



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 091 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, March 7, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 7, 2012

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: Today being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, diaper changing tables were installed in this Parliament building yesterday because I stood up and asked for them, with the support of my Bloc Québécois colleagues.

What is obvious to us now has not always been clear. Women's rights have improved over the years, but only because we fought for them. Even still, the status of women remains precarious. The vast majority of victims of poverty and domestic violence are still women.

One of the first things this Prime Minister did in 2006 was to eliminate funding for women's rights organizations. One day, this institution will have as many women as men. For now, we must continue to take umbrage when anyone tries to prevent the most vulnerable—the vast majority of whom are women—from asserting their right to a dignified life and hope for the future, for themselves and their children.

Our struggle is not over.

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[English]

UKRAINE AT A CROSSROADS

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

[Member spoke in Ukrainian]

[English]

This evening the Ukrainian Canadian community will be kicking off a pivotal conference here in Ottawa to address the many political, economic and social issues that are facing Ukraine. The conference entitled “Ukraine at a Crossroads” will feature many key Ukrainian parliamentarians, chiefs of staff, journalists and human rights activists, amongst others.

Canada continues to be concerned about the conviction, imprisonment and reportedly deteriorating health of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

With worrisome signs of regression in Ukraine's democratic development, Canada urges the Ukrainian government to strengthen its democratic institutions. As elections approach later this year, Canada will continue to support efforts to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society in Ukraine.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work Borys Potapenko of the League of Ukrainian Canadians, Jars Balan of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and Bob Onyschuk from the Canada Ukraine Foundation for making this conference possible.

[Member spoke in Ukrainian as follows:]

Slava Ukraine, Slava Canada.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL ABORIGINAL YOUTH INTERNSHIPS

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour to attend the send-off in Victoria of 10 aboriginal youth from across B.C. on CIDA-funded aboriginal youth partnerships to Uganda and Zambia.

After months of training with the Victoria International Development Education Association, these young people were inspiring as they spoke about what had already become a life-changing experience for them. I know they will enrich the lives of the people they work with in Africa, and not least, they will bring back to their own communities in Canada what they have learned.

One young woman told me that her successful internship application had already inspired her peers back home. I commend Lynn Thornton and VIDEA for showing us how a small amount of seed money from the Canadian government can make a big difference to so many people.

*Statements by Members***ST. PAUL AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL FOUNDATION**

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday I had the honour of attending the fourth annual St. Paul and District Hospital Foundation fundraiser in my riding. After proceeds from tickets, donations and live auctions items were tabulated, the foundation raised \$60,000 from the over 300 people who attended.

The money raised will be put toward a monitor for post-operative patients who have had general anaesthetics and two Life Pak 12 defibrillator monitors, which are used in each of the trauma rooms in the emergency department for heart attack or cardiac arrest patients.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the St. Paul and District Hospital Foundation and all its volunteers, including Dr. Albert Harmse for his leadership in this role, as well as the community of St. Paul for supporting this important fundraiser that will help to save lives in our community and for partnering to bring the best health care possible to rural Alberta.

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MATHIEU LECLAIR

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tragedy has again touched students in Kingston and the Islands.

[Translation]

Last week, we were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mathieu LeClair, a cadet at the Royal Military College of Canada.

[English]

Parents are so proud of everything their children accomplish and so is Canada proud of those training to become future leaders of our country.

[Translation]

This training period is not an easy time in life.

I offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mathieu LeClair.

[English]

To them and the RMC community during this time of mourning, they should know that they have the support of the wider community in Kingston and the Islands, and across the country.

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games were held on February 28 to March 3, 2012 in St. Albert, Alberta. Over 640 athletes participated in 7 events, including snowshoeing, floor hockey, alpine skiing, figure skating, speed skating, cross country skiing and curling.

The community of St. Albert, assisted by Strathcona County and the town of Jasper, hosted the athletes, coaches, friends and families from all across the country. It required a dedicated volunteer organization and 700 volunteers to ensure the success of an undertaking of this calibre. All of their time, energy and commitment made this event possible.

I would like to personally congratulate all of the athletes who participated in the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games. I trust that the memories and friendships made will last a lifetime.

I hope the athletes enjoyed St. Albert as much as St. Albert enjoyed hosting them in this unforgettable celebration of athletic achievement. Congratulations to an exceptional Winter Special Olympics. They are all champions.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

YOUTH

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in October, I had the pleasure of meeting with young people from my riding at the Rigaud youth centre. On that occasion I spoke to them about Canada's political system and my job as a member of Parliament.

It is often thought that young people are only interested in things that can entertain them. That is absolutely not true. Young people are just as interested as adults in participating in public life in their own way.

I would like to ask all hon. members of this House and all Canadians not to judge a person on his or her age. Let us encourage harmony between the generations.

The government should focus on the positive aspects of youth instead of considering them as potential delinquents. Let us give a voice to our young people. Let us work together to give young people their rightful place in society, so that young women and young men in Canada are considered and treated as full citizens.

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[English]

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE INTERNS

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to Ottawa the legislative interns from the great provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Leezann Freed-Lobchuk, Tim Johnson, Anna Murawski, Kai Olson, Jason Stitt and Andrew Todd are members of the Manitoba legislature's internship program. Also, Elliot Bourgeault, Cody Gieni, Jason Kieffer and Reagan Seidler are participating in a similar program within the Saskatchewan legislature.

Both programs are intended for university graduates so that they can work for and engage with their respective provincial legislatures. By working with MLAs, these interns are exposed to the inner workings of the legislative process in a practical, hands-on manner, allowing them to experience a richer picture of government. Indeed, this knowledge will help equip these young people with the practical experience to engage in public policy development, which has immense benefits for the political vitality of our country.

We are very fortunate to have these young people visit us in Parliament and spend time with our federal parliamentary interns and members of Parliament.

Statements by Members

I wish them all the best in their program.

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IRAN

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight marks the beginning of the festival of Purim, a truly joyous holiday in the Jewish tradition. Purim commemorates a time in ancient Persia when the Jewish people were saved from annihilation. Ancient Persia, as we all know, is now present-day Iran. It has been 2,400 years and still we see an ever-growing threat against the Jewish people, their homeland and the entire region. This is something we simply cannot accept.

It is fitting that Purim falls during a week when President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu have discussed the spectre of violence that is descending on Israel. I sincerely hope that their talks were fruitful and that we will see a peaceful solution to the growing tension in the Middle East.

I urge all members to stand with me in support of international pressure on the Iranian government to halt its nuclear program and to enter into peaceful talks with the government of Israel.

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[*Translation*]

MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER STRATEGY

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, municipalities, especially in Quebec, are very concerned about the implementation of the Canada-wide strategy for the management of municipal wastewater effluent and the accompanying draft regulations.

Even though the Government of Quebec has not yet endorsed the strategy, the federal government is insisting on unilaterally imposing regulations that require the renovation or replacement of one out of four wastewater treatment networks. This represents an investment of \$9 billion over 30 years for Quebec alone.

The City of Montreal, Quebec City, the Union des municipalités du Québec and the Fédération québécoise des municipalités recognize that facilities must be modernized. Municipalities are merely asking that the new federal standards be accompanied by an appropriate investment plan.

In the next budget, the Conservative government must announce an investment plan that will help municipalities meet new requirements for wastewater treatment.

* * *

• (1415)

[*English*]

PENTICTON VEES

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was an important date in my riding because it was on March 6, 1955 that the Penticton Vees represented Canada at the World Ice Hockey Championships and defeated the Russians five to zero and came home world champions.

Last night was again March 6, and in spite of it being some 67 years later, the Penticton Vees faced off again in a hockey game that would potentially change history. Much as they did in 1955, the Penticton Vees came through yet again. Last night the Vees hockey club did not just set a new Canadian record, but also a new North American record for the most consecutive wins in junior hockey history with a ten to zero victory.

Canadian Coach Fred Harbinson credits this achievement to 22 kids who are prepared to work hard and have an attitude of commitment to success.

I ask the House to join me in applauding the Penticton Vees Junior Hockey Club for setting a new North American record of 41 consecutive victories.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, happy one hundred and second International Women's Day. Who would have thought a hundred years ago that in 2012 women would be able to run for election, have successful careers and be given away as prizes in morning radio contests.

That is right. This is the environment we are asking women and girls of Halifax to live in, one where they are offered up as trophies, that is, their Czech Republic counterparts, anyway.

A radio station in my riding is running the charmingly named "The male is in the Czech" competition, promoting a mail order bride as a prize and using damaging ideas about foreign women's sexuality to titillate Canadian listeners.

As a woman, I am furious. As a Canadian, I want to apologize to all Czech women and to the 50,000 women of Czech descent living in Canada, incredible women like Chaviva Hosek, Hana Gartner, and Halifax's own Lucy Decoutere.

If the bride gets here, Lucy and I would be happy to show her around and we will make sure that she knows something else that Canadian women have won in the last 100 years: the right to a divorce.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Delta—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to crack down on serious and violent criminals and that is exactly what we are doing.

The safe streets and communities act is comprehensive legislation that will ensure that those who commit sexual offences against children or who operate dangerous meth labs receive sentences that reflect the serious nature of these crimes.

For years, victims have been outraged that those who commit serious offences like sexual assault get to serve their sentences in the comfort of their own homes. We are putting an end to house arrest for such serious offences because we believe that the rights of victims should come first.

Statements by Members

We promised Canadians that we would pass these important measures within the first 100 sitting days of our majority mandate. I am happy to say that we will keep that promise.

It is not hard to see why a recent Environics poll shows that 6 out of 10 Canadians support this legislation. I call on the opposition to finally get on side with the majority of Canadians and support our efforts.

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WORLD CUP VICTORY

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the snow had barely settled from Erin Mielzynski's lightning fast final run this weekend when the Guelph native alpine skier achieved what no Canadian female skier has in 41 years: a World Cup victory.

Fulfilling a childhood dream, Erin finished her final run in a breathtaking 53.59 seconds, becoming the first Canadian woman at the top of the World Cup podium since Betsy Clifford in 1971.

Her breakthrough performance in Germany this week is an inspiration to hundreds of young men and women who take to ski hills across Canada with dreams of victory at the Olympics and other international competitions.

Erin has been representing Canada at international competitions since her debut as a member of Canada's alpine ski team at the 2009 World Cup and as a member of the Canadian Olympic team at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

On behalf of the residents of Guelph and all Canadians, I congratulate Erin for her dedication, hard work and superb talent that are responsible not only for her World Cup victory but also her place in the hearts of Canadians.

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[Translation]

LES VOLTIGEURS DE QUÉBEC

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we must never forget the contributions and sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform. That is why I am proud to rise in the House today to mark the 150th anniversary of the Voltigeurs de Québec, Canada's oldest francophone regiment.

The regiment has participated in many conflicts that helped to define our country. From battles fought by the fledgling Canadian Confederation to the two world wars, and more recently in Afghanistan and on peacekeeping missions, the Voltigeurs have distinguished themselves by their professionalism and their commitment to defending Canadian values.

Today I would like to thank the Voltigeurs for their ongoing service to our country and their contribution to our military heritage.

We remember the sacrifices made by those who have served and those who are serving today.

● (1420)

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities answered “no” to the question about whether aggressive solicitation is a practice supported by the Conservative government.

And yet we know that RMG uses the name of the Conservative Party's telephone fundraising office and that solicitation calls are made from a number cited hundreds of times on websites that list complaints of harassing calls.

To top it all off, we are now beginning to hear from Conservative supporters who feel as though they were taken advantage of. The Conservative Party must take clear action. It must determine which Conservative officials support these practices and impose the necessary sanctions. It must demand that RMG turn over the databases containing the names of people who may have been harassed, take the necessary action and make a public apology.

If it does not, Canadians should consider the little “no” that was so nonchalantly uttered yesterday as another form of contempt for them and, even worse, for the Conservative electorate. There are cases where no—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are focused on Canadians' priorities: creating jobs and economic growth.

Our government's plan for jobs and growth is on the right track. Earlier this week, the Minister of Finance met with private sector economists. After the meeting, Doug Porter, a Bank of Montreal economist, Doug Porter, said, “Keep on keeping on. The plan is working. The economy is moderately growing and the deficit is coming down”.

Our economic action plan has created over 610,000 net new jobs since the recession ended in July 2009 and 90% of these jobs are full-time jobs. This job creation shows that our plan is on the right track for the Canadian economy and for Canadian families.

However, the global economy is fragile with the ongoing European sovereign debt crisis, with the continuing turmoil in the Middle East and with the sluggish American recovery.

Canada is not immune from these external events, and so our budget on March 29 will stay focused on creating jobs and economic growth because Canadians, like my constituents in Wellington—Halton Hills, have told us that these are their priorities.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***41ST GENERAL ELECTION**

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for over a week now, the Prime Minister has been denying that his party had any involvement in the robocall scandal. What is worse is that he is blaming others. Tomorrow, members of Parliament will debate an NDP motion to strengthen Elections Canada's authority so that it can obtain all the necessary documents and exert better control over contact with voters.

We want to know whether the Prime Minister supports this NDP initiative and whether he will help us to help Elections Canada.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not have any objections to this proposal, but I must point out that the Conservative Party is giving all its information to Elections Canada. Nothing is stopping the NDP from doing the same.

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Elections Canada's investigation now extends to Kingston and other areas. The Conservatives can no longer claim that what happened in Guelph was an isolated incident. We know that they have a very centralized structure, that they have close ties with RMG and that decisions are not made randomly but that everything is systematic.

Is the Prime Minister at all worried about what his people did on his behalf?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of the calls we made during the election were documented and that information has been made available to Elections Canada. I hope that the NDP has the same documents and that it will also share them with Elections Canada.

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has already confirmed that it will submit all the necessary documents.

• (1425)

[English]

Last week, the Prime Minister said that the Conservatives never used U.S. based call centres, that only the Liberals had. Perhaps the Liberals used U.S. companies but we now know that his own parliamentary secretary also did in the last election.

I will give the Prime Minister another chance. Does he really stick to his line that only the Liberals used U.S. companies?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear about the Conservative Party of Canada's activities. All of the calls made by the Conservative Party are documented and all of those records are available to Elections Canada. We will be looking forward with great interest to see what documents exist on the NDP's telephone activities during the campaign.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are providing information. I must remind the Prime Minister that it is only the Conservative Party that is being investigated for election fraud, again I might add.

In the last election, 94 Conservative campaigns filed that they had made payments to RMG. In 48 of those, it was the same amount, \$15,000. So we know the Conservative Party gave massive amounts of money to RMG but what about the contracts with the Conservative government? What is the full extent of the relationship between the government and RMG? What government departments gave it contracts? What were the services rendered? Were those tendered or sole source and what was the dollar value?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that because of the transparency that the Conservative Party has provided in this regard. We are assisting Elections Canada with this matter. What we also know is that the opposition paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls.

Before continuing with these baseless smears, the opposition members should prove that their own callers are not behind these reports. These exaggerated allegations demean millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as they say, the member's response should not be dismissed lightly. It should be dismissed with great force and with ridicule and derision because his answers get more absurd with each passing day.

The people have a right to know if their government is giving sweetheart contracts to a very shady company with very strong Conservative ties. RMG and its parent company have been involved in bilking charities, violating do-not-call lists and selling fake memberships. Did it also give RackNine the money to make these phony phone calls and carpet bomb the country with lies, trying to deceive people from their right to vote. We have a right to know what contracts it has with RMG.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, those outrageous and exaggerated allegations made by the member opposite demean millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election.

The opposition paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls, presumably for the NDP under the column "miscellaneous". Before continuing these baseless smears, it should prove its own callers are not behind these reports.

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ELECTIONS CANADA

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has referred to the people working at Elections Canada as "jackasses". He has fought against limits on private spending in the lawsuit of the Prime Minister versus Canada. He lost to the rule of law on the in and out, which required him to make an enormous payment to Elections Canada just yesterday.

Oral Questions

My question is for the Prime Minister. Is it not this ideological opposition to effective regulation that is behind his willingness to continue shackling the Chief Electoral Officer and refusing to give the Chief Electoral Officer the same powers as every other officer has in every province?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. I am unaware of Elections Canada claiming that it does not have the authority or resources to investigate this matter as it should.

In fact, we have said repeatedly, from the very beginning of this particular matter, that we are sharing all information with Elections Canada, in particular to try to ascertain precisely who did what in Guelph.

I would encourage the Liberal Party to be as transparent with its information.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe the Prime Minister was not aware that the Chief Electoral Officer asked for additional powers. He did so in a submission to the committee. The Conservative Party refused to grant him those powers. The Conservatives called the people at Elections Canada “jackasses”. They said that they fought against limits on private spending in elections.

Does not this same ideological approach on the part of the Prime Minister explain his reaction to the Chief Electoral Officer's specific request of Parliament?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the committee selected an option proposed by Elections Canada. Since the beginning of this matter, we have made all of our information available to Elections Canada so that it can find out what happened in Guelph. This is a very serious matter, and we want to know who was behind it.

At the same time, the Liberal Party, which made both allegations and problematic phone calls, must turn its information over to Elections Canada.

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[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the same ideological rigidity that the government is taking with respect to the work of the Chief Electoral Officer that perhaps explains the extraordinary answers that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans gave yesterday to the real attack that is under way now on the inshore fishery in eastern Canada.

This is an issue that speaks directly to the well-being of literally thousands of people whose livelihoods have been maintained by having an effective regulation of their ability to own licences and to keep off the corporate forces.

Why are you abandoning the inshore fishery, the way of life and the communities—

The Speaker: Order, please. I will once again remind hon. members to direct their comments through the Chair and not directly at ministers.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are interested in the words of Canadians and the thoughts of Canadians with regard to the modernization of the fishery and we will proceed in that manner.

I would like to read something that came out this week. It states, “I congratulate the minister for holding that type of discussion. We must always be willing to evaluate our policies and see whether we are meeting the needs of today and tomorrow”.

Do members know who said that? It was said by the former minister of fisheries, Robert Thibault.

* * *

[*Translation*]

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Conservatives finally decided to drop their appeal to the Supreme Court in the famous in and out scandal.

They are guilty of spending \$1.3 million over the maximum allowed under the Canada Elections Act, yet they still tried to hit up taxpayers for \$800,000. The upshot? They now have to pay back \$230,000.

The timing on this is very interesting. They were suspected of committing the in and out fraud with their friends from RMG, so now they are trying to sweep this embarrassing matter under the rug.

In light of their guilty plea, will they finally co-operate with Elections Canada to shed some light on what happened in Quebec last spring?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a question of a long-standing administrative dispute with Elections Canada regarding the issue of whether certain expenses should be counted as local expenses or national expenses. The Conservative Party of Canada obeys the same rules as everyone else. We acted in accordance with the interpretation of the law at that time. In that regard, Conservative candidates spent Conservative funds on Conservative advertising.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this was not an administrative dispute. The Conservatives have to pay \$230,000 because they are guilty of breaking the Elections Act and of having filed false reports in order to get more money out of Canadian taxpayers' pockets.

The in and out system used in that election is strangely similar to what happened in the province of Quebec last spring with another in and out scheme.

Oral Questions

Thousands of dollars in mysterious payments were made to RMG in several ridings in Quebec. What was that money for? Where did it come from? Where did it go? Why? The defeated Conservative candidates do not know. Neither do we. Will the Conservatives' Quebec lieutenant finally enlighten us and tell us what happened?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the article to which the hon. member referred is wrong regarding this particular issue. Conservative candidates spent Conservative funds on Conservative advertising. We followed all the rules based on the interpretation of the day and this administrative dispute has now been resolved.

• (1435)

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is only one party in this House that has been busted for electoral fraud. The Conservatives tried to bilk the taxpayers out of \$800,000 with their dodgy election filings in 2006. They were busted and forced to cop a plea and after years of stalling justice, they have had to pay the taxpayers \$230,000.

Canadians are looking for a bit of contrition, just like in this robo fraud scandal. Now that the investigation is widening, will the Conservatives stop playing games and come clean about their role in interfering with the rights of Canadians to vote?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before continuing these baseless smears, those members should prove that their own callers are not behind these reports. These exaggerated allegations by the member demean millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election. The opposition, in fact, paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls. We believe they are the source of these reports.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary sure is a trooper. He will read whatever lines the PMO gives him. However, when it comes to robo fraud, his attacks are about as effective as the black knight from the Monty Python sketch. This would be funny if it were not so serious. We are talking about an investigation into electoral fraud in Nipissing—Timiskaming, Kingston, Guelph, and Thunder Bay.

Does he not understand that his exaggerated prevarications demean the millions of Canadian people who cast legitimate votes in the last election?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not a joke. The member is making exaggerated allegations for which he has absolutely no evidence. These are unsubstantiated smears being made by the member, and these exaggerated allegations do, in fact, demean millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election.

Before continuing these baseless smears, the opposition should prove that its own callers are not behind these reports.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are the only ones under investigation. They are the only ones who have pleaded guilty to electoral fraud. The in and out scheme is further proof that Elections Canada needs to be given the authority to demand all the documents it needs for its investigations.

If Elections Canada had had such authority in 2006, the Conservatives would have been forced to admit their guilt in the in and out scandal much sooner. The Conservatives were indeed guilty.

Are they going to support our motion to give more power to Elections Canada in order to start restoring a bit a confidence in our democratic system?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservative candidates spent Conservative money on Conservative ads. There was an administrative dispute between the party and Elections Canada in terms of who was responsible for the expenses. Were they local or national expenses? The matter has now been resolved fairly.

[English]

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Chief Electoral Officer says that using external auditors to conduct compliance audits, as the Conservatives want, would increase costs for political parties and there is still no guarantee it is even doable. However, the Chief Electoral Officer believes his preferred option would “substantially enhance transparency and accountability”.

We in the NDP support enhanced transparency and accountability. Why do the Conservatives not?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we support transparency. We have indicated to Elections Canada that we will assist it and provide any documents it is requesting.

Let us be clear. The opposition has undertaken exaggerated allegations in the House that demean millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election. We know that the opposition paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls. Before those members continue these baseless smears, they should prove their own callers are not behind these reports.

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HEALTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to drug shortages, the Conservatives are failing to provide transparency. Canadians deserve better.

Oral Questions

We have a drug shortage crisis and hospitals still do not have a clear picture of what is going on. The drug manufacturer, Sandoz, will not say which drugs are in short supply, and all we hear from the minister is “Don't worry”. Well, patients are worried. Surgeries are being cancelled and intensive care is being compromised.

What immediate action is the minister taking to alleviate this crisis?

• (1440)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been working around the clock to provide support to the provinces and the territories as we are keenly aware of how important this is to families and friends.

I want to be very clear that the shortage has been created largely by the decision of the provinces and territories to pick a sole source supplier, and that supplier cannot provide the drugs now. As health minister, I am taking action to help the provinces and territories address this. I have provided to them a list of drug companies in Canada that are already approved to make the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, copping out and blaming the provinces and the territories just does not cut it. Why did the government not step in sooner if it understood what was going on? They should not be relying on sole suppliers and hoping for the best. What we need is mandatory reporting and timely follow-up, something the government has not done.

The minister is sitting on her hands and leaving Canadians in critical need. Regrettably, this is another example of the minister siding with industry rather than with patients. Why will the minister not take responsibility? Will she act now to ensure mandatory reporting and call an investigation into the shortages?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure Canadians that we are working on this 24/7. When it comes to the approval, it is in our collective interest to resolve this shortage. Industry and professional health care associations must be responsible and continue to work on measures beyond information sharing so that they can create stability in their supply chain and prevent drug shortages.

My department is helping the provinces and the territories by fast-tracking approvals without compromising our high standards of safety and efficacy.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, shifting the blame to others is the only thing this government is capable of.

The Conservatives claim that everything is under control, that they are going to expedite the process for importing drugs. The problem is that they have not even identified alternative drugs. They are making things up as they go along. At best, the process will take weeks.

In the meantime, in the Outaouais alone, more than 60 surgeries have been cancelled. Patients are paying the price for the Conservatives' inaction. This is completely unacceptable.

Where is the plan to guarantee the quality of the drugs manufactured here and to avoid future shortfalls?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very disappointed with Sandoz. It should not have withheld information from the provinces and the territories for as long as it did, which has made the situation worse. It is responsible for managing the safe supply of its products in Canada and for taking steps to prevent supply interruptions that could lead to shortages.

Again I will say that we are doing everything we can to assist the provinces and the territories in addressing this matter.

* * *

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin disclosed that the Conservative Party manages voter lists centrally, meaning perpetrators of this election fraud needed more than local access in order to misdirect voters to the wrong polls in ridings across the country.

We have said all along there is no way a rogue Conservative partisan could have managed such a sophisticated task on his own. This implies some form of central coordination of information and locations.

Will the Conservative Party drop its victimized pretence and give Elections Canada its voter software, which will disclose who, when and how these calls were made right across Canada?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has indicated many times in this House, which is why this question surprises me, we are assisting Elections Canada and we will continue to do so.

The exaggerated allegations made by the member opposite demean the millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election. The opposition has paid millions to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls. Before those members continue these baseless smears, they should prove their own callers are not in fact behind these reports.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the evidence is starting to come in in Lac-Saint-Louis. Last week I was contacted by a voter who told me she received two calls during the election campaign. The first call was a live call asking her if she was going to vote Conservative. She replied she would not. Then close to election day she received a robocall telling her that her polling station had changed.

I would like to know how the Prime Minister would explain this strange coincidence. Also, how would he explain it given the fact that there were no Liberal robocalls in Lac-Saint-Louis during the election campaign?

• (1445)

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again in this regard we are fully assisting Elections Canada. We will provide Elections Canada with any documents that it would like to see in this regard.

What we do know, and we have no evidence on this at all as the opposition has not been forthcoming, is that they have paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of calls. Before those members continue these baseless smears, they should prove that their own callers were in fact not behind these reports.

These—

Hon. Ralph Goodale: You have no evidence.

Mr. Brian Masse: You just said you had no evidence.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Speaker, I can hear them as well.

Let us be clear. The exaggerated allegations coming from the members opposite demean the millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election.

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to media reports, Peggy Walsh Craig of Nipissing received a phone call during the 2011 election campaign asking her if she intended to vote Conservative, to which she said no. She received a second call just prior to election day claiming to be from Elections Canada to tell her that her polling station had moved.

The Conservative MP from Nipissing won only by 18 votes.

Can the Prime Minister categorically tell Ms. Walsh Craig and other voters in her riding that no one associated with his party had anything to do—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is right. We do have an outstanding new member of Parliament for Nipissing—Timiskaming who was democratically elected by the voters of that riding.

What I can say categorically is that the exaggerated allegations by the member opposite and her party demean the millions of voters who cast legitimate votes in the last election, including those in Nipissing—Timiskaming.

The opposition paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls. Before those members continue these baseless smears, they should prove their own callers are in fact not behind these reports.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a budget is all about choices.

For the NDP, the choice is clear: we must choose to help families. The Conservatives would rather deceive families by hiding their intentions. As the Premier of Ontario said, they are playing a shell game with taxpayers' money and making the provinces shoulder the burden of the federal deficit.

Why are the Conservatives making the provinces pay the price for their irresponsible cuts? Why must families always pay for the Conservatives' mistakes?

[English]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only irresponsible choices in this House have been that the NDP has voted against every policy we put forward to reduce taxes for Canadians.

It is rather ludicrous that the member would stand up and suggest that Ontario is not getting its fair share. In fact, it is getting 77% more federal transfers than it did under the old Liberal government.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): That was a nice try by the minister, Mr. Speaker. The government was forced to do that with agreements with the previous government.

Since May 2, the government has been making reckless cuts. The plans include cutting \$33 million from food inspectors, \$29 million from transportation safety, a 43% cut to the Environmental Assessment Agency. The Conservatives gut programs that protect Canadians to spend billions on flawed F-35s and their expensive prison agenda.

Why are the Conservatives so irresponsible? Why will they not put families first for a change?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Speaking of irresponsible, Mr. Speaker, it was very irresponsible of the NDP to vote against the last two budgets when we put in place policies that reduced costs for families, that increased transfers to provinces.

The average family of four has \$3,100 more dollars in its pocket than it did when this party came to government. That is important to Canadians. So is the fact that more than 610,000 Canadians are working now who were not working at the end of the recession.

* * *

• (1450)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, and you voted against veterans. Last month—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I never voted against veterans. I have had to remind several members to address comments through the Chair. I hope they will take my urging seriously.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe has the floor and I would ask her to address her comments through the Chair.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, those members voted against veterans.

Last month, EDM closed up shop and drove hundreds of good Canadian jobs to Indiana. Those workers still have not received their records of employment and they cannot apply for EI. They were promised three weeks ago and still absolutely nothing. Of course, because of cuts to Service Canada, it could be months before they and their families ever see a penny from EI.

Why did the Conservatives raise billions on corporate tax giveaways instead of supporting out-of-work Canadians and the services that they need?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Service Canada is working to ensure that those who have been laid off through no fault of their own do get access to the benefits to which they are entitled just as quickly as possible.

When it comes to supporting workers, our government has delivered. Through our economic action plan, we offered a wide range of supports, such as extending the targeted initiative for older workers. The NDP voted against it. We also provided unprecedented funding for training through the provinces and territories to help those who had lost their jobs to get skills for the new jobs of today and tomorrow. What did the NDP do? Those members voted against it. Why do they keep voting against workers?

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only is the minister cutting employment insurance services, but she is also closing youth employment centres when the youth unemployment rate is 14%, twice that of the general population. The minister says that it is not an issue and that young people will have access to these services online. However, that will only happen if Service Canada has no further technical problems. The Conservatives should be helping young workers, not making things harder for them.

Why cut services and make things more difficult for young people looking for work?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's priority is economic growth and job creation, and that is what we are focusing on. According to surveys, young Canadians prefer to access information online. For that reason, we have invested in the Youth Canada website, where they can find all the information they want. They can still go to a Service Canada office if they want to be served in person.

[English]

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that Canada's long-term competitiveness depends on supporting businesses that innovate and create jobs and economic growth.

Yesterday the Minister of State for Science and Technology gave a speech to the Economic Club of Canada that highlighted the important role the National Research Council must play in Canadian innovation. Could the Minister of State of Science and Technology please update the House on how this 100-year-old institution is being brought into the 21st century?

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government wants to ensure that the National Research Council's next century is even more successful than the last. We are changing and taking steps so that the National Research—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of State has the floor.

Hon. Gary Goodyear: Let me try to share some good news again with the House, Mr. Speaker.

We are taking steps to ensure that the National Research Council's next century is even more successful than its last. We are changing it to be more responsive to industry so we can create even more jobs, better jobs and grow this economy for Canadians even more than we have.

We will continue to make key investments—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we are consulting Canadians about cuts to old age security. Elderly women are particularly worried, and justifiably so. Single women over 65 are Canada's poorest citizens: 46% of them live in poverty. With International Women's Day approaching, I urge the government not to make things even worse for them.

Will the Conservatives finally tell us exactly what cuts they have in store for the old age security program?

● (1455)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we plan to do, exactly, is to protect the old age security program, not only for today's seniors, but also for future generations.

The people she mentioned have nothing to worry about. Nobody who is currently receiving old age security will lose a single penny. Even people nearing retirement will not lose a penny. Younger people will have plenty of time to modify their retirement plans.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the OECD pension team says that OAS is sustainable for future generations and the Parliamentary Budget Officer agrees. Yet the Prime Minister still wants to pull the plug on Canadians who want to retire at the age of 65.

What are the real reasons the government wants to make Canadians work until 67? Is it to fund more corporate tax cuts or is to cover for the cuts to the services that Canadians need?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the real facts are that we have an aging population that is living longer. Right now, there are four workers paying income taxes that support OAS for every one retiree. Soon there will only be two people in the workforce for every retiree and the cost of OAS will triple. That is not sustainable. Our goal is to ensure that the program is sustainable not just today but for future generations.

Inaction is not an option. We must move to protect old age security for all Canadians.

* * *

*[Translation]***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Conservatives voted against our motion to spare veterans from the upcoming budget cuts. The Conservatives claim to support our troops, but they abandon veterans the first chance they get.

The minister says that services will not be affected. Some 1,800 jobs will be cut at Veterans Affairs Canada and 90% of its budget goes directly to services for veterans. Employees are needed to meet the needs of veterans and to administer programs. What dream world is the Minister of Veterans Affairs living in to think that cutting the budget by 10% will not affect services?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only party in the House that is living in a dream world is the NDP. I do not have enough fingers to count the number of times NDP MPs have voted against veterans.

The thing that gets me is that the New Democrats are misleading our veterans. The NDP wants to maintain the rampant bureaucracy. It wants to maintain the costs and maintain the red tape.

We are committed to maintaining benefits and cutting red tape. Against the advice of the NDP, we are going to provide our veterans with the unprecedented level of service we have been providing them for the past six years.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Harold Leduc is an honoured and well-decorated veteran who now serves on the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. Somebody on that appeal board did a drive-by smear and breached his privacy. In fact, he has raised this with the minister and myself. He has written a letter to the Prime Minister, saying:

I implore you Mr. Prime Minister, to show that the harm from these privacy breaches is taken seriously. Please stop the abuse, investigate the disrespect and fix the human damage before another disabled Veteran is harmed or takes their life.

Under section 42 of the VRAB Act, the minister can investigate. Will the Prime Minister tell his Minister of Veterans Affairs to investigate this serious breach of an honoured veteran in Harold Leduc?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, any breach of privacy is totally unacceptable. That is why this government has posed a 10-point action plan.

One other thing I can say is the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore has voted consistently, not against the veterans, but against the military, their families and even against farming in his own riding.

We will continue to provide our veterans with the services they deserve and the tribunal will continue to deliver its service to the veterans.

* * *

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is regarding the maritime rescue sub-centre's closure in both St. John's and Quebec. I would like the minister to stay away from the talking points for just one moment because new information has come to light. The information is that none of the old coordinators are going to Halifax from St. John's. We now know that the Conservatives have agreed to hire new coordinators with less experience and less qualifications.

Within his talking points, could he tell us if this is true and if safety is not being compromised, why are they hiring people less—

● (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, safety will not be compromised and the safety of our mariners is of the utmost importance. All people in the sub-centre in St. John's were given the opportunity to transfer if they so wished. Obviously some of them did not want to go.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the minister is repeating his robo-answer, I will address the question to all my Conservative colleagues.

By closing the rescue centres in St. John's and Quebec City, by lowering qualifications, by not respecting the French language, the government will not save a cent. It will overload the centres in Trenton and Halifax and, above all, put lives in danger on the St. Lawrence River, in the gulf and on the Atlantic Ocean.

Oral Questions

Do not let this happen. Do not remain passive. Lives are at risk. They will be on the conscience of the Conservatives.

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was an incredible statement, totally inaccurate, and not the truth at all. We will not compromise safety in any way, shape, or form, and certainly language is of the highest priority. The member is totally wrong.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have legitimate concerns about what Ottawa is negotiating away to Europe. Canada's trade relationship with Europe is vital, but the Conservative capitulation means the cost of medication will skyrocket, manufacturing jobs will be lost and even cities and towns will lose their rights. Industry is concerned, cities are concerned, towns are concerned and Canadian families are concerned.

Why the secrecy? When will the Conservatives table the European trade agreement so all Canadians can see the results of their actions?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting that we know the NDP members are ideologically opposed to trade. They have never supported a free trade agreement in the House, yet this time they are opposed to a trade agreement that is not negotiated yet. Perhaps we have ideology gone mad here. I am not quite sure what it is. However, after the agreement is negotiated, maybe they would have an opinion.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats support trade deals that create jobs in our communities, not ones that sell out Canadian families.

Cities like Toronto are raising flags over the backroom trade talks with Europe. Last night, an overwhelming majority of Toronto city council members said no to CETA and demanded an exemption from the deal. They said that the deal would handcuff their ability to create local jobs and local economic development.

Will the government respect cities like Toronto with their request to opt out?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am waiting for the NDP to name a trade agreement that it has supported, but we will move on to the rest of his question.

The reality is the Minister of International Trade met with the association of Canadian municipalities. It supports the trade agreement. We have met with the provinces and the territories. They support the trade agreement. There is nothing in the trade agreement that prevents any governments from addressing local needs and providing support to local businesses through the use of measures such as grants, loans or fiscal incentives.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned of media reports that the Ulema Council of 150 leading Muslim clerics in Afghanistan have written a code of conduct that may restrict the rights of women in that country.

Would the Minister for Status of Women please inform this House on our government's position with regard to those reports?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is very concerned by such reports. Afghanistan must uphold the provisions of Afghanistan's constitution, which clearly establishes equal rights between men and women, and respect its obligation under international law.

On the eve of International Women's Day, all of us in this House condemn this potential reversal of Afghan women's rights.

* * *

● (1505)

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, *The Globe and Mail* calls for an end to muzzling scientists.

BBC News has let the world know that Canadian government scientists do not have free speech.

The prestigious international journal *Nature* states that "it is time for the Canadian government to set its scientists free".

What is more harmful to Canada, hurting our international reputation like this or letting a reporter pick up the phone and talk to a scientist about salmon or the last ice age?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can be proud of the scientists who work at Environment Canada and departments across our government and the work that they present in journals and studies and in the media at large.

The reputation of *Nature*, as a pre-eminent scientific journal, is regularly enhanced by the fine work of our scientists carried in its pages.

Points of Order

[Translation]

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are repeat offenders. Once again, they are doing business with a Chinese company instead of giving contracts to Canadian businesses. The first contract was for maple leaf pins; this one is for Diamond Jubilee pins. Made in China. Really?

They had a golden opportunity to help a troubled economic sector, but they did not. Last year, 10,000 jobs were eliminated in Quebec's manufacturing sector. In the past 10 years, 150,000 jobs have been lost. Why not give a contract to a—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government does billions of dollars worth of business with small and medium-sized enterprises across Canada. In fact, we have reached a 40% target. We are doing business with literally thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises across this country, including in Quebec. Those are generating jobs and growth throughout the economy.

* * *

AIR CANADA

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the union representing Air Canada baggage handlers and machinists, IAMAW, served a 72 hour notice to strike to Air Canada. The strike could take place at 12:01 a.m. on Monday morning, March 12.

Air Canada plays such a vital role in the Canadian economy. Over 1 million passengers could be affected by a work stoppage over the March break. Would the Minister of Labour please give the House an update on the status of labour negotiations at Air Canada?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Don Valley West for his timely question. Nobody from the other side of the House has taken the initiative to ask me the same question today when something so important that can have an effect on the economy and on Canadian families is facing us.

I can tell members our government is very concerned about the matter. This is a high-peak travel time, especially for hard-working Canadian families during the March break. However, we do encourage both parties to step back from the breach, go back to the table, find their way around a work stoppage and restore confidence of the travelling public.

* * *

SPORTS

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are learning more about the dangers of concussions. However, all the government has managed to do is throw millions at a mobile app that already exists. Yesterday, the Government of Ontario introduced a concussion strategy. British Columbia thinks it is important, too. So does Nova Scotia.

It has been one year since I introduced a comprehensive plan. When will the Conservatives get in the game and help prevent devastating injuries?

Hon. Bal Gosal (Minister of State (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to keeping our kids and athletes safe. Our government will continue to promote safe sport involvement for all participants.

Recently, I was pleased to announce funding that will help reduce concussions and brain injuries and improve return-to-play decision making for children and youth playing team sports.

* * *

[Translation]

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the robocall scandal, the Conservatives denied their involvement with their hands on their hearts, yet they did not condemn this serious breach of democracy. Then, when new information was revealed in this regard, they claimed that it was an isolated incident and dismissed a young man, just 23 years old. Since then, the Conservatives have been launching unfounded attacks on everything that moves and are refusing to grant the Chief Electoral Officer greater power to conduct audits.

In light of the over 31,000 complaints, the petition signed by 41,000 people and the demonstrations that are being held across the country, does the Prime Minister not think it is time to call for an independent public inquiry, as the Bloc Québécois has been requesting since February 27?

● (1510)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these false allegations are an insult to the millions of people who voted in a legitimate and democratic manner during the last election. The opposition paid millions of dollars to make hundreds of thousands of phone calls to voters during the election. It is up to them to explain what happened with these calls. If not, they will have to provide evidence to support their false allegations.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during a question, the member for Timmins—James Bay used the term “exaggerated prevarications”. I believe that term is unparliamentary and I would ask that he withdraw that remark.

The Speaker: I will take a look at the blues and come back to the House. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is responding.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the word “prevaricate” means to delay and to deny. I think it is a fairly common expression that would actually indicate what has been happening under the government. When we have asked straightforward questions, we have seen an exaggerated element of prevarication. I have a dictionary. I will photocopy the page and give it to the hon. member. It will help him.

The Speaker: I would appreciate a copy of the definition myself so I can make a determination.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports.

The first is a report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, respecting its participation at the meeting of the Standing Committee of Secretaries of Delegation, held in Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal from April 1 to 2 in 2011.

The other is a report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, respecting its participation in the Visit of the Science and Technology Committee, held in Berlin and Munich, Germany from May 9 to 13, 2011.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports of the Canadian Delegation of the Canada–United States Interparliamentary Group respecting its participation in the following meetings: the 65th annual meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference, held in Memphis, Tennessee, July 16 to 20, 2011; the Council of State Governments–WEST 64th annual meeting, held in Honolulu, Hawaii, July 30 to August 2, 2011; the 2011 Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures, held in San Antonio, Texas, August 8 to 11, 2011; the Canada–American Border Trade Alliance Conference, held in Washington, D.C., October 2 to 4, 2011; and the National Conference of the Council of State Governments, held in Bellevue, Washington, October 19 to 23, 2011.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts.

•(1515)

[*English*]

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, entitled Supplementary Estimates (C) 2011-2012.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, entitled Main Estimates 2012-2013.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, in relation to Supplementary Estimates (C) 2011-2012.

FINANCE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I move that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Finance, presented to the House on Wednesday, December 14, 2011, be concurred in.

I will be splitting my time with the fine, eloquent hon. member of Parliament for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

We have heard over the last few months how the Conservatives have characterized their government. This is the first report of the finance committee that comes from the so-called stable majority government. If Tommy Douglas were still in the House, he would say that the government sure smells like a stable.

It is true that when we look at the economic industries of the last few months, since the government's re-election on May 2, we can see that the report does not refer to what the reality is on the ground for the vast majority of Canadian families.

I will take much of my time, before I turn it over to my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, to speak exactly to what has happened to Canadian families under the Conservative government?

I want to reference a few key statistics, which we do not always have the time in question period to raise but on which we would love to have a response from the government. The first two are related to trade statistics. The government has the worst merchandise trade deficit in Canadian history. It also has the worst deficit in current account of balance of payments in this nation's history. That is what the government has managed to create after six years. Now what does that mean?

First, what we have seen is a complete erosion of our manufacturing sector. What we have seen is a loss of 400,000 good family sustaining manufacturing jobs. We have seen all of that, which certainly explains the record merchandise trade deficit.

Routine Proceedings

The government would respond that we are shipping raw resources out of the country and that is making up for it. The reality is that, when we look at the current account deficit on balance of payments, the worst ever under the government, we see that, even with the shipping out of raw logs, raw minerals and raw bitumen, the government has simply put manufacturing jobs, the good quality jobs that we used to enjoy in this economy, in jeopardy through what can only be described as very foolish policies. The fifth report does not reflect that reality.

I will now talk about the quality of jobs, which is also not reflected in the majority report presented by the finance committee. When we look at the quality of jobs, we see that most of the jobs created under the Conservative government are part-time or temporary, very precarious jobs. We are talking about Canadian families that are struggling to make ends meet, trying to hold together a couple of part-time jobs, if they can, and trying to go from temporary contract to temporary contract. The quality of jobs under the present government is very clearly failing. As I mentioned earlier, 400,000 lost manufacturing jobs are a stain on the record of the government, which will go down for generations.

I will now talk about the quantity of jobs. The Conservatives love to stand in the House and throw out these figures on job creation under their government. Statistic Canada tells a completely different story because, rather than just inventing statistics out of its gut, it actually tracks and produces the real stats of what is happening in the Canadian economy.

Since May 2008 through to the fall, which I will get back to a moment, we actually saw the job creation record of the government being a scant 200,000 jobs. The problem is that the labour force over that same time grew not by 200,000 or 300,000 or 400,000 but by 450,000 jobs. What that means for the average Canadian is that the government produced 200,000 jobs when 450,000 were needed just to tread water, just to stand still.

There again we see a real failure of the government. It is a quarter of a million jobs short, even before we hit the fall. What happened in the fall? The New Democrats certainly know because we are in touch with our constituents and with our communities. Many MPs from our side of the House, as well as Conservatives, have seen factory closures in their ridings.

What we have seen is the loss of 60,000 full-time jobs, 60,000 families have lost their breadwinner, 60,000 times workers got that feeling in their gut, having to go home and tell their family that maybe the kids will not be able to go to summer camp this year, that the family will need to rein in their expenses and maybe that they will not be able to keep their home. That happened 60,000 times under the government in just the span of the last few months.

• (1520)

I will now talk about salaries. In the last year, the average Canadian family has lost 2% of its real income. Families are struggling to make ends meet with less and less under the government. Any jobs that the Conservatives created pay \$10,000 a year less than the jobs that were lost. They have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs and have made them up with part-time and temporary jobs that pay \$10,000 a year less.

I will now go to the final category, which is how families are faring under the Conservatives. As New Democrats know, because we are in touch with our constituents, the average Canadian family is now struggling under the greatest debt load in our nation's history. Families are struggling to keep their head above water, struggling to pay the expenses, all because the government simply does not know how to manage the economy.

At the same time, we have also seen record levels of income inequality that take us back to the years of the Great Depression. We are now seeing a small minority of Canadians earning most of the real income in this country. Those are shocking statistics but those are realities. That is what many Canadians told the finance committee and talked about in the prebudgetary hearings that were held across this country. That is not reflected in the majority report. This is a fundamental problem when we have Conservatives on the committee who simply will not recognize the economic reality of so many Canadian families.

How have the Conservatives decided to proceed? We get a sense of this in the fifth report but even more so when we look at the main estimates that we have been talking about over the last few days, and the issues and questions that MPs from the NDP have been raising in the House, responding to our constituents' needs and to what our constituents have been telling us. They have been saying that they do not believe the government is on the right track at all when it wants to spend billions of dollars on untendered jet fighters that have serious flaws and problems.

The F-35s were supposed to cost \$9 billion. That escalated to \$15 billion or \$16 billion, then \$20 billion and now more than \$30 billion. As most members know, no one on that side of the House actually knows what the total cost of the F-35s will be. The government is talking about \$30 billion and potentially \$40 billion. On this side of the House, we are saying that we need to start anew. If we want to replace the CF-18s, we need to re-tender it at a fixed price and ensure that any costing that comes out of the federal government is held rigidly in check.

The government has also put forward a very costly prisons agenda. That has been evaluated but no one on the Conservative side has been able to say with any certainty how much it would cost. We have had independent evaluations done that show the total amount would be close to \$19 billion. These are not the priorities of Canadian families that are struggling under record debt load and are looking for a break. They are looking for a government that cares about them, is willing to invest in job creation, is willing to invest in services to help those families and is willing to put forward the kinds of priorities that are fundamental Canadian values that we all share.

We do not see those priorities reflected at all in the majority report. From the recollection that we have from the Canadians who came forward to the finance committee and tell their stories, we do not even see that reflected in the report.

Routine Proceedings

What we do have, thankfully, is a minority report of the NDP that talks about reinforcing our pension system so that we can lift seniors out of poverty and have a solid pension system for years to come. In our minority report, we talk about job creation programs, putting in place a real priority for the federal government to create good, family sustaining jobs, the kind of jobs the Conservatives have lost over the last few years. In the minority report, we talk about reforming research and development, which has been a failed policy under the Conservatives. We talk about opening doors to post-secondary education. We talk about ensuring that Canadian consumers are protected from some of the financial practices that gouge them every day. We talk about empowering a green economy and investing in critical infrastructure. We talk about investing in children's early education and building that quality post-secondary education that leads to the jobs of tomorrow.

• (1525)

In short, the report talks about the kinds of priorities that Canadians really have, the kinds of values that we all share and the kind of direction in which Canadians want to see this country go.

In the minority report of the fifth report of the finance committee, we see what Canadians want: an economy that is built so that we can have the country we all desire, a country where everyone matters and nobody is left behind. That is the kind of economy Canadians want to build and that is what we presented in our minority report.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to rise on the issue of finance and trade in our country. It is an issue of great concern to all of us.

In the last year, we have faced the proposal for two pipelines that would ship raw bitumen out of this country to the United States and one potentially to China. This raw bitumen represents a piece of the supply chain where the upgrading would occur in another country, which would mean the loss of many jobs. The unions that work in this area estimate that the job loss would be severe. I think the loss to the Canadian economy could be calculated simply by the value of upgrading times the number of barrels sent out of the country per day.

What does my colleague think about the kind of energy strategy that we are employing in this country that would leave us as the hewers of very rough wood and leave the profits from our natural resources, our treasure house for our grandchildren, in the hands of other countries?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member for Western Arctic is from a resource region but he is always very conscious of the importance of ensuring that we are creating good quality jobs in Canada.

The reality is that we are seeing an erosion of those fundamental Canadian values of putting in place an economy that works for everyone, that builds on those strong communities and where we are not exporting raw bitumen and raw logs. The hewers of rough wood. We are not hewing any wood. We are cutting trees down and shipping raw logs and minerals overseas.

We heard earlier in question period the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île talk about the federal government buying buttons that were not even made in Canada. The Conservatives have done this repeatedly.

The problem is that the Conservatives just do not get how to build a modern economy. It shows from the loss of job figures and from the poor quality of jobs that they have managed to create, which are part-time or temporary. It also shows with the overwhelming erosion of Canadians' quality of life under the Conservative government.

I believe that 102 New Democrats sit in this House because Canadians want to see an economy that makes all Canadians prosper. That is why so many of us were elected and I am convinced that there will be many more of us in 2015.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his description of the last few years of so-called economic growth and the turmoil we have been through under the Conservative government.

I would like him to explain how, over the past few years, Canada has lost its reputation as a leader and innovator and why our industries are having a hard time innovating and being industrial leaders.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for LaSalle—Émard. She has a strong presence in the House of Commons when she talks about resources and development and how important it is for Canada to invest in tomorrow's economy.

As we all know, the truth is that we are at the bottom of the list of industrialized countries when it comes to public investment in research and development. We are in last place thanks to the Conservatives. We are in last place when it comes to developing patents internationally. Among industrialized countries, Canada is at the very bottom of the list. As for the number of PhDs produced in Canada, we are now second-last because of all the shutdowns and all the obstacles that students face.

That is a poor record, a record that led to the collapse of the Canadian economy on the Conservatives' watch. Clearly, they have failed utterly. Still, we know that more and more people across Canada are looking to New Democrats for leadership in creating tomorrow's green economy. And that is what we will provide.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster is a hard act to follow. I always learn a lot from what the member has to say. I think we all do.

This past weekend I had the pleasure, as did many of the residents of Halifax, the south shore, Bridgewater and Queen's County, of speaking with the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. He talked at some length with us on Friday night and again on Saturday afternoon about what he and the official opposition thought needed to be done with respect to the economy. He also talked at some length about the wrong-headed priorities of the Conservative government, which we found to be quite interesting.

He and I also took the opportunity to listen to a number of constituents. They talked about some of their concerns with respect to the economy and some of the things they were doing.

A business development officer from Lunenburg-Queens talked about how the economy of that region is changing and what people are doing to try to deal with those changes. He talked about what could be done at the federal level by the government, or by the NDP government that will be formed in 2015, in order to properly support the south shore of Nova Scotia and other communities throughout the country.

The people who attended those meetings were very comfortable with the information. They were inspired by the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. I thank him for that.

The report of the Standing Committee on Finance is on the prebudget consultations. As the member for Burnaby—New Westminster mentioned, there is a minority report attached to the report. The official opposition members on the committee did not think that the majority report properly reflected some concerns. Some ideas and concerns that witnesses had were not properly reflected in the report, and therefore, opposition members on the committee presented a minority report.

It was an important consultation. It gave Canadians an opportunity to bring to the attention of the committee important issues that affect the economy, their communities and families. There is no question that the consultation was a good thing.

We go through the prebudget consultation process to inform the House, the Minister of Finance and his officials about what Canadians think should be reflected in the budget. However, after that happened, the Prime Minister of this country, while on a sojourn across the water to attend a think-tank session in Davos, Switzerland, announced that a critical program for seniors in this country was going to be changed. I do not know what he was drinking at the time, pop or Chardonnay or whatever, but he mentioned it in passing.

● (1535)

The committee had already heard from senior citizens. The committee had already talked to seniors. While it is not reflected in the main report, in the minority report we talk about senior Canadians' concerns about income security and the lack thereof when they reach retirement. Without question it is a very serious concern. Had they known that the government was going to change the OAS, which preponderantly advantages low-income seniors, they would have been outraged. They would have lined up to attend the meetings that were held across the country.

What troubles me is this facade of having consultations. We ask Canadians to contribute to this chamber's understanding of their concerns and what we should do. Then the government unilaterally announces what it is going to do, and it is going to affect hundreds of thousands of seniors across the country.

Another example is health care. It is fundamental to the lives of Canadians and the success of many organizations and businesses in this country. The Minister of Finance unilaterally announced to the first ministers of the provinces what the funding formula is going to be over the next number of years. There was no discussion or consultation. There was no talk about how the government is going to work with the provinces in order to ensure that health care is not only maintained but restored, reinvigorated, modernized and properly funded. On an issue which is very important to the people

Routine Proceedings

of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, the people in all of Nova Scotia, indeed the people across the country, there was no attempt to have those discussions. The finance minister and the government unilaterally determined that they were going to make this funding change.

Once again, outside of the prebudget consultations, this information was announced and blindsided Canadians. Without question, it causes us some concern.

Another thing that happened this week was the government's attack on veterans. The member for Sackville—Eastern Shore moved a motion to ensure that the programs and services to support the women and men who represent, fight for and defend our country are not cut. The government did not support the motion.

I am sufficiently troubled about this that I would suggest the government and members of the House need some time to reflect. Therefore, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Call in the members.

● (1620)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 145*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boufin-Sweet
Brosseau
Caron

Andrews
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brisson
Byrne
Casey

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Cash	Charlton	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Chicoine	Chisholm	Hiebert	Hillyer
Choquette	Chow	Hoback	Hoepfner
Christopherson	Coderre	Holder	James
Comartin	Côté	Jean	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Cotler	Crowder	Kent	Kerr
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day	Lauzon	Lebel
Dion	Dionne Labelle	Leitch	Lemieux
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Leung	Lizon
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau	Lobb	Lukiwski
Easter	Eyking	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Footé	Freeman	MacKenzie	Mayes
Fry	Gameau	McColeman	McLeod
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain	Menegakis	Menzies
Giguère	Godin	Merrifield	Miller
Goodale	Gravelle	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia	Nicholson	Norlock
Hsu	Hughes	O'Connor	Obhrai
Jacob	Julian	Oda	Oliver
Kellway	Lamoureux	Opitz	Paradis
Lapointe	Larose	Payne	Penashue
Latendresse	Laverdière	Poilievre	Preston
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Raït	Rajotte
Leslie	Liu	Rathgeber	Reid
Mai	Marston	Rempel	Richards
Martin	Masse	Richardson	Rickford
Mathysen	May	Ritz	Saxton
McCallum	McGuinty	Schellenberger	Seeback
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud	Shea	Shibley
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Shory	Smith
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Sopuck	Sorenson
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Murray	Stanton	Storseth
Nantel	Nicholls	Strahl	Sweet
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti	Tilson	Toet
Papillon	Patry	Toews	Trost
Péclet	Perreault	Trottier	Truppe
Pilon	Plamondon	Tweed	Uppal
Quach	Rae	Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Rafferty	Ravignat	Van Loan	Wallace
Raynault	Regan	Warawa	Warkentin
Rousseau	Sandhu	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Scarpaleggia	Sellah	Sky Country)	
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-	Wilks	Wong
sor)		Woodworth	Yelich
Stewart	Stoffer	Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Sullivan	Thibeault	Zimmer— 149	
Toone	Tremblay		
Turmel	Valerioté— 120		

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finlay (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal

Nil

PAIRED**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that you will have noticed that the Minister of Citizenship took his seat after you began to put the question, and I would ask that his vote not be counted.

The Speaker: In fact, I did not notice if the hon. minister did that.

Does the Minister of Citizenship want to clarify when he took his seat?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I suppose I did arrive after the row was called. I apologize.

The Speaker: The Table will make sure that the votes reflect that fact.

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 Beauharnois—Salaberry, international trade; the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, seniors.

There are five minutes for questions and comments for the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

Routine Proceedings

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the presentation by the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour on the economic failures of the government, which are many. I know that he could not in 10 minutes fully spell out all of the failures we have seen: the job losses, including the manufacturing job losses. I would like him to speak, if he could for just a moment, on how the NDP addresses these kinds of economic considerations. The average Canadian family, struggling with a record debt load and lower income and poorer than ever before under the Conservatives, needs grounds for hope.

Could the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour spell out why it is so important, with the NDP moving forward to 2015, that we can move in and repair what has been a badly tattered economy under the Conservatives?

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about this. I think the reason that the member for Burnaby—New Westminster enjoyed my presentation was that I complimented him so many times about what a great job he was doing as the opposition finance critic.

Try as I might, I know that I would not be able to lay out in the same detail as that member could the steps that an NDP government would take from one end of this country to the other, but let me try.

We would certainly listen to the communities, like the ones in Nova Scotia that we met with this weekend, who talked about the need to support funding programs like community economic development, which the government will reduce through devastating cuts to ACOA. We would focus on reversing their priorities, which we believe are wrong, including the corporate tax cuts. We would reverse those so that we would have the revenue to be able to direct money to veterans, to seniors, to the people who desperately need support.

•(1625)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have witnessed under the current government is the climb in the manufacturing deficit from about \$16 billion in 2005 to \$80 billion now. We have lost value-added jobs as a result.

I would ask my colleague about what effect that has had on Canadians as we become more of a service and natural resource nation, versus one with good manufacturing jobs, which are actually being won in the United States, where there is a plan to rehabilitate manufacturing and where these jobs are actually on the rise and taking some of our Canadian jobs.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Speaker, the member is the international trade critic who stands here repeatedly and talks about the failures of the government and its ability to negotiate fair deals with other countries, deals that would properly protect Canadian workers, protect jobs, and enhance opportunities for our businesses and communities to prosper.

In response, the government has said that the NDP has never supported any trade deal. Our response is that we want to see trade deals that protect and encourage Canadians jobs and not devastate communities. That is what the member has been doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have heard this presentation. As the industry critic, I have some specific concerns about industry. The hon. member drew attention to the manufacturing sector, but many other sectors such as agriculture and forestry are having problems. One of the major problems is that our economy relies far too heavily on the exportation of our natural resources. This puts upward pressure on the dollar, a phenomenon known as the Dutch disease.

The government's lack of reaction to this very specific problem affects not only the manufacturing sector, but also a number of Canadian industrial sectors. Can my hon. colleague say a few words about that?

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his extremely important question, because in the past 20 years, and especially over the last six years under the current government, we have increasingly been moving back to the situation we faced in the 1950s and 1960s when we were very much hewers of wood and drawers of water. We were sending raw logs out of Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and other provinces, including Quebec, completely unprocessed. All of those jobs were going to Europe and the United States.

We are doing the same thing with raw bitumen. It is a problem that has to be addressed. Thank heavens that in 2015, there will be an NDP government to begin to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House do now proceed to the orders of the day.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Call in the members.

Routine Proceedings

● (1705)

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

(Division No. 146)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinoooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon
Lebel	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayer	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)

Wilks
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 149

Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Andrews	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brison
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeman
Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hsu	Hughes
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
Mai	Marston
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rae	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Sandhu	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Sellah
Sgor	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-)
Stoffer	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriotte — 117	

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion carried.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***SAFE STREETS AND COMMUNITIES ACT**

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the stage of consideration of Senate amendments to the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government orders on the day allotted to the consideration of the said stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

● (1710)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30 minute question period.

[English]

At this time, I would invite hon. members who wish to pose questions to the government to stand to indicate how much time the Chair will need to allot for questions. Members will also be reminded that for the purposes of this 30 minute question period, preference is given to opposition members who wish to pose questions.

The hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised by this motion. There should not be any reason why we should be surprised. It has happened 16 times since Parliament started. Since the May 2 election, this will be the 17th time.

It is a total abdication of the democratic responsibilities that the government should have, and every Government of Canada should have and has up until this point, to allow for meaningful democratic discussion and debate in the House. We are here for that. That is why it is called Parliament.

The government has never understood this. Since the Conservatives received a majority, they have run roughshod over that moral, democratic responsibility they have to the opposition parties and to Canadian citizens as a whole.

I understand the member will move another motion of this kind on Bill C-31. When will we see that one?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that question would have to be directed to the government House leader.

The hon. member says that he would like to have meaningful debate. Let him check *Hansard* from this afternoon. What was all that nonsense going on, a stalling by the NDP?

I would be hard-pressed to come up with any bill that has had as extensive an amount of debate as this one has had. Indeed, one of the major components of the bill is the part that goes after drug

traffickers. It has been over four years since that bill was introduced to Parliament. There have been hundreds of witnesses and hundreds of hours, days, months and years spent discussing this.

It is about time we give the people of Canada what they have asked for. They want this bill. They supported us. That is what we are delivering today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we continue with questions and comments, in light of the fact that there are many more members who wish to ask questions than the 30 minutes will allow, we will default to the normal 1 minute question and 1 minute response, as we have customarily done.

The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

● (1715)

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in a rather extraordinary moment here. The reason why we are having this debate and why it came back from the Senate was because the government did not listen to the advice of the member for Mount Royal and take the amendments in the House. It realized that it had made a mistake and when the bill went to the Senate, it then proceeded to adopt the amendments that came from the member for Mount Royal with respect to the issue of counterterrorism and state sovereignty.

The least the government could do would be to allow the member for Mount Royal an opportunity to speak to those issues, since he is the one who is responsible for the only amendments that have been accepted by the government with respect to the question of counterterrorism.

Would the minister agree to have the member be heard right now?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, this is wonderful news. I take it that the hon. member will support the bill when it comes to a vote.

I know at one point in time the Liberals supported the components with respect to drug traffickers. There are those who were cynical and who thought that the only reason they supported it in House was because they had a majority that could kill it in the Senate. Again, that would be a cynical point of view.

However, in as much as the hon. member has now said that they would have liked to have seen those amendments with respect to the anti-terrorism provisions of the bill, I take it as a sign that the Liberal Party will finally do what is right. The Liberal members will stand and support this important legislation. I want to thank them in advance for that. That is wonderful.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in the same predicament as the Liberal leader. This legislation cannot be passed from our point of view because there are so many egregious elements in it.

Most opposition members, certainly the Green Party and from what I hear the hon. member for Mount Royal and the Liberal Party, support the section relating to the proceeds of terrorism and the ability to go after people who commit terrorist attacks with civil suits seeking financial remedies. This process would have been made much simpler had the government been prepared to consider amendments when the hon. member for Mount Royal first moved them.

Government Orders

That said, I find it unfortunate that we are closing down debate once again on this bill. Would the hon. Minister of Justice reconsider and allow other sections of the bill to be reopened at this time?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I would be hard-pressed in all the years I have been here to come up with another piece of legislation that has had as much debate as Bill C-10 has had.

If we spent another four years debating this, would the member change her mind? Let us be honest. The day before yesterday the member said that people were criticizing the bill because more criminals might be on the streets. On another day members say that everybody is going to be locked up. Those members cannot make up their minds.

Ultimately, they should be supporting this legislation because it is the right thing to do. The legislation goes after drug traffickers, the people who are bringing heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine into this country. It sends out the message that that kind of behaviour is unacceptable. That is why the member and everyone else should support this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister is anxious to pass the bill because the government has a deadline to pass it within 100 days. There are at least 10 days to go so closure does not have to be invoked on the bill.

The government invoked closure at second reading. The government said that the House did not need to debate the bill further because it would get full debate in committee. Even the Mulroney governments of 1984 and 1993 with their huge majorities accepted amendments. However, not a single amendment proposed by the opposition to try and improve this legislation was accepted. This is the last opportunity to bring the amendments to the Canadian people.

Why is the government not prepared to allow this debate to take place?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said that he wants to debate this issue but if we check the record, about two hours ago the NDP wanted to adjourn the House. The NDP does not want to talk about it at all.

Let us be honest. Everybody is forthright here. If one member of the NDP were still around 100 years from now, that one person would be complaining about cracking down on crime in this country and complaining about cracking down on all the people we are going after. We are going after drug dealers. We are going after people who sexually exploit children. We are going after people in the child porn business. All we hear from those members is that they do not like the procedure, that they wanted to move an amendment.

Let us get on with it. Let us do the right thing for the people of this country.

• (1720)

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after a serious look at this legislation, I am able to enumerate some seven constitutionally suspect provisions. I want to know to what extent the Minister of Justice did due diligence before he tabled the bill in the House and got constitutional advice which told him that all of the provisions in all of these nine pieces of legislation were valid. Would he table that information in the House?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the hon. member, and I think he knows this, that all pieces of legislation that we table in Parliament receive due diligence to make sure that they pass the constitutional test with respect to the charter and, as we are under an obligation, the Canadian Bill of Rights which was introduced in the House by Mr. Diefenbaker. We are very careful with respect to all aspects of the Constitution to make sure that all elements of legislation will pass that test. I am completely confident that every single element in this bill is completely within constitutional jurisdiction.

It is our responsibility to take steps to better protect Canadians and that is what we are doing in this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I learned something when I got into politics. My first campaign was in 2000, and I have rubbed shoulders with many politicians. What they told me is that when we are elected as MPs, we become an MP for all the people. Of course we represent a certain political party and certain choices and ideologies that come from our convictions. However, once we are elected, we represent everyone. The same is true of the government. The government is led by the leader of the Conservative Party, but he is everyone's Prime Minister.

So, why is the minister doing something so undemocratic, once again, with yet another time allocation motion—the Conservatives are out to break a record—for instance, by disrespecting the Government of Quebec, which has been very clear about its requests concerning Bill C-10?

The Quebec justice minister has even said that this is a Canada he cannot identify with, and that he had no intention of paying for the additional costs associated with Bill C-10. Why does the minister want to shut down the debate?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I think I am missing the hon. member's point with respect to a majority within the House of Commons or indeed the Senate. We received a very clear mandate from the people of this country

One of the things we have done in the last four elections is put our crime justice agenda and our priority to stand up for victims of crime before the people of Canada. I for one am very grateful that as we made it clear to Canadians that this is what we stand for, what we want for this country, our mandate has continued to increase election after election.

Again, I thank the Canadian people for giving us this mandate. We will deliver on that mandate.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is what I have to say about the time allocation motion. At present, some amendments have been made to this bill. Canadians have been paying very close attention to this bill, no matter which way they lean. We are not talking about a bill that we are passing as is, but rather an amended bill. No matter which way they lean, Canadians want to know what impact these amendments will have. I think we need to take the time to discuss this.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, that is incorrect.

[*English*]

This bill has been before this Parliament for quite some time. I would suggest that the NDP always wants to talk about procedure. We want to talk about substance. We want to talk about what is in the bill.

The bill is very clear. It better protects victims of terrorism. It goes after people who are in the child pornography business. It goes after drug dealers. That is the substance of the bill. That is what I would hope hon. members of this House would concentrate on rather than filibustering, trying to adjourn the House, or using some other procedural tactic.

• (1725)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, legal scholars across this country and the Canadian Bar Association have very serious concerns about the constitutionality of many aspects of this bill.

The member for Mount Royal has asked the minister whether he will table the legal opinions with respect to its constitutionality. I am not sure we have an answer. I will ask the question again.

Will the minister please table the opinions with respect to the constitutionality of the provisions within Bill C-10?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the House that this legislation received the due diligence of the Department of Justice to make sure it complies with all aspects of the Constitution, including the Canadian Bill of Rights, going right back to the British North America Act to make sure that this is within federal jurisdiction.

I would say to the hon. member that I appreciate the individuals he referred to. I listen to a lot of people. I listen to scholars and lawyers. I listen to law enforcement agents and victims as well.

I was with Sheldon Kennedy in Toronto today. He was urging the passage of the bill because he himself has been a victim. I have heard from so many victims. They want to make sure that their thoughts and concerns are heard and are reflected in the legislation of this country. I have been only too happy to assure them that this is exactly what the bill does.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very dissatisfied with this gag order, the seventeenth of its kind. When the first iteration of Bill C-10 was introduced in the House of Commons, we debated it. Then the government wanted to move things along so quickly that very serious mistakes in this bill had to be corrected by the Senate at the last minute.

This government's lack of respect for Canadians and for the members of Parliament is unbelievable. Both sides of the House are here to debate bills and improve them. Obviously, the NDP is dissatisfied and, personally, I am angry about these gag orders. This Parliament is supposed to be democratic but such is no longer the case. The Conservatives need to change their behaviour.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said that he is upset. Very often I meet with victims groups and they are upset when they believe that their thoughts, concerns and priorities are not being met or heard. I have assured victims groups that they have elected a government that listens to them and that their concerns are a priority for this government.

We were very clear in the election. We did not say if there were procedural problems we would not proceed with their concerns. We never said that. Hon. members can say that they do not like the procedure, but these bills have been debated off and on for four years. They do the right thing by victims. I suggest to the hon. member that he do the right thing for victims today. He should join with us and support this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most of the members who are asking questions today did not hear any of that evidence. I did hear the evidence. I heard overwhelmingly from victims who stand up for this legislation.

What is interesting is that the only time this bill was time limited in committee was on a motion moved by the NDP critic. Clearly those members must have a different idea today than they did before.

I ask the minister, who stood up for victims during committee? What did the victims of crime overwhelmingly say about Bill C-10?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I have been very appreciative over the years that victims groups and individuals have come forward and have been so supportive of the legislation we have introduced in Parliament.

I remember when we were getting rid of the faint hope clause, a reporter asked me a valid question. She asked if we thought people would stop committing murder because they would not have the availability of an early parole date at 15 years. I said I had no idea what would possess somebody to commit premeditated murder but I knew it would reduce victimization. Victims would tell me that they were victimized all over again when the 15 years rolled around, and then 17 years, and 19 years. It is reducing victimization. That is what has been a priority for this government and it will continue to be a priority in the future.

Government Orders

• (1730)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could comment on the comments that were made by David Daubney, a former member of Parliament who sat in caucus with the minister in Mr. Mulroney's government. Mr. Daubney is a former director of the criminal law policy section at Justice Canada. Several days after terminating his career, Mr. Daubney said to the minister that he did not agree with this bill, that fear was at the basis of much of these measures, and he did not agree that it was constitutional.

For the third time, would the minister respond to the direct question: Will he table the evidence in the House of Commons today to substantiate that he has proof that this bill is constitutional?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear that the bill complies with all aspects of the Canadian Constitution, whether it be the charter, whether it be the Canadian Bill of Rights. Mr. Diefenbaker introduced that important piece of legislation in this chamber. I am completely confident that the bill meets all the constitutional requirements.

There will be those who disagree with what we are doing, but I take heart from all those who work on the front lines, people in law enforcement, ordinary Canadians and victims, who overwhelmingly say again and again, "You are on the right track. Keep it up. Do the right thing for us and for Canada".

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is odd. Earlier, I heard the hon. member saying that this bill would definitely have an impact on victims but that he did not really know if it would have an impact on criminals. I have a great deal of respect for victims, and I do not really think I have to say that, because it is so obvious. However, I am wondering why the hon. member would want to pass a bill when we do not know what effect it will have on criminals. That seems a bit illogical for a society that supports rehabilitation. I would like the hon. member to elaborate a bit on this.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. This will have an impact on criminals. There is no question about that. This will have a great effect on those individuals who think it is a good idea to bring drugs into Canada and people who like to get into the child porn business, because if they get charged under this piece of legislation, they are looking at jail time.

The hon. member asked what impact it would have on criminals. I hope it has a great impact. I hope it encourages people to stay away from that business and not get involved in those kinds of activities, because there are serious consequences for getting involved in those kinds of activities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues should know that when I first began practising law I dealt with compensation for victims of crime. I know a great deal about victims of crime.

First and foremost, they want the people who attacked them to be arrested. After that comes punishment. They want justice. But what

they want most of all is to end impunity for criminals, not to impose exemplary sentences. In that regard, I would point out that putting a rope in every inmate's cell is not necessarily what victims have called for.

The Minister of Justice informed us that these laws are constitutional. However, a few weeks ago we were advised of a legal decision indicating that the omnibus bill's provisions on firearms possession were considered cruel and unusual punishment. Is that what we can hope for from Bill C-10 over the next three years, that judges will dismantle it piece by piece?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may think it is cruel punishment to have somebody, who is part of organized crime, bringing in drugs, such as Ecstasy, to this country, which many times has the effect of killing people, and those individuals are only looking at a year or two years in jail. It is up to the courts and we provide the guidelines.

However, for people who sexually exploit children to be looking at jail time, the member may think that is cruel and unusual punishment.

I think I speak for most Canadians when I say that this is on the right track. The people who bring in Ecstasy for the purposes of killing people in this country should meet certain penalties, which is exactly what the bill delivers.

• (1735)

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice and people on that side of the House like to talk a lot about victims. In fact, they like to portray themselves as the only ones who do actually care about victims. We on this side of the House also actually care about victims.

Members of the government made a big deal of the fact that they created an ombudsman for victims. Would the minister very briefly tell us what recommendations from the ombudsman for victims they have implemented to show that they really do care about victims.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the whole Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime was created by this government. All the improvements that we have made to the victims fund, all the investments that we have made in that, are all in support of victims in this country.

The hon. member says that we like to talk about victims. The reason for that is that we stand up for victims in this country. We make their priority our priority. I am very proud to stand with a group of individuals who have made victims rights a priority. That is exactly what we will continue to do.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was very concerned when I heard the Minister of Justice make a comment earlier that he is tired of hearing from this side of the House when we have concerns with procedure in the House and that that side of the House prefers to deal with substance.

Government Orders

He seems to speaking at odds to his own leader, the Prime Minister of Canada, who only a month ago sat down with the first nations of Canada and agreed to move forward in a new partnership, nation to nation, a new way of procedure, and undertook that, from here on in, in all bills, all procedures and all initiatives by the Government of Canada, the Conservatives would not move forward unless they consulted in advance and accommodated the rights and interests of first nation peoples.

We have heard from the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and we have heard from many first nations complaining that this bill would simply incarcerate more first nations people who are already being prejudicially treated. What does the minister have to say in response to that?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the bill focuses on criminal activity.

I want to be very clear when I talk about the whole issue of procedure. What I get from the NDP members, on a day when we are discussing this very important legislation, is that they want to adjourn the House and go home. I guess I do have a few problems with that.

This bill is very important. I stood with Sheldon Kennedy, a man who had been victimized. I do not want to have to go back and tell him that the NDP members wanted to adjourn, that they did not want to talk about the bill today and that they wanted to go home. I find that completely unacceptable.

Yes, I do want to discuss these important pieces of legislation and that is exactly what we will do.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we constantly hear from the other side is how the legislation would deal with that poor person who may be growing a few marijuana plants in the basement and that this is prejudicial to him or her. Perhaps the minister could re-explain to the members on the opposite side of the House how this legislation targets those who traffic in drugs.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brampton West for all the support that he has given us on our crime legislation. I and everyone in the government are very appreciative. Contrary to what some of our critics would like to say about the bill, which is completely incorrect, the bill goes after drug traffickers.

• (1740)

Mr. Peter Julian: From Panama.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: You bet, from Panama. The people who bring drugs into this country. Those people who bring drugs into this country are looking at mandatory jail time. The bill goes after drug traffickers and we have been very careful.

I appreciate that some of our critics did not get a chance to read the bill but the bill talks about drug traffickers and that is what would do and that is why this country needs this strong legislation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must acknowledge that the Minister of Justice is an expert in hyperbole. Unfortunately, that does not make the legal principles of his bill any more palatable.

All committee members, including myself, looked at this huge bill. Once again, it has 109 pages of text and affects nine laws. A number of the clauses have never been examined by the House or by all members of the House.

The Conservatives claim, falsely to my mind, that it has been discussed for hours and hours. The only thing I can say to the House is that we have discussed the closure motions at length. I have never had to rise so often for such a reason for a large bill like this.

However, the adjournment motion may have been moved in response to the arrogance of a minister who strutted around the whole day celebrating in advance because his bill would finally pass today. It is not the minister—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. We have enough time for an answer.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the bill and its components have been before Parliament. It has been debated and it has been thoroughly analyzed. The hon. member says that she wants meaningful debate. How are we supposed to feel when we wanted to debate the bill and the government House leader then tells me that the NDP members want to adjourn the House. I am not making this up. This is what they did this afternoon. They asked to adjourn the House, to go home and to not discuss these issues.

What am I supposed to think? I am here for the victims of crime and I am telling them that we are moving forward on this. What am I supposed to tell them, that we are taking the day off because the NDP is in a snit about something and wants to adjourn the House? That is the question I have to ask the NDP members. Would they explain that, please? If they are so interested in debating these issues, why would they want to adjourn the House?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to our obligations as members of Parliament in relation to the Standing Orders. I have looked at this matter and, although we all took an oath to Her Majesty the Queen, it is well understood that our oath is not actually to Her Majesty as a person but to Her Majesty the Queen comprising our loyalty to the Constitution and the rule of law.

Since we first debated Bill C-10 in the House, we have now had a court ruling from the Ontario Superior Court in the case of *R. v. Smickle*. In that case, a judge of the Superior Court of Ontario made it very clear that the concerns of many members of opposition parties on this matter are not misplaced, in that the bill may well be unconstitutional. As such, I feel it is important, although novel, to rise on a point of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her intervention but I do not hear anything in there that is really a point of order. I think it is a matter of debate concerning the issue at hand.

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion before the House.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Call in the members.

• (1825)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 147)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Bateman	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon
Lebel	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb

Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Wilks	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 150

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bellavance
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brisson	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathyssen
May	McAllum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)

Private Members' Business

Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclét	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	Sullivan
Stewart	Toone
Stoffer	Trudeau
Thibeault	Valerioté — 122
Tremblay	
Turmel	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from February 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-293, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (vexatious complainants), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House shall now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-293 under private members' business.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 148*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Bélangier	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Casey
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Coderre	Cotler
Cuzner	Daniel

Davidson
Del Mastro
Dion
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Eyking
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Foote
Galipeau
Gameau
Glover
Goodale
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Pacetti
Payne
Poilievre
Rae
Rajotte
Regan
Rempel
Richardson
Ritz
Scarpaleggia
Seeback
Shea
Shory
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Trudeau
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Wilks
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 181

Dechert
Devolin
Dreeschen
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fry
Gallant
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hillyer
Hoepfner
Hsu
Jean
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Murray
Norlock
Obhrai
Opitz
Paradis
Penashue
Preston
Raitt
Rathgeber
Reid
Richards
Rickford
Saxton
Schellenberger
Sgro
Shiple
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-)
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Truppe
Uppal
Valerioté
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to)
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Angus
Aubin
Bellavance
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Caron
Charlton

Private Members' Business

Chicoine	Chisholm	Choquette	Chow
Choquette	Chow	Christopherson	Comartin
Christopherson	Comartin	Côté	Crowder
Côté	Crowder	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	Day	Dionne Labelle
Day	Dionne Labelle	Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau	Freeman
Dusseau	Freeman	Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Godin
Giguère	Godin	Gravelle	Groguhé
Gravelle	Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia	Hughes
Hassainia	Hughes	Jacob	Julian
Jacob	Julian	Kellway	Lapointe
Kellway	Lapointe	Larose	Latendresse
Larose	Latendresse	Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie	Liu
Leslie	Liu	Mai	Marston
Mai	Marston	Martin	Masse
Martin	Masse	Mathysen	Michaud
Mathysen	May	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Nantel	Nicholls
Mourani	Nantel	Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Patry	Péclet
Papillon	Patry	Perreault	Pilon
Péclet	Perreault	Plamondon	Quach
Pilon	Plamondon	Rafferty	Ravignat
Quach	Rafferty	Raynault	Rousseau
Ravignat	Raynault	Sandhu	Savoie
Rousseau	Sandhu	Sellah	Stewart
Savoie	Sellah	Stoffer	Sullivan
Stewart	Stoffer	Thibeault	Toone
Sullivan	Thibeault	Tremblay	Turmel— 90
Toone	Tremblay		
Turmel— 91			

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Consequently, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION ACT

The House resumed from March 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-312, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (democratic representation), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division at second reading of Bill C-312 under private members' business.

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 149*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bellavance
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Bélangier	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Casey
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Coderre	Cotler
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dion	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote	Fry
Galipeau	Gallant
Garneau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodale	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Hsu
James	Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr

NAYS

Members

Private Members' Business

Komarnicki
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Murray
Norlock
Obhrai
Opitz
Paradis
Penashue
Preston
Raitt
Rathgeber
Reid
Richards
Rickford
Saxton
Schellenberger
Sgro
Shiple
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Smith
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Truppe
Uppal
Valeriot
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukowski
MacKay (Central Nova)
May
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Pacetti
Payne
Poilievre
Rae
Rajotte
Regan
Rempel
Richardson
Ritz
Scarpaleggia
Seebach
Shea
Shory
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Trudeau
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 182

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

• (1840)

FINANCIAL LITERACY

The House resumed from March 5 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 269.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 150*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Welland)

Allison
Anders
Andrews
Armstrong
Aspin
Aubin
Bateman
Benoit
Bernier
Bezan
Blanchette-Lamothe
Block
Borg
Boulerice
Braid
Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calandra
Cannan
Caron
Casey
Charlton
Chisholm
Chong
Chow
Clarke
Coderre
Côté
Crowder
Daniel
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Del Mastro
Dion
Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra
Eyking
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Foote
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Giguère
Glover
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Grewal
Harper
Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Hughes
James
Julian
Kellway
Kent
Komarnicki
Lamoureux
Larose
Lauzon
Lebel
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Lemieux
Leung
Lizon
Lukowski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Merrifield
Miller

Ambler
Anderson
Angus
Ashfield
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bélangier
Benskin
Bevington
Blanchette
Blaney
Boivin
Boughen
Boutin-Sweet
Breitkreuz
Brosseau
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooze
Byrne
Calkins
Carmichael
Carrie
Cash
Chicoine
Chisu
Choquette
Christopherson
Clement
Comartin
Cotler
Cuzner
Davidson
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dechert
Devolin
Dionne Labelle
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dussault
Easter
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Freeman
Galipeau
Garneau
Genest-Jourdain
Gill
Godin
Goodale
Gosal
Gravelle
Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn
Hillyer
Hoepfner
Hsu
Jacob
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lapointe
Latendresse
Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leitch
Leslie
Liu
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Marston
Masse
May
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Menzies
Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)

Private Members' Business

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray	Nantel
Nicholls	Nicholson
Norlock	Nunez-Melo
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Opitz
Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Patry
Payne	Péclet
Penashue	Perreault
Pilon	Poilievre
Preston	Quach
Rae	Rafferty
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Rousseau	Sandhu
Savoie	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Sellah
Sgro	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Smith	
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stewart
Stoffer	Storseth
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Thibeault
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Toone
Tremblay	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Turnel
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Wilks	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer- — 269	

NAYS

Members

Mourani

Bellavance
Plamondon— 3

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

PORT OF QUÉBEC

The House resumed from March 6 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion M-271, under private members' business.

● (1900)

[English]

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

(Division No. 151)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bellavance
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brisson	Brousseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeman	Fry
Gameau	Garrison
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Stewart	Sullivan
Stoffer	Toone
Thibeault	Trudeau
Tremblay	Valeriote- — 122
Turnel	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Bateman	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon
Lebel	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Wilks	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 150

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

I wish to inform the House that because of the delay there will be no private members' business hour today. Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting.

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, health is a priority for the vast majority of Canadians. Year after year, survey after survey confirms that Canadians want to preserve their universal public health care system. But there is currently a looming threat to our public health system in the form of the trade agreement Canada is negotiating with the European Union. This ambitious agreement covers services, agriculture, intellectual property and much more. According to Canada's chief negotiator, this is an unprecedented agreement.

To protect our existing and future public health care services, Canada must insert clear reservations excluding these services from the agreement. Yet the government is refusing to tell us whether it will exclude Canada's public health care system. We also have reason to believe that some provinces will not be asking for the exclusions that are critical to preserving our public services. Moreover, the exclusion process requires provinces to add public services they wish to exclude to a negative list. Because each province is doing this on its own, the process is complex and chaotic and will create major differences between them.

On Monday, health experts came here to Ottawa to explain to us what Canada has to do to prevent a potential agreement from eroding our health care system. Michael McBane from the Canadian Health Coalition, Michèle Boisclair from the Association des infirmières du Québec and Marc-André Gagnon, a pharmaceutical researcher from Carleton University, agree that Canada must add reservations in order to exclude health from the agreement.

Those reservations have to clearly define what we mean by public health care services. What is more, according to these experts and a dozen or more other health care stakeholders, Canada and the provinces should make sure that the reservations protect future public health care. For example, if Canada wanted to have a universal drug insurance plan in future, the free trade agreement must not allow insurance companies or the governments we do business with to sue our government.

That is the risk we are facing with the free trade agreement currently being negotiated. According to experts from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the reservations in NAFTA, which was negotiated years earlier, do not protect our future public health care, and the member countries could dispute medical insurance coverage expansion.

We also believe that this agreement must be fully debated by the general public, by all members of Parliament in the House of Commons and in committees. We deplore the lack of transparency and democracy that the Conservative government is imposing in this case in particular, and also in a number of other cases.

Adjournment Proceedings

What we want are free trade agreements that encourage trade while respecting our public services, which are so important to Canadians. It is possible to encourage economic exchange without bargaining away our common resources, our health care system, the education of young people, and water, to name but a few of these services.

And so, this is what I am asking today: will this government commit to protecting our public health care system by putting it, as well as Canada's future health care services, on the list of exclusions?

● (1905)

[*English*]

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, our government's top priority is the economy. We have weathered the economic storm and the world has noticed. At every turn, we hear great excitement about Canada's resilience and what we offer is a stable business destination in these difficult times. This resilience is due in part to our ambitious pro-trade plan, the most ambitious of such plans in our nation's history.

Since taking office, we have taken action. So far, we have concluded free trade agreements in nine countries. Canadians can now sell their products, services and expertise in countries as diverse as Panama, Jordan and Switzerland at very competitive access terms. We are in negotiation with many more countries, including India and, of course, the countries of the European Union which is the focus of today.

Despite its current economic challenges, the EU remains the largest market in the world. I can say that the EU itself remains committed to a broad, ambitious trade agreement with Canada. The benefits for Canadian workers and their families are clear: a 20% boost in bilateral trade and a \$12 billion annual boost to Canada's economy. That is the equivalent of 80,000 new jobs or a \$1,000 increase to the average Canadian family income.

With 60% of our economy and one in five jobs dependent on trade, the message is clear. At a time of deep economic uncertainty, Canada needs this agreement to grow its economy and spark new jobs and prosperity. Our government believes that there is no better job creator than free and open trade, which is why we have been working shoulder to shoulder with our European partners to conclude an agreement this year that benefits Canada.

We are pleased with our progress so far in areas like goods, services, investments and government procurement. We are closing in on the last remaining issues to be resolved and developing paths forward on all of them. I can assure the member that our government will vigorously advance and defend Canada's interests at every turn.

A final agreement will directly benefit Canadian businesses, workers and families. Unfortunately, there are some who do not share this view, people using the same tired arguments that free trade will hollow out Canada's economy, drain its resources and erase its culture. We heard these arguments during the great Canada-U.S. free trade debates in the 1980s. None of these predictions have come true. What free trade did do was very beneficial to the Canadian economy. It created millions of Canadian jobs and gave our businesses the kind

of access to the American marketplace that other countries only dream about.

Despite those facts, some continue to resurrect the same arguments. The NDP has raised the issue of our public health care system in the context of the Canada-EU trade negotiations. An agreement with the European Union would exclude all social services, including health care. The government has stated this many times.

The Government of Canada has preserved in all its trade agreements the ability of Canadian authorities at all levels to regulate health care services based on Canadian objectives and priorities. The negotiations with the EU are no different.

It should also be noted that there will be nothing in this agreement that could force Canada to privatize health care services. Again, that is true for all of Canada's free trade agreements.

Free trade with the EU will mark the beginning of an exciting new chapter in Canada's economic success story. Hard-working Canadians can count on their government to stand up for their interests and open new markets like the EU for years ahead so that we can continue to create Canadian jobs.

● (1910)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Madam Speaker, the global trade agreement will leave the door wide open to the privatization of health care. As far as I know, health is not a consumer good. No one chooses to become ill or to pay for treatments. It is quite different from consumer goods that are sold on grocery store shelves.

I see that the government still does not want to commit to protecting our public health system. What a pity. It will be Canadians who pay the price. Canadians have not been consulted and may pay dearly for the decisions of this government. This will affect not just the citizens of today, but those of tomorrow.

Another problem with this agreement is the extension of patents. It is not just the NDP who are saying so. Health experts—more than 15 came on Monday—municipalities and researchers do not agree. Extending drug patents is questioned by many. If no one is committed to excluding patents, who then will do so?

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

Ms. Kellie Leitch: Madam Speaker, despite its current economic challenges, the EU remains the largest trading market in the world. As I mentioned before, the EU is committed to a broad, ambitious trade agreement with Canada. The benefits to Canadian workers and their families are clear: a 20% boost in bilateral trade and a \$12 billion annual boost to Canada's economy. That is the equivalent of 80,000 net new jobs or a \$1,000 increase in the average Canadian family income.

An agreement with the European Union will exclude all social services, including health. The Government of Canada will preserve the ability of Canadian authorities at all levels to regulate health care services based on Canadian objectives and priorities.

SENIORS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to ask the member opposite to answer the question that I asked in the House on December 1, 2011. Unfortunately the question was not answered by the parliamentary secretary at that time. My question was:

An HRSDC study found that, despite being eligible, more than 125,000 seniors are not receiving the old age security benefits they deserve. The government has known this since 2009. It has known about the problems in the program.

Why has the government not acted to ensure that all Canadian seniors receive the benefits to which they are entitled?

The answer from the parliamentary secretary did not address my question. Talking points were rattled off about the new horizons program, but there was nothing on why more than 125,000 seniors, who are eligible, were not receiving their benefits.

New Democrats have long argued that we need to automatically enrol seniors who qualify for GIS. Changes should be made to the legislation so Revenue Canada can automatically check for individuals who become eligible for GIS and automatically enrol these individuals in the program.

The Conservative government is well aware that the OAS and GIS are critical if we hope to keep seniors above the poverty line. In fact, the government's own response to petitions presented in the House, calling on the Conservatives to end seniors' poverty, trumpeted how successful the OAS and GIS had been in reducing the levels of poverty for our seniors.

There are many factors that have been left out of the musings of the government. The truth is that OAS is economically beneficial to all of society. Seniors on OAS spend all of their money in their neighbourhoods. That is money reinvested in our economy, in small businesses that in turn create jobs. Seniors pay taxes. OAS is not a burden on the economy. It is an investment in the economy. Seniors are not the liability the government pretends. They are an asset and they contribute to the well-being of us all.

My question remains. It is a call that government account for the poorest seniors because these seniors are the only ones who will qualify for OAS and, in particular, GIS benefits.

Eligibility for GIS is based on a maximum income, other than OAS, of \$15,888 per year for an unattached person over 65 and \$20,976 for a married couple. Individuals living just above the income thresholds are ineligible for GIS benefits. This is not a lot of

money for living expenses, after rent and bills are paid, particularly for unattached seniors.

There are some seniors struggling to make it on reduced incomes because they are not aware that they qualify for additional benefits. This GIS money can make the difference for someone, give them the opportunity to afford food, medicine or pay their bills. By simply ensuring that seniors are getting the money they qualify for, their quality of life, their dignity is assured.

My question was about rights for the poorest seniors. I will now be very explicit in my question. Will the government automatically check for individuals who become eligible for GIS and automatically enrol these individuals in the program?

● (1915)

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad to answer the hon. member for London—Fanshawe's question. I am glad she brought up the issue of seniors who do not receive old age security benefits for which they are eligible. This provides me an opportunity to clarify things.

In order to receive OAS pension benefits, Canadian seniors need to apply. It is unfortunate that some people actually do not know this and are suffering unnecessary hardship.

[Translation]

It is very disconcerting to hear that seniors do not receive the benefits to which they are entitled. In such situations it is certainly not because the government is withholding that information.

[English]

We reach as many seniors as possible to give them the information about the CPP and OAS, as well as the GIS.

One way is through direct mail. Every year we send over 600,000 applications to Canadians who are not yet receiving their CPP or OAS to encourage them to apply. Recently we mailed over one million statements of CPP contributions, targeted at seniors who were not yet receiving their CPP retirement pensions, in part to remind them that this pension was available to them.

Another way is through public information campaigns and various outreach activities to seniors. Employees of Service Canada's mobile outreach services have delivered hundreds of seminars and appeared at many community events across the country to get the message out about CPP and OAS.

We also work with community organizations that serve seniors. These organizations have been very helpful in educating seniors about their pensions and what pension benefits are available to them.

We collaborate with the Canada Revenue Agency to use tax records to identify seniors who may be eligible for benefits.

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The staff in our service centres are trained to ask seniors if they know about these benefits, and our citizen service specialists do more than just give out information; they actually help eligible seniors fill out their application forms. In addition, we are making special efforts to contact seniors who are harder to reach because they may be homeless, live in remote areas, do not speak English or French or have disabilities.

People who are already receiving the GIS may not always know that they have to renew their application each year. However, we have changed the renewal process so that almost all GIS recipients apply only once and have their benefits automatically renewed by filling out their income tax forms. If they do not file their income tax return or complete their application by the deadline, we send them a reminder.

The public pension system is the cornerstone of our financial support from government and of what we provide to Canadians in their later years. It is a solid, sustainable and well-designed program and we are doing our best to see that everyone who is eligible has access to it.

• (1920)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Madam Speaker, this is a situation that can be remedied. The maximum benefit that one can receive from OAS and GIS combined is \$1,191. That is just over \$14,000 a year, and barely enough to cover rent in most cities in this country. This is a travesty and we can afford to fix it. We can also afford to make sure that seniors who qualify for GIS receive their GIS.

The money to support seniors is readily available. We have the money to lift seniors out of poverty in the present, and we have the money to address additional expenses the government will face in the future as our population ages.

Instead of investing in Canada, the Conservatives have chosen to saddle the treasury and Canadians with corporate tax giveaways, billion dollar fighter jets and prisons we do not need.

The government can find people who do not pay their income tax. It can find them right away. Why can it not find the seniors who have not been able to access their GIS? Surely we can do better.

Ms. Kellie Leitch: Madam Speaker, our government really wants to provide the best quality of life for Canadian seniors.

[*Translation*]

We are listening to seniors.

[*English*]

We know that seniors are concerned about the economy and maintaining their standard of living in retirement. In Canada we have one of the best regarded retirement income systems in the world.

We want Canadian seniors to know that there are many federal programs designed especially for them and their particular needs. Far from keeping these programs under wraps, we are promoting them as much as possible, because we want every eligible senior to take advantage of them. We are doing just that.

As I mentioned before, I hope the member opposite decides that she will tell the seniors in her riding all about them. I tell my constituents in Simcoe—Grey about them as frequently as I can.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:22 p.m.)

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