and promote the objectives of the Official Languages Act by personally promoting the use of both official languages in their institutions. This is a term and condition of employment. Additionally, deputy ministers or others appointed by the governor in council from the executive group, EX, of the public service were required to meet a linguistic profile of CBC/CBC according to the Treasury Board policy concerning the language requirements for members of the executive group, established in 2003.

The language proficiency of an individual constitutes personal information, and is protected in accordance with the principles of the Access to Information Act.

Question No. 77—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at the Privy Council Office: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the period of April 1, 2010 to July 4, 2011, the Privy Council Office, PCO, responds with regard to (a) that normal attrition provided the Privy Council Office with the flexibility to manage budget reduction during the last fiscal year.

In response to (b), 430 full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition.

In response to (c), no full-time or part-time employees were laid-off.

In response to (d), 487 full-time and part-time employees were hired.

In response to (e), the indeterminate departure rate for 2010-11 was 16.3%, which is consistent with the previous year's indeterminate departure rate of 16.5%. The Privy Council Offices does not formulate projected attrition rates.

Question No. 80—Hon. Hedy Fry:

With regard to Health Canada's wait times strategy: (a) what are the most recent wait times as reported by each province in each of the five key areas of the government's wait times strategy (cancer, heart, diagnostic imaging, joint replacement and sight restoration); and (b) what was the amount of money earmarked for wait time reduction disbursed by the government to each province in each year of the government's wait times strategy?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, CIHI, has been reporting on progress on wait times across jurisdictions. Its most recent edition of the “Wait Times Tables—A Comparison by Provinces, 2011”, released on March 21, 2011, provides a summary of provincial wait times data, primarily comprised of retrospective administrative data, in the five priority areas as of September 2010. This report provides the most comparable available information on wait times for a common point in time for all provinces. The report is available on the CIHI website, <https://secure.cihi.ca/estore/productFamily.htm?locale=en&pf=PFC1599>.

In terms of funding transferred to provincial and territorial governments, the federal government provided \$5.5 billion in wait times commitments. This included a wait times reduction trust totalling \$4.25 billion for the period of 2004-05 through 2008-09, followed by a \$250 million annual wait times reduction transfer, from 2009-10 through 2013-14. To provide the public with greater certainty on timely access, budget 2007 announced additional funding of more than \$1 billion over three years to support the development of patient wait times guarantees, including a \$612 million trust; a \$400 million enhancement to Canada health infoway funding; and a \$30 million patient wait times guarantee pilot project fund. These targeted investments were intended to help the provinces and territories test and implement patient wait times guarantees. Further information on the allocation of federal funding for wait times by jurisdiction is available through the Department of Finance’s website, http://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/typhc_-eng.asp and <http://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/mtp-eng.asp>.

Question No. 85—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With regard to the Department of Natural Resources, for every year since 2006, how many people have been employed by the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Port Hope area initiative management office has employed the following number of staff for each year since it was created in 2008-09: 2008/2009 – 5; 2009/2010 – 22; 2010/2011 – 36.

Question No. 86—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at Public Safety Canada: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the 2010 budget operating freeze called for general containment of expenditures through key restricting measures.

One of the key measures impacting Public Safety Canada, PS, is the one calling for increases in wages and salaries resulting from collective agreements negotiated in the period from the 2010-11 to 2012-13 fiscal years, to be funded within the PS’ existing appropriations. As such, no additional funding was provided in 2010-11 to fund the 1.5 per cent increase in annual wages for the federal public administration, and PS is required to reallocate from

its existing operating budget to fund these increases. Based on PS’ existing workforce for 2010-11, this measure translates into an increase in our salary expenditures of \$845,000, including 17 per cent employee benefits plans, which PS is required to absorb. PS will also be required to fund the cost of economic increases resulting from collective agreements negotiated in 2011-12 and 2012-13 through reallocations from its existing reference levels.

PS has put in place rigorous financial planning and reporting practices that better support timely and informed decisions on the allocation of resources to ensure the efficient and effective management of objectives and priorities. This process has enabled PS to closely monitor the financial situation in 2010-11 and to exercise informed decisions in the reallocation of any departmental flexibility to support operating requirements. This has in turn provided the necessary latitude to realign resources to meet priorities and manage the added cost of negotiated economic increases within PS’ operating budget.

Through its integrated business and human resources plan, PS has been successful in articulating a strategic approach in support of an effective deployment of its resources to support the achievement of priorities and key initiatives. This tool will prove instrumental in guiding the department through its management of expenditure containment measures over the next two fiscal years.

PS has also successfully managed to maintain its use of overtime over the past three years and is currently in the process of evaluating additional control measures to better support the impact of future years’ unfunded wage increases.

In budget 2009, the government announced that spending on travel, hospitality and conferences would be capped at 2008-09 levels for 2009-10 and 2010-11. Budget 2010 reaffirmed the commitment to maintain the cap on spending at the 2008-09 levels of departmental spending in these areas. Through prudent management, PS has successfully reduced its spending on travel, hospitality and conferences over the last two fiscal years. This has resulted in savings of more than \$1 million in 2009-10 and further savings of approximately \$210,000 in 2010-11.

Routine Proceedings

The Government of Canada introduced a new expenditure management system in 2007 as part of an on-going commitment to better manage government spending. A key pillar of this system is the ongoing assessment of all direct program spending, or strategic reviews. Budget 2010 held this commitment with the intent to maximize savings in future strategic reviews. PS' contribution in respect of the 2009 round of strategic reviews resulted in total savings of \$7.3 million to its 2010-11 reference levels; \$1.1 million of which is in operating expenditures. In this respect, PS will achieve more sizeable savings in 2011-12 of \$13.4 million to its reference levels, \$3.1 million of which are in operating expenditures.

In response to (b), PS' departure rate for 2010-11 was 14.1 per cent, an improvement from last fiscal year's 16.6 per cent. For the 2010-11 fiscal year, figures compiled on the nature of terminations show that of the 157 terminations that occurred during this period, 119 employees or over 75 per cent of the departures are attributed to employees that have transferred out of PS to other federal government organisations, with the remaining portion mostly being distributed between retirements, 17 employees or over 10 per cent; and end of specified period, 8 term employees or 5 per cent.

In response to (c), no full-time or part-time employees were laid off in 2010-11 as a result of the impacts of the 2010 operating budget freeze measures.

In response to (d), during 2010-11, 117 full-time employees and three part-time employees were hired.

In response to (e), the projected departures rates for the next five years can only be estimated based on past trends of departures. On the basis of the calculated yearly average rate of departures over the three fiscal years, including PS' estimated rate for this year, the average departure rate for PS is estimated to be around 15 per cent over the next five fiscal years. Based on the same methodology of calculation, 81 per cent of the departure rate is forecasted to be attributable to employees transferring out of PS, while 11 per cent will likely be linked to retirements. The future years' impact of the 2010 budget operating freeze has not been factored in this extrapolation and could impact the future years' forecasted departure rate.

Question No. 87—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at the Canadian International Development Agency: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), budget 2010 announced a number of cost containment measures to reduce the rate of growth in operating expenditures in 2010-11 and the following two years. In 2010-11, CIDA had to absorb the wage and salary increase resulting from signed collective agreements, \$1,769K. For the next two years, the agency's operating budget is frozen at the 2010-11 levels. As part of Canada's new agenda for aid effectiveness, CIDA has already committed to focus its programming to improve efficiencies in program delivery and operations, while maintaining high level of stewardship and due diligence. In order to improve efficiencies, program business processes are being redesigned to be more

streamlined and to enable more effective program delivery. The implementation of CIDA's integrated business planning provides a foundation for more effectiveness and efficient use of resources going forward.

In response to (b), during fiscal year 2010-11, 169 full-time employees and 4 part-time employees have left CIDA. The departures include the number of deaths, resignations, retirements and transfers out.

In response to (c), in fiscal year 2010-11, zero full-time or part-time employees were laid off.

In response to (d), in fiscal year 2010-11, 126 full-time and 2 part-time indeterminate employees were hired.

In response to (e), as of March 31, 2011, 172 employees were eligible to retire. By the end of 2016, 280 additional indeterminate employees will be eligible to retire. Overall, 452 indeterminate employees, excluding secondments and students, will be eligible to retire by 2016.

Question No. 88—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), budget 2010 announced two significant actions to reduce growth in the operating expenditures.

First, federal organizations are expected to absorb all salary increases beginning in 2010-11 until the end of 2012-13.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, AANDC, is successfully absorbing salary increases negotiated in collective agreements and additional personnel costs. The absorption of costs is done through robust monitoring of staffing processes and minimal transfer of operating dollars to cover some salary costs.

Second, operating budgets will be frozen at 2010-11 levels for the following two fiscal years, 2011-12 and 2012-13. It should be noted the freeze applies to operating budgets only. Operating budgets include departmental personnel costs, such as wages and salaries, as well as a range of other operating costs, including professional services contracts, transportation, communications, leases, utilities, materials and supplies.

Routine Proceedings

Certain adjustments have been made to operating budgets to allow for increases, for example, i, economic action plan spending; ii, the budget 2010 measures not included in the main estimates 2010-11; iii, any new policy initiatives approved by cabinet; iv, non-discretionary labour costs, such as parental benefits or severance pay.

The 2010-11 Main estimates did increase for the department due primarily to points i, ii and iii above.

AANDC is vigilant in managing its operating budget. Senior management continues to review and monitor spending levels on a monthly basis. The department continues to operate within its travel, hospitality and conferences cap announced in budget 2009 and encourages the use of tele and video conferencing to generate savings in travel. AANDC continues to see a downward trend in public servant travel, hospitality and conferences. Reducing certain types of expenditures is allowing the increased salary costs to be covered.

When required to do so, senior management continues to manage adjustments in operations and reallocates resources where needed.

For 2011-12 and 2012-13, AANDC will continue providing programs and services as planned while prudently and efficiently managing within its available resources.

In response to (b), during fiscal year 2010-11, April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, a total of 436 employees were lost to attrition. This includes 427 full-time and 9 part-time employees.

In response to (c), during fiscal year 2010-11, April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, a total of 16 full-time employees were laid off.

In response to (d), during fiscal year 2010-11, April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, a total of 442 employees were hired. This includes 438 full-time and 4 part-time employees.

In response to (e), the department does not have a system in place to project attrition rates. However the average attrition rate over the last three fiscal years is 10.21% (12.55% in FY 2008-09, 9.36% FY 2009-10, 8.72% FY 2010-11). Therefore, we can expect that the attrition rate will continue to trend downwards, but not significantly. AANDC estimates that over the next five years, 991 employees will come eligible for retirement. Among workers hired under the Public Service Employment Act, approximately 56% do retire within one year of becoming eligible or choose to retire before eligibility.

Attrition rates include departure rates of indeterminate employees, for example, retirement, transfers out, termination, resignation, discharge, death, lay off.

Question No. 89—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at Industry Canada: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Industry Canada is committed to making appropriate spending choices in order to remain within the departmental budget voted by Parliament.

To achieve this objective, current and planned spending was monitored closely. Forecasts were completed and approved by senior management on a monthly basis and staffing plans were rigorously reviewed to ensure affordability and sustainability. Major project spending decisions are approved through an internal governance process.

These measures will continue in future years in order to maintain operations within parliamentary appropriations provided to Industry Canada.

In response to (b), in fiscal year 2010-11, 476 full-time and 12 part-time permanent employees left the department.

In response to (c), no full-time or part-time employees were laid off as a result of budget 2010 cost containment measures.

In response to (d), in fiscal year 2010-11, 374 full-time and 4 part-time employees were hired.

In response to (e), as Industry Canada's attrition rate varies based on multiple factors that are determined on an annual basis, the department does not prepare a five year projection.

Question No. 90—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at Natural Resources Canada: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), (b), and (c), Natural Resources Canada, NRCan, is fully compliant with the operational budget freeze announced in budget 2010. The measures in the operational budget freeze require NRCan to absorb the collective bargaining increases related to 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13. In addition, as per budget 2009, NRCan is subject to the cap for travel, hospitality and conference fees based upon 2009-10 expenditures. In 2010-11, NRCan spent 19% less on travel, hospitality and conference fees compared to 2009-10 expenditures. From April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, a total of 361 NRCan employee departures resulted from attrition. These fiscal restraint measures are being managed without any impact on NRCan employees.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (d), the number of full-time and part-time indeterminate employees hired at NRCan from April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011, is as follows: full-time indeterminate employees hired, 299; part-time indeterminate employees hired, 5.

In response to (e), the total of indeterminate employees eligible for retirement over the next five years is 1,233.

Question No. 92—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the Department of Natural Resources and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, for every year since 2006, how many full-time staff have been employed by the Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Office?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the low-level radioactive waste management office, LLRWMO, employed the following number of full-time staff for each year since 2006: in 2006-2007, 30; in 2007-2008, 27; in 2008-2009, 26; in 2009-2010, 12; in 2010-2011, 11.

In 2009-2010, the responsibility to deliver the Port Hope area initiative was formally transferred from the LLRWMO to the Port Hope area initiative management office, which resulted in employee transfers, as evident in the decrease in the last two years.

Question No. 93—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to Service Canada's job cuts in rural areas: (a) is Service Canada planning to reverse its decision to eliminate jobs in the riding of Cardigan; (b) what are Service Canada's reasons for cutting jobs in rural areas and moving them to larger centers; (c) how many jobs will be cut permanently, both in the Cardigan riding and nation-wide; and (d) what are the projected overall long-term effects on rural populations with regard to access to government services?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as of August 30, 2011, in response to (a), Service Canada is committed to serving Canadians efficiently and effectively in these challenging economic times. Like any well-managed organization, Service Canada must ensure its workforce is based on changing operational requirements over the course of the year.

In response to (b), Service Canada strives to make it easier for Canadians to get the information and services they need from government, when and as they want it. Increasingly, this means that government needs to provide 24-hour online easy-to-use self-service. Canadians also want efficient government that provides them with good value for their hard-earned tax dollars.

Service Canada's employment insurance service delivery model has a new vision—one workload, one process, one workforce—supported by a national workload strategy. Essentially, this means work can be moved quickly and effectively to the next available agent in one of our processing sites across Canada, as opposed to local availability.

Over the next three years, Service Canada will continue to modernize the delivery of employment insurance by expanding the automation of EI claims. By leveraging technology, Service Canada will have the capacity needed to address fluctuating workloads and improve efficiencies, all while creating a greater capacity to meet clients' demand for online self-service.

In response to (c), as a result of efficiencies arising from modernization and consolidation, there will be an impact on the number of staff needed and where they are located. Human resource

reductions as a result of this phase of modernization will be managed with the help of attrition, reassignment and training.

There are approximately 600 positions that will be affected nationally by these changes over the next three years. Our goal is to ensure employment continuity of indeterminate staff. A workforce management strategy has been developed to help manage staffing through attrition, reassignment and training.

Vacancy management committees have been set up in every region and branch with the goal of ensuring that all internal affected employees are considered for other available positions. Throughout the process, we are committed to ongoing communication with unions about consolidation and will be using the established consultation committees as a means of ensuring dialogue.

In response to (d), the government has committed to delivering service to Canadians in a way that is modern, efficient and focused. These modernization efforts will provide Canadians, including those in rural communities, with greater access to an increased range of information and services. These changes will result in efficient service for Canadians, including serving 95% of citizens within 50 km of where they live; choice of channels for delivery, including servicecanada.gc.ca, 1 800 O-Canada, in-person SC centre, or outreach location; and focus on first-point-of-contact resolution and proactive service offers tailored to client needs, called "bundling".

The end goal is consistent with our mission to provide secure, knowledgeable, seamless and personalized service to Canadians.

Question No. 97—Hon. Wayne Easter :

With regard to the government's response to Q-795 (40th Parliament, Third Session), particularly the Minister of Natural Resources' statement in the answer to part (c) that no construction has begun on the Port Hope Area Initiative, why have 19 claims for over \$800,000 been paid out for this initiative?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as of December 2010, the 19 claims listed in the government's response to Q-795 had been paid out under the property value protection, PVP, program. The PVP program compensates property owners in the municipalities for those losses related primarily to a diminution in property value, in accordance with the authorities granted for the Port Hope area initiative by the Treasury Board of Canada. Each of the 19 claims was submitted in accordance with the PVP guidelines and assessed individually based on merit.

Routine Proceedings

Despite the fact that the implementation phase of the initiative has not yet begun, some property owners have realized losses on the value of their properties. In most cases, these losses are attributed to the proximity of the properties to the proposed waste management facilities and the uncertainty of buyers about the potential effects of the proposed facility on the property that is being sold. Thus, the prospect of the development of a radioactive waste management facility in the vicinity of these properties has led to a diminution in property value.

Question No. 99—**Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With regard to the firearms training program for Canada Border Services Agency officers: (a) how many training facilities are there; (b) where are these facilities located; (c) is accommodation for trainees and trainers located on site or provided through commercial sources; and (d) what is the duration of the program for the trainees?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), there are currently three dedicated training facilities for the CBSA duty firearm course, as well as modular firing ranges in Ottawa, Ontario, and Chilliwack, British Columbia, and 72 private and public ranges across Canada that the CBSA can lease for arming practice and recertification activities.

In response to (b), the training facilities are located in Chilliwack, British Columbia; Ottawa, Ontario; and Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

In response to (c), the training facilities in Chilliwack and Summerside have accommodations on site. The training facility in Ottawa does not have accommodations on site, so employees stay at a local hotel in close proximity to the training facilities. Trainers who are engaged locally do not require accommodations.

In response to (d), the duration of the duty firearm course for employees is 15 days.

Question No. 101—**Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With regard to the Air Travellers Security Charge in 2010: (a) how much money was collected and where was this money spent, in both real and accrual sums; and (b) does the government have any information concerning how this fee compares to airport security charges in other countries and, if so, what are the details of this information?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the air travellers security charge, ATSC, came into effect in 2002 to help fund the air travel security system, including the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, the federal authority responsible for the security screening of air passengers and their baggage.

In addition to CATSA, the air travel security system includes Transport Canada regulations and oversight and Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on selected domestic and international flights. In response to (a), as stated in the 2010 Public Accounts of Canada, the ATSC accounted for approximately \$375 million in accrual figures in 2009-2010. For more information, please visit www.tpsgc-pwpsc.gc.ca/recgen/txt/72-eng.html. As per the financial statements in its 2010 annual report, CATSA had operating expenditures of approximately \$577 million in accrual figures in 2009-2010. For more information, please visit www.catsa.gc.ca/File/Library/87/English/AnnualReport2010.pdf. Figures are available on an accrual basis.

In response to (b), numerous countries levy charges on passenger tickets to recover the cost of screening, but it is difficult to make international comparisons. In Canada, the ATSC helps fund the enhanced air travel security system and is payable by air travellers who principally and directly benefit from that system. Other countries may use different approaches to fund their air travel security. The U.S., for instance, employs different sets of fees and taxes, including passenger security fees and air carrier fees, to help pay for aviation security enhancements.

Question No. 102—**Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to the operating budget freeze at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, insofar as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, ACOA, is concerned, with regard to the operating budget freeze, in response to (a), the agency is continually monitoring ways to increase efficiencies. Initiatives are being undertaken to streamline internal operations while maintaining service to clients and appropriate stewardship of government resources. The agency anticipates no difficulties in achieving the savings required.

In response to (b), no full-time or part-time employees were lost to attrition; in response to (c), (c) no full-time or part-time employees were laid off; in response to (d), 59 employees were hired, of which 43 were indeterminate and 16 were specified period appointments, all full-time; and in response to (e), as of June 21, 2011, 41 employees were eligible for retirement, 10 will be eligible between July and December 2011, 18 in 2012, 22 in 2013, 24 in 2014 and 19 in 2015.

In addition, over the past five years an average of 29 employees have left the agency each year for reasons other than retirement, and it is anticipated that this trend will continue to some extent over the next five years.

Question No. 103—**Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With regard to the operating budget freeze at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, closely monitored all operating expenses and reported on them monthly to the senior management of the department.

Budget 2010 announced two significant actions to reduce the rate of growth in operating expenditures. First, any salary and wage increases set in the Expenditure Restraint Act and in collective agreements for fiscal year 2010-11 until the end of fiscal year 2012-13 are to be absorbed by organizations. No moneys were provided to AAFC to fund the 1.5 % increase in annual wages for the federal public administration. AAFC is required to reallocate the resources from its operating budgets to fund these increases. Funding that was already provided in the department's reference levels for these increases was returned to Treasury Board Secretariat through supplementary estimates.

The department has a staffing realignment board that reviews and approves all external staffing requests to ensure that people are matched to priorities within available financial resources. Salaries are monitored monthly by each branch against established maximum salary budgets.

Second, operating budgets for fiscal year 2011-12 have been frozen at the 2010-11 levels. A subsequent freeze of operating budgets at those same levels is anticipated for fiscal year 2012-13.

To this end, additional measures were instituted that focused on travel, hospitality and conferences. Employees have been advised of best practices related to travel in an effort to reduce the associated costs, e.g., encouraging the use of video conferencing, using the online booking tool, booking travel well in advance to take advantage of reduced rate tickets.

In response to (b), 483 indeterminate employees, 462 full-time and 21 part-time, were lost to attrition at AAFC during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

In response to (c), no employees were laid off at AAFC during the 2010-11 fiscal year.

In response to (d), 467 indeterminate employees (465 full-time and 2 part-time) were hired at AAFC during the 2010-11 fiscal year.

In response to (e), fiscal restraint and reduced hiring across the public service is expected to reduce the number of departures to other government departments. AAFC does not forecast attrition more than two years into the future because there are a number of unknown factors that make such forecasts unreliable.

At present, the expected attrition rate is forecast to be 450 in 2011-12, 7.2% of total employees, in the current fiscal year; 430 in 2012-2013, 6.9% of total employees; and 445 in 2013-14, 7.1% of total employees.

Attrition is defined as the departure of employees due to retirements or resignations, transfers to other government departments, departments or other...

Question No. 104—**Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With regard to the operating budget freeze at NAV CANADA: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, NAV Canada is the private sector, non-share capital corporation that owns and operates Canada's civil air navigation service, ANS. Transport Canada has no responsibility with respect to business decisions that the company makes with respect to budget and/or staffing issues.

Question No. 106—**Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With respect to the National Highway System (NHS), for core routes, feeder routes and remote northern routes: (a) what is the process for suggesting the addition of a new route to the Council of Ministers of Transportation and Highway Safety; and (b) how many provinces and territories must support the addition of a new route for it to be included in the NHS?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), any new route additions or other major changes to the NHS, including deletion from or movement within the three categories comprising core, feeder, and northern and remote routes, could be proposed by any jurisdiction including the federal government. In order to evaluate these proposals, jurisdictions are required to provide supporting information and the data as per established criteria and thresholds. The NHS task force then provides its recommendation to the council of ministers.

In addition, in 2007 ministers also agreed that a full review of the NHS be undertaken every five years to maintain its relevance due to changing economic, social and demographic conditions. Starting in 2009, the NHS review task force engaged in a thorough review of the NHS for 2010. However, the 2010 review has yet to be brought to closure as additional work is required prior to recommendations being tabled with the council of ministers.

In response to (b), all changes to the NHS must be unanimously approved by all members of the council of ministers responsible for transportation and highway safety.

Question No. 108—**Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With regard to the operating budget freeze at the Department of Finance: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Routine Proceedings

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), to ensure maximum efficiency for taxpayers' dollars in the fiscal year 2010-11, as part of the government's commitment outlined on page 161 of budget 2010, found at www.budget.gc.ca/2010/pdf/budget-planbudgetaire-eng.pdf, salary costs were reduced due to the time it takes to re-staff positions after staff departure, and measures were also put in place to reduce goods and services costs in areas such as travel. For 2011-12 and 2012-13, the department will continue these measures and seek additional opportunities for efficiencies in departmental operations.

In response to (b), attrition is defined as the number of employee departures. For the period April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011, 255 employees left the department, 215 full-time employees and 40 part-time employees. These employees include indeterminates, terms, seconded in, part-time workers, casuals and students. The required salary savings resulted from the period the positions were vacant before being restaffed.

In response to (c), between April 1, 2010, and March 31, 2011, the Department of Finance did not lay off any full-time or part-time employees.

In response to (d), the department hired 225 employees between April 1, 2010, and March 31, 2011, including 185 full-time employees and 40 part-time employees. These employees include indeterminates, terms, seconded in, part-time workers, casuals and students. The 2011-12 main estimates reflected a reduction in the operating budget of the department due to a number of initiatives other than the budget 2010 commitments. The departure and hiring numbers were impacted by all of these items.

In response to (e), the percentage of indeterminate employees who have left the department in the last 5 years was 17.5%. These data are updated quarterly and are used for internal business planning.

Question No. 109—Hon. Denis Coderre:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at Environment Canada: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the operating budget freeze at Environment Canada, in response to (a), the key driver of the cost containment measures is the operating budget freeze that was articulated in the 2010 federal budget tabled in the House of Commons on March 4, 2010.

Two significant actions were announced in the budget to reduce growth in operating expenditures: operating budgets will be capped at the 2010-11 levels for the two fiscal years, 2011-12 and 2012-13; any wage and salary increases set in the Expenditure Restraint Act and in collective agreements applying from the beginning of 2010-11 and until the end of 2012-13 are to be absorbed by organizations.

These measures apply to all federal organizations appropriated by Parliament including departments, agencies and crown corporations.

The following items are excluded from the freeze: economic action plan spending which ends in March 2011; budget 2010 measures not included in the main estimates 2010-11; new policy initiatives approved by cabinet; non-discretionary labour costs, such as parental benefits or severance pay.

There was no government-wide freeze on hiring.

Within this context, Environment Canada has taken the following measures to limit spending for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Impact of budget 2010 measures for 2010-11 fiscal year have been included in 2010-11 supplementary estimates (A or B). There are no budget 2010 measures in supplementary estimates (C); budget 2010 measures for 2011-12 have been included in the 2011-12 main estimates. Travel, conferences and hospitality are within 2008-09 levels as directed by budget 2009 and are monitored by monthly reports. Efficiencies in the procurement process have been implemented. Human resources allocation has been re-evaluated and optimized.

In response to (b), the transactional data available in Environment Canada's human resources management system, HRMS, does not provide information on whether any employees separated from the department as a result of the operating budget freeze. In the course of normal operations, however, during fiscal year 2010-11, 582 full-time employees and 1127 part-time employees left Environment Canada.

In response to (c), from April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011, one full-time employee was laid off at Environment Canada. No part-time employees were laid off. The one layoff was a result of a lack of work due to the sudden ending of a research project, but it was not as a result of the operating budget freeze.

In response to (d), from April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2011, Environment Canada hired 432 full-time employees and 1,031 part-time employees in the course of normal operations.

In response to (e), in the next five years, it is estimated that Environment Canada will lose between 550 and 600 full-time employees each year to attrition for various separation reasons in the course of normal operations. No projections are available for the attrition of part-time employees due to the transitory nature of the types of work involved.

* * *

[English]

STARRED QUESTIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the government's response to Starred Question No. 15 be printed in *Hansard* as if read.

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[Text]

***Question No. 15—Ms. Elizabeth May:**

With regard to the Montreal Port Authority: (a) was the Prime Minister's Spokesperson, Dimitri Soudas, involved in any way in the appointment of the Montreal Port Authority's Chief Executive Officer; and (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, (i) what are the details of this involvement, (ii) did the Prime Minister consent to this involvement?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Montreal Port Authority appoints their chief executive officer.

* * *

•(1525)

[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. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 74, 75, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 91, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 105, 107, 110, 111 and Starred Question No. 21 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2—Mr. Bruce Hyer:

With regard to corporate taxation: (a) how many corporations in Canada paid no tax in each of the last ten years; and (b) for each corporation identified in (a), what were its revenues and its profits in each of the last ten years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3—Mr. Dennis Bevington:

With regard to the expenditures of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as identified in the 2011-12 Main Estimates: (a) what programs are funded under the lines (i) Northern Land, Resources and Environmental Management (page 191), (ii) Contribution for promoting the safe use, development, conservation and protection of the North's natural resources (page 194), (iii) Contributions for promoting the political, social and scientific development of Canada's three territories (page 195), (iv) Contributions for promoting regional development in Canada's three territories (page 197), (v) Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Community Development (page 196); and (b) for each program identified in (a), what are the names or identities of each individual recipient of funds from each program and what amount of funding was provided to each recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 4—Ms. Libby Davies:

With regard to the PROminent FUNCtionaries of the Communist Party (PROFUNC), run by the government between 1950-1983: (a) when requested by an individual who believes his or her name may be on the PROFUNC list, will the government disclose whether or not that individual's name is on the list; (b) what was done with the names on the PROFUNC list once PROFUNC was discontinued; (c) were any of the names or was any of the information about individuals named on the PROFUNC list ever turned over to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), or any other security agency, at any time after 1983; (d) were any of the names or was any of the information about individuals named on the list ever shared with the Government of the United States or any of its security, policing or military

bodies; (e) did any of the RCMP personnel who helped compile or maintain PROFUNC work for CSIS or other security agencies following the end of the program; and (f) what other materials were created by individuals working for PROFUNC between 1950-1983 (i.e., minutes of meetings, reports filed by security agents, other documents)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 5—Ms. Libby Davies:

What is the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2009-2010, up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Vancouver East, identifying each department or agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 6—Mr. Peter Stoffer:

With respect to the Veterans Burial Regulations and the Corporation named by the Department of Veterans Affairs Act to administer the Veterans Funeral and Burial program, specifically the Last Post Fund (LPF): (a) what is the annual amount of financial support and funding provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (b) what is the statistical information, provided to the minister, on reimbursements provided by the LPF to assist in payment of funeral and burial costs for the estates of (i) First World War veterans, (ii) Second World War veterans, (iii) Korean War veterans, (iv) estates of veterans who received a disability benefit from Veterans Affairs Canada, (v) estates of allied veterans; (c) what are the details of the annual administrative and operating costs of the LPF from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (d) what are the details of the annual program costs of the Veterans Funeral and Burial Program from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (e) what are the details of the annual salary costs for LPF staff from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (f) what are the details of how frequently business plans, operating budgets, capital budgets and performance reports are submitted by the Corporation to the Minister; (g) what are the details of any departmental analysis concerning the raising of the means test for eligibility for support through the Veterans Funeral and Burial program; (h) what are the details of any departmental analysis concerning the extension of eligibility for a funeral and burial to all estate-tested Canadian Forces (CF) and RCMP veterans; (i) what is the estimated financial cost of extending eligibility to the Veterans Funeral and Burial program to all estate-tested CF and RCMP; (j) how often does the department conduct an assurance audit of the LPF; (k) when was the last time the government conducted an assurance audit of the LPF; and (l) when does the department plan to conduct the next assurance audit of the LPF?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 7—Mr. Peter Stoffer:

With respect to Canadian Forces veterans trying to obtain an end to the deduction of Pension Act disability payments from Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Long Term Disability benefits: (a) what is the total amount of money spent by all departments and agencies, excluding the Department of Justice, from March 2007 to 2011 inclusively, on the defence against the SISIP class action lawsuit; (b) what is the total amount of money the government has spent to hire outside legal counsel, from March 2007 to 2011 inclusively, on the SISIP class action lawsuit; and (c) what is the total amount of money spent by all government departments and agencies on the SISIP class action lawsuit, from March 2007 to 2011 inclusively, including all costs associated with the work of the Department of Justice?

(Return tabled)

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Question No. 8—Mr. Peter Stoffer:

With regard to veterans' long-term care facilities and veterans' contract beds in community care facilities: (a) what are all facilities, by province and territory, that are under contract by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide veterans' beds; (b) for each facility identified in (a), what is (i) the number of beds, (ii) the average cost of a veteran's bed; (c) when, by facility and province or territory, does the department expect to close veterans' beds based on the declining population of its Second World War and Korean War veteran clientele; (d) what are the details of any departmental analysis concerning the expansion of the definition of eligible veterans for admittance to veterans' health care centres; (e) what are the details of any departmental analysis concerning the government's payment for veterans' beds at long-term care facilities or community care facilities for the spouses of Second World War and Korean War veterans; (f) does the department have any estimates of the cost of paying for veterans' beds at veterans' long-term care or community care facilities for the spouses of Second World War and Korean War veterans and, if so, what are they; (g) what, if any, are the plans for the long-term care of modern-day Canadian Forces (CF) veterans who require long-term care and do not meet the criteria for admittance to veterans' beds at veterans' long-term care or community care facilities; and (h) is the department engaged in any discussion of the development of specialized medical centres for modern-day CF and RCMP veterans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 9—Mr. Peter Stoffer:

With regard to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB), legislated by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act: (a) who are all permanent and temporary members of the Board, broken down by province and territory, appointed by the Governor in Council since 2006; (b) has the government considered disbanding the VRAB; (c) has the government considered modifying the VRAB; (d) has the government considered implementing a policy to ensure that VRAB appointees by the Governor in Council must have (i) military or RCMP experience, (ii) medical experience; (e) what were the total annual federal funds provided to the VRAB from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (f) what is a breakdown of the annual spending of the VRAB, from 2006 to 2011 inclusively, as it relates to (i) program costs, (ii) administration costs, (iii) salary costs of the VRAB board members, (iv) travel costs for the VRAB board members, (v) VRAB staff costs, (vi) VRAB staff travel costs; (g) how many reports has the VRAB chairperson made to the Minister with respect to the use of resources allocated to the Board from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (h) when was the last time the Department of Veterans Affairs completed an assurance audit of the VRAB and when is the department planning to conduct the next audit; (i) how often does the department conduct assurance audits of the VRAB; (j) has the department planned an extensive review of the administration of the VRAB; (k) does the Department of Veterans Affairs regularly analyze the reasons why pension decisions are overturned by the VRAB in favour of the client with regard to the interpretation of (i) legislation, (ii) medical issues, (iii) legal issues; (l) has the VRAB provided information to the department on how many pension decisions, made since the VRAB's inception, have been in favour of the veteran client using the benefit of the doubt clause (section 70); and (m) how many pension matters or cases has the VRAB referred back to the Minister for reconsideration, by year, from 2006 to 2011 inclusively?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 10—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to the full process currently being undertaken by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) regarding chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), including the August 26, 2010, meeting of the Scientific Expert Working Group (SEWG) and the CIHR's "knowledge synthesis review": (a) what is the accepted operating definition of "conflict of interest" for the CIHR, (i) why was no disclosure statement made by all participants who attended the August 26, 2010, joint meeting of the CIHR and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada (MSSC), (ii) are there plans to provide an opportunity to declare possible conflicts of interest subsequent to the meeting; (b) what are the details of all information produced and circulated by the CIHR in January 2011 regarding follow-up care for multiple sclerosis (MS) patients and to which organizations was the information sent; (c) will the disclosure statement to be signed by members of the SEWG at its next meeting in June 2011 include specific reference to any (i) consultancy, (ii) grant support, (iii) membership on advisory councils, (iv) speaker's bureau, (v) other sources of funding a member might have; (d) how does the CIHR plan to ensure that all members of the SEWG have the same understanding of private or personal interests that could influence decision-making; (e) will all disclosure statements in (c) be made publicly available and, if so, when, and, if not, why not; (f) which, if any, of

the SEWG's members have been trained in Dr. Zamboni's methods and by whom were these members trained; (g) which, if any, of the SEWG's members have watched diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI and, for each member identified (i) where did this observation take place, (ii) under what guidance, (iii) how many images and treatments were studied by the member; (h) which, if any, of the SEWG's members have undertaken diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI and, for each member identified, (i) where were these actions performed, (ii) under what guidance, (iii) how many images and treatments were performed by the member;

(i) does the CIHR recognize the emerging scientific discipline of neurovascular disease; (j) does the SEWG include any members of the International Society for NeuroVascular Disease (ISNVD) and, if so, who are these members, and, if not, why not; (k) which, if any, members of the SEWG have attended any of the ISNVD's conferences, specifying for each such member the conferences that he or she attended; (l) does the inclusion of investigators of the seven MS Society-funded studies in the SEWG comply with the CIHR's operating definition of "conflict of interest" and, if so, what are the reasons that explain this compliance; (m) regarding the "knowledge synthesis review", (i) what is the protocol for the review, (ii) how is research deemed to be, or not to be, pertinent, (iii) who specifically is undertaking the review, how were they chosen, and what expertise do they have to undertake the review, (iv) why has the CIHR decided to have them undertake the review, (v) what are the CIHR's reasons for not having the SEWG undertake the review, (vi) what is the cost of the review, (vii) what is a comprehensive list of abstracts to be reviewed, (viii) what additional material, people, or other sources will be consulted, (ix) will the review include scientific evidence presented at all the major scientific conferences on CCSVI to date, namely, Hamilton (February 2010), New York (July 2010), Washington (October 2010), Katowice (March 2011), Bologna (March 2011), Chicago (April 2011), and San Diego (May 2011), (x) will the review include contacting the leading experts in the field, asking for their unpublished data, visiting their laboratories and operating theatres, (xi) if the answer to (m)(x) is in the affirmative, what, if any, protocol has been established for each contact, and what, if any, weighting will be applied to this evidence; (n) how does the CIHR plan to weigh or assess the seven MS Society-funded studies and the "knowledge synthesis review" in its establishment of any future policy, particularly in its deliberations on whether to undertake clinical trials for CCSVI in Canada; (o) which, if any, members of the SEWG have attended any CCSVI conferences, specifying for each such member (i) what conferences he or she attended, (ii) in what capacity, (iii) who paid for the trip or attendance at the conference, (iv) what written evidence did he or she report to either the CIHR or SEWG, (v) if no written evidence was reported, why not; (p) which members of the CIHR have attended any CCSVI conferences, specifying for each such member (i) what conferences he or she attended, (ii) in what capacity, (iii) who paid for the trip or attendance at the conference, (iv) what written evidence he/she reported to either the CIHR or SEWG, (v) if no written evidence was reported, why not; (q) why has the CIHR decided not to further investigate CCSVI through clinical trials; (r) why has the CIHR decided not to follow recommendations made by the Ontario Association of Neurologists, the Canadian Society of Radiologists, the Canadian Society of Vascular Surgery, the American Society of Interventional Radiology, and the International Union of Phlebology regarding CCSVI;

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(s) what does the CIHR consider an “appropriate pace”, a term used in its May 18, 2011, e-mail to Dr. Kirsty Duncan, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke North, for the introduction to Canada of any potential new medical treatment for any medical condition, and how much evidence does the CIHR consider is required before a treatment should undergo clinical trials in Canada in terms of (i) the number of procedures undertaken, (ii) the number of countries undertaking the procedure, (iii) scientific evidence presented in academic peer-reviewed journals, (iv) scientific evidence presented at academic conferences, (v) scientific evidence presented at academic conferences for conditions that are progressive diseases, especially progressive diseases for which there are limited or no options for treatment; (t) what is the CIHR’s accepted protocol, including all necessary steps, for bringing a new treatment to clinical trials in Canada, (i) when was the protocol established, (ii) what treatments have undergone clinical trials as a result of the protocol, (iii) which treatments have been rejected to date; (u) is the creation of a SEWG a standard step in the CIHR’s protocol for bringing a new treatment to clinical trials in Canada, and, (i) if so, since the creation of the protocol, what are all new treatments and their associated SEWGs, (ii) if not, why was this step deemed necessary for approval of clinical trials for CCSVI; (v) what are the last five medical treatments for any medical condition accepted by the CIHR for use in Canada and, for each treatment, what are the details of all evidence required by the CIHR in its decision to have the treatment undergo clinical trials, including, but not limited to, the number of procedures undertaken, the countries undertaking the procedure, and scientific evidence presented in both peer-reviewed journals and academic conferences; and (w) with regard to the MS registry announced March 23, 2011, (i) who specifically is collecting the information, (ii) what precise information is being collected, (iii) what consent will be necessary from patients for any data collection, (iv) when will information begin to be collected, (v) what specific information is being collected regarding the treatment of CCSVI, (vi) what information is being gathered or tracking is being done of individuals who have chosen to have the liberation procedure outside Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 11—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to depleted uranium (DU), military service, and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) benefits and programs: (a) what are all potential sources of DU to which Canadian Forces (CF) members and veterans might have been exposed between 1990 and the present; (b) what are any operations between 1990 and the present that might have brought CF members and veterans into direct or close contact with DU, including, but not limited to, operations in which Canadian personnel seconded to other military forces were involved; (c) did any CF member or veteran serve between 1999 and 2003 in areas assessed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to be DU areas; (d) what, if any, DU munitions, vehicles made with DU, or ships carrying DU munitions, were used by CF between 1990 and the present; (e) what are all possible exposure routes for each source of DU identified in (a), (b), and (d); (f) what, if any, field measurements were taken around any DU source identified in (a), (b), and (d) and, if such measurements were taken, what was the level of contamination of the environment for each site, for each time sampled; (g) what, if any, studies were undertaken by the Department of National Defence (DND), or any other federal government department or crown corporation, from 1990 to the present, regarding DU environmental contamination linked to the military and what were the chief findings of each such report, including (i) whether it identified a need or made a recommendation to work with caution in DU contaminated areas, (ii) whether it identified a need or made a recommendation to do policy work regarding DU contaminated areas; (h) what follow-up took place concerning the chief recommendations of each report identified in (g), as well as concerning the issues identified in each of (g)(i) and (g)(ii);

(i) what, if any, clean-up operations were undertaken in impact zones between 1990 and the present, and, if such operations were undertaken, why was each clean-up operation deemed necessary, and what national or international recommendations were followed in each clean-up; (j) which, if any, experts were consulted to determine any possible DU contamination between 1990 and the present, and, if experts were consulted, who were they, and in what field or fields did each expert work; (k) what, if any, specific training, equipment and guidance was given to CF members and veterans who were required to work in areas of DU contamination or to conduct any DU field assessments and clean-ups; (l) what, if any, specific radiation field measurement and health and safety equipment was provided to CF members and veterans, including equipment used to determine the presence of DU, and what specific training was provided concerning the use of any such equipment; (m) what, if any, training, equipment and guidance was given to CF members and veterans concerning the handling of both intact and damaged weapons previously used to fire DU munitions; (n) from 1990 to the present (i) what was the CF’s policy regarding

transportation, use, exposure, risk mitigation, and testing of DU from 1990 to the present, (ii) how did or does the policy comply with all relevant guidelines and regulations for the protection of the environment and personnel, including, but not limited to, those established in the Canada Labour Code, by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and through the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, (iii) were the guidelines and regulations identified in (ii) followed during CF operations abroad, (iv) how was the policy elaborated in (n)(i), enforced during CF activities both in Canada and abroad; (o) is there a protocol accepted by the government for urine testing for DU and what are its details, including, but not limited to, (i) who should be screened, (ii) following what exposures should screening occur, (iii) which laboratories were or are used for the screening, (iv) what criteria have been used to select the laboratory that conducts the screening and how can quality assurance in screening processes and results be ensured, (v) the maximum acceptable delay between DU exposure to initial screening, (vi) the screening method and how that method was chosen, (vii) the screening schedule, (viii) any follow-up mechanisms, (ix) how screening is documented, (x) when this protocol was accepted; (p) what, if any, screening procedure exists for potential DU exposure for CF members and veterans, including, but not limited to, (i) an exposure questionnaire, (ii) a 24-hour urine collection test, (iii) a detailed physical exam, (iv) clinical tests of organ systems function; (q) what, if any, DU follow-up program or similar program intended to screen and monitor health problems associated with DU exposure is available to CF members and veterans; (r) what, if any, CF members or veterans have been identified and tracked following potential exposure to DU through situations related to (a), (b) and (d), and what was involved in the tracking procedures, specifying whether the tracking included (i) urinary uranium determinations, (ii) clinical laboratory values, (iii) psychiatric and neuro-cognitive assessments, (iv) other forms of tracking;

(s) what, if any, summary statistics are now available for cases identified in (r); (t) what, if any, CF members or veterans have been identified and tracked following exposure to (i) vehicles hit with friendly fire, (ii) burning vehicles, (iii) fires involving DU munitions, (iv) the inspection or salvaging of damaged vehicles; (u) what, if any, information is given to CF members or veterans who might have been exposed to harmful DU conditions, and, specifically, how is this information relayed; (v) can CF members or veterans who might have been exposed to harmful DU conditions ask to be screened for DU exposure, if not, why not, and, if so, (i) what procedure do they follow, (ii) who does the testing, (iii) what is the cost of the testing; (w) what are the potential health effects from (i) external exposure to DU, for both low and high dosages, in both the short term and the long term, and (ii) internal exposure to DU, for both low and high dosages, in both the short term and the long term; (x) what, if any, CF members or veterans have applied for compensation associated with DU exposure during military service, specifying (i) the number of requests, (ii) whether compensation was awarded, (iii) whether compensation is pending, (iv) whether compensation is in appeal, (v) how many appeals have been made; (y) have any of DND’s medical or surgical members ever identified a possible link between a CF member’s service or a veteran’s service, exposure to DU, and particular health effects, and, if so, (i) how many times has such a possible link been made by DND’s medical or surgical members, (ii) what follow-up occurred as a result of any identified possible linkages; and (z) does the government have plans to convene a working group to review the latest research on hazardous materials exposure, including, but not limited to, exposure to DU, and possible health effects and, if so, (i) what is the planned scope of the review, (ii) who is to convene the working group, (iii) how are experts to be chosen, (iv) how are conflicts of interest to be avoided and declared, (v) what is the timeline for the review and the review’s milestones?

(Return tabled)

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Question No. 12—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), the liberation treatment, and multiple sclerosis (MS): (a) what consensus documents have been published regarding the diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI, (i) by whom, (ii) on what dates, (iii) what were the recommendations, (iv) were they reviewed by the August 26, 2010, meeting of the CIHR in collaboration with the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada (MSSC); (b) why were Canadian members of the International Union of Phlebology (IUP), who were part of the consensus process regarding the diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI, not consulted during the August 26 meeting of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); (c) what are the details of any plan the government has or is developing to collect evidence regarding the diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI, for example, through clinical trials or the creation of a registry; (d) what percentage of surgical procedures in Canada have been double-blind tested over the last 40 years and, for this percentage, (i) what is the risk of complication, (ii) what is considered an acceptable risk of complication, (iii) how do physicians judge acceptable risk and convey this risk to their patients, (iv) what actions do physicians take to reduce risk if the patient chooses to undertake the procedure; (e) when a medical treatment appears to be potentially effective, is its approval ever fast-tracked by the relevant Canadian authorities and, if so, (i) what are any examples of this in Canada over the last five years, (ii) has this ever happened with respect to MS, (iii) if so, who advocated for a fast-tracking and when, (iv) what process was followed to allow the treatment, (v) who made the decision to proceed, (vi) why was fast-tracking deemed necessary, (vii) what were the known risks at the time of the request, (viii) what, if any, negative impacts resulted; (f) what are the reasons for the length of time it has taken the relevant Canadian authorities to implement clinical trials or to develop a registry; (g) why did no member of the August 26 group declare any conflicts of interest, either real or perceived; (h) how many liberation procedures did the August 26 group estimate have been undertaken, (i) which countries were undertaking the procedure, (ii) to which countries were Canadians travelling, (iii) were the practitioners considered to be sufficiently trained, (iv) were the procedures in these countries found to be safe;

(i) which people, labs and operating theatres had undertaken the diagnosis or treatment of CCSVI in Canada prior to the August 26 meeting; (j) why did the August 26 meeting not include Canadian experts in the imaging or treatment of CCSVI and for what reasons was Dr. Sandy McDonald not included as a participant; (k) why did the August 26 meeting not include international experts in diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI, data presented at international scientific conferences or site visits to labs and operating theatres, which were or had been undertaking diagnosis or treatment; (l) what is a comprehensive explanation of why the inclusion of CCSVI and liberation experts might have biased the sample of the August 26 group and whether such selection is an established practice at all CIHR meetings; (m) what are all the names of the group members who had spoken out against diagnosis or treatment of CCSVI or the liberation procedure prior to the August 26 meeting, what were the details of their positions, and what are their publically-available comments on the matter; (n) who were all the members of the August 26 group and, for each member, what were his or her stated or declared conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest; (o) what was the August 26 group's assessment of and comments concerning all reviewed published papers, including both positive and negative observations; (p) did the August 26 group find it unusual that two of the reviewed papers had been accepted for publication in only six weeks, (i) did the group review whether this is a common practice in medicine, (ii) did the group consider how and why this might happen, (iii) did the group explore the expertise of those writing the papers, their experience, how their results compared with those of Dr. Zamboni and, if so, (iv) what were the group's findings for questions posed in (iii); (q) which neurologists, present at the August 26 meeting, had followed MS patients who were diagnosed with CCSVI and who had been treated for the condition, (i) how had neurologists followed them (e.g., appointment, EDSS score/another scale, MRI, neurological exam, etc.), (ii) what, if any, evidence did they present of patients' progress following the liberation procedure; (r) did the August 26 group find the reversal in the MSSC's position, who was part of the greater group, unusual, (i) did the group investigate or consider the reasons for this change in position and, if so, (ii) what observations did it make or conclusions did it come to regarding the reversal;

(s) did the August 26 group estimate how its decision might impact Canadian MS patients, including (i) impacts on their mental health and how this might impact their disease, (ii) the number of Canadian MS patients who might feel forced to seek help outside Canada, (iii) how air travel, a compromised vascular system, recent surgery, and lack of follow-up in Canada might impact their disease and, if so, (iv) what are the results of those estimations; (t) what consensus documents are forthcoming, (i) by whom, (ii) when will they be published; (u) what is the work plan for the new expert working group which met for the first time on November 23, 2010, (i) who are the

panellists, what are their qualifications and what is their expertise in diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI, (ii) how were the panellists chosen and by whom, (iii) what is the group's mandate and how was it derived, (iv) what is the schedule of meetings, (v) what is the timeline for the group's work, (vi) what evidence will be reviewed to reach any decision about possible clinical trials, registry, diagnosis, treatment, follow-up care, etc.; (v) what was the agenda for the November 23 meeting of the expert working group, (i) what abstracts, documents, and presentations were reviewed, (ii) which Canadian and international experts, with experience in diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI, were consulted, (iii) what Canadian and international unpublished data were explored, (iv) what Canadian and international labs or operating theatres were reviewed and visited; (w) for what reasons is the new group going to analyze interim and final results from seven studies funded by the Canadian and US MS Societies and why are these studies considered more worthwhile cases for analysis than other studies already completed; (x) when will the November 23 expert panel declare and post any conflicts of interest, following the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS) guide, on the CIHR website to eliminate the possibility of real or perceived conflicts; and (y) further to assurances made by the President of CIHR, Dr. Alain Beaudet, to the Subcommittee on Neurological Diseases on December 7, 2010, that MS patients who have had the liberation procedure would have follow-up, what are the details of how that follow-up will occur, specifically, (i) how will "a message be sent", by whom, to whom, by when and what will the message be, (ii) specifically, will all patients who travel or travelled outside Canada be assured that their doctors will see them, that appointments will not be cancelled, that tests will not be cancelled, that they will have access to recommended prescriptions, that they will not lose their long-term care and that they will not be berated for making the decision to have liberation, (iii) how will this be enforced, (iv) what action should MS patients take if they are denied care, (v) to whom should they report a denial of care, (vi) what are the consequences for a physician or health practitioner or organization who delivers care but fails to provide follow-up care, (vii) will follow-up include ultrasound or MRI to image the veins of MS patients and, if so, how often will these imaging procedures occur and who will pay for them?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 13—Ms. Olivia Chow:

With regard to the Champlain Bridge in Montreal: (a) what is the volume of correspondence in which a new bridge is requested or complaints are made about traffic congestion as a result of the maintenance and repair of the bridge as received by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, or Transport Canada from (i) individuals, (ii) organizations, (iii) elected representatives; (b) what is the total number of petition signatures received from individuals requesting the construction of a new bridge; (c) what are the names and addresses of the organizations that submitted correspondence as per (a)(ii); and (d) what is the government's reason for not funding the replacement of the Champlain Bridge?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 14—Ms. Olivia Chow:

With regard to infrastructure project applications made under Canada's Economic Action Plan: (a) what is the total number of project applications approved, broken down (i) by municipality, (ii) by electoral district in each municipality; (b) what is the total number of project applications rejected, broken down (i) by municipality, (ii) by electoral district in each municipality; and (c) broken down by municipality, what project applications were rejected and, for each, what was (i) the reason for the rejection, (ii) the amount of funding requested, (iii) the electoral district in which the project would have been completed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 17—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to the Small Craft Harbours Program and the \$3.2 million announced on April 23, 2010, by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to improve small craft harbours in Prince Edward Island: (a) how much of the \$3.2 million was spent in fiscal year 2010-2011; (b) how much was identified to be spent in 2010-2011; (c) where was the money spent; and (d) how much money was spent on each harbour?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 18—Mr. Malcolm Allen:**

With respect to the Investment Canada Act and foreign corporate takeovers of Canadian companies: (a) on an annual and monthly basis from January 1, 1993 to December 31, 2010, how many takeovers were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; (b) for each takeover, what was the aggregate value of acquisition (i) federally, on an annual and monthly basis, (ii) by province, on an annual and monthly basis; (c) distributed federally, on an annual and monthly basis, and by province, on an annual and monthly basis, what are the takeovers, further distributed by the industry sectors (i) resources, (ii) manufacturing, (iii) wholesale and retail trades, (iv) business and service industries, (v) other; (d) in which year since January 1, 1993, did the most foreign takeovers of Canadian companies occur; (e) what is the current position of the government on foreign takeovers; (f) has the Investment Canada Act mandate changed since it was created and, if so, when and how, specifying the details of all amendments to the mandate; (g) in regard to takeovers approved between January 1, 1993 and December 31, 2010, what are the number of jobs affected by these takeovers as submitted by the investors as part of the application for review; (h) how many times has the Competition Policy Review Panel met on an annual and monthly basis, and broken down federally and by province, since its creation; (i) what changes to the Investment Canada Act has the Competition Policy Review Panel recommended; and (j) what other actions have been taken by the government to review the Competition Act and Investment Canada Act?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 22—Mr. Pierre Nantel:

With regard to the Prime Minister's presence at a National Hockey League finals game in Boston: (a) what was the total cost of the trip; (b) how much did the flight cost; (c) how many staff members, ministers, parliamentary secretaries and public servants accompanied the Prime Minister; (d) which departments paid the travel costs; (e) what were the total hospitality expenses incurred; (f) what organization or person invited the Prime Minister to the game; (g) what are the names of the public servants and staff members from the Prime Minister's Office that accompanied the Prime Minister on this trip; (h) how much did on-site security cost; and (i) who paid for the tickets?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 25—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to bonuses granted by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, for each of fiscal years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, how many bonuses were dispersed and what were the amounts of these bonuses, broken down by: (a) fiscal year; (b) individual personnel; (c) region; and (d) departmental division?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 26—Hon. John McCallum:

With respect to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the government's commitment of \$2.85 billion over 5 years for the Muskoka Initiative: (a) for each project or program that qualifies for the renewed \$1.75 billion in existing funding, (i) what is its name and objective, (ii) what is the total federal funding commitment, (iii) what is the timeframe for the project or program; (b) for each program or project that qualifies for the new \$1.1 billion in funding announced on February 1, 2011, (i) what is its name and objective, (ii) what is the total federal funding commitment, (iii) what is the timeframe for the project or program; (c) for each of the bilateral, multilateral and partnership branches, (i) which partner and country is receiving funding, (ii) how much funding is each partner and country receiving; and (d) what plans does the government have to inform Parliament and the public regarding this spending?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 27—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to departmental spending from 2006 to present, what were the total costs of rentals and purchases of individual staging, lighting and audio equipment, and production and assorted technical costs for all government announcements and public events?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 29—Mr. Claude Gravelle:

What is the total amount of government funding, since fiscal year 2006-2007 up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Nickel Belt, specifying each (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative, (iii) amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 30—Mr. Claude Gravelle:

With regard to grants and contributions applications to federal economic development agencies since April 1, 2010, what funding applications were approved by departmental officials but rejected by the Minister's office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 31—Mr. Claude Gravelle:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at federal economic development agencies: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid off as of April 1, 2011; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees have been hired since April 1, 2011; and (e) what programs will be subject to funding cuts as of April 1, 2011?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 33—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to government funding within the constituency of Guelph: (a) what was the total amount offunding originally announced, broken down by fiscal year, since fiscal year 2006-2007, up to and including fiscal year 2010-2011, specifying for each announcement (i) the department or agency responsible for the funding, (ii) the program or initiative from which the funding came, (iii) the project name, (iv) the total value of the project; (b) for each announcement identified in (a) what was, (i) the total amount delivered, broken down by fiscal year, since fiscal year 2006-2007, up to and including fiscal year 2010-2011, (ii) the department or agency responsible for the delivered funding, (iii) the program or initiative from which the delivered funding came, (iv) the project name, (v) the total value of the project; and (c) broken down by fiscal year, since fiscal year 2006-2007, up to and including fiscal year 2010-2011, in each case where the final, total amount delivered, as specified in (b), was different from the funding amount announced, as specified in (a), what was the reason for this discrepancy?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 34—Ms. Olivia Chow:

With regard to infrastructure funding requests since 2006, broken down by infrastructure funding program, including but not limited to the Public Transit Fund, the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund, the Border Infrastructure Fund, the Infrastructure Canada Program, the Green Infrastructure Fund, and the Building Canada Fund: (a) how many applications for funding have been received; (b) how many applications have been rejected; (c) what is each application that has been rejected, including the date of application; (d) for applications identified in (c), what was the reason for rejection; (e) for applications identified in (c), what was the electoral district of the proposed project; and (f) how many applications are pending decision?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 35—Mr. Scott Simms:

With respect to government decentralization: (a) does the government have any information on proposals prepared since 2006 on the relocation, from the National Capital area to other regions of Canada, of (i) government departments or parts thereof, (ii) agencies, (iii) Crown corporations; and (b) does the government have any information on assessments completed since 2006 on which of the following entities could be relocated from the National Capital area to other regions of Canada, namely, (i) government departments or parts thereof, (ii) agencies, (iii) Crown corporations?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 36—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to employment in the federal public service: (a) for the period of January 1, 2005, to May 31, 2011, (i) how many people were hired by the federal public service, (ii) how many casual employees were hired by the federal public service, (iii) how many term employees were hired by the federal public service, (iv) how many indeterminate employees were hired by the federal public service, (v) how many applications for priority employment appointments in the federal public service were submitted by qualified medically released members of the Canadian Forces, (vi) how many qualified medically released members of the Canadian Forces have received a priority employment appointment, (vii) how many qualified medically released members of the Canadian Forces were still on the priority employment appointment list when their eligibility period expired; (b) for the period of 2005 to the present, how many qualified medically released Canadian Forces veterans were hired by each department; and (c) what measures are being taken to extend the priority employment appointments program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 37—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to the statements by the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment, entitled "Canada's Green Budget 2009" and "Minister Prentice Highlights the Environment in 2010 Budget": (a) how many applications were submitted under the 2009 \$1 billion investment in clean energy research, development and demonstration projects, and, for each project identified, (i) who was the applicant and in what sector does the applicant work, (ii) what was the amount of funding requested, (iii) what were the projected outcomes, (iv) what was the projected return on investment; (b) what, in detail, are all of the clean energy research development and demonstration projects awarded funds through the 2009 \$1 billion investment, and, for each project identified, (i) who was the recipient of the funds and in what sector does the recipient work, (ii) what was the amount of funding requested, (iii) what was the amount of funding awarded, (iv) what were the projected outcomes, (v) what was the projected return on investment, (vi) has the project been started, is it in progress, or has it been completed, (vii) what, if any, findings, publications, contracts, etc., have resulted from the project, (viii) in what geographic area was the project located; (c) what monies of the 2009 \$1 billion investment for clean energy research development and demonstration projects have been spent, (i) what monies remain available, (ii) what, if any, advertising did or does the government undertake to promote the program, (iii) what, if any, costs are associated with any advertising of the program; (d) how many project applications were submitted under the 2009 \$1 billion Green Infrastructure Fund, and, for each project identified, (i) who was the applicant and in what sector does the applicant work, (ii) what was the amount of funding requested, (iii) what were the projected outcomes, (iv) what was the projected return on investment; (e) how many projects were awarded funding through the \$1 billion Green Infrastructure Fund, and, for each project identified, (i) who was the recipient of the funds and in what sector does the recipient work, (ii) what was the amount of funding awarded, (iii) what were the projected outcomes in terms of reductions in emissions, waste, or other environmental payoffs, (iv) what was the projected return on investment, (v) has the project been started, is it in progress, or has it been completed, (vi) what, if any, findings, publications, contracts, or other significant results have been produced as a result of the project; (f) how many retrofits were undertaken under the 2009 \$300 million eco-ENERGY Retrofit program, (i) what was the average cost of a retrofit, (ii) what was the average income of the family or individual undertaking a retrofit, (iii) what was the average household savings on energy, (iv) what was the average household savings in terms of money spent on energy annually, (v) what is the estimated savings to the environment each year, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs); (g) what specific projects were undertaken to maintain federal laboratories for \$250 million in 2009, (i) why did the government identify these projects as investments in the environment, (ii) what laboratories benefitted, and what was the investment per lab, (iii) what specific laboratories need maintenance or further maintenance; (h) what specific projects, by station, were undertaken or are being undertaken under the \$85 million for key Arctic research stations, why did the government identify these projects as investments in the environment, and, for each project identified, (i) what was the investment, (ii) what is the life expectancy of the investment, (iii) is further work needed, (iv) what projects does the government know still require funding; (i) what progress has been made to date on the \$2 million investment in a feasibility study for a world-class Arctic research station, (i) what was the mandate of the feasibility study, (ii) what was its start date, key milestones, and end date, (iii) what, if any, results are available; (j) what are all federal contaminated sites across Canada, and, for each contaminated site identified, (i) where specifically is the site located, (ii) has the site had an environmental assessment (iii) if so, what are the main contaminants at the site, what is the projected

cost of remediation, (iv) if not, what is the projected cost of an environmental assessment and the time required for that assessment; (k) is there a priority list for addressing contaminated sites listed in (j), and if so, (i) in what order do the sites appear on that list, (ii) what methodology is used to establish priority, (iii) who undertakes any priority assessments, what are their expertise, and how are experts chosen; (l) how much of the \$80.5 million set aside for assessment of federal contaminated sites has been spent to date and what, if any, monies are remaining, (i) how many assessments have been started, are in progress, or have been completed to date, (ii) what are the findings for any completed assessment in terms of the environmental contamination, any threats to human health, and the projected cost of remediation, (iii) how many jobs have been created to date; (m) how much of the \$165 million set aside for remediation of federal contaminated sites has been spent to date and what, if any, monies are remaining, (i) what remediation projects are started, are in progress, or have been completed to date, (ii) what are the findings for any completed remediation in terms of reducing environmental contamination and any threats to human health, (iii) what is the cost or projected cost of all remediation projects identified in (m)(i), (iv) how many jobs have been created to date; (n) what specific national parks projects have been undertaken with the \$75 million earmarked in 2009, and, for each project identified, (i) what is the park's name, (ii) what is its location, (iii) what is the total investment, (iv) what is a description of the project; (o) what, if any, progress has the government made on its 2009 \$10 million investment in annual reporting of key environmental indicators such as clean air, clean water and GHG emissions, (i) what system was in place for reporting each, (ii) what, if any, system is now in place, (iii) when will the government make use of improvements in data resulting from this investment in its reports; (p) what, if any, progress has the government made on its 2010 \$18.4 million investment to enhance the tracking of environmental data through the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators program, (i) what specific projects does the government plan to undertake with the money and, for each project identified, (ii) how much money will be spent, (iii) how will monies spent improve environmental reporting, (iv) when will the government use improvements in its reports; (q) what, if any, action has been taken on the 2010 \$100 million Next Generation Renewable Power Initiative; (r) what, if any, consultation regarding environmental assessments has taken place with Aboriginal peoples in 2010, (i) identify all projects that affect Aboriginal communities, (ii) on which of the identified projects in (r)(i) have Aboriginal peoples been consulted to date; (s) how much of the \$2.8 million earmarked for consultations with Aboriginal communities has been spent and how much is still available; (t) what are all contaminated Great Lake sites and where specifically is each site located, (i) what is a ranking of these contaminated sites, (ii) what is the method used to determine levels of contamination, (iii) what is the scale used to compare levels of contamination, (iv) what is the government's definition of "most degraded", (v) what are all "most degraded" sites, (vi) for each site identified in (t)(v), what is a description of the contamination and what is the cost of the remediation; and (u) what specifically is the \$16 million ear-marked for to clean up the "most-degraded" Great Lakes sites, what monies have been spent to date, on what specific projects, and what is the projected return on investment in terms of the environment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 39—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to the recent changes in the way with which Service Canada community outreach offices' services will be delivered: (a) what is the rationale for changing the way in which Service Canada has been operating across Canada; (b) how much money will be saved through these changes; (c) how many Service Canada community offices will be closed because of this decision; (d) how many people will lose their jobs as a result of this decision; and (e) what are the supposed benefits of such changes?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 40—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to the way with which Service Canada will now be delivering services and the increased emphasis on accessing government services via the Internet: (a) what is the government's plan to address rural Canadians' lack of access to basic Internet; (b) what is the government's plan to ensure that rural Canadians who have no access to an Internet connection can access government programs and services in a timely manner; and (c) what is the government's plan to ensure that Canadians are technologically literate and capable of using the Internet to access essential government services?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 41—Ms. Judy Foote:**

With respect to government spending in the constituency of Random—Burin—St. George's, what was the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2005-2006 up to and including the current fiscal year, itemized according to: (a) the date the money was received in the riding; (b) the dollar amount of the expenditure; (c) the program from which the funding came; (d) the ministry responsible; and (e) the designated recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 42—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to the 2010 round of strategic reviews described and implemented in Budget 2011, specifically for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Marine Atlantic and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) what changes does the government intend to implement in order to make the delivery of its programs and services more effective and efficient; (b) what is the rationale for these changes; (c) what are the projected savings; and (d) what are the projected staffing changes to full-time labour, part-time labour and contract labour as a result of the government's changes to the ways it delivers programs and services, broken down by (i) department, (ii) change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 43—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to the departmental name change of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), announced on May 18, 2011, and effective June 13, 2011: (a) what is the government's rationale for the name change, specifically the rationale for (i) replacing "Indian Affairs" with "Aboriginal Affairs", (ii) replacing "Northern Affairs" with "Northern Development"; (b) did a consultation process take place on the implications of the name change, and, if so, (i) with which individuals and organizations, (ii) on which dates, (iii) what recommendations resulted from these consultations; (c) what is the expected impact on First Nation inherent and treaty rights; (d) does the government plan to commit additional resources to programs for Inuit, Métis, non-status Indians and urban Aboriginals; and (e) what is the expected cost of implementing the name change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 45—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to the government's investments in on-reserve housing for First Nations: (a) what is the total annual expenditure on new on-reserve housing construction; (b) what is the total annual expenditure on repair of existing on-reserve housing; (c) which government departments or agencies provide investments in this area; (d) what is the government's statutory responsibility for on-reserve housing; (e) what was the annual expenditure in fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, distributed by department and program activity; and (f) what is the estimated annual expenditure in fiscal years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, distributed by department and program activity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 47—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to Western Economic Diversification (WED): (a) what was the total dollar value of repayable contributions and of repayable portions of partially-repayable contributions, made during fiscal years (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011; (b) what is the total dollar amount repaid from contributions identified in (a); (c) what was the total value of non-repayable contributions made during fiscal years (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011; (d) for each non-repayable contribution made in fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, (i) which organization or individual received the contribution, (ii) what was the total dollar amount received, (iii) for what purpose was the contribution granted, (iv) who gave final approval for the contribution; (e) how many contracts were issued by WED in fiscal years (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011; and (f) for each contract issued in fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, (i) which organization or individual received the contract, (ii) was the contract tendered or sole-sourced, (iii) if the contract was sole-sourced, why, (iv) if the contract was sole-sourced, who gave final approval, (v) what was the total dollar amount for each contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 48—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to Western Economic Diversification (WED): (a) what is the total number of applications for green innovation and clean technology projects approved in fiscal year (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011; (b) which organization or individual received funding for each project in (a); (c) what dollar amount of funding was granted to each project in (a); (d) what was the total dollar amount of funding granted by WED to projects in (a) in fiscal year (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011; (e) for each of the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, what percentage of WED's total expenses is comprised by the amount specified in the answers to (d)(i), (d)(ii), (d)(iii) and (d)(iv), respectively; (f) what is the total number of applications for green innovation and clean technology projects rejected in fiscal year (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011; and (g) for each project application in (f), what was (i) the dollar amount of funding requested, (ii) the reason for the rejection?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 49—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to oil tanker spills on Canada's coasts: (a) how many oil spills occurred from 1980 to 2011; and (b) for each spill that occurred during this time period, (i) where was the spill located, (ii) from what type of vessel did the spill originate, (iii) what was the carrying capacity of the vessel, (iv) how many cubic litres or barrels of oil was spilled, (v) what was the grade of the oil product spilled, (vi) what measures did the government take to respond to the spill, (vii) what measures did the government take to clean up the spill, (viii) how long did it take to execute (b)(vi) and (b)(vii), (ix) what was the total cost of (b)(vi) and (b)(vii), (x) if applicable, for what dollar amount or percentage of the costs attributed to (b)(vi) and (b)(vii) was the operating company of the vessel held liable, (xi) if applicable, what was the total dollar amount collected from the operating company for (b)(vi) and (b)(vii)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 50—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to temporary resident visas: (a) for each fiscal year from 2006-2007 to 2010-2011, how many applications for temporary resident visas were received by the Canadian offices in (i) Beijing, (ii) Hong Kong, (iii) Shanghai, (iv) New Delhi, (v) Mumbai, (vi) Chandigarh, (vii) Jakarta, (viii) Seoul, (ix) Kuala Lumpur, (x) Islamabad, (xi) Manila, (xii) Singapore, (xiii) Colombo, (xiv) Bangkok, (xv) Ho Chi Minh City, (xvi) Dhaka, (xvii) Mexico City, (xviii) Guadalajara, (xvix) Monterrey, (xx) Prague; and (b) how many applications were issued by the offices listed in (a) for fiscal years (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 52—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to Industry Canada and, more specifically, funding that has been provided through the department for broadband initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador: (a) broken down by fiscal year, from 2007-2008 to date, (i) what specific amounts of funding have been approved for projects and under what program was the funding approved, (ii) what are the specific details of each project, (iii) when was the funding approved, (iv) how much funding was requested in the application, (v) who were the applicants for each project; (b) broken down by fiscal year, from 2007-2008 to date, (i) how many applications were submitted that did not receive funding, (ii) what were the individual requested amounts for each application, (iii) who were the applicants for each specific application; and (c) broken down by fiscal year, from 2007-2008 to date, what were the total amounts of funding provided for broadband projects in Canada?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 53—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to Transport Canada and, more specifically, fees that have been collected from vessel owners, vessel operators and all marine traffic users as a result of access or entry to any port located geographically in Placentia Bay, for fiscal years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010: (a) what fees have been paid to the government or any department, federal corporation or agency; and (b) what has been the reason or purpose of these collected fees and what are the specific amounts for each reason or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 55—Mrs. Maria Mourani:

With regard to the Integrated Relocation Program (IRP), the contract for which was awarded to Brookfield Relocation Services in 2009, and for the period from April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011: (a) how many relocation files were opened during this period; (b) what is the number of relocation files for each of the various departments and agencies, as well as the tenant-owner breakdown; and (c) for employee transfers involving the sale of property, what are the names of the "listing" real estate agents or brokers and their agencies?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 60—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With respect to benefits paid to Deputy Ministers (DM) of government departments, broken down both by individual and by department, what is the amount of benefits paid to DMs, including, but not limited to: (a) club memberships or membership discounts for personal recreation or socializing purposes, such as fitness clubs, golf clubs or social clubs; (b) season tickets to cultural or sporting events; (c) access to private health clinics and medical services outside those provided by provincial healthcare systems or by the employer's group insured benefit plans; and (d) professional advisory services for personal matters, such as financial, tax or estate planning?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 61—Mr. Andrew Cash:

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and its programs and initiatives related to homelessness and affordable housing: (a) how much funding is dedicated to the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP); (b) what is the status of the RRAP with regard to program delivery for fiscal years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; (c) what is the status of any agreements with the provinces with regard to delivery of the RRAP, and, if no agreements are in place, what is the status of any negotiations with the provinces with regard to delivery of the RRAP; (d) broken down by electoral district, by fiscal year, how many applications for funding under the RRAP have been (i) received, (ii) approved, (iii) rejected; (e) broken down by electoral district, by fiscal year, (i) what are all applications approved for funding under the RRAP, including the amount of funding approved, (ii) what are all applications denied funding under the RRAP, including the amount of funding requested and the reason for the rejection; (f) how much funding is dedicated to the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI); (g) what is the status of the AHI with regard to program delivery for fiscal years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; (h) what is the status of any agreements with the provinces, with regard to delivery of the AHI, and, if no agreements are in place, what is the status of any negotiations with the provinces with regard to delivery of the AHI; (i) broken down by electoral district, by fiscal year, how many applications for funding under the AHI have been (i) received, (ii) approved, (iii) rejected; (j) broken down by electoral district, by fiscal year, (i) what are all applications approved for funding under the AHI, including the amount of funding approved, (ii) what are all applications denied funding under the AHI, including the amount of funding requested and the reason for rejection; (k) how much funding is dedicated to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS); (l) what is the status of the HPS with regard to program delivery for the fiscal years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; (m) what is the status of any agreements with the provinces, with regard to delivery of the HPS, and, if no agreements are in place, what is the status of any negotiations with the provinces with regard to delivery of the HPS; (n) broken down by electoral district, by fiscal year, how many applications for funding under the HPS have been (i) received, (ii) approved, (iii) rejected; (o) broken down by electoral district, by fiscal year, (i) what are all applications approved for funding under the HPS, including the amount of funding approved, (ii) what are all applications denied funding under the HPS, including the amount of funding requested and the reason for rejection; (p) broken down by year and by type of funding, since 2006, how many new units of affordable

housing have been built using CMHC funding; (q) how many people are currently on waiting lists for affordable housing, broken down by (i) province, (ii) municipality; and (r) since 2006, what was the average number of people on a waiting list for affordable housing, broken down (i) by province and year, (ii) by municipality and year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 63—Mr. Andrew Cash:

With regard to the Georgetown South rail line: (a) what is the total volume of correspondence received by the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and by departments for which the minister is responsible calling for the electrification of the rail line from (i) individuals, (ii) organizations, (iii) elected officials; (b) what is the total number of petition signatures received by the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and by departments for which the minister is responsible calling for the electrification of the rail line; (c) what are the names and addresses of all organizations in (a); (d) since 2006, what reports has the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and the departments for which the minister is responsible produced or received regarding (i) the health impacts of diesel trains in urban centres, (ii) the benefits of electrification of urban rail, (iii) the noise pollution of diesel trains; (e) what, if any, federal funding has been provided for the Georgetown South rail line; (f) if federal funding was provided for the Georgetown South rail line, were any conditions put in place requiring the electrification of the rail line; and (g) what is the government's position on making the electrification of urban rail lines a condition for receiving federal funding for transit projects contained within an urban area?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 64—Hon. Bob Rae:

With regard to the situation in Haiti following the recent earthquake: (a) at what meetings has the government participated where there were discussions concerning the promotion of effective leadership and good governance in Haiti; (b) what measures has the government undertaken to ensure that the money pledged to Haiti is getting delivered on the ground; (c) has the government looked into any other assistance programs besides direct economic aid to help the people of Haiti; and (d) what measures has the government taken to reopen the embassy in Haiti and restore consular services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 65—Hon. Bob Rae:

With regard to consular services: (a) what briefing notes has the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade received or produced regarding consular services in response to recent events in the Arab World Middle East and Northern Africa; (b) what measures has the government taken to ensure the safety of Canadians living abroad in response to recent events in the Middle East and Northern Africa; (c) what is the projected budget for consular services abroad over the next 3 years; (d) what impact will any changes in the projected budget for consular services have on the number of personnel working in consular affairs outside of Canada; and (e) what impact will any changes in the projected budget for consular services have on the number of personnel working in consular affairs inside Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 67—Mr. Sean Casey:

With respect to the New Veterans Charter, the tax-free, lump-sum Disability Award, and the tax-free, lump-sum Death Benefit, between April 2005 and June 2011: (a) how many recipients of the lump-sum Disability Award or the Death Benefit filed a complaint with the Department of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) about either benefit; (b) how many Disability Award or Death Benefit files have been forwarded to the Deputy Minister or Minister of Veterans Affairs' attention; (c) what was the nature of the problems associated with each case forwarded to the Minister in (b); (d) after receiving a lump-sum payment, how many recipients or their dependants requested additional funds; (e) has VAC experienced cost savings associated with the granting of the lump-sum Disability Award and Death Benefit, as compared to other longer-term assistance measures such as, but not limited to, the disability pension and health care benefits; (f) has VAC reviewed or evaluated the lump-sum Disability Award and Death Benefit programs; and (g) what findings or conclusions have been made by any reviews or evaluations in (f)?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 69—**Mr. Sean Casey:**

With respect to Agent Orange and Canadian veterans trying to obtain fair compensation for their exposure to Agent Orange spraying at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown: (a) what is the total amount of money spent by all federal departments and agencies, excluding the Department of Justice, on the defence against the Canadian veterans' Agent Orange class action lawsuit (i) from July 1, 2005, to June 1, 2011, (ii) from March 5, 2010, to June 1, 2011; (b) what is the total amount of money the government has spent to hire outside legal counsel in its defence against the Canadian veterans' Agent Orange class action lawsuit (i) from July 1, 2005, to June 1, 2011, (ii) from March 5, 2010, to June 1, 2011; and (c) what is the total amount of money spent all federal departments and agencies, including all costs associated with the work of Department of Justice officials, on the defence against the Canadian veterans' Agent Orange class action lawsuit (i) from January 1, 2009, to June 1, 2011, (ii) from March 5, 2010, to June 1, 2011?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 70—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to grants and contributions since 2008 at the Public Health Agency of Canada, what funding applications were approved by departmental officials but rejected by the Minister's office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 72—**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:**

With regard to public opinion polling across all governmental departments since January 1, 2011: (a) how many polls were conducted by each department; and (b) for each poll, what (i) was the subject matter of the poll, (ii) questions were asked, (iii) was the sample size, (iv) was the period of time in which the poll was conducted, (v) were the results, (vi) was the department for which the poll was conducted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 74—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to grants and contributions since 2008 at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, what funding applications were approved by departmental officials but rejected by the Minister's office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 75—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to grants and contributions since 2008 at Health Canada, what funding applications were approved by departmental officials but rejected by the Minister's office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 78—**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With respect to the national crime prevention strategy and the youth gang prevention fund: (a) how much money has been spent on each of these programs in each fiscal year since 2005-2006; and (b) how much money has been spent on advertising for each of these programs in each fiscal year since 2005-2006?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 79—**Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With respect to the safety management systems (SMS) put in place by airlines since 2005, and following the appearance of the Chair of the Canadian Federal Pilots Association before the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities on February 21, 2007: (a) how many SMS inspections were carried out by Transport Canada inspectors, and on which airlines; (b) for each inspection carried out by Transport Canada, was the airline in compliance with the security regulations in place at the time of inspection; (c) for each inspection that was completed on an airline that was not in compliance with the regulations, what measures were taken by the airline to ensure that compliance was achieved; (d) did Transport Canada verify Aveos SMS compliance and, if yes, when will its report be concluded; and (e) does Transport Canada intend to review the SMS regulations that airlines are subject to in the near future?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 81—**Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to the sale of Statistics Canada data and products, how much revenue external to Government of Canada sources did Statistics Canada make in fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 from the sale of products and services, broken down by Census-related and non-Census-related products and services, excluding special surveys?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 82—**Hon. Bob Rae:**

With regard to the rising costs of the F-35 stealth fighter jets and the fact that United States officials have publicly questioned the progress and efficacy of the F-35s: (a) in what meetings with the United States has the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) or the Department of National Defence (DND) participated at which there were discussions of the increasing cost of the jets from the initial \$9 billion assessment to approximately \$21 billion; (b) in what meetings with the United States has DFAIT or DND participated at which there were discussions about the impact that production delays surrounding the F-35s would have on Canada's timeline to receive the jets and the amount that the jets will cost; and (c) what is the most recent projected cost for Canada's purchase of the F-35 jets?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 84—**Mr. Sean Casey:**

With respect to staffing at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) what is the breakdown, expressed as a percentage of the total number of VAC staff, of VAC staff who work in (i) the departmental headquarters in Ottawa, (ii) the departmental headquarters in Charlottetown, (iii) regional offices across Canada, (iv) sub-regional offices across Canada, (v) district offices across Canada; (b) what are the names and titles of departmental staff at the EX level and above in the Head Office in Ottawa; (c) what is the authorized number of employees on the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB); and (d) what is the breakdown of the location of the VRAB members and employees in the various regional and district offices of VAC?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 91—**Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to oil spill clean-ups in Northern Arctic waters: (a) what dispersants does the government use or have plans to use in this process; (b) what is the quantity of the government's stocks of these dispersants; (c) what tests has the government conducted concerning the use of these dispersants in the clean-up of an Arctic oil spill; (d) what tests has the government conducted concerning the effects of these dispersants on (i) the Arctic environment, (ii) Arctic wildlife; (e) when and by whom were the tests in (c) and (d) conducted; (f) what were the costs of the tests in (c) and (d); (g) does the government have a regimen in place for the ongoing evaluation of dispersants to be used in Arctic spills; (h) how are the dispersants which the government evaluates graded in terms of effectiveness for use in the Arctic; (i) in the event of such an occurrence, does the government have plans to use a dispersant to break up a spill at the source of the leak in Arctic waters; (j) what is the government's assessment of the effectiveness of the use of dispersants at the source of a spill in the clean-up process; and (k) what, if any, tests has the government conducted to develop a strategy for using dispersants to break up spills at the source, and what are the costs for these tests?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 94—**Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to grants and contributions since 2008 at the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, what funding applications were approved by departmental officials but rejected by the Minister's office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 95—**Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to grants and contributions since 2008 at Status of Women Canada, what funding applications were approved by departmental officials but rejected by the Minister's office?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 96—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to Canadian International Development Agency funding since 2009, what is the name of every organization that has not had its funding renewed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 98—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to the operating budget freeze at Western Economic Diversification Canada: (a) what measures were taken to limit spending in the last fiscal year; (b) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition; (c) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off; (d) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired; and (e) what is the projected attrition rate over the next five years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 100—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to grants and contributions under \$25,000 granted by Status of Women Canada since January 1, 2008, what are: (a) the names of the recipients; (b) the amounts of the grant or contribution; (c) the dates of the grant or contribution; (d) the dates of length of funding; and (e) the descriptions of the purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 105—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to the purchase of 65 F-35(A) fighter jets for future use in the Canadian Forces: (a) when and on how many occasions did the Department of National Defence (DND) submit a justification for “the legal authority to use an exception to competitive bidding”, as is required in section 3.15[a] of the Treasury Board Guideline; and (b) for each submission, referenced in the government’s response to part (a) of this question, that utilized the exception to competitive bidding found under section 3.15[a][iv] of the Treasury Board Guidelines, what justification is provided that would allow the government and DND to consider the F-35(A) as the only aircraft capable of meeting all of the department’s high-level mandatory requirements for this procurement project despite the department’s knowledge that the F-35(A) cannot meet the mandatory requirement pertaining to air-to-air refuelling?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 107—Hon. Gerry Byrne:

With regard to the operations and management of Marine Atlantic Incorporated (MAI), what are the details of: (a) MAI’s (i) Corporate Plan 2004-2005 to 2009-2010, (ii) Corporate Plan 2005-2006 to 2010-2011, (iii) Corporate Plan 2006-2007 to 2011-2012, (iv) Corporate Plan 2007-2008 to 2012-2013, (v) Corporate Plan 2008-2009 to 2013-2014, (vi) Corporate Plan 2009-2010 to 2014-2015; (b) each of the respective Corporate Plan Summaries for each Five Year Corporate Plan identified in (a); (c) all Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Directors of MAI held between January 1, 2004, and March 1, 2011; (d) all minutes, records or notes of Corporate Planning Sessions of the Board of Directors of MAI held between January 1, 2004, and March 1, 2011; (e) all President’s Reports submitted to the Board of Directors of MAI between January 1, 2004, and March 1, 2011; (f) all Chief Executive Officer’s (CEO) Reports to the Board of Directors of MAI submitted between January 1, 2004, and March 1, 2011; (g) all reports, minutes of meetings or record of meetings held between either the President, the CEO or the Board of Directors or any Committee of the Board of Directors with either the Minister of State (Transport) or the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Communities held between January 1, 2004, and March 1, 2011; (h) all reports, minutes of meetings or record of meetings held between either the President, the CEO or the Board of Directors or any Committee of the Board of Directors and either the Deputy Minister of Transport Canada or any Assistant or Associate Deputy Minister of Transport Canada held between January 1, 2004, and March 1, 2011; (i) all draft reports, findings, recommendations and conclusions forwarded to Transport Canada by the two firms, Fleetway Incorporated and Oceanic Consulting Corporation, which were contracted to provide input on various aspects of MAI’s fleet renewal deliberations, as referred to in the President’s Report to the Board of Directors of MAI on September 23, 2005; (j) the final reports, findings, recommendations and conclusions submitted to either MAI or to Transport Canada by each of the two firms, Fleetway Incorporated and Oceanic Consulting Corporation, whom were contracted by either MAI or Transport Canada to provide

input on various aspects of MAI’s fleet renewal; (k) all responses made by MAI to Transport Canada regarding MAI’s position on each of the recommendations arising out of MAI’s Advisory Committee report chaired by Captain Sid Hynes, as was requested of MAI by the Deputy Minister of Transport Canada, along with any replies to these messages from the recipients; (l) all minutes, records and notes of the meeting or meetings held between officials of MAI and representatives of Canadian shipyards regarding MAI’s fleet renewal requirements and bidding opportunities of new vessels; (m) all minutes, records and notes prepared by management officials of MAI providing references to an analysis on the future fleet renewal to either the President of MAI, the CEO of MAI or to the members of the Board of Directors of MAI; (n) all minutes, records and notes including electronic messages prepared by Transport Canada officials for either the Minister of Transportation, Communities and Infrastructure or the Minister of State (Transport) or to members of their respective offices, regarding analysis and discussion of the future fleet renewal recommendations provided by Fleetway Incorporated and by Oceanic Consulting Corporation along with any replies to these messages from the recipients; (o) all minutes, records and notes including electronic messages prepared by Transport Canada to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Communities or to the Minister of State (Transport) or to members of their respective offices, pertaining to the motion passed by MAI’s Board of Directors that MAI’s fleet replacement program consist of four new vessels along with any replies to these messages from the recipients; (p) all costs incurred to re-position the MV Blue Puttees from MAI facilities to St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, for the unveiling ceremony presided over by the Prime Minister on February 11, 2011; (q) all costs incurred by MAI in the re-position the MV Blue Puttees from MAI facilities to St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, for public display during the Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL) Annual General Meeting and Convention held between February 24 to 27, 2011; (r) the cost of all public relations, advertising, marketing and promotion planning, preparation, activities and campaigns broken down by event or campaign incurred by or on behalf of MAI between April 1, 2010, and March 1, 2011; (s) any incident reports from events that occurred affecting the MV Blue Puttees while in transit to St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, for the February 11, 2011, unveiling ceremony including the situation of listing of the vessel while enroute and the damage that occurred to both the St. John’s Port Authority docking facilities and to the MV Blue Puttees while docking in St. John’s for that event; and (t) any planned or potential labour force adjustment strategies or requirements within MAI expected or possible in the next three calendar years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 110—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to the government’s use of random selection in selecting applicants for jobs in the Public Service: (a) why is this process used over other possible selection processes; and (b) does the government have any plans to eliminate the random selection process in the future?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 111—Mr. Andrew Cash:

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and promotional items: (a) broken down by fiscal year, since 2006, what was the total amount spent on CMHC branded promotional items; (b) broken down by fiscal year, since 2006, what types of CMHC branded promotional items were purchased by the CMHC; (c) broken down by fiscal year, since 2006, what was the total amount spent on each type of CMHC branded promotional item; (d) broken down by fiscal year, since 2006, what was the total volume purchased of each type of CMHC branded promotional item; and (e) what is the current inventory level of each type of CMHC promotional item?

(Return tabled)

***Question No. 21—Ms. Elizabeth May :**

With regard to the 2010 G8/G20 Summits in Ontario: (a) what was the chain of command relating to security; (b) what Canadian law enforcement and security forces were involved; (c) what international security experts or agencies were involved; and (d) did such agencies recommend kettling people at intersections?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Malpeque, and I will recognize him now.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROCUREMENT CONCERNING CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege on an issue which I believe constitutes a contempt of the House by the government in relation to the publicly stated efforts of the government to undermine the Canadian Wheat Board with the intent to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. Prior to referencing precedents which support this submission, I would provide the following by way of background.

According to the federal government's MERX web site, operated and controlled by Public Works and Government Services Canada, the following notice of proposed procurement was placed on the site on August 11, 2011: Reference Number 225648, entitled "Assessment and Identification of Assets and Financial Contracts of the Canadian Wheat Board". The contracting authority listed is a senior contracting officer with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. According to the notice of description contained on the site, the purpose of the contract is stated as follows:

The purpose of the audit is to provide reasonable assurance of the total financial impact of the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the dissolution or winding up of the CWB after the final pooling periods (expected to be July 31, 2012). The final pool period may be conducted as usual under the Act.

The notice of description continues under the audit's objectives:

A. To provide assurance that the financial reporting is up to date and that all financial transactions have been accurately recorded in order to determine the potential financial impact of the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the dissolution or winding up of the CWB.

B. To provide assurance that all agreements/contractual and licencing agreements and all marketing plans as well as the security provided for those said plans entered into by the Canadian Wheat Board are all documented and verified in order to determine any potential liabilities and to review all termination clauses. This will also include a review of all documentation with financial implications, such as outstanding legal actions.

The Speaker will note that on at least two occasions in the notice of description, the government has stated clearly and unequivocally that the reason for the audits is based upon "the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the dissolution or winding up of the CWB".

The contempt arises from the direct reference that the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and dissolution or winding up the Canadian Wheat Board will follow the final pooling periods expected July 31, 2012.

In other words, there is the presumption that the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, a procedure which can only be sanctioned by an act of Parliament, will in fact occur. The

Privilege

government has made no secret of the fact that legislation to repeal the Canadian Wheat Board Act will be introduced this fall. That is its right. What the government has not stated as clearly as does the notice of proposed procurement is that the pith and substance of the act will be the "dissolution or winding up of the CWB".

It is my submission that the posting of this notice of proposed procurement with the wording provided is a contempt of this House on the basis that no legislation has been tabled, let alone passed, upon which such a specific intent can be supported.

I would add to this submission the following.

In the July 28, 2011 issue of the *Western Producer*, an article appeared entitled, "Open market will kill CWB". In the article reference was made to the establishment by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food of a task force, which is "to look at issues that are likely to arise once legislation to end the single desk is passed." The task force is chaired by Agriculture Canada deputy minister John Knuble and consists of representatives of the Canadian Grain Commission, Canadian International Grains Institute, Grain Growers of Canada, Pulse Canada, and the Canola Council of Canada.

● (1530)

On September 6, 2011, my office received from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada the terms of reference of that task force. As the Speaker will note, the opening statement of the terms of reference reads as follows:

The group will take as given that:

— all grains will be removed from the monopoly by August 2012.

I would further note that the reference of the task force provides for the expenditure of public funds of which has yet to be revealed to this House. I quote:

We are targeting up to four meetings in Winnipeg between mid-July and early September, with video/tele conferencing as required. The Department will reimburse invited participants for approved travel expenses.

It is my understanding that the minister was to receive a report from that task force on September 15, 2011.

There is no ambiguity to this statement. Given the specifics contained in the notice of proposed procurement referenced above, the terms of reference of the task force complement the procurement notice and serve to reinforce the contempt I am outlining, namely, that neither the notice of procurement nor the terms of the task force cited are based upon any legitimate action of the House, which is the only body that can authorize a repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the dissolution or winding up of the CWB.

The government presumes that the act has been repealed, which in fact it has not. It has not been presented; it has not been debated; it has not been amended or in any way pronounced upon by the House or the other body down the corridor.

By way of precedence, I refer the Speaker to the decision of Speaker Fraser on October 10, 1989, at pages 4457 to 4461 of *Debates*, as contained in *Selected Decisions of Speaker John A. Fraser*, pages 3 to 11. The context of the decision was the following:

Privilege

In August 1989, during the summer recess, the Government placed an advertisement in newspapers across the country stating that the proposed new Goods and Services Tax (GST) would come into effect on January 1, 1991. When the session resumed on September 25, 1989, the...Leader of the Opposition raised a question of privilege relating to the said advertisement. He was of the opinion that by placing newspaper advertisements announcing an effective date for the GST, the Government denied the role of Parliament in the imposition of taxes and thereby prejudiced proceedings of the House and its committees.

Speaker Fraser indicated it was not his intent, and rightly so, to rule upon the content of any legislation the government proposed or brought forward to the House, and it is not the intent of this submission either. However, Speaker Fraser did begin by expounding upon the arguments presented by the Liberal leader at the time, and I quote from pages 4 and 5 of *Selected Decisions of Speaker John A. Fraser*:

...first, that the advertisement prejudices the future proceedings of the House and of the Finance Committee...; and second, that the advertisement is a contempt of Parliament because it leads readers to infer that the House has no role in the passage of the tax, thus misleading the Canadian public concerning the procedures employed by Parliament in adopting such legislation.

As to the first point, Speaker Fraser did acknowledge that the House did have before it a technical paper on the subject which was under discussion. This is a fact not in evidence on the matter that I now raise before the House.

The Conservative government of the day, in its defence, presented the following in response. Again, I quote from page 5 of *Selected Decisions of Speaker John A. Fraser*:

[The Minister of Justice] explained that in the budget which was approved by the House, the government had indicated that the Goods and Services Tax would be implemented on January 1, 1991. Finally, since the Committee is presently studying the issue, he suggested that no case can be made for the claim that the Committee's work is being impeded.

● (1535)

Again, Mr. Speaker, neither of the facts referenced by the then minister of justice are in evidence with respect to the matter I now place before you regarding the Canadian Wheat Board. There is no reference to the Canadian Wheat Board in any context in the budget the government tabled on June 6, 2011, nor has a technical paper nor a cost benefit analysis of any kind been presented to the House.

Finally, neither is the agriculture committee nor any other committee of the House examining in any respect the issue of the Canadian Wheat Board.

However, the government has stated in its notice of proposed procurement a specific date as to when the functioning of the Canadian Wheat Board's pooling system, as currently provided for by an act of Parliament, will cease, that being July 31, 2012.

Speaker Fraser went to considerable length to provide clarification as to what constitutes a contempt. In this regard he cited Speaker Sauvé of October 29, 1980 at page 4214 of *Hansard*. Rather than take time to quote at length those remarks, I would refer to the *Selected Decisions of Speaker John A. Fraser* on pages 6 and 7. Speaker Fraser was quite clear and this point is key to the argument I present today. I must quote from page 10 of *Selected Decisions of Speaker John A. Fraser*:

However, I want the House to understand very clearly that if your Speaker ever has to consider a situation like this again, the Chair will not be as generous. This is a case which, in my opinion, should never occur. I expect the Department of Finance and other departments to study this ruling carefully and remind everyone within the

Public Service that we are a parliamentary democracy, not a so-called executive democracy, nor a so-called administrative democracy.

Speaker Fraser concluded by stating:

This advertisement may not be a contempt of the House in the narrow confines of procedural definition, but it is, in my opinion, ill-conceived and does a great disservice to the great traditions of this place.... [T]his ad is objectionable and should never be repeated.

He went on to say:

[I]f ever this issue has to be debated and considered by this House again these comments will serve to guide the House in its deliberations.

I want to repeat that, Mr. Speaker, because it is important to your decision:

[I]f ever this issue has to be debated and considered by this House again these comments will serve to guide the House in its deliberations.

I would add to the preceding the following from a decision by Speaker Parent, found at pages 8987 to 8988 of *Debates* March 13, 1997 and referenced in *Selected Decisions of Speaker Parent* on pages 7 and 8 wherein Speaker Parent, in reference to a matter related to government advertising in the public domain prior to final passage of legislation stated:

[W]here the government issues communications to the public containing allusions to measures before the House, it would be advisable to choose words and terms that leave no doubt as to the disposition of these measures.

Those whose duty it is to approve the wording of communications to the public for a Minister must surely be aware that the terms used in parliamentary language have a very specific meaning. Trying to avoid them or to use them for advertising purposes shows a lack of consideration for the institution of Parliament and the role of the Members in the legislative process.

What should be taken note of is the fact that the Conservative government of the day, in respecting the admonition of the Speaker, withdrew from circulation brochures referencing the implementation of the goods and services tax at that time.

● (1540)

In responding to a question of privilege concerning the distribution of brochures related to the implementation of the GST, on December 18, 1989, at page 12 of the *Selected Decisions of Speaker John A. Fraser*, he stated:

...subsequent to the Chair's ruling on the advertisements for the GST, steps had been taken to have all offending materials returned to the Department.

I refer as well to a ruling by Speaker Milliken on the issue of privilege again related to government advertising found at pages 6276 and 6278 of *Debates*, May 29, 2008. In his decision, Speaker Milliken stated that the advertising in question at the time contained caveats which demonstrated that there was no "misrepresentation of the proceedings of the House or of any presumption of the outcome of its deliberations".

He also stated:

It is with these precedents in mind that I reviewed the advertisements in question. They contain phrases such as "the Government of Canada is proposing measures", "These important measures, once in effect," and "These measures are currently before Parliament". In my view, the advertisements clearly acknowledge that these measures are not yet in place.

Even a cursory examination of the text of the advertisement placed on the government MERX website on August 11 of this year fails to meet the test of clarity referred to by Speaker Milliken in his decision of May 29, 2008 referenced above.

I would also point to a statement of the government House leader on May 15, 2008, on page 5922 of *Debates*, during a debate on a question of privilege related to government advertisements wherein he stated:

...that advertising undertaken by the government should not presume or suggest that a decision had been made already when it had not been taken by the House of Commons or by Parliament.

Obviously, the government's actions with the MERX ad and the actions of spokesmen in western Canada are clearly operating on the assumption that the Canadian Wheat Board Act is gone as of next year. Legislation has not even been introduced in the House.

At page 85 of the second edition of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* it states:

By far, most of the cases of privilege raised in the House relate to matters of contempt challenging the perceived authority and dignity of Parliament and its Members.

In that regard, I would remind the House of the decision of Speaker Milliken on March 19, 2001, at pages 1839 to 1840 of *Debates*. With respect to a matter of the failure of the government to provide a legislative briefing to members, the Speaker stated:

To deny to members information concerning business that is about to come before the House, while at the same time providing such information to media—

Or in the case before the House today, the public and potential contractors:

...that will likely be questioning members about that business, is a situation that the Chair cannot condone.

In respect to the matter I have presented today, it is my submission that the government has failed to heed the advice and admonishments of the government House leader himself or of previous Speakers on this matter.

Just before I close, to add a little context I would also add this one final point with respect to the actions of the government in this matter.

Section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act is very germane to the argument presented today, which in part states:

The Minister shall not cause to be introduced in Parliament a bill that would exclude any kind, type, class or grade of wheat or barley, or wheat or barley produced in any area in Canada, from the provisions of Part IV, either in whole or in part, or generally, or for any period, or that would extend the application of Part III or Part IV or both Parts III and IV to any other grain, unless

- a. the Minister has consulted with the board about the exclusion or extension; and
- b. the producers of the grain have voted in favour of the exclusion or extension, the voting process having been determined by the Minister.

● (1545)

It is my submission that the announcement that the government is seeking audit advice on the process of “dissolution or winding up of the CWB”, which will be under way by July 31, 2012, constitutes a breach of the act as it currently stands.

As far as I am aware, the government has not consulted with the board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board on any bill presented to Parliament and the minister has not called for any plebiscite of producers in respect to that legislation. In fact, the Canadian Wheat Board held a plebiscite in which 62% said they do not want the minister to touch the bill.

Privilege

To summarize, the case of contempt I present here is different from that raised on October 8, 1989, in the following aspects.

First, the notice to propose procurement is clear in that it is proposing to let a contract for audits of the Canadian Wheat Board, based upon the stated fact of “dissolution or winding up of the CWB after the final pooling periods (expected to be July 31, 2012)”.

Second, unlike the 1989 case referred to, the government has not even attempted to provide this House or any committee of this House with any kind of technical paper or any indication that it has done due diligence and completed its own economic impact assessment on any proposed changes to the Canadian Wheat Board, let alone “dissolution or winding up”.

Given the admonition of Speaker Fraser, it is my submission that the case he warned against reappearing has now arisen and one with even less legitimacy than that of the one he decided upon in October 1989. As a consequence, it is my submission that the text of the notice of proposed procurement and the terms of reference of the task force established by the Minister of Agriculture would leave the reader to conclude that the Canadian Wheat Board will be repealed, even though no such legislation in any form has been tabled in this House, and that in less than a year the Canadian Wheat Board will be in the process of dissolution and winding up, two facts which will negatively impact upon the board, those farmers operating under it and those doing business with that board.

My privilege, as well as that of all members of the House, has been affected by the fact that the public has been placed in a position to conclude that Parliament has acted on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board on the basis of a notice of procurement when in fact it has not.

Therefore, I would seek from the Speaker a finding of contempt and I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

● (1550)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point. I will try to be far more concise than my colleague from Malpeque.

Let me state at the outset that there is clearly no case of privilege here. There is no contempt that is being sought by the member for Malpeque. The hon. member went to great lengths to try to compare a situation that occurred with public advertising in 1989 regarding the GST with the situation we have before us now where there was a notice of procurement not made in general terms to the general public but specifically to a company called MERX.

Mr. Speaker, that is critical in your determinations, because we have always stated our intentions to make fundamental organizational changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. We have campaigned for four successive elections on that. The last election concluded in May of this year was no different.

Privilege

Therefore, there is no question that the general public, producers across western Canada, and anyone else for that matter knows the intentions of our government. We have not introduced legislation yet giving any details of that. When and if that legislation is introduced, we have not stated in any unequivocal or definitive way that there would be a date for the conclusion of that legislation.

The member for Malpeque is clearly trying to draw a very long bow by taking a request for procurement with an end date to the company that may want to submit a tender and stating that clearly since there was a date contained in the ad of request for procurement that must be the date that the government feels this legislation will have been concluded. That is a very long bow to draw and is simply incorrect. There is no definitive statement that the Government of Canada has put out any public advertisements stating that by a certain date in the future the Canadian Wheat Board legislation will have passed. We have not even introduced the legislation so there can be no contempt.

The member for Malpeque is on his tirade once more trying to suggest that Canadian producers in western Canada will be somehow aggrieved by changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. We take a different view. We have stated that many times quite publicly.

In this particular question of privilege that the member raises, there is no question of contempt whatsoever because nowhere has there been any public advertising presented by the Government of Canada giving an end date to legislation that has not even been introduced. The advertisement the member is referring to is merely a request for procurement which provides a date for those companies that are interested to submit their tenders to the government. That is all. It does not state that the government intends to have legislation passed by any specific date. In fact, there has been no indication in a public venue or any public advertisement whatsoever that the government plans to even introduce legislation and at what date.

I know the member opposes the government's plan to give marketing freedom to Canadian western producers, but we will do so. We will introduce legislation that will be debated in the House. All members of this place as well as members of the agriculture committee will have a chance to examine and to speak to the legislation when and if it is introduced. However, it has not been introduced and there is no contempt.

In conclusion, I would suggest to my friend from Malpeque that while he has differing views from the government on the rights of Canadian farmers to market their grain as they see fit there is no contempt in this case.

However, as I am sure my friend from Malpeque wishes to engage in further debate on this, I ask that we be allowed to reserve the right to comment further if needed in the near future.

• (1555)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like the opportunity to intervene first on the point of privilege raised by my colleague from Malpeque and also provide some comments on the intervention by the parliamentary secretary.

I would start by saying that the parliamentary secretary stood and very categorically announced that there is no breach of parliamentary privilege or contempt here. I only raise this point to put to you, Mr.

Speaker, that it is not for him to make that determination, but for you as the Speaker of the House to determine whether my colleague from Malpeque has a legitimate point of privilege and whether a finding of contempt may in fact stem from it.

Addressing my colleague's point, we took note as well that the request for proposals on the MERX website that took place in August very clearly stated a wish for help in evaluating and auditing the wrap-up costs associated with terminating the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk monopoly by July 31, 2012. In other words, the Canadian Wheat Board as we know it would cease to exist on August 1, 2012. I agree with him and ask you, Mr. Speaker, given that Speakers are bound by jurisprudence and precedent, to take note of the precedents that he cited, not from one Speaker but three separate Speakers, that such an announcement can presuppose, undermine and prejudice the parliamentary procedure that necessarily determines legislation and would be able to result in the final abolishing of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I would point out that it is not only the collective privilege of members of Parliament that is being impacted by this presupposition, this announcement for all the world to see, that the Wheat Board is finished, over and dead. It is not only those of us in the chamber who are impacted, but the rural Prairie economy is also affected by such an announcement. If this announcement gazetted on the MERX website was so benign and innocuous, as the parliamentary secretary would have us believe, why do we see the spike in the share prices of the very grain companies that will benefit by assuming the very lucrative market share left behind by the \$6 billion a year corporation that the government is so hell-bent and determined to dismantle? If this announcement was so innocuous, why are the share prices going up in these companies in anticipation of what the government has very publicly announced?

We should take note that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the minister who is responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and who should by all rights be the Wheat Board's greatest champion, not its worst enemy and saboteur, has visited the offices of the Canadian Wheat Board only one time, and for 20 minutes, although some argue it was 22 minutes. He was being timed.

We just learned this from the CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board during our meetings in Quebec City not three days ago. It was announced to us that the one and only time the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food responsible for the Wheat Board has ever visited the Canadian Wheat Board was to announce to it this summer that on July 31 it will cease to exist and that on August 1, 2012, there will be no more single desk monopoly for marketing grain through the Canadian Wheat Board.

That is a public declaration. That is an announcement. That is not even giving us the right to entertain first reading, second reading, committee stage, third reading and report stage of a piece of legislation before the government has decreed by its advertising in MERX and by its public declaration to the directors of the Canadian Wheat Board that they are finished. That does undermine, sabotage and strip away my privilege as a parliamentarian to effect change to that legislation.

Privilege

It may be that the government will not get its legislation through. It may well be that it becomes amended or modified or ameliorated, or that some of the worst aspects of it do not succeed, even though it has a majority.

• (1600)

We know that for the government to meet that July 31 deadline, that legislation has to clear the Senate by December 15. The members on this side will not allow that to happen. We will use every parliamentary procedure possible to ensure that the government does not get legislation passed, if we cannot amend it to modify it.

That means the government will be undermining the Prairie economy, destabilizing the key industry in our agricultural sector, throwing confusion and chaos into the marketing of grain and grain exports. Grain to Manitoba is what oil is to the province of Alberta. The government cannot be so cavalier and reckless.

The government intends to dismantle the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world by July 31, 2012, and it does not even know what it will cost. It is only starting to ask now for some help in auditing the impact. Never mind the fact that the government has not done a cost benefit analysis. It has not even done an initial adjudication as to what this might cost.

The figures from the Canadian Wheat Board directors are loosely \$500 million in wrap-up costs. A \$6 billion a year corporation cannot be wrapped up without some closing costs, not when the government has just contracted to buy new ships for the Great Lakes, not when it has producer cars, not when it has standing contracts that it will have to break.

I would add my voice to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to take note of the rulings as set out by my colleague, the hon. member for Malpeque, and to take into consideration that the unilateral and arbitrary declaration by the government that the Wheat Board is over is deleterious to my privilege as a member of Parliament, deleterious to the Prairie economy and deleterious to the Prairie farm producers who count on the Wheat Board to provide the best return for their grain sales.

Speakers are guided by precedent and jurisprudence and there is an abundance of jurisprudence that supports the point that my colleague raises, that we are being denied that most fundamental right and privilege of all members of Parliament, and that is to determine the outcome of legislation and not have it presupposed by a government that has very little respect for Parliament.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief and stick to the principle of process, about which I believe all of us need to be concerned.

My colleague made reference to citations through Speaker Fraser and talked about how important it was that we respect the institution that we belong to and that we participate fully. We have to be very careful of the dangerous slope that we are going into.

When governments or departments make a mistake, there is a great deal of honour in coming forward and saying that they made a mistake and that they will ensure it is not going to happen again.

I would love to see a government minister, the acting House leader, whomever from the government benches, recognize that Speaker Fraser in his comments, which have been referenced in addressing this motion, are in fact applicable for today's motion.

It is indeed critically important that when a minister's office or the government takes an action in anticipation that a bill is ultimately going to be coming through the House of Commons and passed, that is in fact wrong. The process of the House of Commons has to be allowed to do the things that it needs to do in order to ensure that we operate from within the law.

I would ultimately argue that government should not be presuming how the House of Commons will vote on any given issue.

I know from personal experience back in 1986 everyone believed that the Manitoba budget would pass because it had a majority government. No government advertising was entered into prior to the budget that was supposed to pass. The government advertising for the budget always occurs post-passage or post-introduction of the budget itself. In 1986 that budget did not pass even though there was a majority government.

My suggestion is to put the emphasis on the process. We need to be looking at that. I believe my colleague highlighted Speaker Fraser in his remarks to ensure the integrity of the House of Commons is maintained. I would suggest that, at the very least, the right thing would be for the minister responsible to stand in his place, recognize that a mistake has been made, state that he will go out of his way to ensure that it does not occur again and that the problem currently in place is fixed.

• (1605)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I know you will be making your decision available to all of us in the very near future. I would reiterate just one or two points that I made in my first intervention.

Both members from the third party and the member from the official opposition seemed to suggest that the RFP that was put on the MERX web site categorically gave a deadline for alterations to the Canadian Wheat Board, in other words for legislation to be concluded. That is not the case. It was merely a request for MERX to supply a proposal to our government and gave a deadline for when we wish that proposal to be in our hands. It did not refer to the legislation itself. In fact, as I mentioned earlier, the legislation has not yet been introduced. There will be ample opportunities for debate on that piece of legislation when and if it is introduced in this House.

However, our intentions have always been clear, so to suggest, as my hon. colleague from the official opposition mentioned, that we are somehow undermining the ability of parliamentarians or destroying or undermining the economy of Canadian western grain producers, is absolutely false. Canadian western producers have known for years the intentions of our government and they have overwhelmingly voted in rural ridings across western Canada for a Conservative majority government, which they now have.

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To my colleague from Winnipeg Centre who says that any changes to the Canadian Wheat Board as advocated by our government may destroy the agricultural economy, I would point out two illustrations. One is of a producer who contacted me in my riding and said two years ago that his farming operation lost \$250,000 because he could not market his barley to the highest bidder. He was forced to sell his barley through the Canadian Wheat Board and it cost his farming operation \$250,000. I would like the member for Malpeque or any other member to stand in this place and please respond to that producer as to why the Canadian Wheat Board was a good deal for him.

In response to questions about the agricultural economy, the Minister of Agriculture pointed out today quite correctly that one of the benefits of having a voluntary wheat board is the positive impact it would have on value-added industries actually starting up their businesses in Canada. Right now because of the Wheat Board, pasta plants, value-added plants and industries like that are not allowed in Canada. They have to find their place of business to be set up otherwise. There are four or five of those examples south of the border. They do not fundamentally understand what the Wheat Board means in terms of restrictions to agricultural industry. That is fine. We can have that debate. We hope to be able to educate them when legislation is introduced, if it is introduced.

In conclusion, to suggest that because of a request for proposal to an industry on a web site, that it be the end date of the legislation we have yet to introduce is sheer folly. It absolutely makes no sense. In my view, there is no basis for privilege. There is certainly no basis for contempt.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you give a response to this very important question at your earliest opportunity.

• (1610)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, the deputy House leader is absolutely wrong in his remarks and I will make two points to prove so.

The deputy leader talked about the contract with MERX. The advertisement tells the contractor, whoever it might be, and, through that advertisement, the public, that it must assume that the Canadian Wheat Board ceases to exist. That is the assumption that is made when in fact that can only be done through legislation in the House. We are not operating in a dictatorship where the executive branch of government decides all. The deputy House leader is absolutely wrong on that point.

Second, I will refer members back to my remarks. I indicated in my remarks that the Minister of Agriculture set up a task force. On September 6 of this year, my office received from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada the terms of reference of that task force. The very first term of reference reads:

This group will take as given that:

all grains will be removed from the monopoly by August 2012.

I will quote it again for the deputy House leader. The group, the task force, appointed and paid for by the Government of Canada, will take “as a given that: all grains will be removed from the monopoly by August 2012”. That is clearly operating on presumption. Legislation has not even been entered into but it will be gone. A

task force has even been set up. We need to keep in mind that the task force was basically secret. Public meetings were not called for farmers to be heard. It was just an internal, little select body chaired by the deputy minister of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think you have any choice but to rule contempt of the privileges of the House on the actions of the Government of Canada in this particular matter.

The Speaker: I thank all hon. members for their submissions. I can assure them that I will take this issue under advisement and come back to the House in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PREVENTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS FROM ABUSING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Minister of Immigration provided his comments on this particular bill and I do have questions that I want to pose to him. The tradition in the chamber has been to allow opposition members to question a minister on legislation right after he or she has spoken. The Minister of Immigration has spoken and I do have questions. When will I get the opportunity to pose the questions to the minister?

The Speaker: Unfortunately, since the minister is not available to be here for the question and comment portion of his speech, the tradition of the House is to move on to the next speaker. I will give the floor now to the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-4, first, because of its severe impact on legitimate refugees who come to Canada; second, because of its direct conflict with Canada's international obligations; and third, because it takes Canada once again down the wrong-headed road of trying to use incarceration as a solution for social problems.

Looking at the title, Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act, one might wonder why anyone would be concerned. We all share a common concern about the financial exploitation of desperate refugees. We all share concerns about the unsafe transportation of refugees to Canada. However, the title of the act is clearly more about spin than about information. It is designed to provoke a, “well who could disagree with that”, kind of response. Unfortunately, it is something we have seen all too often on Conservative bills.

Early in the debate, the parliamentary secretary for immigration said that Canadians clearly voted for this measure. In fact, if they had read the title and if this were a vote determining measure, then it was certainly with the expectation that this bill would contain significant measures targeting human smugglers.

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However, when we actually look at the bill, what do we find? We find only two significant measures targeting those smugglers. These two measures might perhaps be helpful. One makes the endangerment of life and safety for those being transported an aggravating factor when it comes to sentencing. This is something for which we might find support from all sides of the House.

Second, there is a measure that would extend the time for initiating proceedings against smugglers from six months to five years. As we all know, human smuggling cases can be quite complicated. Again, this is a measure that might find a degree of support from all sides of the House and might pass quickly.

The other measures directed at smugglers are of questionable use. They once again stem from the Conservative's approach of trying to deter crime through mandatory minimum sentences and large fines even though all the literature in all kinds of criminal activity and behaviour show that these do not serve as deterrents. I think the problem for the government was that there was not much to do in the area of targeting human smugglers because the maximum penalties are already life in prison and up to \$1 million in fines.

Why the dramatic title? Unfortunately, the government either believes in its own rhetoric, which is based on fear, or the government is attempting simply to enhance its tough guy image at the expense of legitimate refugees.

How large is this problem? Of the 30,000 refugee claimants who might arrive in any given year, less than 2% are estimated to have arrived at the hands of smugglers or in the famous cases of the two ships that came. That is less than 2% or 300-500 people out of more than 33,000 claimants. We are taking a sledge hammer to what is a very real but very small problem.

Still, if we were under siege by human smugglers, there are solutions that would quickly address this problem without draconian attacks on refugee rights and without incurring enormous long-term costs of incarceration. These are quite simple. They are enhanced enforcement and the expeditious determination of refugee claims. Both of those measures require annual adequate funding to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and to law enforcement agencies. However, when we have a government that is now obsessed with cuts to public agencies, we cannot expect them to be able to do the enforcement work and do the determinations of refugee claims in an expeditious manner, which would actually take away the problem of smugglers and abuse of the system.

I will outline the main content of the bill because it is this content that gives rise to my concern. It is this content that I do not really understand. Bill C-4 is an attack on legitimate refugees who happen to arrive in a different manner than other refugees. I find the following seven things to be major concerns.

Bill C-4 creates a discriminatory category of designated refugee claimants based on their mode of arrival. It would impose penalties and disadvantages on legitimate refugees who have been forced to use the services of human smugglers to escape with their lives. It would impose penalties and disadvantages that would not be placed on other legitimate refugees who happen to arrive under their own steam, by air or crossing land boundaries.

● (1615)

Second, it provides for the detention of legitimate refugee claimants for up to one year with no review, including children. These are people who have perhaps suffered violence themselves, who have perhaps lost members of their family, who have certainly lost almost everything they had to their name. What will we do in Canada? We will further punish them by keeping them in detention for up to one year with no review.

Third, Bill C-4 proposes a ban on humanitarian and compassionate applications for five years. This would arbitrarily deny a right to those who have already been victims twice over. They were victims in their home country and victims of human smugglers. Now, in Canada, we would deny them a right to make their case on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, which all others have the right to do in this country.

The fourth thing of concern for me in Bill C-4 is that it would suspend the right to apply for permanent residency for five years. I cannot imagine what we think we would accomplish by doing this. It can only delay family reunification cases where families have been split up abroad and it can only delay the integration of refugees into Canadian society.

My fifth concern is that it would deny refugees travel documents that they would otherwise be entitled to if they were designated claimants. Once again, I cannot imagine what the problem is we are solving here, but the problem we are creating, once again, is with families who may have been separated abroad and who may need these travel documents to travel to help reunify their families.

My sixth concern is that it would allow the retroactive designation of claimants as possibly coming under this act. It is a fundamental principle of British common law which we use that we do not apply retroactive measures in criminal law. To me, the same thing should apply in the case of immigration law dealing with refugee claimants.

Finally and perhaps most egregious, Bill C-4 would exclude designated claimants from the appeal process, something which I believe the Supreme Court would find very hard to uphold in the long run.

Before I say a little more about my specific concerns, I want to talk a little about my own experience with refugees. As some in the House will know, I am the co-founder of the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society. It is a society that was set up in the 1980s to employ refugees and immigrants to help other refugees and immigrants with their settlement services in the community of Victoria. I am very proud of my long association with the Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society and the very high quality of work it has done in my community.

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In the 1980s, I worked with Latin American refugees who came from Central America. Many of them stayed in my home as their first base of arrival in Canada. I visited refugee camps in both Indonesia and Afghanistan and helped on international projects trying to get the safe return home of refugees. First and foremost, I can tell the House that refugees are looking for a safe place for their families. They are not examining the comparative refugee regulations in countries around the world. They are simply looking for a place to go where they can be safe.

I will tell you a short story about the Campos family who came from El Salvador in the mid 1980s. They had two sons. One of their sons was taken from their house and shot in the street by security forces. They left that night without any documents, taking their younger son and fleeing the country. They ended up at my house in Victoria. I do not know how they got there but I have some suspicions that it was not an altogether pleasant journey, and they may have used the services of human smugglers. They felt they had no choice but to try and save the life of their only surviving son. The Campos family, Arnaldo, Virginia and José are still friends of mine today and they are alive because we gave them refuge in Canada. They did not shop for a place to go. They fled for their lives.

In the late 1980s, I served as an expert witness at refugee board hearings on behalf of Indo-Fijians who fled the military coup in Fiji, as I was working at that time for an international non-government organization. Again, when the Canadian minister of foreign affairs at the time, Joe Clark, said that we would accept refugees from the coups, there was great surprise in Canada when tens of thousands of Indo-Fijians got on the next plane and arrived in Vancouver. If we had had this kind of bill in place, those who had organized the flights would have been defined as human smugglers. Those who raised money to help them come to Canada would have been caught in the web of this bill. These are very productive and proud Canadians today, still living and working in Vancouver.

• (1620)

When we ask about the definition of human smuggling, I should add that as my eighth concern. I feel the definition is so broad that we will inadvertently catch those who are helping legitimate refugees out of humanitarian concerns in the web of the bill. I bought tickets for people to come illegally into Canada in the 1980s who were fleeing for their lives. Would I have been defined as a human smuggler? I am afraid under the bill I might have been.

Earlier in this debate the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism used a bizarre market analogy about trying to affect the price charged by human smugglers. This is nothing out of the real world of refugees who are living in camps day-to-day, trying to find a way to reach safety.

On the other side, we heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration talk about queue-jumping, which implies that there is some kind of organized system for dealing with refugees around the world. This is a system that does not exist and cannot exist when people are fleeing for their lives. Again, there are undoubtedly a few who will attempt to exploit our refugee determination system. The solution for those few is enforcement and swift refugee determinations. This will eliminate the problem of those smugglers who try to target Canada.

My concerns are with legitimate refugees, people who have lost everything, people who have been victims of violence. My concern is how we will treat them when they arrive in Canada. If they arrive by boat, will we deny them the same treatment as other legitimate refugees? The discriminatory category of designated claimants is a clear violation of charter rights and I think the courts, again, would find it hard to uphold such a measure.

The provision of detention without review has already been ruled unconstitutional by the Canadian Supreme Court when dealing with security certificates. Plus we have a provision that says mandatory conditions will be placed on designated claimants who are released and those will be set by regulation. Again, I doubt the Supreme Court of Canada would uphold any such vague determination of conditions for release of detainees.

The bar on humanitarian and compassionate applications for five years and the suspension of the right to apply for permanent residence for five years clearly violate both our obligations under the international convention on refugees and also under the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. This convention requires that in all cases the best interests of the child be taken into consideration and I cannot see how that can be met with bans on humanitarian and compassionate applications and with suspensions on the right to apply for permanent residence, which would allow the reunification of families.

I would like to ask the House to listen to the voice of refugees and to those who have actually worked with refugees in the field. Listen to those like the Canadian Council for Refugees that have called for the abandonment of this draconian legislation. Listen to Amnesty International that works every day with those who live in fear of their lives and often tries to help them find safe places to go. Listen to the Canadian Bar Association and its severe reservations about the legislation. Listen to the many other community organizations that work trying to help those who have suffered severe traumas to integrate into Canadian society.

Listen to those voices when it comes time to vote on the bill. Can it be amended? Can it be fixed? My concerns are very severe and I have seen no inclination on the government side to listen to these arguments about humanitarianism, compassion, human rights and treating fairly those who have already been victimized by becoming refugees from their country and by having to resort to the service of human smugglers.

I know many of these people and I know many other members of the House know those who have come to Canada as refugees. The bill would have made that much more difficult for many people who are an important part of our communities now. Let us not deny ourselves the future potential of those people who choose not to come here, but make a wonderful addition to our society.

Government Orders

• (1625)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before questions and comments, 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 Nanaimo—Cowichan, Poverty; the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, Seniors; the hon. member for Windsor West, Canada-U.S. Border.

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of the hon. member and thoughtful reflection on issues involving not only our immigration system but those of refugee claimants and the treatment of refugee claimants in very particular dire circumstances. It has captured the House for some time.

The rule of law is an essential component of our society. The rule of law is something that the House, this Parliament, needs to ascribe to and needs to hold as its witness. However, the rule of law as stated within this bill is twofold. The rule of law states that not only is the government prescribing a certain method dealing with refugees, a particular variety of refugees, but what is not stated within the bill is that there is a right to due process. That right to due process allows for a consideration of appeal. No single decision can be taken without review. No government can impose a standard without having it adjudicated for its fairness.

Within the context of this legislation, does the hon. member feel this bill and the prevention of any right to review for certain claimants would be constitutional and be upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada?

• (1630)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I think there are very clear examples, in particular, Supreme Court cases involving security certificates, where the Supreme Court has upheld the right to due process. I would like to stress that in none of the cases we are talking about of refugee claimants, even those who came on the boats, have we found anyone who is a threat to Canadian security at this time. Therefore, even in those more severe cases that did involve questions of national security the Supreme Court would not uphold taking away the rights to due process.

As well, in the 1985 Singh case, the Supreme Court very clearly said that refugees could not be denied due process rights because of their new status in Canada.

Therefore, I do not believe that many parts of the bill would stand up to a court challenge.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to listen to his debate and I found it interesting. I have one community in my riding, Brooks, Alberta, which is probably one of the most diverse communities around. There are some 110 languages spoken. There are people from probably any five countries and some of these have been refugees. They have told me that we are on the right track. They have said that people who come here, like those who came on the *Sun Sea*, should not be able to jump the queue, that they should not be able to take advantage of our good Canadian hospitality, particularly with all of the funding that they get for health care and everything else.

From my point of view, from my constituents who are have been refugees and who are supporting us, why is the NDP not supporting us in this position?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, in this case the government has been part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In seeking to dramatize the ship arrivals and in seeking to increase fears, it has caused many Canadians to turn away from the generosity with which they have normally received immigrants and refugees in our country.

I believe when Canadians are asked to look at the real facts, the very small numbers involved and the very real situation of human rights abuse they were fleeing in Sri Lanka, then the boats from Sri Lanka no longer look like such a horrible queue-jumping problem. They look like people who were doing exactly what refugees do, and that is fleeing for their lives and fleeing to a place of safety.

I believe Canadians are generous-hearted and understand that refugees need to be welcomed here when they have no other place to go.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the comments of the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca were very cogent and thoughtful. I enjoy having him as part of my caucus.

The member spoke of the issue, as a number of my colleagues have, about concerns on how the proposed legislation strays from already binding commitments by this nation to international law.

First, there seems to be a pattern under the current government to move away from international obligations commitments. There was a comment earlier today from the other side about why the UN did not do the job. Part of the actions with the UN is stepping up to the plate and signing and ratifying international conventions. When we sign and ratify, we are committing that we will abide by those. Could the member speak to that?

The second issue is that this is the second step taken in substantially altering our immigration and refugee system long policy in Canada. The first measure was to massively open the doors to serve certain sectors and bring in tens of thousands of temporary foreign workers and then say that if they came in as a temporary foreign worker, they should not bother applying for their permanent citizenship or bring their families to contribute to society in the long term.

Could the member speak to those issues and the implications of this proposed law?

• (1635)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, when people point the finger at who should be responsible, I like to point this out. Who takes responsibility for dealing with refugees? Yes, the UN does for some international refugees, but it does this on the basis of voluntary contributions by nations, so there is only so much it can do.

Government Orders

Far more of the work of trying to care for refugees falls to the international non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations that, through donors, out of the generosity of their hearts, help finance the attempts to make refugees safe. I worked for two of those international non-governmental organizations in trying to get refugees safely back to their homes.

It is easy for governments to point the finger at each other, but what we see is ordinary people around the world stepping up and recognizing the problem that refugees have and stepping up to the plate to help them out in those dire times.

As to the other questions, the turning away from our international commitments, the government cannot simply ignore those. They are a part of Canadian law. We have committed ourselves to them and I believe that, again, should this legislation pass in its present form, those commitments will be tested in the courts. As well, they will be tested in the court of world opinion, where Canada's reputation is on the line for being one that not only encourages others to adhere to international law and covenants and their responsibilities, but sets an example in doing so.

It is a very negative trend if we turn away from those obligations. How then can we call on other nations to uphold their obligations when have done so?

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those who come to Canada illegally should expect to be subject to our laws. I believe the bill sends a strong message to those looking to circumvent the immigration system that this will not be tolerated.

The NDP has said that the bill needlessly violates the rights of illegal immigrants by detaining them in order to determine their identity. Does it maintain that we should allow illegal immigrants to roam free without consequence and without knowing whether they are a threat to public safety?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the member's question in particular shines a light on the problem on the other side of the House.

The member has done two things in the phrasing of his question, which I think illustrates the problems with the bill. One is that he has switched from talking about refugees to immigrants. The problem with refugees is that they are not choosing to go anywhere. They are not immigrants. They are refugees.

Second, the member refers to them as illegal entrants, but under the international conventions on refugees, they are not illegal entrants. They have the right to enter Canada and seek refuge here under international agreements which we have signed and ratified.

They may enter illegally if they were immigrants and, as I said, we should use enforcement and quick determination to remove those people who try to use the refugee system as a way around the immigration system. I totally agree with the member on that.

The problem is that if he switches his discussion to refugees, then they have legal status. They have the right to seek that refuge in Canada and we have the responsibility to treat them fairly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of thoughts to share with members regarding this particular bill. I will give a bit of an overview.

We look at Canada as a great country that has all sorts of hope and opportunity and that is fairly well established around the world. Today, we have somewhere in the neighbourhood of 0.8% in terms of our overall immigrant population, which is roughly 260,000-plus immigrants every year, and a portion of those immigrants come to Canada as refugees. We had higher percentages during the 1990s when more immigrants came to our country on a per capita basis. However, all in all, Canada has provided opportunity and hope for citizens from around the world to come here and call Canada their new home.

"Refugees" is not a bad word. The government has done a disservice to refugees as a whole because of the way it is branding refugees as being dirty and not really contributing to the Canadian economy. That is what Canadians are picking up on because of the manner in which the government continues to talk about refugees.

What is even worse is that we often hear people use "refugee" and "immigrant" as one and the same. I can say that there is a great deal of concern with regard to trying to fix the system we have, but, all in all, the vast majority of Canadians are quite happy with the contributions of immigration policies from the past that have seen a good balance of immigrants and refugees come to our country.

Dealing with Bill C-4 and why it exists today causes a great deal of concern for many stakeholders who have worked with refugees over the years. I have had opportunities to have discussions with a number of refugees over the years. I believe I have an excellent appreciation of what it is that many refugees have to go through in order to arrive in Canada, ultimately settle and become contributing members of our society. We sell refugees short when we do not better educate the population as a whole in terms of the valuable contributions that refugees make to our nation. Instead, I have found that the government has made the decision to try to come across as talking tough on the crime and safety elements. It has kind of roped in the whole refugee aspect of it, which is most unfortunate.

There are ads that say that the Prime Minister has a plan to crack down on human smugglers and bogus claimants. There is an interesting picture, to which I have made reference, showing the Prime Minister and, what appears to be, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism standing on the back of the *Ocean Lady*. Members will be familiar with the *Ocean Lady*, the vessel that had 76 refugees on board.

It is interesting that the government seems to be determined to make refugees look as if they are bad. When we look at the number of refugees who have come in via boats, it is a small percentage of the overall number of immigrants, let alone the number of refugees that come to Canada. To try to put everyone in the same group and demonize refugees is just wrong.

I do not believe this is good legislation. I believe it establishes a second tier of refugee that is not healthy, that promotes and encourages some of the negative thinking and attitudes toward refugees that is out there. I believe the government has a role to encourage more tolerance and better education regarding issues surrounding refugees and so forth.

Government Orders

•(1640)

I was hoping to ask a couple of questions earlier when the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism spoke to Bill C-4. Usually members are afforded the opportunity to ask questions. However, the one question I was hoping to get an answer to concerns the boat on which he was standing side-by-side with the Prime Minister, the *Ocean Lady*. There were 76 individuals who claimed to be refugees. How many of those individuals are, in fact, settled today? It would have been wonderful to have heard a response from the minister. My understanding is that all of them had qualified for asylum here in Canada. That was a photo-op that the government used to tell Canadians that refugees are bad.

The feedback I get from the average person, because of the way in which the government has persistently attempted to make refugees look bad, is starting to have an impact, and it is not a pleasant impact. There is a percentage of Canadians who have very little tolerance toward refugees and, to a certain degree, immigrants. The government is feeding into that anger by taking the types of stands it is taking. It is a hatred.

I would caution the government in terms of the way in which it continues to move forward on this issue. If the government really wants to make a difference, if it really wants to have a more positive impact it should be focusing on how to bring refugees in and process them in a more timely fashion so that those who are legitimate can become a part of the Canadian economy. That would be something that would be wonderful to see from the government.

What was the minister talking about in his comments? He stated that the reason we have Bill C-4 is because of the profiteers, the profiteers being the human smugglers. That is the reason we have this bill. That is what the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism said just a few hours ago.

To what degree would this legislation penalizing the smugglers? The smugglers, generally speaking, are, as far as I am concerned, unethical individuals who base a dollar value on humans. They exploit tragedy. I and members of the Liberal Party have very little sympathy for these profiteers or human smugglers.

Having said that, the impact of Bill C-4 would be far more profound on the refugees, not the smugglers, not the profiteers who the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism says that he is trying to hit and hurt with this particular legislation.

If the minister does not change the legislation, the real victim here will be the refugees because he has established that second tier. He says that we will now be able to hold off in recognizing someone. It could be four, five years before they would ultimately be able to sponsor a family member.

As a member of Parliament, I am sure all offices have communications with immigrants who are trying to sponsor family members from abroad, especially if it is a parent, but also brothers, sisters, siblings, nephews, nieces, and so forth. Do members know what the processing times for those today?

What we are saying is that based on the assumption, and it is a fair assumption, 99% of those who are arriving on the boats are in fact legitimate refugees who need asylum. It would have been nice if the

Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism were here to provide an answer himself.

•(1645)

The Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism wants the power and the authority, which he would get through this legislation, to tell refugees that they cannot land in Canada for five years. We can just imagine leaving a country where we were being shot at, we were receiving death threats and so on, landing in Canada considering ourselves fortunate because we survived and then being told that our life was on hold. Yes, we made it to Canada but our life is on hold for maybe five years. After five years we may be able to sponsor our family. That would mean anywhere from nine months to twelve years. Considering the direction in which the government is going it would probably get closer to the latter.

Canada has a moral and legal obligation to accept refugees. We can imagine a 23-year-old man wondering when he would be able to see his wife and 6-year-old child.

I always thought that families were important here in Canada, that Canadians recognized the value of family. Do we see that value in this legislation? I would say no. The minister of immigration does not recognize the value of family and he wants to put it into law and wants us to pass it. Members need to look at what the minister is asking us to do. If the purpose is to target profiteers, then let us change the focus.

The minister himself, in addressing the legislation, said that the government was doing some other things in the background, working with other levels of government and that it has been very successful. He made reference to other boats that were prevented from leaving. Maybe the minister should invest more resources in that as opposed to bringing in legislation that is questionable at best. That would be a good direction for the minister to take.

I would suggest to all members, in particular, government members, that they hold their ministers accountable for the legislation they bring forward. Just because a minister brings in legislation does not mean that it is good legislation. If a minister brings in something and a little red flag, blue flag or orange flag goes up, we have a responsibility to look into it and hold that person accountable, just like I would have welcomed the opportunity to pose some specific questions to the minister of immigration on this legislation.

We do have an immigration standing committee. Even though I am somewhat new to the House of Commons, I am not overly impressed with the immigration standing committee because it does not allow for ongoing questions relating to the accountability of the individual who I believe is most important, and that is the minister of immigration.

There are so many issues facing immigration today and yet the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism would have us address a seriously flawed piece of legislation that would likely get defeated if it were brought to the Supreme Court. That is what he has us debating today. I can tell the House that there is a list of at least a dozen issues, maybe 20, that need to be addressed by the minister in his portfolio.

Routine Proceedings

The minister made reference to the bill going to the immigration standing committee, which is great because that is part of the process. I still think we can strengthen the process by allowing critics and other members of Parliament to ask more specific questions of the minister, because, ultimately, we have the responsibility to think outside a political agenda. I have witnessed a political agenda in this particular bill and the agenda has more to do with hatred I would suggest, although I do not want to over-react. There was a bit of hesitation when I used the word “hatred”, so I will just rephrase it.

• (1650)

I am sure every member in this chamber would recognize that refugees contribute a great deal to our economy and they will continue to do that into the future. Overall, refugees have made a significant impact in our economy, our social fabric and who we are today as Canadians, as a country. I will acknowledge the fact that there is a small percentage of refugees that do create some problems and there are some individuals who will take advantage of potential refugees. Those ones upset me and many members all the time, and quite significantly.

The image and the message that the government sends out to the public are not positive when it comes to refugees, and I cited two specific examples. When we have the Prime Minister standing on the back of a boat saying that we are after the human smugglers and brings in legislation of this nature, many Canadians, and members can go and canvass their own constituents, are of the opinion that people who came in on that boat should be shipped back to the country of origin, whether they are legitimate or not. That is because the government of the day has fuelled that sentiment and given that impression either directly or indirectly. Tell me how that is a healthy thing for government to be doing.

I would suggest that there are things we can do, that we have to recognize the importance of the rule of law, that we have to ensure that individual refugees are provided the opportunity to appear and allow for a judge or appeal board to provide a decision in as quick a fashion as possible.

The reason I talk a lot about the process is because if we want to move forward and continue to be a country that can provide hope and opportunities, we need to recognize there are things that government can do to improve the system. We are spending too much time on things that I believe are hurtful. If we want to spend time on improving the system, the biggest recommendation I can give on the whole refugee file is to provide the resources necessary to ensure we have a process that is more timely and that is fair. Whether they are children or adults, whatever gender and whatever part of the world they are coming from, we need to ensure there is a sense of fairness to the process and it is done in a timely way. The quicker it is done, the sooner legitimate refugees will be able to settle and contribute to our communities and for those who are not legitimate, then the sooner they are out of Canada.

• (1655)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard some pretty outlandish statements by the member opposite. In the member's presentation, he has made Canada appear as somewhat of a pariah on the international stage for this bill and what we plan to do, throwing innocent refugees at the mercy of preventative detention. I would contest those statements.

Would the member like to comment on the fact that this legislation brings us in line with the UN protocol against smuggling of immigrants by land, sea and air which, among other things, requires states to criminalize migrant smuggling?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe when the Minister of Immigration gave indication as to the primary reason for the bill, it was all about smugglers and the profiteers. In trying to address the legislation, my emphasis was more so on the refugees and the way in which the legislation would have a negative impact on legitimate refugees to the degree in which it would make the refugees the victims, not the profiteers. I do not understand how members believe that the bill would have that desired impact that the government talks about with regard to the profiteers.

There are other ways of doing it so that we do not have to penalize legitimate refugees who are fleeing countries where, if they remained, they might lose their lives.

• (1700)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. member for Winnipeg North. We are really struggling here with the notion that there is a queue for refugees.

I used to practise in immigration law. I had a lot of refugee claimants. In fact, they mostly were ship-jumpers in Halifax. They would take their one chance to get away from a repressive regime.

I say with some humour, in the hopes of waking up other members around the House, that at one point my colleagues in my law firm said I knew how to say “Hi, sailor” in 27 languages.

However, there is no queue for refugees. Refugees show up with the clothes on their backs. They are trying to get away from a repressive regime. When I have raised this point with the Minister of Immigration, and I have heard it from government members today, it has been said that there is a queue and they just go to a United Nations refugee camp and wait there.

I would like to ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North this question. The claim by the government that there is such a thing as a queue for refugees will be at the heart of the public relations campaign to defend an indefensible bill. We have to really explain to people that the UN High Commission for Refugees is a voluntarily-funded branch of the United Nations. It does not have the capacity to provide places for people, like waiting rooms around the world, in refugee camps. That is not the route refugees take. They show up here, they ask to be assessed and they ask for their rights to be respected.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting this way. I am sure the member will get the appropriate answer.

Government Orders

I would like to table at this time, in both official languages, the 2008-09 and 2009-10 annual reports of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, as well as the Government of Canada's response to these reports.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PREVENTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS FROM ABUSING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Winnipeg North with his response.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we recognize that international law guarantees that people who fear persecution have the right to seek asylum in another country. That is in international law. I do not think anything should change on that.

To talk about jumping the queue, again, is just to try to politicize the issue so the government can try to give the impression that people will be done wrong by if it allows boats to come to Canada, whether they have legitimate refugee claims or not. When the government says that they are jumping the queue and when we know full well that in the vast majority of the cases these are legitimate refugees who are seeking asylum is just wrong. Again, when we take a look at international law, there is no queue-jumping. When the lives of people are at risk, people will take the opportunity when the opportunity comes forward. We all need to, and should, appreciate that.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would assert that Vancouver Kingsway is one of the most multicultural ridings in the country. We have a very vibrant and growing Vietnamese community. I dare say that one would be hard pressed to find a Vietnamese family that did not have a family member or knew someone who escaped Vietnam when South Vietnam fell after a long and protracted civil war.

In talking to people in my community, I noted that many of those people left Vietnam by boat and in fact paid people to assist them to leave. Had this legislation been in force in any of the surrounding countries to Vietnam, they would have been treated as criminals as would the people who aided them. They would all have been considered to be in violation of legislation.

The proposed act, section 117, says:

No person shall organize, induce, aid or abet the coming into Canada of one or more persons knowing that, or being reckless as to whether, their coming into Canada is or would be in contravention of this Act.

It is this proposed section that has many church groups and refugee organizations nervous that if they organize or aid someone to come to Canada, they may be in violation of the act. It could simply

be by not having valid travel documents to be put in violation of the act and they may be subject to being in violation.

Could my hon. colleague comment on the advisability of such a section in the legislation?

• (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is why I make the reference to try to personalize this. If people understand and have an appreciation of why we have refugees coming to Canada on an annual basis or if they talk to people who came to Canada under that classification, whether it was 1 year or 30 years ago, they would get a better appreciation as to the actual situation.

I believe the vast majority, maybe even all the stakeholders, the people who are having to deal with the issue of refugees, would not support this legislation. If it were good legislation, one would think it would get support from stakeholders. I look to the Minister of Immigration to provide us with the list of stakeholders. I would be interested in knowing those stakeholders that say this is good legislation and bring it forward. In terms of numbers, we know a lot do not support it.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this question is more for clarification.

I think I heard my hon. colleague say that 99% of those who came on the *Sun Sea* were legitimate refugees. I may be misinformed, but my understanding is that there have not been any hearings yet. How can he say that 99% of those have actually been proven to be legitimate refugees? If I misunderstood him, I would like him to clarify this with the House.

The other thing I find unfortunate in his comments is the implication that on this side of the House there is somehow a lack of compassion. I can say without any question that many of my colleagues in this room have personally cared for refugees in their homes and are part of churches who sponsor refugees regularly. I would ask him to be careful in his insinuation about the lack of compassion.

We are simply trying to ensure that we have a fair process that does not penalize those who really deserve to be treated as refugees.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will address the member's latter comments first.

I do not question that many members in the Conservative caucus have a caring heart and attitude toward refugees. That is why I said one should not make the assumption that when a minister introduces a bill that it is a good bill. Even backbenchers have a role to play in ensuring that legislation is good. However, I suggest this legislation is not good. On the stakeholders, Conservatives may talk about it in caucus and so forth to better debate that particular issue.

However, I was referring to the *Ocean Lady*. My understanding is that of the 76 refugees none of them have been detained. That was one of the questions I wanted to ask the minister about and that was what I made reference to. I was referring to the *Ocean Lady*. I am not too sure about the other one.

Government Orders

I have to be careful in terms of what I say, but it was implied to me that it was at least 99%. As there were 76 refugees, I am assuming they were all released from the *Ocean Lady*. I look forward to the Minister of Immigration actually providing the information in regard to that.

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am profoundly sad that Canadians must once again stand to oppose this morally repugnant bill. Immediately I would like to remind the House that the people who stand to be criminalized by this bill, indeed the people who are already victimized as they languish in Canadian detention centres under inhumane conditions for excessive lengths of time, are children, women, victims of torture, abuse and rape, and victims of the kind of poverty that entirely eradicates an individual's inalienable right to self-determination and autonomy.

Already at any given point in time, Canada is holding around 450 non-status migrants in detention centres and maximum security prisons. Dozens of these people at any given time are children. Charges have never been laid against them and they have no idea when they will be released or if they will be deported.

Canada does not jail children unless they are seeking asylum. We do not jail people for years when they have never been charged with a crime, unless they are seeking asylum. We do not jail people without providing access to legal counsel, unless they are seeking asylum. We do not categorically bar prisoners from seeking bail, unless of course they are seeking asylum. We do not jail the traumatized victims of political conflict, abuse, and poverty, unless they are seeking asylum.

Canada is guilty of doing all of this already. The use and misuse of maximum security detention centres to imprison those seeking refugee status is a blight on this nation's integrity. The bill before us today will make this travesty infinitely worse. Among its many problems, Bill C-4 states that anyone arbitrarily labelled as a designated claimant, for reasons left to the discretion of the minister, will be mandatorily detained on arrival in a detention centre or prison and will not have their case reviewed for one full year. Once again, a remind the House that this does include children.

It is incumbent upon the House to consider the health and safety of individuals when we look at a bill that commits people to imprisonment. Health is rarely considered in immigration policy, but study after study from around the globe is proving that immigration detention strategies are creating significant health concerns. A study from the Centre for Population Mental Health Research that was published in the *Public Library of Science* journal finds that the rate of mental disorder among populations held in detention centres are substantially higher than those of people held in community settings. Not surprisingly, children in particular show evidence of severe mental health impairment. Rates of suicide and self-harm are at a level comparable to or higher than that among prison populations.

There is a strong correlation between the mental health of refugees and the length of time spent in detention. When finally released from detention they will almost always suffer from prolonged mental health impairment due to the trauma suffered while they were detained. These detention centres, like the centre for the prevention of immigration in Laval, where upwards of a hundred individuals,

including children, are being held at any given time, or like the maximum security prison in Rivière-des-Prairies where refugee claimants make up one-third of the prison population while they have not been charged with any crime or convicted of any crime, are very often the site of human rights violations and abuse. The migrants held at these detention centres are routinely denied access to any health services, especially mental health services.

Are members here today prepared to assume responsibility for endangering the lives of these people by neglecting their health? When they are eventually assessed, so many of their claims are proved to be legitimate. The government is punishing innocent people. The Conservative members of the House wish to punish more innocent people with harsher mandatory imprisonment for longer periods of time.

According to his own discretion, this bill will allow the minister to retroactively wrench a whole family or part of a family out of their community where they are waiting to hear about their refugee status. In other cases, they may already have refugee status. They will be taken under this law and thrown into detention. Family members would be forceably separated. Children would be forceably removed from their parents despite the fact that their parents have not been accused of being unfit, if their case has never come to court or if they have been flagged by child protection agents. The lasting anguish inflicted by separating a parent from a child or a child from a parent would be, and already is, guilt on the head of the government.

● (1710)

The Canada Border Services Agency jailed 14,362 people from 2008 to 2009 for immigration reasons at the cost of \$45 million of taxpayers' money. Under Bill C-4, with the minister's new power to arbitrarily define any migrant as a human smuggler, these numbers are sure to increase.

The government must make the definition of "designated claimant" clear and transparent. At this point, according to this bill, the minister would have the absolute power to label any group of refugees as designated claimants for largely arbitrary reasons that he will not disclose. Once labelled, a refugee would be subject to the litany of unfair regulations set out by this bill. The discriminatory nature of this arbitrary designation would create two classes of refugees in Canada. This is a clear violation of section 15 of the charter that states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, even refugees and migrants. It is crucial to the integrity of our charter that all persons are afforded the protection of basic human rights under our law, including those without status.

It is the obligation of the House to not pass legislation that is in violation of our charter. Not only is this bill in violation of our charter, it is also in violation of the United Nations' protocol relating to the status of refugees and our own Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Government Orders

We have to recognize that jailing people on Canadian soil in an effort to stop them from fleeing persecution and poverty from wherever they come is completely nonsensical. The bill intentionally and maliciously refuses to draw a distinction between those who are committing the crime of human smuggling and those who are victims of the crime of human smuggling themselves. It is true that people are trafficked to this country under false pretenses and are abused, raped and kidnapped as a result of the human trafficking industry. However, enforcing the same punitive measures against the victims and the criminals themselves is the very definition of the word "insanity".

Earlier today, the member for St. Catharines excused this exact lapse of logic by saying that the human smugglers of the ships disguise themselves as those who are being smuggled. That is absurd. If a criminal wears a disguise while committing a crime, it does not give us reason to change our laws to erase the distinction between the criminals and the victims. Under any circumstance, that proposition is laughable. However, for some reason that line of thinking is tolerated when we speak of the plight of refugees in Canada.

The member for St. Catharines also pointed out that Canadians do not wish to share their health care services with those seeking asylum and who do not yet have status. I would like to state that I am one woman who would be perfectly happy to share the privilege of public health care with those who are most needy and vulnerable.

In December 2009, Jan Szamko died in an immigration centre in Canada after being denied medical aid. In December 1995, Mike Akhinen died from medical neglect at the detention centre in Mississauga known as Celebrity Inn. These are just two cases of neglect that resulted in death. Instances of non-status Canadians being denied medical attention is extremely common and this bill would make it 100% legal.

Refugees come to Canada with legitimate claims, fleeing the worst conditions imaginable. We have a moral obligation to help them. Would the Conservative members of the House be willing to look individuals in the face when they are desperate and ill and deny them a doctor? That is inhumane and I refuse to believe that Canadians are inhumane. I refuse to believe that we are as illogical as this bill. When my colleagues from the government speak endlessly on behalf of what Canadians want them to do, I would like to remind them that the majority of Canadians did not vote for them and they do not necessarily share the same values. I am proud to represent some of the many Canadians who did not vote for them and who do not support this bill.

This bill reduces smuggled human refugees to goods being illegally brought into this country. The government thinks that by raising the duty or the tariffs on the commodity will discourage this trade out of existence. Refugees are not cattle. They are not softwood lumber. They are human beings and human smuggling is not a commodity trade. Maybe we could compare it to a service. Even if we were to follow this line of logic through to its conclusion, we could assume that if this bill were to come into effect it would force human smugglers to raise the price of the service that they provide to refugees in response to the increased tariffs we are now imposing on them. Clearly, it does not make any sense.

● (1715)

Some of the members of the opposition have already spoken about history and historical precedent. I believe it is important to look to history before we act as a nation. Let us look to another time when human beings were treated like commodities to be levied. Imagine how history would regard us if we jailed the refugees coming through the Underground Railroad into Canada during the time of American slavery. I guarantee this bill would bring the same kind of shame on Canada. We would live to regret it.

Beyond the fact that the bill is morally repugnant for all of the reasons I have enumerated in this speech, it is not what it purports to be. How would the news that Canada has new tough-on-smuggling laws ever reach those who are actually fleeing to Canada by these means? How will the victims of poverty and persecution who come to Canada seeking asylum get the news that we just passed some tough new inhumane refugee laws?

The only way this legislation will ever be effective is if the government delivers leaflets around the world explaining our new laws. The bill clearly is not aimed at reducing human smuggling. It is targeting Canadian voters by making them feel like the threat of illegal immigration is greater than it actually is.

I join members of the opposition in opposing the bill. It not only creates an arbitrary process but indeed is discriminatory against the most vulnerable citizens of this world.

● (1720)

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is with regard to the doors being open to legitimate refugees while safeguarding the integrity of our borders. Bill C-4 ensures that criminals looking to play our system and those looking to jump the queue are sent a strong message. Canadians will not tolerate this abuse of our generosity.

I call on the NDP to support the bill and stand with real victims of human smuggling and law-abiding Canadians.

I am curious to know what the definition of "maximum security" is in the hon. member's mind because to me it means something like Millhaven or Kingston Penitentiary. Could the hon. member please give us her definition of what "maximum security" really is?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, that is not the point. It is that we would be jailing people who have come here looking for safety. The government is not making a distinction between those who are committing acts of human smuggling and those who desperately need to leave their countries in order to be safe. That will not be a deterrent to those looking for safety. Rather, it will cause mass amounts of physical and mental health issues. That makes no sense if we look at the situations of the people who are coming to this country looking for help.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on her speech. A lot of the conversation taking place is centred around the idea of queue jumping, whether or not it is a myth. The other issue pertains to the two-tiered system that would be created by Bill C-4 carried over from the last session. Could the member comment on that?

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Also, has she had any experience regarding how refugees in the system are dealing with the fact that the bill does not go to the crux of the issue and does not really fix the problem in the sense that there is no great incentive out there not to be involved in this type of work?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, the question of queue jumping speaks to the idea that the members across the way do not understand what a refugee is. It is someone who is in a desperate situation, whose security is at risk, whose health is at risk due to the situation in his or her home country. Refugees do not get in line, they flee, otherwise they could be killed or raped.

Members opposite do not seem to understand that fleeing is fleeing and is not getting in line and waiting. Whether people are in camps or on a boat to come to Canada is just not the point.

As a member of the global community, Canada has a moral obligation to help these people.

● (1725)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): In the summary, at letter (f), it says the following:

(f) provide for detention rules and a review procedure...

That means that more prisons will have to be built for these people and these families. Who will build them? Will it be the government, the private sector or a public-private partnership? Will there be classrooms for the children? Will special staff be hired to manage the review procedure in these detention centres? Will children be separated from their parents? What are we really talking about here? Is this not just a way of criminalizing these people?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question and comments.

It makes absolutely no sense that the government is talking about being economically responsible and yet wants to build bigger prisons. It makes no sense.

[*English*]

What is going on is just illogical. I cannot understand what the bill is supposed to be doing. It does not make any sense. It will not do any of the things the Conservatives claim it will do. It does not follow any of the things that are their priorities such as the economy and fairness. It is blatantly opposed to all those things.

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused by the member's comments. Could she distinguish for me between jail and detention?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, when someone is put away for absolutely no reason and the person did not commit a crime other than to flee for his or her security, I do not care what term is used, the result is that a punishment is being inflicted on the person for something the person has not done. That is the problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her speech. I believe she has gone to the heart of human nature and sensibility. She has touched on a very important point: the separation of children from their parents. When

we study 20th century history, we find examples of the separation of children from parents.

I would like her to tell us how she thinks the international community, in light of the horrible things that happened in the second half of the 20th century, will view the image that Canada is projecting.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Jean for his very good question. We do not seem to have learned a great deal from history. Children have been traumatized by being separated from their parents.

[*English*]

It creates risks in our society among generations. It causes many other concerns in terms of social understanding. It absolutely does not make any sense. It is not economically viable. It does not make sense in terms of our collectivity in Canada to be doing this to families when five years from now we will say to them that they can come in now. The damage has been done. It creates traumatic experiences and it puts a burden on our society that we do not need.

We should be welcoming these people with open arms and trying to help them instead of making their situation worse.

[*Translation*]

That does not make sense. We have learned nothing from history.

● (1730)

[*English*]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my strongest opposition and objection to the bill at hand, Bill C-4, , the "Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act". I put quotations around the title not because it is the short title of the bill, but because that is not really what the bill is about. It was presented by the Minister of Public Safety earlier as a bill that would protect Canadians and others from human smugglers. In reality, it is a bill that attacks refugees and the Canadian immigration system.

Let us be frank. This bill is not at all about human smuggling. Canada currently has the harshest punishment possible, according to Canadian law, if convicted of human smuggling. Under Canadian law smugglers are imprisoned for life. There is nothing stronger and no more severe form of punishment than life in prison in Canada.

Let us talk about what this bill is really about: playing politics with refugees and instilling a sense of fear in Canadians about refugees. We have seen this bill before. This bill was and is remarkably similar to Bill C-49 presented in the last Parliament. It was opposed by all members of the opposition parties and by so many Canadians across the country from coast to coast to coast.

Let me speak to the false claims and the areas of ambiguity this bill presents.

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First, the bill positions refugees as “queue jumpers”. This is a falsehood. Refugees and asylum seekers must still follow the same processes and procedures of all claimants. It also creates a two-tier immigration system. It creates two different levels of refugees, and a new classification of refugee, a “designated claimant”. These are refugees who have an “irregular arrival”. That means anybody who shows up by boat. Of course the terms in quotations I am borrowing from the bill.

This bill essentially says that someone who arrives in an irregular fashion, such as by boat, is not a refugee but rather is a criminal. This bill says that people who wish to flee war or conflict zones or persecution but do not have the means to purchase an airplane ticket are queue jumpers. Instead, because they cannot buy a plane ticket, they risk their lives. They throw themselves on a rickety cargo boat, spend two months crossing the ocean, any ocean, but no, they are not real refugees. That is what this bill is telling us.

The bill is telling us that they are not real asylum seekers; they are not really fleeing a horrible situation, leaving their families behind, leaving their livelihoods, leaving their homes, leaving a horrible situation. This bill tells us that these people are liars, that they are not real asylum seekers, that they are not risking their lives to come to Canada hoping for a better life. This bill tells us that these people are criminals. This is what the bill and the government are telling us, unfortunately.

When we look at the history of this great country, it is very clear that Canada was built on the backs of immigrants. Historically, boatloads of immigrants arrived at Canada's ports for centuries. Canada saw an immense number of Irish refugees arriving at Canada's sea ports during the famine in Ireland. At that time, Canadians were strongly in opposition to these refugees staying in Canada, yet they were permitted to stay. Today we see that they contribute so much, and that they contribute positively to Canadian society. Now, we see people of Irish heritage all over Canada, including in this House. Many members of Parliament are of Irish descent.

● (1735)

Refugees are people who contribute positively to the land they go to. So how do we as a nation deal with boats carrying refugees that enter Canadian waters? Do we turn them away, forcing them to return to their country of origin? Or rather, as we saw recently, do we have other countries do our dirty work and intercept these boats in international waters so they do not make it here and we do not need to do anything?

Time and again we have seen the consequences of this course of action. In 1914, the *Komagata Maru*, which was carrying 376 passengers from Punjab, India, was forced to return. In the 1930s, the refugees on board the SS *St. Louis* were fleeing Nazi Germany, but were forced to return and were killed by the Nazis. There are many others. Forcing people to return to their country of origin is not the answer.

While this bill specifically attacks refugees who arrive by boat, it will have detrimental effects on all claimants regardless of whether they enter Canada by boat, by air or on foot. This legislation would require the mandatory detention of all designate people arriving in Canada, whether they arrive on foot, by boat or by air. This includes

women, children, babies, the sick, the elderly. Anyone who arrives in Canada by any method would be required to be detained for a minimum of 12 months, an entire year. After those 12 months were served, they might receive some consideration, but they could also be held for up to five years. They would also be denied permanent residence or family reunification for at least five years after that. This is a clear violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the past, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down mandatory detention without review. This is detention based on identity with no possibility of release until the minister arbitrarily decides that identity has been established. This breaches sections 9 and 10 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protect people against arbitrary detention and allow the right to prompt review of that same detention. Arbitrary detention is also a violation of a number of international treaties to which Canada is a signatory.

Why are we detaining these people to begin with? People are usually detained because they are a danger to others or they are a flight risk and could disappear before their questioning or trial happens. Should this bill pass, the government would have the right to jail or detain all refugees without proving that they are a danger to society or that they are a flight risk, for a minimum of one year without an appeal process. How is that just?

Do members know the psychological effects detention and imprisonment have on children? Some British researchers have shown that even in a few months of detention the psychological effects on children are tragic. They wet their beds. Some become mute. Others stop learning. They become withdrawn. They are not able to go to school because they cannot focus. Some lose weight. Some do not eat. These psychological and physiological effects have been seen in children who have been jailed for just a few weeks or months. Think of the psychological scars that we would be inflicting on these children who come to our country and are placed in detention centres. Some may call them jails but we call them detention centres. That is where children would be put for at least a year. It is totally unjustifiable.

● (1740)

Furthermore, these people are being detained until they can prove their identity through some form of documentation. Most refugees who come to Canada do not have documentation, regardless of which process they use to enter the country. When people flee their nation, they leave behind everything. When they leave their country due to a natural disaster, this documentation may not exist. How can we realistically expect people who have lived through an earthquake or tsunami and are fleeing their country to have appropriate documentation proving their identity? How can we expect people who have left a war-torn country to carry valid identification? A lot of refugees arrive at our shores without identification. These are people who could be classified as designated.

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Some of the refugee claimants who arrived in Canada by the MV *Sun Sea* now live in my constituency. I have spoken with many of them. They have told me the stories of their trip to Canada and their arrival in B.C. and how so many of them were borderline holding on to their lives. We all know that one man perished on the journey across the Pacific. Many of them had United Nations identity cards. They had UNHCR refugee cards. Upon their arrival, the people who greeted them gathered all of their identity cards and then, when there were not the same number of identity cards, as individuals they were told that they did not have adequate identification onboard. Regardless of whether or not they had a refugee card, they were all detained. Thankfully, many of these people have been released because our great service men and women at the Canada Border Services Agency took the time to sort out the identity cards. Unfortunately, many of them are still being detained today.

Under Bill C-4, decisions on claims by designated persons cannot be appealed to the refugee appeal division. Eliminating the right to appeal can have tremendous consequences for these so-called designated persons.

I am sure that most of us have heard stories from our constituents about failed refugee applications, about a person who has left his or her country only to face a heavily bureaucratic process. The person does not have the right kind of supporting documentation to present at a hearing and his or her application is unfortunately rejected. Sadly, some of us have heard about the horrific consequences of these failed refugees and what awaits them when they are deported to their country of origin. Unfortunately, mistakes can happen, which is why we have the appeals process. That is why refugees deserve to be able to appeal to the refugee appeal division.

My personal story is like that of many immigrants to Canada. My father came to Canada as a refugee claimant from Sri Lanka. He was fleeing the civil war during the early parts of the war. Once he was granted permanent residency, he sponsored my mother and my sisters to join us. We were reunited in Canada. I am proud to say that the child of a refugee claimant in Canada is now a member of Parliament.

It is difficult for me to imagine in the middle of this violent conflict my father having the time to ensure that he had all of his documentation aligned, ready to go, everybody's identification ready to go, supporting documents ready to go, when he was running away from being shot or his country being bombed. How can we expect people fleeing persecution, fleeing a war, to have all their identification in order? Fortunately, his application was approved and my family was able to join him here in Canada.

It is absolutely unreasonable to expect people to collect all the necessary documents and to have them available upon arrival. My father was lucky that he left at the early stages of the war, but the people who left later, the people fleeing from other countries because they were being bombed, this is absolutely unfair.

• (1745)

That is why there are checks and balances in our refugee process and why they are so integral. This absolutely goes against the compassionate nature that Canadians are known for, Canada's values. Canada's values lie in being compassionate, being concerned for human rights and being concerned for human beings.

When I first saw the bill, I asked myself why the government would propose such legislation and why it would put forward a bill that attacked refugees.

I am taken aback by the idea of queue-jumpers. The government is trying to paint refugees as jumping the immigration queue. When people are fleeing persecution, fleeing a war or an area that is attacked by a natural disaster, they cannot be called queue-jumpers.

With a large immigrant population in Scarborough—Rouge River, I can easily say that the number one form of casework in my constituency is immigration-related. In my immigration casework, there is an unbelievable amount of family reunification cases. People in my area are frustrated that they are waiting 5 to 10 to 15 years in the process. They are stuck in the process waiting to have their families, their loved ones, join them here in Canada. When they begin the process of bringing their parent or sibling over to Canada, they are told that it will take 5 to 10 years. They apply and they wait and wait and continue to wait. The backlog for parents who are waiting to come to Canada is in the hundreds of thousands. Why? It is because the number of visas for parents and grandparents issued this year has been reduced by close to 44% of what it was. The wait times are getting longer and longer. This year, there are only 11,000 parents who can come to Canada. In 2005 and in 2006, the target was 20,000. Now it is only 11,000. This is a reduction of 9,000 people in this current year. This is not the only backlog that exists, unfortunately.

The government claims that it is clearing the backlog for skilled workers when, in actuality, the backlog for skilled workers grew. In 2005, there was a backlog of 487,000. Now, it is 508,000. In the past six years, this backlog has grown by 173,000 applications.

This so-called clearing the backlog is, unfortunately, not working. It is not working for skilled workers and it is not working for families trying to reunify. Immigrants are getting resentful because they are waiting longer and longer to bring their loved ones to Canada. They are being told by the government that there are people who are jumping the queue. There are hundreds of thousands of people waiting patiently, some not so patiently, to come to Canada. This is not due to nothing other than failed immigration policy. People are really upset that they have to wait so long.

However, rather than amending immigration policy to actually deal with the backlogs and the time constraints, the Conservative government is trying to find a scapegoat: the new refugees who are coming. This is not the government's fault or the fault of the failed immigration policies, but the refugees' fault. They are jumping the queue and taking the spots of all those other people who have been patiently waiting.

What the government has failed to mention is that for some refugees there is no queue to jump. There is no lineup for people who are in serious danger, for people who are living through a civil war, for people who are being persecuted because of their gender, their religion, their sexual orientation, et cetera. When their lives or the lives of their family is called into question, there is no line. Once they are safely in Canada, they must then join the exact same queue as everyone else and wait their turn to get their status in our country.

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is so eager to paint Canada in tarnished light for doing what ordinary Canadians see as the right thing, which is protecting the safety of our borders, the integrity of our immigration system and the security of our streets and communities. This response is measured, it is firm and it meets all of Canada's international obligations.

Would the member comment on why her party is so determined to allow human smugglers to keep on taking advantage of Canada's immigration?

• (1750)

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, the bill does not really mention human smugglers very much, except in the title. When we actually look at the bill piece by piece, it mentions refugees a lot more than it mentions people who are smuggling people into this country.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives, the government and the bill do not actually talk about or attack human smugglers in the bill.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the effect that a long waiting list can have on someone applying for permanent residency. She also stated that there is a very large backlog in the system.

Can my colleague comment on the effect that waiting an additional five years, as proposed by this bill, will have on the constituents in her riding?

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, people are waiting for their parents or grandparents to join them here.

I will talk about my grandparents. My grandmother is 93 years old right now and I am lucky to have her here with me. If I were waiting another 5, 10 or 15 years for my grandmother to join us, I would not be able to meet my grandmother. The last time I would have seen her was when I was five years old.

Unfortunately, that is the reality of so many people living in Scarborough—Rouge River, but I know it is the same reality for many Canadians living across the country from coast to coast to coast. They are not able to reunite with their family members. We are forcing families to be apart and children to live without their parents.

Just recently I got a letter from a constituent. The mother and child are here but the father is stuck back home. The child came here when she was two. She is now nine and does not know her own father.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I sympathize with the hon. member and her personal experiences. My mom was in a forced labour camp in Nazi Germany and my

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father survived the Soviet gulag, so I understand what it means to find a safe haven in a country with freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

However, I am perplexed why the hon. member thinks that smugglers are actually benevolent in some way because they are exploiting asylum seekers trying to come to Canada.

Although there may be examples aboard those ships of legitimate individuals, I would like to know why the hon. member thinks that there is absolutely no risk to Canadian security and safety. Would the hon. member be prepared to put her own personal guarantee against anybody stepping off one of those ships?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I am not an expert in identifying individuals. That is why we have those people in the RCMP and at the Canada Border Services Agency who are trained to do these things.

I will not provide a personal guarantee to anybody about anything to do with people coming off a boat. However, I have a problem when the member opposite and the bill only talks about individuals who are risking their lives by throwing themselves on a cargo boat and coming across an ocean. These are the people who are being targeted by the bill.

Unfortunately, there are agents who are smugglers and who send people by airplane, but those people are not being targeted by the bill, unfortunately, and only the people who are the poorest of the poor and who are risking their lives are being attacked by the bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulo, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her wonderful speech, which allowed us to see the human side of the situation of refugees and immigrants. It is important to understand the possible consequences of implementing the arbitrary measures proposed in Bill C-4. This can have human, economic and social impacts since a traumatic experience can take a very long time to get over.

Since the government is always going on about security, does the hon. member believe that this bill, as proposed, will somehow improve national security?

• (1755)

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I really do not see any difference in an increase to the level of our national security. Our forces do a really good job. This bill is attacking refugees who are coming to Canada seeking a safe haven, like the member for Etobicoke Centre earlier mentioned. I do not think people who are coming to find a home that would welcome them, that would allow them opportunities and provide their children a life are risking the security of our country.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about what is and is not in the bill. The hon. member referenced two ships that were infamously turned away. I am not sure where in this legislation it contemplates turning any ships away.

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She also seems to want to have it both ways. On the one hand, she talks about the professionalism of our security services, the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP. On the other hand, she suggests that the people who have been detained, specifically the individuals who came off these two ships last summer, were been treated unfairly, that the officials in British Columbia and the people who took care of their health, education and endeavoured to find out who they were and under what circumstances they came somehow treated these people so poorly that they have been left traumatized by the experience of being in Canada. I suggest that is absolutely not the case and they were treated properly.

Would she agree with me that it is the responsibility of a government to protect sovereignty and to ensure anybody who seeks to come to this country is the person he or she says? That would include, since she is not willing to give a personal guarantee, that the RCMP and the security services of our country endeavour to make sure that everybody who wants to come here actually comes here for the right reason.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, the one ship I spoke about was the *MV Sun Sea*. When the people were kept in detention, there was only one member of Parliament, as far as I know, who visited them in the detention centre and that was the New Democrat member of Parliament for Burnaby—New Westminster. I was actually providing some translation services and working with local community members on the ground who were visiting individuals in the detention centre on a regular basis.

As I mentioned earlier, people who came out of the detention centre are now living in my constituency. They have said that the individuals treated the adults well, but when children are separated from families and kept in detention centres for long periods of time, it has psychological and physiological effects on children. The member probably missed that in my speech.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask for withdrawal of the bill unless it can prove itself to be different and unless we can make some serious amendments to it because the unintended consequences of the bill will have disastrous affects.

No one here thinks human smuggling and human trafficking is good. We know it exploits people, whether it is because they are poor, or they are seeking work in another country, or they are fleeing persecution and fear for their lives. Exploitation of that kind is in fact egregious and all of us agree on that. We all want to do something to target the actual people who do that exploitation.

At the same time, it is not a simple black and white issue. Many people are seeking to come to this country because they fear for their lives and that of their families. Many of them are women who fear they will be raped. We know in certain parts of the world, because of their different caste or religion, or whether they are journalists, or no matter what they are, many people are in danger. History has shown us that people who are afraid, who are in danger and fear for their lives and that of their families will do absolutely anything to survive and to save their families. So many of them sell what little they have and they find ways of even buying passage onboard a ship to come here.

Let us separate the victim from the smuggler. If the bill had new amendments that would deal with those people who exploit, I think

we could talk about that. However, the bill has muddied the waters. It seeks to take the victims, the people who are genuine refugees, who are afraid and who seek asylum in our country, and creates a sense that these people are wrong-doers, that they are criminals, that they have no valid reason to seek asylum at all in our country. It creates a sense of xenophobia and fear among Canadians because it muddies the waters and it creates a sort of broad and generic term that does not clearly define what the problem is.

In 2005 the Liberal government and the minister of justice brought in a bill on this issue. It was a bill that tried to deal with the complexity of human smuggling and human trafficking. It talked about preventing the trafficking itself, which is dealing with some of the failed states that we talk about, helping them with democratic institutions and playing a role abroad. It talked about preventing poverty in other parts of the world where people might seek refuge because of lack of poverty and the ability to feed their families.

Prevention was a huge piece. Prosecution of the actual smuggler, the person committing the crime, was a huge part. There were very heavy sentences in prosecution put down. It also talked about protecting the victim, the person who was being smuggled, or trafficked, or exploited. There was a real balance in the bill. It also talked about building partnerships with other nations, with international organizations, with international humanitarian groups, with police around the world, like Interpol, to try to find ways to deal with the criminal element of traffickers.

It was a solid bill and I would have thought that if the government wanted to add to that bill, there were lots of amendments it could have made that would have dealt with it from that kind of balanced perspective. However, what we see here is that this bill catches in its net, and I want to be kind and not say it targets, but inadvertently catches in its net genuine refugees and it creates significant barriers to those who are seeking asylum. In fact, it re-victimizes them if we look at the bill clearly.

I want to back up a bit and look at the history of many of the so-called illegal refugees who have come to our shores over the history of Canada. There were those people who we called the Vietnamese boat people, many of whom are here. They came in boats. We opened our arms so that many of them now are really strong citizens of this country. We saw other groups. In the history of the second world war the *St. Louis* came here with Jews aboard it. No one knew what was going on in Europe at the time, so everyone thought it was a scam and sent these people back to certain death in the camps in Germany. We know there were about 80 Estonians in World War II who came to these shores on a tiny little boat that was supposed to take 40 people.

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●(1800)

We have made mistakes in the past in our country, turning away people who were genuinely seeking help. We do not want to repeat those mistakes. The Prime Minister himself called that the black history of Canada. We have made apologies to these groups. We have given them redress. We have done everything to try to right some of those wrongs we did when we took a sledgehammer to a delicate issue and problem.

We recognize that even now. Many of the so-called refugees that we say are the United Nations convention refugees live in camps, in a sort of free zone between countries that are in conflict. We also know that in the days of Nazi Germany, we did not know what was going on at the time. We were not aware of the full extent of what was happening in Vietnam .

Historically we have not known what is going on in some states, with the quiet pogrom against various people, the quiet disappearance of people in many countries that are supposed to be bona fide countries that we trade with and talk to.

We need to know that people are fleeing for their lives. We need to apply a level of humanitarian empathy toward what is happening to these people. In fact, a very famous illegal migrant to our country came with her family, stowed away illegally aboard a ship coming to our shores. It turns out it was one of very great governors general of the country, the Right Hon. Adrienne Clarkson.

We cannot just throw a piece of jello at the wall and see if it slides or sticks. This is about people's lives. We have to deal with it very differently.

What we would create with this is a two-tiered system of refugees in the country. First and foremost, these refugees would be detained for 12 months without a review. This violates section 10 of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, the current provisions within the charter and within law demand some kind of review after 48 hours. The government now suggests this should be 12 months. Children will be detained for 12 months in a camp. This is unconscionable. That violates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Do we not care about the international conventions and treaties on to which we have signed?

In fact, under the United Nations convention on the status of refugees, denying asylum to arrivals who come seeking asylum to the shores of any nation, even if those arrivals are illegal, violates section 31 of the United Nations convention on the status of refugees. Therefore, we are already denying and violating our own laws, our own constitution and international treaties that we have signed.

When we put people away after they have been found out to be valid refugees, they are being denied liberty for five years, taking away the ability to get any documents in those five years. For those five years they are stateless, neither permanent residents or temporary residents or citizens. They are nothing. The police can ask them to come and report at any time, asking them whatever questions they wish to and the refugees must produce documents. What is happening in the country, when it has been proven they are genuine refugees and they are still treated in that way.

There is ample legislation in the country dealing with and detaining individuals who are criminals when there is in fact reason for Canadians to fear for their safety or who we think are a flight risk. There are things that we can use. We have instruments to use right now.

Let us imagine the economic loss of opportunity that will be created. For five years someone is unable to work or do anything. These people may come with skills or trades and may be able to contribute to the country, to the productivity and the economic benefit of this nation.

We heard the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism say that today, that immigrants and refugees have come to this country and contributed to nation-building and growth. We are denying five years of a person's ability to do that. During that time people lose their skills, their certification and are unable to work at that because they have lost all the skills and training they had.

To take away the value of these refugees to Canada and to Canada's economic growth and prosperity does not make any sense to me at all. Therefore, for most of us, it is an issue of fully re-victimizing people, not just for 12 months but for 12 months and then for 5 years after, 6 full years. It does not make any sense. It certainly does not give Canada's reputation a boost. It makes us look as if we have become a mean-spirited nation over this period of time.

●(1805)

There is a growing notion among people that an illegal refugee is automatically a danger to our society. I gave some examples of people who have not damaged this country, who have come here and helped to build a strong nation and are strong contributors to our country.

I know that the Prime Minister apologized for all of the bad things that we used to do. He called it the dark history of Canada. We need to think this thing through very carefully. We see an arbitrary attitude: "Who cares. Let them eat cake. There are always going to be bad people and if we find two bad people in a group of 100, then let us slam the two and throw away the other 98. We are going to sledgehammer legislation to catch two people who may or may not be violating the law".

Let us criminalize the ones who are exploiting. Let us criminalize the smugglers. Let us find ways to work with others to chase them down and to deal with that issue, but let us not victimize people any more. That kind of doublespeak does not help. It creates among Canadians a deep sense of xenophobia. Everyone is afraid of that other, that is going to harm them, when most of us have been part of that other at some point in time in the history of this country.

Government Orders

I would ask the government to look at the bill carefully. I would ask the government to do one of three things. One choice would be to withdraw the bill because it is the same bill we had prior to the election in the last Parliament. Everyone said it was a bad bill. The government could accept amendments. We could have a generous length of time to look at the bill at committee and present amendments. That would take political will. It would take goodwill. It is a majority government and there is no need to use a fist to ram everything through. The government could actually listen to parliamentarians and people who say there are ways in which the bill could be made better. At the least, the bill should be sent as a reference on certain questions of legality and constitutionality to the Supreme Court of Canada so the court could decide whether the bill is legal and constitutional. Most scholars have told us it is not. Most of us in the House know it is not. I would suggest that the government knows it is not.

The bill plays on emotions. It tells half-truths to Canadians. It confuses them. It muddies the waters. What we are creating is a fear about people who may need Canada to help them find new lives and save their families just as we would if we were fleeing persecution here in Canada. Let us hope that none of us ever has to do that, but let us remember that history has taught us otherwise. Let us remember that there are many people who came here as illegal migrants and are contributing to Canadian society in major ways. They are hard-working people who are helping to build this great nation of ours.

Let us withdraw the bill, or at least send it to the Supreme Court on questions of constitutionality and legality.

• (1810)

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to set the record straight. The member suggested there is no opportunity for those seeking refugee status, but the bill does allow for that. It does allow for those arriving on vessels to have access to Canada's asylum system and are deemed eligible to make a refugee claim. They will receive a hearing on the merits of their claim before the independent Immigration and Refugee Board.

The member led those who are watching the debate to believe there will be no opportunity but there will be an opportunity. The bill does allow for that. It introduces measures to deter the criminal activity of human smuggling and to create enough disincentive so that in the future, people do not place themselves at risk by taking part in the smuggling operations.

To say that these people have no way of claiming refugee status is not true.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, there are United Nations convention refugees, as I said in my speech earlier. They are people who go into the lineup and sit in camps for years and years until a country will take them. They are called convention refugees. Then there are those who cannot stay because they are afraid. There are no no-fight zones for them to stay in. They have to run and hide. They will do anything to save their lives. Saying that these people do not have to take part in this does not sound reasonable or rational to me. If a person is going to die or be killed tomorrow, if a person is fleeing and hiding with members of his or her family, the person would do anything to save them.

To say that they have access is not true. When they came they would be forced to be detained for 12 months without review. The current law states that within 48 hours they have to have some sort of review to check their refugee status. The hon. member is leading us astray when she says that they have recourse. They do not. Children would be detained for a whole year. Then for five years they would be stateless persons with no documents and they would be subject to recall at any time by police. That is a denial of human rights and civil liberties.

• (1815)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I have noticed that this debate has dwelled a lot on the frame of mind of people who are refugees or in a situation of complete and utter distress. It is a situation I have never seen and I hope I never will. I am willing to bet that the vast majority of us if not all of us in the House have never been in that position. We have to juxtapose that with what is best for the nation and what is best for them. In saying that, there are several issues at play.

One is we are creating a two-tiered element. In the past we talked about country of origin and now we are talking about a two-tiered element. These are classifications put on human beings under an extreme amount of stress. This has to be a thorough debate simply because they cannot participate in it and I am glad it is happening in this way.

Shifting to the more domestic side of things, this is a question on what is contained within the amendment we put forward this morning. It is about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and protecting against arbitrary detention and prompt review of detention because Bill C-4's provisions violate international obligations relating to refugees and respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection.

I would like my colleague to comment on those who are seeking protecting juxtaposed against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, earlier I talked about the fact that this bill is in violation of many treaties that we have signed.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a national piece of legislation. In fact, to arbitrarily detain people without any recourse or review for up to 12 months would violate section 10 of our charter. The current legislation says only 48 hours,

Canada was one of the first nations to sign proudly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, we would see children being detained for up to 12 months. Even if the country said that it would not detain children, what would we do with them? Where would we send them? Would we take them away from their parents? Would we put them on a boat somewhere out in the ocean? Would we leave them in no man's land?

This is a ridiculous piece of legislation in that it does not even pay attention to the basic, logical, legal human rights of people.

Government Orders

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in the House, but I wish I did not have to speak on this issue.

I look back to what we did recently in Parliament. We passed a piece of legislation that addressed refugee issues in a very comprehensive way.

It really puzzles me that the bill before us came under public safety. Since when have we started to look at immigration and citizenship issues as issues of public safety? The legislation refers most of the time to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. I believe that the wrong minister has presented this bill. It needs to be addressed under immigration.

My colleagues have made some wonderful points about the five years that a person would have to wait to get any papers before being able to travel. A person could wait up to a year to see what kind of designation he or she was going to get. That is a long time. After that it could be another five years. If the person does not report on the right date, it could actually be lengthened to six years. We would be looking at seven years before the person could apply for residency.

I want us to look at the human element. We all value our families and our safety and security. I want us to look at what we are proposing for families who are going to be moving here under refugee status from very difficult circumstances. We are saying that it will be not one, five or six years, but possibly seven years before they could apply for permanent residence. It means many years of having no travel documents and no status.

It also brings to my mind a young woman with whom I have been dealing. She is a refugee from Somalia. She moved to Canada about four and a half years ago. She brought three of her children with her. She left one of her children behind with her mother because the child was still a toddler, two years old. When she got to Canada she wanted to be able to work and she did not know who would look after the two year old. The mother is elderly and she has applied for the child to join her. The child is eight years old. She left that child behind at the age of two.

Under the new proposal, people cannot even apply for five, six or seven years, depending on their luck or the arbitrary decision of someone. Then when applying after that many years, they could wait another three, four, five, six, seven or eight years. That same two year old could be 14 or 15 years old.

Surely when the United Nations came up with a convention regarding people seeking asylum under the refugee status, it did not have in mind that families would be separated for that length of time. I want members to imagine the impact on that mother who lives in my community, even under our current rules. She comes to my office two or three times a week looking for some magic to speed things up.

I want us to always remember that when we sit in this very august House and pass legislation, it has a real impact on families and it will have an impact on those families and individuals moving to this country. What message are we sending around the world?

• (1820)

There was a time in my youth when I travelled around Europe and people used to want to wear the Canadian flag. Americans travelled wearing the Canadian flag. I asked them why they carried a Canadian flag when they were American. I had not moved to Canada at that time and I was interested. They said that it was because Canada was held in such high esteem. If we start taking these kinds of steps in which we create two levels of refugee status and we are seen as separating families for 5, 10, 12 years, very soon Canada's image internationally will be tarnished.

We see ourselves as and we are a compassionate and caring nation. We give a great deal of attention and forethought to humanitarian needs. I would say that the essence of this bill is not humanitarian. It has very little compassion built into it.

This morning I heard my colleague from across the aisle speak very eloquently to the need to punish smugglers. I absolutely agree but I believe we have legislation that exists now that gives the highest sentence possible that any Canadian court can give, which is a life sentence. We do not have punishment beyond a life sentence in Canada, which I am happy about. For me, that punishment already exists.

At this time, we should not punish people who are already victims, because that is what refugees are. They have already been victimized. They have had to leave their homes. They are running away. They have left their belongings behind and some have left their family members behind. They find asylum across the border and eventually hope to get into countries like Canada. When they come here, they make contributions and become wonderful members of society.

Let us not make further victims of those refugees now by making them go through all these unnecessary hoops, which are not going to deter the smugglers or agents who might be involved in wrongdoing. If we are worried about smugglers using the refugee status to bring people into this country illegally, then let Parliament and the government provide funding to the RCMP and other enforcement agencies. Let there be more oversight over the laws that we already have.

As I said previously, we already have a law in place that gives human smugglers the highest possible punishment. Now it is about enforcing that legislation and finding the smugglers. We will not find the smugglers sitting on a boat that is bringing refugees to Canada. I always say that, for all we know, they are wearing Armani suits and sitting in a New York or Toronto cafe drinking cappuccinos. If we are really after the people who are breaking our laws and abusing the refugee laws we have right now, let us dedicate resources and tackle that issue so that we are actually tackling the issue, instead of now, with this legislation, making things more difficult for a very victimized group already.

I have to be honest. I stayed up to go through some of this legislation and kept asking what the purpose of this was. What are we hoping to achieve? We are a nation of immigrants. We have refugees who come here from all over the world and I would say that we have not had any more than a handful who have been anything but legitimate.

Adjournment Proceedings

●(1825)

If that is the case, why are we doing this? Why are we instilling some kind of fear in everyday Canadians that there is a gargantuan problem out there and that this is the magic pill. This is not a magic formula to address those who break our laws. All this does is divide families for a longer period and humiliate, and I use that word deliberately, people who have suffered.

I have had the privilege of working with refugee families as a volunteer in the evenings and on weekends while I was a teacher, and I have had the privilege of teaching young people who have come from refugee camps. I remember a young man I reached out to and what his reaction was. He came from a very violent background and what he needed was security and assistance. Those are the kinds of families that may be in limbo for up to 12 months and then, if they are designated into this category, it could be another five or six years.

Let us, as Canadians, remember our humanity and our compassion.

●(1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I am pleased to tell the member for Newton—North Delta that she will have up to eight minutes remaining for her remarks, and then there will be a period of 10 minutes for questions and comments when this motion is up for debate again in the House.

[Translation]

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

POVERTY

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question that I raised in June in the House on child and family poverty. At that time, I talked about the fact that nearly 700,000 children in Canada were living in poverty. I asked the minister what the government was doing. The minister at the time acknowledged that the effects of the global recession had been increasing poverty in Canada. However, the substance of her answer did not indicate that there was any meaningful action being taken on the part of the government.

I want to refer to a September 2011 report from the Conference Board of Canada called “Child Poverty”. It essentially lays out why we should be concerned about child and family poverty in this country. The report had a couple of key messages. First, that Canada scores a C grade and ranks 13 out of 17 peer countries, that more than one in seven Canadian children live in poverty. When we talk about first nations, it is one in four children. When we are talking about children, of course, we are not talking just about children but about children and their families.

The report puts child poverty into context. The report indicates that children who experience poverty, especially persistent poverty, are at a higher rate of suffering health problems, development delays

and behavioural disorders. They tend to attain lower levels of education and are more likely to live in poverty when they become adults.

The OECD says that failure to tackle the poverty in exclusion facing millions and their families is not only socially reprehensible but it will also weigh heavily on a country's capacity to sustain economic growth in years to come. That is very important because, of course, we will be relying on those children to become productive adults and support us in our old age.

The report had a question, “Is the child poverty rate declining in Canada?”. And, of course, no surprise to many New Democrats, the answer is, absolutely not.

In 1989, the House of Commons passed a unanimous motion to make child poverty history by the year 2000. Initially, there was a drop in child poverty but by the mid-2000s it had increased once again to 15.1%.

There are other countries that are taking meaningful action on that, one being the United Kingdom. It set out a 20-year mission in 1999 to end child poverty through a series of integrated policies, including strengthening early learning, education, affordable housing and health services, as well as raising the minimum wage and augmenting child benefits. It has had some success with those policies. As we can see, other western countries with similar kinds of systems that we have here in Canada have taken meaningful action.

The Conference Board of Canada did go on to state what Canada could do to become a leader on child poverty. It stated that the government needs to fund jobs training, provide child care and introduce things like tax incentives for lower-paid workers.

What concrete measures will the government take to eliminate child and family poverty in this country?

Dr. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for raising the issue of children and poverty in Canada.

From the outset, I will say that I am as committed as anyone in the House to seeing a decrease in child poverty in Canada and I am confident that we are on the right path toward a steady decline in child poverty.

Our economic action plan has been there to fight poverty. Investments made by our government through the economic action plan, including temporary enhancements to employment insurance as well as permanent increases in child benefits and programs such as the working income tax benefit have prevented many more Canadian families from falling into a low income bracket.

We believe that the family is the building block of society and that one of the most important investments we can make as a country is to help families with the costs of raising their children.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government provides over \$14 billion annually in benefits for families with children through the universal child care benefit, the Canada child tax benefit, including the national child benefit supplement for low income families, and through the child tax credit.

Since 2006, our government has made significant investments in benefits for families with children.

In 2006, we introduced the universal child care benefit, which pays \$100 per month to all families with children under the age of six to help them with the costs of caring for their children. The UCCB alone has lifted approximately 24,000 families with over 55,000 children out of low income circumstances.

In 2007, we introduced the child tax credit, which provides tax relief to families and parents in recognition of the additional costs associated with raising children. It provides a maximum tax value of over \$300 in tax relief to more than three million Canadian families with children.

In budget 2009, we increased the amount that families with children can earn before benefits under the Canada child tax benefit, including the national child benefit supplement, thereby providing increased support for low and modest income families with children.

The national child benefit supplement has been successful in reducing the incidence of families with children living in low income and in reducing the severity of low income for those families who continue to live below the low income threshold.

In budget 2010, we reiterated our commitment to giving Canadian parents choices in child care. We improved the taxation of the universal child care benefit to ensure that single parent families are treated fairly. We enhanced the delivery of child benefits for parents with joint custody.

In addition, we have introduced a series of tax measures to better recognize other expenses, such as the child fitness tax credit and the children's arts tax credit included in budget 2011.

One of the best ways out of poverty is to help Canadian workers gain skills that lead to employment. Our government's approach to reducing poverty emphasizes giving Canadians the skills and opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency while providing targeted support for those facing particular barriers.

● (1835)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Conference Board of Canada and other reports have indicated that child and family poverty is increasing in this country. There are a number of measures that could be taken in order to alleviate that poverty.

I talked earlier about a job strategy. A comprehensive job strategy is an important part in lifting children and families out of poverty as is a national child care program.

There is one concrete measure that the government could take. In the previous Parliament, Tony Martin introduced Bill C-545, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada. I have reintroduced Tony Martin's bill as Bill C-233. In conjunction with consultations across Canada, that bill came out with some very concrete steps that could be taken.

Would the parliamentary secretary and the government support Bill C-233, An Act to eliminate poverty in Canada?

Dr. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, we are very much focused on this subject. We introduced the working income tax benefit in 2007 to help ensure that more low income families are financially better off as a result of getting a job.

In budget 2009, the tax benefit was enhanced by \$580 million, effectively doubling the initial investment to provide further support to working families and to other Canadians.

In 2011, approximately 1.5 million working Canadian families are expected to benefit from the working income tax benefit.

We also extended work sharing agreements to keep Canadians working by up to 26 weeks to a maximum of 78 weeks.

We are seeing the results of these investments. In the first eight months of 2011, employment increased by 194,400. This is good news for Canadians and Canadian families.

Under budget 2011, we provided additional funding to make available an extension of up to 16 weeks for active or recently terminated work sharing agreements to be phased out by October 2011.

The family is the building block of our society. Our priority—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. The parliamentary secretary may know that we have exhausted our time on that particular question.

● (1840)

SENIORS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the minister for a clarification on the answer she provided to the House in June regarding the needs of seniors.

I have been listening to seniors and meeting with seniors' organizations over the summer. I have heard over and over how there is a desperate lack of funding for programs and a very real and legitimate fear that Canada is not prepared for the rapidly rising seniors population.

I am hoping the minister has had an opportunity to meet with organizations as I have. I am sure if she has done so that she will have heard the same messages over and over again, and the extraordinary ideas put forward by people who are working with our seniors or who are seniors themselves. These ideas would go a long way to address the needs of an aging population. I have heard loud and clear from everyone with whom I have spoken that we are in desperate need of a comprehensive plan that will ensure that we can address this demographic shift.

Adjournment Proceedings

The most important issue voiced over and over is that seniors want to stay for as long as possible in their own homes. They want to be in their communities, near their friends and families. I really do not think this is asking too much.

It is very clear that we need a home care plan, a plan that ensures seniors can stay in their homes and that any modifications needed to be done to those homes are available at an affordable rate.

We also need to make sure that seniors can access services without having to travel great distances, especially as their mobility becomes more and more challenged.

A network of community hubs would be an effective way of assuring that access. This would also help combat the solitude that affects many seniors, especially single seniors or those caring for their partner or loved ones.

What our seniors are asking for is affordable and appropriate housing that will meet their needs as they age. As their abilities change, our older loved ones need appropriate care within the community or residence in which they live. Access to families and their social networks is the key to health and safety for our seniors.

I have also heard that seniors often were not informed about the services available to them, or how to access the information to connect with those services. A community hub could operate as a central location where seniors could go for assistance with health care, financial issues, government funding and other services that directly affect them.

Finally, I heard about elder abuse. It is difficult to paint elder abuse with one brush. It comes in all forms, physical, sexual, financial and psychological. The scale of the abuse can vary dramatically. It can be something that has been happening over a lifetime or can occur when a senior becomes frail and vulnerable.

The source of the abuse can be caregivers, a spouse, children or even strangers looking to take advantage of a vulnerable lonely person. Often the abuse is hidden, not spoken of.

This is a great tragedy. We need a program that can measure and address the varying needs of our older loved ones suffering from abuse or abandoned in our community. I ask the parliamentary secretary across the aisle if she knows if the minister has a plan or is working on a plan to provide our aging population with the protection and funding for the programs they need as they retire.

Dr. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to outline all the actions the Government of Canada has taken to combat elder abuse.

I appreciate the question by the hon. member for London—Fanshawe as it has provided me with an opportunity to raise awareness of this serious issue.

Members of the House surely know that elder abuse takes many different forms, among them financial exploitation, physical and mental abuse, and neglect. It is estimated that 4% to 10% of older adults in Canada will experience one or more forms of abuse at some point in time in their senior years.

The Government of Canada has been very active on this issue of elder abuse. The federal elder abuse initiative, launched as part of budget 2008, took a focused federal approach to combatting this problem. It did so by raising awareness and developing resource materials for front-line professionals who provide support and services to seniors.

The Government of Canada invested \$13 million over three years in support of this initiative.

The cornerstone of the federal elder abuse initiative was a national awareness campaign called “Elder Abuse - It's Time To Face The Reality”. This campaign, launched in June 2009 and which ran again in October 2010, used television, print and the Internet to convey its powerful message.

This groundbreaking advertising campaign helped Canadians understand what elder abuse is and provided information on these issues.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

The campaign was far-reaching.

[*English*]

Based on the results of a post-campaign survey, the advertisements left audiences with a strong impression and the public became more aware of the issues of elder abuse. Since the beginning of the campaign, more than 80,000 visits have been made to the elder abuse awareness Internet page at seniors.gc.ca. Several thousand calls have been received and more than 100,000 resource documents have been sent to Canadians.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the initiative has been the robust legacy of information and resources that is now available to Canadians through seniors.gc.ca and at 1-800-O-Canada and Service Canada centres across the country. Through public opinion research, we have confirmed that we have successfully raised awareness on elder abuse.

The results from a 2010 survey commissioned by Justice Canada on awareness and perceptions of elder abuse highlight the success of the awareness campaign. The report found that elder abuse awareness had increased by 11 percentage points since 2009 and that 9 out of 10 Canadians or 93% said that they were aware of the term “elder abuse”. These results speak for themselves demonstrating that this initiative has successfully fulfilled its mandate during its three-year mission.

While the initiative has come to a close, the Government of Canada remains committed to combatting elder abuse and building on the foundation created by the federal elder abuse initiative.

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Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, seniors fear losing control over their finances and over their personal choices. Families and those with power of attorney can take control and take choice away and consequently take away dignity. Seniors can be forced into housing they do not want to move into. They can be told to hand over their finances. We allow this to happen for the sake of convenience or for our fears of a senior's safety. Yet older Canadians should have a say and should be allowed to determine the directions they wish to take. The emphasis here is that seniors want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

We have heard about the ad campaigns, but there needs to be action. Once again, what is the plan? What does the government have planned to ensure that seniors will have the opportunity and be able to maintain control over their own lives?

Dr. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada remains active in addressing elder abuse through the new horizons for seniors program which helps older Canadians use their leadership skills and energy to benefit communities across Canada. Budget 2010 proposed over \$10 million over two years to increase funding to the new horizons program for seniors.

In June 2011, the government launched a call for proposals under the recently enhanced new horizons program with elder abuse awareness included in the funding objectives.

As members of the House can see, the type of programming confirms the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to combat elder abuse.

The recent throne speech also proposed tougher sentences for those who abuse seniors.

Canadian seniors have worked hard to build our country and our government is committed to supporting those seniors by combatting elder abuse in all its forms. Having underscored all of these actions, I believe our record speaks for itself.

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you back in this chamber at the start of another session.

I want to talk about an interesting and important subject near to me, which is the border. On June 13, I asked a question of the government with regard to the perimeter deal that is currently being constructed between Canada and the United States.

It is very important to acknowledge that there has been a number of recent border deals that have thickened the border. They did not provide the relief for time, travel and reduction of red tape. In fact, the United States has successfully created the northern border thickness based upon political movements in the south. This is unfortunate because it is costing us jobs, and the government has not done enough to challenge this attempt to thicken the border on the northern side.

Consultations are going on right now about the perimeter security deal that is being constructed. It would affect everything from immigration, our privacy, our military and a whole series of things. It would also affect our trade and our travel. As the United States is Canada's number one trading partner, we will see the loss of jobs.

I am concerned that the government has often been too willing to sign agreements that have actually not delivered in terms of the reduction of wait times or the red tape. I would point to one concern in terms of significance, and it is symbolic too because it has affected our tourism, which is that the government tore up a treaty that we had from the War of 1812, which it celebrated. What that did was allow gunboats on the Great Lakes again. We now have gunboats out there that fire 1,200 rounds a minute. I do not know what threat comes from Canada that requires 1,200 rounds a minute. These guns were used in Afghanistan and Cambodia. It is the Browning machine gun in particular.

That has had a cooling effect in terms of trade and tourism because people do not want to be around that stuff. Blackhawk helicopters have been added and a number of different dirigibles that do spying in Canada. Ironically, these things are not allowed to be used to spy in America, but they were being used to spy into Canada. The most famous one was in Sarnia. The people there went out to moon the balloon because they did not accept that there was a dirigible over top of their homes.

I have talked to a lot of businesses to put some pressure on the government. There should be some direct measureables about signing those agreements. We signed that shipwright agreement which now allows American boats to come into Canadian waters and arrest Canadian citizens. Interestingly enough, we are not even an equal partner in that particular program.

The Americans have their state police, their federal police, their customs officials and their municipal police who can now arrest Canadians, but when it comes to us, only our RCMP can reciprocate. Our own good men and women of the customs services are not treated to the same degree. We are not even in the same relationship at the same time.

I have asked the government to be more open and accountable, which means no longer just having a website to have hearings about the perimeter security. I am asking the government to conduct real parliamentary hearings and have oversight, not just website, one way announcements and a consultation. It is not acceptable when so much is at risk.

● (1850)

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States share a remarkable history that greatly benefits both countries. We are each other's closest trading partners. In fact, our relationship is a model for the world.

Like all partnerships, ours must continue to evolve to address challenges and opportunities if it is to last and flourish. We share a common goal of keeping our borders open to commerce and closed to criminals and terrorists.

Adjournment Proceedings

On February 4, the Prime Minister and President Obama announced the Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness. This declaration marked a new long-term partnership between both countries and demonstrated a continued commitment to promote greater economic opportunity and to address threats as early as possible on both sides of the border.

Since being announced, we have been listening to the views of Canadians on this important initiative to ensure that Canada's interests are protected as we move forward.

In total, the government received input from more than 1,000 Canadians and almost 200 submissions from groups and organizations, including business groups, provinces and territories, municipalities, organized labour, civil society groups, academics and think tanks.

We reached out directly to national and regional groups and organizations, as well as border communities and first nations. A letter was also sent to every premier and territorial leader inviting provinces and territories to engage in the dialogue.

On August 29, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made public two reports on these consultations and, earlier today, these reports were tabled in the House for all members to review. The member opposite should review them.

The member speaks of a secretive process. This could not be further from the truth.

We thank the people and businesses who took the time to provide us with so much thoughtful input. These are important issues for Canada and Canadians and the overwhelming response we received makes this evident.

We will continue to work with President Obama and his administration to deliver on this initiative without compromising Canadian sovereignty.

Canadians elected a strong, stable, national majority Conservative government in May. They gave us a strong mandate to secure our economic recovery by protecting their interests and promoting their values.

Keeping our borders open to legitimate trade and travellers and closed to criminal and terrorist elements is vital in that regard.

I would think that the member opposite would want to join us in securing Canada's security and economic prosperity.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that every time an agreement has been signed we have had a thickening of the border

and the government has not contended. It has listened to Hillary Clinton, Lieberman and other elected officials run Canada's name down with regard to 9/11. At the same time, it has never challenged them on that and has allowed this myth to develop.

With regard to the process right now, it is done in a vacuum. It should be done in the public. The dialogue should be going back and forth between the different groups. It should not just be point and click on a website right now. A thousand people is not a lot when we consider our sovereignty and our personal privacy are at risk. In fact, the Privacy Commissioner has warned of the threats with regard to losing personal security.

As things currently stand, the government did nothing when the patriot act was introduced, and Canadian personal information is taken from us without our knowing if we have our data assembled in the United States, for example.

I would point to the fact that we need to have greater accountability because even the Rideau Institute has noted that personal privacy and a number of different issues will be at risk with regard to this deal. Why can it not happen in these chambers? Why can it not happen in the halls of Parliament where we actually have the parliamentary oversight of legislation that affects so many Canadians?

• (1855)

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, our shared border plays a fundamental role in Canada's relationship with the United States and speeding up legitimate trade and travel is crucial in this regard, as is creating jobs and opportunities for Canadians and Americans alike.

The government received a great deal of valuable input from the public consultation process, as well as diverse views on many issues. These are important issues for Canada and Canadians, and the overwhelming response that we received makes this evident.

We are working with President Obama and his administration to streamline and secure our border and to enhance regulatory co-operation, ensuring that people and goods can flow freely and safely between our two countries.

[*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 6:56 p.m.)

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