



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 179 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 8, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 8, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)
[English]

HELPING FAMILIES IN NEED ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act and to make consequential amendments to the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Regulations, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

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

• (1005)

Hon. Jim Flaherty (for the Minister of Human Resources, Skills and Social Development) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Jim Flaherty (for the Minister of Human Resources, Skills and Social Development) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in the House today to this absolutely fantastic legislation. The helping families in need act is a bill that would provide help to parents who are going through some of the most difficult times in their lives.

As a new member of Parliament, I very much remember one of the first constituent meetings I had after being elected. I heard from the father of a very young girl who was very stricken with cancer. Our party had made a promise in the election campaign that we would bring in changes to the employment insurance system that would allow parents of critically ill children to claim benefits while they were spending much needed time with their child. I remember

him sharing his story, saying how much of a benefit it would have been in their case if his wife had been able to take the time off work and claim EI benefits, enabling her to stay with their very sick child. I am delighted to report that the child has had a great recovery and is doing well.

That is just one example of one family out of thousands that the changes proposed in Bill C-44 would help. As one individual member of Parliament, to hear that story and to be able to rise in the House today and talk about it, knowing that the bill would make a significant difference to families like that, makes me immensely proud.

The proposed legislation supports the implementation of three initiatives: the new federal income support for parents of murdered or missing children, the new employment insurance benefit for parents of critically ill children and enhanced access to EI sickness benefits for parents who fall ill while they are receiving EI parental benefits.

The title of the bill says it all. It is about helping Canadian families. It is about supporting them through situations that are both financially and emotionally difficult.

As announced by the Prime Minister earlier this spring, we will be creating a new benefit for the parents of murdered or missing children. We heard at committee from a number of parents whose lives had been affected by the fact that their child was missing, had been missing and, in some cases, had been murdered. I cannot even imagine as a parent going through that. We listened to the testimony and heard from these parents indicating how much this benefit would have helped them in their situation. Even though they continued to grieve, and they will each and every day for that murdered child, the ability to take time off to spend with the remaining members of the family, to have that level of support, and to know that their job will be secure through the amendments that are proposed in the bill to the Canada Labour Code, will make a significant difference to the lives of those people who showed the courage to come before the human resources skills and social development committee and share their stories with all of us. I know every member of the committee, both opposition and government members, were very moved by the testimony of those individuals.

As a father of two wonderful daughters, I understand how important family is and a parent's desire to protect our children. The loss or disappearance of a child as a result of a criminal act can only be described as the most difficult experience a parent could ever go through.

Government Orders

•(1010)

The new federal income support for parents of murdered or missing children, which would provide parents with financial support of up to \$350 per week for up to 35 weeks, is a major step forward. I am delighted, at report stage, that all members of the committee recommended that the bill come back here today for further and final debate, and hopefully passage. We all recognize the tremendous benefit that this support would provide to these families.

The helping families in need act would also amend the Canada Labour Code to protect the jobs of parents who temporarily leave a federally regulated job to cope with the death or disappearance of a child as a result of a suspected Criminal Code offence. We know that the new income support and the knowledge that their job is also protected would help ease the pressure on parents in this unimaginable situation.

Since Canadians first elected a Conservative government, we have been devoted in our support for victims of crime, despite the fact that the opposition parties continually vote against our measures to strengthen victims' rights. However, the bill does transcend party politics. It would provide support for Canadians going through something that is so personal, so devastating and so profound that only those who have been touched by this kind of tragedy themselves will ever truly understand it.

We have already heard a number of very touching speeches in the House by many members of Parliament, including the member of Parliament for Brant. I want to thank him for what I think was a very moving speech and for sharing his family's personal story yesterday in the House on the bill. It just goes to show that there are 308 people who get elected to this place who all come from different parts of the country, different families and so on. Many of us wind up being touched on a personal level by some of these tragedies in life because we know of a relative with a critically ill child or we know of a family where a child has gone missing. Unfortunately, there are some of us who also do know families who have been touched by the fact that a child has been murdered.

I am glad to hear that my hon. colleagues from the Liberal and NDP parties will be supporting the bill, even though the NDP did initially vote against the ways and means motion to get it moving. Let me review some of the measures we have taken to help families, even though the opposition parties either opposed or delayed many of these great initiatives.

Our government has expanded the eligibility for compassionate care benefits to include people considered as family by the person who is ill. We have allowed self-employed workers to opt into the employment insurance program to be able to receive maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits.

In speaking to a number of self-employed people, I know how much in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville they very much appreciate the fact that they can opt into the EI system. This is especially true of women entrepreneurs because they will then be eligible for maternity and parental leave benefits while they are caring for their newborn, a time when they may not be able to continue to run their own business directly. We have also improved access to EI parental benefits for military families and for foster

families who make a demonstrable commitment to adopt the child in their care.

•(1015)

As a former board member of the Peel Children's Aid Society, I know how important it is for foster families to be able to spend the time they need with a new child they have adopted into their family and to be eligible to collect EI benefits just as if it were their own, biological, newborn child. What a great initiative we have brought forward to encourage more families to foster and to adopt children who need wonderful homes.

Our government is committed to making targeted, common sense changes to the EI program to support hard-working Canadian families. We are doing this through the helping families in need act. This support will help people at a time when they most desperately need it.

While we are fortunate to live in one of the safest countries in the world, we are not immune to violence. It is unthinkable but every year in Canada some 1,100 children are reported abducted and about 100 children are murdered. I cannot even begin to imagine what it might be like to lose someone I love more than anything in the world, especially in something as senseless as a child abduction or a murder. It is unthinkable, and families who have to deal with that reality deserve our support.

Our government is taking steps to help families who are dealing with these traumas. We have heard from Canadians that this help is needed and it is long overdue. That is why our government made the campaign commitment to provide support. I am delighted to say we are following through on it right now. This income support will help these parents take time off work to address legal issues and to begin their emotional recovery.

Fortunately, many employers grant unpaid leave to parents in these situations. I think there would be very few employers who would not empathize with their employee and his or her family going through this, and those companies are often very generous in their support. However, it is important that we, as legislators, also make sure that we are doing what we need to do within the laws of Canada and within our employment insurance system to also provide our support.

Fortunately, while it helps parents focus on their families, most parents cannot afford to go without an income for extended periods of time. They also need to know that their job will still be there when they are ready to come back.

We are the one party that is always putting the rights of victims ahead of criminals. Our record has been very clear on this issue. In 2007, we provided \$52 million to strengthen the federal victims strategy. In budget 2011, there was an additional \$26 million for this initiative. Since Canadians elected our government, we have brought in much needed legislation to protect the victims of crime as well as to ensure that those who do commit crimes pay the price. We will continue to deliver on our commitment to protect all Canadians.

Government Orders

●(1020)

As the parent of two daughters aged 13 and 8, the thought of losing one of them is unimaginable. We talk to families who have been through that situation and all members of the House empathize with what they go through. We as the government have an obligation to support and help families cope during these tragedies, however horrible the circumstances. By providing this much-needed financial support and job protection for parents, we can at least give them some time to begin to heal.

I want to quote a number of different representatives and organizations that support the bill and its speedy passage. Dan Demers from the Canadian Cancer Society stated:

This new EI support will allow parents to focus on caring for their child rather than worrying about how to pay the bills and can they keep their jobs. These programs will strengthen Canadian families and provide them the flexibility and the security they need to help keep their lives as normal as possible through a very difficult time.

Terri Odeneal, executive director of the Comox Valley Hospice Society, stated, “By extending these benefits, we can ensure that parents can focus on caring for their child during this difficult time rather than worrying about financial issues”.

Sharon Ruth, who is the mother of a critically-ill child, in a press conference this past September stated:

Every time there was an election, all the efforts died on the order paper and we had to start again. The truth is that I had help from each party, but it wasn't until our country finally got a majority government that I'm standing here today with all of you on the brink of what I hope will be revolutionary change to help those families that are in need and most vulnerable.

I will quote Sharon Ruth again, because she speaks very passionately about where we are and where we need to go. She said:

I want to thank [the minister] who has a genuine concern for family and their suffering, for receiving myself and Colleen and Edwina Eddy last November and to listening to what we had to say. She believed that changes needed to be made and worked toward making this day happen.

In conclusion, I want to go back to one of the first face-to-face constituency meetings I had with a resident of the great riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, a father who shared his story with me. He said, “Brad, you guys need to keep your election commitment. You need to get this measure enacted”.

Nothing gives me greater honour and privilege today than to stand in the House to speak to Bill C-44 and tell that father that we have delivered.

●(1025)

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his work on committee. We sat on HUMA together and reviewed this bill in some detail.

I noticed the member could not resist taking some partisan jabs. I will try not to reply in kind, but I want to point out that he ended by suggesting that his party had kept its commitment with respect to the electoral platform where indeed the Conservatives promised in 2011 to “provide enhanced EI benefits to parents of murdered or missing children”.

We on this side of the House support that commitment and will vote in favour of Bill C-44. However, the member neglected to say that the Conservatives' commitment also said that “Funding for this

measure will come from general revenue, not EI premiums”. This is part of the commitment they did not keep.

We know from other debates in the House that the EI system is not serving Canadians well. Only four out of ten Canadians can access EI. We know that successive Liberal and Conservative governments have stolen \$57 billion out of the EI fund to pay down the debt and deficit rather than provide the much needed benefits for people who, frankly, paid into the system, which is only workers and employers.

Now we have an about face. We are adding something else to the draw on the EI fund, which is we now have to pay for this bill out of the EI fund as well.

Could the member talk for a minute about why the Conservatives flip-flopped on their commitment that this program would not be funded by EI?

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, all party members at the human resources committee have worked very hard in reviewing the bill. I want to express my thanks on behalf of our government to the opposition parties for their support of the bill.

Opposition members have raised some issues where they believe some changes would be appropriate. We have listened and we believe that this is the right way to go. Based on the best information that we get from the very professional and hard-working bureaucrats within the ministry, we believe the right way to go is to have part of the benefits in the bill paid through the EI fund and part of the benefits for missing and murdered children paid out of the general revenue fund. That is consistent with the compassionate care and sick leave benefits that we presently have in the EI system.

One of the things I did not get a chance to mention in my speech, which did come up at committee, was the reason for the 37 weeks of the entitlement under critically ill and whether it should be longer. In fact, it can be longer. A family can claim the 37 weeks, plus the 15 weeks for a sick benefit, plus 6 weeks for compassionate care leave. That is a tremendous amount of time for families to claim benefits, especially when they are workers who have already paid into the EI fund.

●(1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party will be support the bill as well. We have recognized this as a very important issue. We care about our children and we want to be there in a very real and tangible way, which is one of the reasons we support the bill.

In the past, through electoral elections, we have talked about expanding this to look at, for example, gravely ill parents or siblings and how employment insurance might be able to assist them. At the end of the day, the government has an obligation to apply that compassion and caring attitude to those individuals as well. We hope the government will act on that.

Government Orders

However, with this legislation, there would be an obligation to carry on discussions and dialogue with provincial jurisdictions. Many would argue that there has been a great deal of concern regarding the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Could the member provide some comment on how that minister needs to play a strong role in working with the provinces so we can realize the maximum benefits of the bill?

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and the members of the Liberal Party as well for indicating that they will be supporting the bill. I thank the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso who is the Liberal Party member on the committee. He, too, just like the member for Hamilton Mountain, has worked very hard on the bill, reviewing it at committee and ensuring that it is a strong bill to go forward and ensuring that it will help families.

After this bill is passed, it would be the role of all members of Parliament to have conversations with our respective provincial colleagues to get them to adopt similar labour code changes in their provincial labour legislation to mirror the changes that we bring forward to the Canada Labour Code, to ensure that the 90% of the people in our country who are not covered under the Canada Labour Code but are covered by employment standards and labour legislation in the provinces will also be able to get the benefit that federally-regulated business and federal government employees will get through the changes in Bill C-44 with respect to the Canada Labour Code.

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the families in need act is clearly a compassionate act that is long overdue. I am delighted to be in the House today to hear members of all parties agree that they are in support of this compassionate and necessary legislation.

As a parent three times and a grandparent of four little ones, I cannot imagine the stress on a family when confronted with a missing or murdered child. We have all been touched in the House. I doubt there is anyone who has not been touched by someone who has lost a child. We have seen the grief and the difficulties the families face.

This bill addresses important needs to take certain issues off the table so families can focus on the stress at hand of dealing with a missing or murdered child and the grief that goes with it.

I would like to commend my colleague for his speech this morning. I felt he addressed the issues very well and obviously with great compassion. We have talked about job security, but would the member perhaps go a little deeper on the issue surrounding federal income support? It is something that is very important in helping families to deal with these issues at such a time as they are being confronted with them.

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Don Valley West very much for his support of the legislation. I am not at the grandparent level yet, but I see the joy in my parents and in-laws' eyes when they interact with my daughters. Hopefully my day will come when I can enjoy grandchildren as well.

The member asked a specific question about the federal income support for parents of murdered or missing children. Beginning on January 1, 2013, this new grant will provide \$350 per week for up to 35 weeks to parents of murdered or missing children, if they are less

than 18 years of age, whose death or disappearance is the result of a suspected Criminal Code offence.

To receive this taxable grant, the affected parents will need to have earned a minimum level of income in the previous calendar year of \$6,500 and take leave from their employment.

Again, this is a support mechanism for families is not directly related to the EI fund, but is related to another benefit to recognize the fact that in the case of missing or murdered children, it is different and in a lot of cases it is finite. It is done because the child has been murdered and the family needs the support mechanisms and the longer time to deal with that issue.

This is a major step forward for these families that need and require this level of support.

● (1035)

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House again to continue the debate on Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act and to make consequential amendments to the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Regulations. Although the title itself does not tell us much, the bill would make a series of improvements, most of them through the employment insurance program, to Canadian families that desperately need the support of their government. For that reason, as I indicated at second reading, my NDP colleagues and I are pleased to support the bill.

However, we take our role as the official opposition seriously. We hold the government to account and even when we agree with the intent of a particular piece of government legislation, we will work hard to ensure it is the very best bill that it can be.

To that end, we went into the committee hearings on Bill C-44 hoping to make the process work. Committee is where we have the opportunity to go through a bill clause-by-clause to question the minister, or in this case ministers, responsible for the bill and to hear testimony from both experts in the field and from individuals who would be impacted by the proposed legislative changes. We then go through the bill with a fine tooth comb to address concerns because, with the current government in particular, the devil is often in the details.

Because we support Bill C-44, we went into committee hoping that a spirit of co-operation would prevail and that we would collaborate to make the necessary improvements to give parents of critically ill, murdered or missing children the support they so desperately needed. I cannot tell members how profoundly disappointed I was when the government members on committee reverted to the old caricature of themselves and refused to entertain a single amendment proposed by opposition MPs. Honestly, it was a disgrace.

I will give one example of an area where we could have made an important improvement to the bill.

Government Orders

In order for parents of murdered or missing children to receive the government grant, they would have to have earned \$6,500. Presumably, that threshold was set to show some kind of attachment to the labour force. Leaving aside the broader question of whether it is necessary to prove such attachment in the first place, I asked the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development in committee why she chose to adopt a threshold based on earnings as opposed to hours worked. Obviously, under her rules, somebody who worked for minimum wage would have to work many more hours to qualify for the benefit than somebody who made \$150 an hour. Why would we create such an unequal threshold when people at the lower end of the wage scale would likely need the financial support even more than those at the higher end?

I encouraged the minister to explore other ways of proving attachment to the labour force. The minister responded by saying that they could not use hours worked to prove attachment to the labour force because:

—that would not be compatible with the eligibility of self-employed workers who have opted into the EI system. Their eligibility for EI special benefits is based on financial figures, on dollars earned, because we cannot measure their hours. There's no way to validate that.

Really? We do not trust the self-employed to report accurately, so we will punish those workers who earn minimum wage or work part-time because the government cannot create a nuanced enough system to ensure that the bill is fair to everyone. Really? Is that what the government is saying to parents of murdered and missing children?

We in the opposition could not move the necessary amendments in committee because they would have been ruled out of order. However, the minister had, and still has, the opportunity to right this wrong. Changing the eligibility criteria is the right thing to do and it would not throw the government into financial crisis.

Let us be clear about the numbers here. According to the Canadian Police Information Centre, there were 25 abductions by strangers in 2012. Helping 25 families will not break the bank, but even if it did, it is absolutely the right thing to do and the minister should not be creating artificial barriers by means testing eligibility for support. The Conservatives' failure to reconsider these provisions is an absolute disgrace and belies the spin that they are sincere about wanting to help families in crisis.

I would say the same thing about the other amendments my NDP colleagues and I were pushing for in committee. I know I will not have time to repeat them all in the House today, but let me continue to highlight some of the most obvious areas where we could and should have found common cause.

I will begin with the most egregious example where the Conservatives' strict adherence to talking points trumped common sense. Clause 5 of Bill C-44 states that leave for critical illness would end on the last day of the week that the child died. New Democrats tried to move a modest amendment that would have extended that leave for another two weeks after the child's death to give the parents time to grieve and to bury their child.

• (1040)

Our proposed amendment was supported by the Canadian Association of Social Workers, Ronald McDonald House Charities,

the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Canadian Labour Congress. Fred Phelps, the executive director of the Canadian Association of Social Workers was almost incredulous when he asked the committee, "would compassion not dictate that families require time after death to mourn and bury their child?" For most Canadians, the answer would have been a resounding yes, but sadly, compassion does not appear to be the government's forte and the bill is proceeding unamended.

Let me give another example. The bill as it currently stands defines children as those under 18 years of age. Why is that? In many cases children are defined not by age but by their dependency on their parents. For example, many dental and health insurance plans cover so-called children until they reach the age of 18 or they complete school; 18 is not a hard and fast cutoff. I would argue that this should be the case in Bill C-44 as well. Particularly, it is essential that the definition of child be expanded beyond the age of 18 for disabled children.

As the minister herself acknowledged, the criteria she used were emotional dependency and emotional maturity. Clearly, those criteria would apply to some disabled Canadians who may well be over the age of 18 but for whom the emotional attachment to their parents is every bit as real as for those children who fit the current definition in the act.

As Tyler Hnatuk, representing the Canadian Association for Community Living made clear at committee:

...caregiving responsibilities for parents of children with disabilities often continue much longer in life than for other families, and so certainly I want to recognize the need and the duties that carry on throughout a lifetime.

The parenting of a child with a severe disability is a lifetime commitment.

It would have been easy for us to allow for the expansion of the definition of the word "child" in this bill. That is why the New Democrats on the committee moved an amendment that would add child to the list of terms that could be defined through regulations, which would allow the government to expand the definition to include dependent children over the age of 18. Again, we are talking about a very small number of families who would be impacted, but for those families the concern is very real.

It is not good enough for the Conservatives to vote no just because the amendment came from the NDP. The Conservatives should have put partisanship aside and acted in the best interests of Canadians. That is what they were elected to do, but if they cannot even do it on a bill that has all-party support, how are we ever going to make the committee process work on the more contentious matters that are referred to our committee? Is it really that foreign a concept to the government that detailed scrutiny of its bills may actually lead to better legislation? Committee work used to be an integral part of the legislative process under governments of all stripes, but under the Conservative Prime Minister, that work is wholly devalued.

Government Orders

Here is another example. Clause 6 of the bill provides leave for the parents of murdered or missing children. We all support that provision, of course, but would it not make sense to allow parents to take that leave on a flexible basis rather than mandating that it be taken in consecutive weeks? We were not suggesting that the total number of weeks be increased. We simply wanted to allow parents to apportion their leave to suit their personal circumstances. Oftentimes their dealings with the judicial system occurred months down the road. Why would we not allow them to use some of their leave time during that critical time? Again, that flexibility found broad support among the witnesses who gave testimony before our committee.

Let me give a sampling from the very people whom this bill is intended to help. When asked whether it would be helpful to create flexibility with respect to the leave provisions of the bill, here is what they said.

Mr. Bruno Serre, whose daughter Brigitte was murdered in January 2006 at the age of 17 during her shift at a gas station in Montreal, said:

I think that would be a very good thing.

For example, if this happened to someone and, after 10 weeks, they felt ready, they could return to work. In my case, I went back after five weeks, but I wasn't really capable.

So it would help to have hours or weeks banked. Five probably would have been used and then there would be 30 left, which could be used over the years. But there should be no expiry date. For example, it could be decided that the recipient would have one year to use these 35 weeks, as is sometimes the case in the government. Instead, this should be spread out over two or three years. Some trials can take place three years later.

If someone has used all the weeks and the trial comes up, that person will relive the tragedy. When the trial comes up, you relive the day when you learned about the death of your loved one. So there are other steps to take. If the person doesn't have any weeks left, he or she will have to go through the same situation again that happened at the very start. That person will be lost and unable to work.

Being able to bank the weeks for later would be a very good solution.

• (1045)

Christiane Sirois concurred. Ms. Sirois' son was kidnapped on November 1, 1984, when he was 8 years old. When asked about the desirability of creating greater flexibility she said:

My answer is yes, without hesitation. I support what Mr. Serre said: there should be banked hours, should a person need them.

This doesn't apply for me. I haven't found my son, but I can put myself in the shoes of people who have found their child. I do not dream about finding him alive after 28 years, you can be sure. But I understand. I am suspended. What will happen when I find his little eight-year-old body or what's left of it? This will happen one day, for sure. I will relive 28 years stored up in my memory. It is important to be prepared for this, that is certain.

That is why it is crucial that these victims have a minimum amount of financial assistance to help them survive. Because listen carefully: you don't really live with this, but you survive.

Lastly, let me add the words of Ms. Céline Hotte, whose life changed forever when her daughter was murdered. Here is what Ms. Hotte told us in committee:

For 10 to 17 years after the events, I had to deal with the perpetrator's parole requests and the issue of halfway houses. To contest these requests, you need to put together a file. This takes signatures from people in the village where he lived. This isn't easy to do. You also have to read about everything he did in prison. This isn't easy. You cannot talk to him—that's not what I want to do anyway. You have to read the reports. He never followed the recommendations. Each time, it put me right back into the situation I had gone through.

Clearly there is widespread agreement that every circumstance is different and that there must be enough flexibility to allow for accommodation.

That is certainly the conclusion drawn by Canada's Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, who in her testimony also encouraged the government to allow for flexibility. She focused particularly on the administration of justice and the court process:

We know that if there is a murder, the court case may be several years down the road, so to provide an option and some flexibility—for example, a parent may choose to take a certain amount of time at the time of the crime, and then, if the criminal court process is two years down the road, they may need to have time then as well. Also, in some cases the person responsible may not be apprehended for a while. I'm just saying adding that flexibility would provide parents of murdered and missing children an opportunity to take the time when it's appropriate for them, when they need that time.

Clearly, there was broad-based consensus about what needed to be done to make Bill C-44 as effective as possible for the people it was intended to help. The only people offside were the members of the Conservative caucus, presumably at the direction of the minister responsible and the Prime Minister.

I make these points more in sadness than in anger. We had the perfect opportunity to improve a bill that we all agree is worth supporting. This did not need to be an exercise in rigid partisanship, where the Conservative members of the committee automatically oppose anything proposed by the NDP. Frankly, the victims of crime deserve better. The parents of critically ill children deserve better. The Canadian public deserves better. They deserve a concerted effort from all their elected officials to make Parliament work. In this instance, on Bill C-44, the Conservative members on the human resources committee let Canadians down.

Now at this point members may well wonder whether we will continue to support the bill. Let me reassure them. My NDP colleagues and I will of course vote in favour of Bill C-44. My point is simply that we could have achieved more, that we could have improved the bill in meaningful ways, but that we failed to seize that important opportunity.

That does not mean that baby steps in the right direction are not worth taking.

In fact, as I said at the time of second reading, there are parts of Bill C-44 that were lifted directly from my own private member's Bill C-362. Let me just review which those are.

First, one of the proposals included in the government's bill would amend the Employment Insurance Act to allow mothers and fathers currently on parental leave to access EI sickness benefits if they fall ill during their parental leave. This is a welcome and long-overdue amendment. There are few Canadians who would disagree that new parents who are very often already stretched both physically and financially should not be penalized if they become ill while on parental leave.

Government Orders

I am a little puzzled, though, as to why the minister would have stopped short of extending this benefit further. If she appreciates the injustice of denying sickness benefits to those whose circumstances change while on parental leave, then why did she fail to apply the same consideration and logic to workers who are laid off while on parental leave? Why would we solve one injustice and at the same time wilfully ignore the other?

My bill does take that extra step. It would fix that wrong. It recognizes that those on parental leave, the very same physically and emotionally drained new parents who sometimes become ill while on parental leave, can find that they have been downsized or laid off, through no fault of their own, while on parental leave.

• (1050)

As it currently stands, parents in that situation are denied benefits. Inexplicably, the government is content to leave them twisting in the wind, unsupported by even the meagre support provided by EI.

On the upside, my private member's bill also includes provisions to cover the self-employed in this benefit arrangement. I am pleased to see that the government has at least adopted them.

I do want to reflect for a moment on whether the EI program is the best vehicle for delivering the larger package of supports contemplated by Bill C-44. As members can tell from my phrasing, I obviously do not think it is. It bears pointing out that at one time the government agreed with me.

As recently as 2011, the Conservative Party platform stated, "Funding for this measure will come from general revenue, not EI premiums". The Conservatives were right to adopt that approach. Whether one is a waged worker, senior manager, professional or stay-at-home parent, the devastation of a critically ill child is the same. All Canadians who find themselves caring for their seriously ill child are incurring a myriad of expenses that go beyond lost wages, and they all deserve our support.

What happened to make the government change its mind? The grant for parents of murdered and missing children will be paid from general revenues and not through EI. However, with respect to critically ill children, the Conservatives have ignored their election promise and are paying for their commitment through EI. I don't need to remind anyone in the House that the EI fund is not the government's money. It is a fund to which only workers and employers contribute. Therefore, for the government to draw on that pool of money to create a photo op on a policy announcement, no matter how positive, is surely beyond the pale.

I know my time is almost up, but I ask that the House indulge me for one more minute so that I can make a final point.

New Democrats support the bill. It is not a question of ideology or partisan politics; it is about assisting families in their time of need. However, let us be clear. The bill does not go far enough to help the families of missing and murdered children, nor the parents of kids who are critically ill.

Also, the bill does not go far enough in making reforms to EI. These measures completely fail to address the greatest challenge with EI, which is the lack of access for unemployed Canadians.

The bill will clearly pass, and by all means let us do it quickly, because we have to get on with tackling the larger question of comprehensive EI reform. We must make EI accessible and effective for all Canadians. Nothing less will do.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and for the indication that her party will indeed be supporting the bill.

One of the most rewarding opportunities I have had since being elected to Parliament almost seven years ago was to co-chair, along with her colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh, a parliamentary committee on palliative and compassionate care. We had the opportunity to go across Canada and listen to dozens of witnesses who gave input on the issue of palliative care. One of the issues was dealing with gravely ill children. I would like to read an excerpt from Sharon Ruth with respect to her daughter Colleen Ruth.

She stated:

Governments must support and invest in families during these tragically difficult times. The long term socio-economic benefits and returns of supporting families are far greater than the supposed cost savings that result from a politics of inertia. Doing nothing simply raises the toll of broken individuals and families. Colleen is living proof that there are gaps in our social and support systems that need to be updated. I am asking you to extend compassionate leave benefits to at least 26 weeks in a 52 week period. I am also asking that you change the qualifying criteria to "gravely ill" as opposed to "significant risk of death".

I ask my colleague this. Rather than focusing on some of the things that, yes, we could improve, could she just acknowledge that the 35-week benefit is much better than the 26 weeks that many were requesting? Indeed, not only is it 35 weeks, but my colleague from Mississauga—Streetsville pointed out many other positive initiatives. I wonder if she could acknowledge that.

• (1055)

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge my colleague's work with the palliative care caucus.

Of course, I agree that baby steps are better than no steps. That to me is a given. However, I do want to take our responsibility here as parliamentarians seriously. There is a reason that we refer bills to committee after second reading. Second reading simply suggests that we have agreed to a bill in principle. We then send it to committee so that we can do the hard work and listen to expert testimony and learn from people's individual experiences about how we can make legislation the very best it can possibly be so that we are actually serving the people whom it is intended to help.

Statements by Members

We did that at committee. We heard very moving testimony. It took incredible strength for some of the witnesses to share their personal stories with us. All I was suggesting is that we did not do them justice. The changes that they were asking for were not of a huge magnitude. They were not very costly. Let us be clear: there are not that many children in Canada who in any given year are murdered or go missing. However, for the families who are impacted, their lives change forever. They were looking to their government and to our committee to help them find the support they so desperately need. We had that opportunity in committee and we let those families down. Therefore, I do not think we should be proud of the work our committee accomplished on the bill.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech did an excellent job of summarizing the ascent of the bill, where we are today and maybe the opportunity that was missed. The Liberal Party wholeheartedly supports the spirit and intent of the bill, but there were some opportunities missed along the way.

Stephen Moreau was the lawyer who represented Natalya Rougas in the case that was presented to the Supreme Court and was ruled on. One thing that was brought out during the debate was the stacking provisions. The court ruling in 2011 said that those provisions on receiving maternity leave and then sick leave were already in legislation, as intended by parliamentarians who passed the law in 2002.

I would like the member's comments on Mr. Moreau's testimony during the hearings.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely what Mr. Moreau said in committee. I do want to point out that what Mr. Moreau was talking about, rightly, was the stacking of special benefits.

At no point did our committee address the stacking of those special benefits with regular EI. Of course, that is one of the most fundamental problems with our EI system. For example, if someone is on maternity leave and intending to go back to work, but their company shuts down and they are laid off or downsized while on maternity leave, it is not possible now to stack the maternity benefits with regular EI.

That is something that is absolutely critical for us as legislators to look at doing. That is exactly what my private member's bill proposes. I look forward to all members of the House supporting that bill when it comes forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time for government orders has expired. The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain will have four minutes remaining for questions and comments when this matter returns before the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

[English]

CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ind. Cons.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize 33 youthful delegates who have visited with us for the past seven weeks. They are here in members' offices to gain valuable perspectives on Canada's most important democratic institution, the Parliament of Canada.

These young people, representing the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary program, embody the highest ideals of achievement and community service. They are the future leaders of Ukraine, young people like Yaroslav Barkov from my office.

Canada and Ukraine are inextricably linked forever by prior migration. Fully one in 30 Canadians is of Ukrainian descent, as are my wife, daughters and granddaughters. Ukraine holds a special place in the hearts of Canadians. Canada was the first country in the western world to accord diplomatic recognition in 1991 to an independent Ukraine.

As the young emissaries depart, we wish them well and say to them, *Menohaya Leeta*.

* * *

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I participated in MADD London's 25th anniversary red ribbon campaign.

Held at London's Airport Kia dealership, Mothers Against Drunk Driving launched its annual challenge to Londoners not to get behind the wheel if they drink. London Police Chief Brad Duncan reminded us that the RIDE program would be out in full force to help put a stop to totally preventable, heart-wrenching accidents and deaths.

We heard a tragic story from Mary Rodrigues. Mary was driving through an intersection when her car was T-boned by a drunk driver. Her son Alex was in the car. Alex was killed. Alex was four months old. Mary challenged us to honour her son by following the simplest of rules: if someone drinks, they should not drive.

Project red ribbon runs until the first Monday after New Year and will see volunteers distribute millions of red ribbons to the public to attach to their vehicles and keychains. It pays tribute to the more than 1,000 Canadians who do not need to die every year because of selfish, stupid and impaired drivers. We have to make drinking and driving as socially unacceptable as lighting up a cigarette in a non-smoking area. If we cannot do it for ourselves, we should do it for Alex.

* * *

HAMILTON STEEL WORKERS' CENOTAPH

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians across the country take part in Remembrance Day services this week, I would like to bring to the attention of this House a special ceremony in Hamilton.

Statements by Members

In Hamilton in 1959, a cenotaph was unveiled on the grounds of the former Stelco plant. That day more than 800 steel workers, who were members of the Stelco War Veterans Association, marched in that initial dedication ceremony. The cenotaph has been the site of Remembrance Day services ever since.

This year's ceremony will have new significance because U.S. Steel Canada recently completed the revitalization of this very important cenotaph dedicated to the 3,000 steel workers who became war veterans and their families. The cenotaph's renovations include the complete refurbishment of the plaques with the names of the 172 steel workers who gave their lives in the service of Canada.

I call on the members of the House to join me in remembering those brave steel workers who sacrificed their lives in the service of Canada.

* * *

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the life and work of Robert (Bob) Burns of Estevan, Saskatchewan, in the constituency of Souris—Moose Mountain.

Robert was born in 1930 in the hills of southwestern Saskatchewan in the Wood Mountain area. Sports like baseball, softball, skating, curling and hockey were always a big part of his life. During his years, he worked as a grain buyer, car salesman and for 25 years as a retail salesman with Sears Canada.

He always believed in being a team player and devoted much of his life to helping youngsters become involved in the sport of hockey and ball. He picked them up and at times fed them kept them at his home, and he coached and taught them not only about sports but also important life lessons. He believed that to be successful in sports and in life, one had to give 100%, hold one's head high and be a good sport.

It is these great attributes and qualities in Robert and his life's contribution to the many communities in Souris—Moose Mountain that are recognized in the awarding of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal to him. I congratulate Bob. Way to go.

* * *

● (1105)

FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 12 to November 17 is Family Doctor Week in Canada.

Family Doctor Week proudly acknowledges the outstanding contributions of Canadian family doctors and dedication to their patients and delivery of high quality care.

[*Translation*]

We have heard from patients just how much they value their family doctors and how important their help is when it comes to providing the necessary care to patients and their families.

[*English*]

In particular, I would like to pay tribute to Dr. Calvin Gutkin, who is retiring as executive director and CEO of the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

[*Translation*]

For the past 16 years, he has worked tirelessly on behalf of family doctors and all Canadians who want to see improvements in family medicine across the country.

[*English*]

He supported the successful evolution of the Family Medicine Forum, and the enhancement of medical student and resident training as the future of family medicine, and he spearheaded the development of the National Physician Survey. Most recently, he helped author, and is currently advocating for, the Patient's Medical Home as the next significant step in enhancing family practice care in Canada.

Cal is a true believer in family medicine. We thank him for his endeavours and wish him well in the future.

* * *

HOCKEY NIGHT IN LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 1, I hosted my sixth annual Hockey Night in Leeds and Grenville. This charity hockey match features former NHL stars, local dignitaries and members of Parliament on the ice raising money for the United Way of Leeds and Grenville. The game ended in a tie, but I am pleased to report that the real winner was the United Way, as \$112,000 was raised for its campaign.

I want to thank the donors who made this game and its results possible, and the fans who came out to support this great cause. In particular, I would also like to thank Crystal Sled and executive director Judi Baril and her team at the United Way for their tremendous organizing efforts, and special thanks go to former NHL star Doug Smith, who was the honorary chair of this event.

The event was held in Athens this year, with the support of that community's council, headed up by Mayor Herb Scott. Finally, George and Kevin Tackaberry of Tackaberry and Sons deserve special mention. They made a very large donation and then topped it off to bring the total to \$112,000.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to point out that the Conservatives hold the shameful record of muzzling the members and cutting off debate 29 times since the beginning of this Parliament.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge the government to take action on employment insurance. For the past few weeks, it has been using surreptitious means to pressure and harass job seekers who are already feeling the stress of not being able to make ends meet.

Statements by Members

On the one hand, the government is going after unemployed workers like a desperate vulture and forcing them to send from three to five CVs a week, under the pretext that there is a labour shortage. On the other hand, we have the facts: Statistics Canada has said that the Canadian economy is not producing enough jobs, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us that cuts in 2012 will eliminate another 125,000 jobs.

Canadians need jobs. The government needs to stop wasting its time hounding unemployed workers and do what it was elected to do.

The government wants unemployed Canadians to work. The solution is simple: create jobs.

* * *

[English]

PORTAGE—LISGAR

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we all prepare for possible boundary changes in our ridings, I would like to bring the attention of this House to a location of immense importance in western Canada.

The prime meridian sits on a small plot of land in the northeast corner of my riding of Portage—Lisgar. This is where, beginning 1872, the dominion surveyor measured, mile by mile, on all points of the compass, over 200 million acres of land from Manitoba to British Columbia.

Immigrants and settlers moved onto the land and words section, half-section and quarter-section came into our vocabulary. Our roads, our farms, our towns and villages all designated from this one simple beginning.

The measure of any great nation is the strength of its history and the character of its people. The prime meridian is an important starting point for the western Canada we know and love. Today, a cairn marks this historic spot in my riding and preserves its history for centuries to come.

* * *

CANADIAN YOUNG SCIENTIST JOURNAL AWARDS

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to share with the House the success of some of our young scientists for their candidacy for the *Canadian Young Scientist Journal* best paper awards.

As members may know, the *Canadian Young Scientist Journal* located in my riding of Willowdale provides a unique opportunity to high school students to express their views on a broad range of scientific topics and introduce themselves to the national scientific community.

The competition helps young people to discover the innovative potential of tomorrow through a platform that allows them to discuss their ideas with their peers and academic communities. The success of these young scientists will surely lead them on the path to university or further research.

Today I congratulate Abhishek Chakraborty, Brittney Allen, Carlos Xu, Alexandra Ficht and Rachel McLay. They have worked

hard to come up with some of the best papers in this cross-Canada competition.

These aspiring young scientists are truly leading citizens of our nation and the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you and all hon. members join me today in recognizing the achievement of these young scientists.

* * *

• (1110)

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege to rise today to pay tribute to Stephen Lewis on the occasion of his 75th birthday on November 11. I am very proud to follow in the footsteps of New Democrats like Stephen Lewis, who have represented my community. Stephen was the MPP for Scarborough West for 15 years, 8 of them as leader of the Ontario NDP.

Among his many accomplishments, Stephen served as Canada's ambassador to the United Nations and the UN's Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, work that he continues today through the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Anyone who has heard him speak knows of his oratory skills and mastery of the English language. They also know of his passion: his passion for Africa; his passion for women's rights and equality; and his passion for a just society.

On behalf of the official opposition and, indeed, all New Democrats, I wish Stephen Lewis a happy 75th birthday and I extend our best wishes for many more to come.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 70th anniversary of the Dieppe raid in August was a powerful reminder of the bravery and dedication that Canadians demonstrated during the Second World War. Of the nearly 5,000 Canadians who participated, only 2,210 returned to England, many of them wounded. Tragically, 916 Canadians died as a result.

Those who participated in the Dieppe Raid were among the more than one million Canadians who served during the Second World War. Their efforts helped ensure victory was achieved. During the Second World War, approximately 55,000 Canadians were wounded and more than 45,000 gave their lives in the fight for freedom. This was a remarkable sacrifice for a young nation with a population of only 11 million people.

It is our duty to preserve the legacy these courageous men and women granted us and ensure their selfless dedication is never forgotten. We must pass the torch of remembrance on to future generations so they, too, can understand and appreciate the importance of commemoration.

Lest We Forget.

*Statements by Members***MEDIA LITERACY WEEK**

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the digital world offers an incredible opportunity for free expression, social engagement and learning and yet, along with this unprecedented access come serious issues, particularly for young people who are navigating the world of chat pages and social media. This is why privacy online is a right. Privacy matters.

This is the message of the National Media Literacy Week. The New Democrats are very proud to support the seventh annual Media Literacy Week that was launched by MediaSmarts which, along with the Canadian Teachers' Federation and 70 other organizations, are working with young people, teachers and community leaders to raise awareness and understanding of digital literacy online.

We call on the government to get proactive, to ensure that the rights of young people online are protected and to ensure that the Privacy Commissioner has the tools she needs to protect the rights of Canadians in the digital realm.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank everyone who so generously shared their touching poems, thoughts, stories and feelings on the Records & Collections page of the Veterans Affairs website. I would like to quote an excerpt from a poem by Madeleine Heckbert entitled *Remember*:

Remember them:
The war they waged,
The lives they saved,
The freedom they gave.
Remember them.

Remember that for justice,
For love of country,
Many perished.
These children we cherished,
They fought for justice.

...

Remember their bravery,
Their strength and invincibility.
We depended on them
And they on us.

Some gave their lives
While others still live.
Our love for them thrives.
Our thanks we still give.

I would like to join with Ms. Heckbert in saying: lest we forget.

* * *

●(1115)

[English]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the eve of the 74th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, when, in 1938, Nazi troops stormed Jewish neighbourhoods in Germany, vandalizing Jewish homes and businesses, desecrating

synagogues and cemeteries, arresting some 30,000 Jews, murdering others and burning books, as a precursor to burning people and the atrocities to come.

We commemorate Kristallnacht on the eve also of Remembrance Day when we honour the brave men and women who fought for Canada and for freedom, including those instrumental in defeating the Third Reich.

This week is also Holocaust Education Week, wherein the lessons of the Holocaust are transmitted to generations of Canadians will resonate globally with Canada as incoming chair of the International Task Force for Holocaust Remembrance and Education.

[Translation]

The lessons of the Holocaust are universal. We remember the dangers associated with cultures of hate and the importance of speaking out against injustice.

[English]

Tonight, I will attend a commemoration of Kristallnacht and, on Sunday, Remembrance Day ceremonies in my riding. As we remember the horrors of the past, let us ensure that the world will never experience such horrors again.

Lest we forget.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next week, members of Parliament will travel back to their ridings to speak with their constituents on the things that matter most to them. I can assure members that we will not hear a call for higher taxes.

Canadians are pleased with our government's low tax plan for jobs and growth and for lowering the price on almost everything with our 2% cut to GST.

What they do not want to see is the NDP's proposed carbon tax that would raise the price on almost everything. Its sneaky tax scheme would have Canadians spend more of their hard-earned tax dollars on gas, groceries and electricity.

Why does the leader of the NDP want hard-working Canadians to pay for his \$21 billion carbon tax?

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week will be busy back in my riding of Newton—North Delta. Not only will I have the pleasure of participating in multiple events but I will also have to explain the \$8 billion Conservative money grab. That is right, for the last six years Conservatives have been sneaking increases to user fees for Canadians. They are now twice as high as they were a decade ago. What are the Conservatives gouging Canadians for? Youth exchange programs, maps, family reunification, even divorce, and I could go on. There are many more.

What is worse is that almost all of their budget cuts are to the very services Canadians rely on. Increased user fees and blind and reckless cuts, it is a double whammy for Canadians and their wallets. That is why New Democrats vote against the Conservatives' irresponsible agenda.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in May of 2011 the NDP misled Canadians when it titled its election platform, "Give families a break". In fact, this could not be further from the truth. What it should have called its platform is, "Give families a \$21 billion carbon tax". At least then it would be accurate.

It is located right on page 4 in the same platform in black and white, an NDP carbon tax scheme that would raise the price of all things Canadian families need, such as groceries, gas, electricity and heat. In effect, this NDP tax gets tough on Canadian families, not giving them a break as the opposition would have Canadians believe.

Thankfully, Canadian voters gave our Conservative government a mandate to keep taxes low, grow jobs and really give Canadian families the break they so rightfully deserve.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, we learned that the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development will announce a plan to privatize social services. One of the models that she wants to use to justify the government's massive cuts to public services is that of Goldman Sachs, the commercial bank accused of fraud in the American real estate scandal no less.

Can the Conservatives tell us exactly what services they are going to privatize and why those services are no longer part of the government's plans?

• (1120)

[*English*]

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has been focused on making sure that communities and families are well supported. That

is exactly what this initiative is doing, very unlike the NDP's approach.

Whether we put forward initiatives such as the enabling accessibility fund or whether it is the registered disabilities savings plan, these are initiatives to help Canadians and help communities, unlike the NDP's approach where it wants to tax individuals to make sure that we cannot provide those programs for them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's disengagement is not going to put more money in people's pockets.

The other model that the minister is using is that of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom. The people of Great Britain opposed it, and their government had to rethink its plan four times.

What the minister is proposing here is merely a public relations exercise to justify new cuts to services for Canadians. Why imitate a plan that failed so miserably in the United Kingdom?

[*English*]

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we actually have a plan in this country. We have the economic action plan, and we are putting it in place to make sure that Canadians have jobs. We want to make sure that Canadians are able to provide for themselves and build their communities. That is exactly what we are doing with this initiative.

I look forward to the NDP supporting the economic action plan, but apparently it is not willing to do that. It is not willing to help create Canadian jobs, as we have done with 820,000 net new jobs.

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that 85% of Conservative cuts are to front-line staff and services Canadians rely on. Service Canada is already in bad shape. One in four EI applications are not being processed on time. The majority of calls are not being answered.

Why is the only Conservative response to this more privatization?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is clearly not the case. We have indeed put forward more resources to ensure that Canadians have the services when and where they need them, all across this country. We have done so in a way that is economically efficient and responsible, and reacts to the needs of communities that are diverse all across the country.

Just because things are being done differently does not mean that the NDP members have to put on their tinfoil hats and come up with conspiracy theories. The reality is that Canadians need these services, and we are providing them. We have increased services to those communities that are most in need. We will continue to do so because they are indeed the services that Canadians have come to expect.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the proposed Conservative model for fiscal restraint is to focus their cuts on the services that Canadians rely on and then use Goldman Sachs as a model for prudent management. What is motivating the Conservatives here is not actually any concern about social services, it is a PR stunt to make up for the fact that they are making these reckless cuts.

Can the Conservatives tell us what in the world they hope to learn about social service delivery from investment banks?

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, our government recognizes that we have to take steps to ensure we enable communities to tackle local problems. That is exactly what these initiatives do. They allow communities to deal with their local issues so that they can be effective in supporting families.

It is very unlike the NDP approach, which wants to tax and spend, making sure that Canadians do not have the funds in their pockets to help with their local communities. We are about creating jobs. We are about making sure we build communities. I encourage the NDP to support the economic action plan, which helps create those jobs and build those communities.

* * *

PARKS CANADA

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we also learned that Conservatives will stop maintaining cross-country ski trails in many of our national parks. They include Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan, Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, and Elk Island National Park in Alberta. This is another example of cuts to direct services.

Can the Conservatives tell us if they plan to use a private company to deliver these services as well, perhaps Goldman Sachs?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no government has done more when it comes to protecting our great natural spaces. National parks and historic sites will remain open this winter. Parks Canada is working with volunteer groups to provide assistance and equipment for ski tracking and trail maintenance.

* * *

● (1125)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Public Safety, yesterday he told the House, in the course of an answer, that he in fact had been instrumental in instructing officials to settle the civil suit between Ashley Smith's family and the Government of Canada.

What facts was the minister aware of that led him to reach that conclusion? Second, does the government have other videos in its possession with respect to the treatment of Ashley Smith? Does it have other videos in its possession with respect to the treatment of other people in our prison system?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Public Safety was very clear on this matter yesterday. Of course, the

Oral Questions

treatment of Ashley Smith is indeed a tragedy. That is why the coroner's inquest is ongoing. The Minister of Public Safety has instructed all those associated with the inquiry to provide all the information necessary so that we can not only get to the bottom of the Ashley Smith incident specifically, but also more broadly ensure that those who are in custody going forward are treated with respect and appropriate techniques that are greatly improved, based on the tragedy that we saw in the treatment of Ashley Smith.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is odd that the minister who is aware of the situation did not answer the question, but I am willing to accept the other minister's response on behalf of the government as long as he provides the specific answers we need. I asked the minister very specific questions, and I think that we are entitled to receive answers that are just as specific.

What facts led the government to settle with Ashley Smith's family? Is the government in possession of any other videos with respect to the treatment of Ashley Smith? Is the government in possession of any other videos with respect to the treatment of other mentally ill people in the Canadian prison system?

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would remind all hon. members not to refer to who is or is not in the chamber.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

[Translation]

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's first question was clear, and my answer was also clear.

The minister said it yesterday, and I am repeating it today: we gave instructions that all the necessary information be given to investigators so that, in the future, the judicial process produces more responsible outcomes than what we saw in the videos of Ashley Smith.

[English]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect, the Minister of Public Safety is in the House. That is why I asked him the question. He is here.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. What I said was that members should not refer to who is or is not in the chamber.

The hon. member for Toronto Centre may proceed.

Hon. Bob Rae: Mr. Speaker, I will not refer to the fact that the minister is not answering the question that I asked him. However, I will ask the same minister, why is he not answering this question?

Oral Questions

I am asking him a very specific question. What facts led him to settle with Ashley Smith's family? What videos did the government have in its possession? Those are very clear questions. What other videos does he have in his possession? What other photographs does he have in his possession? What other things does he have in his possession about the mistreatment of mental patients who are in our prisons?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we take this particular case and the broad subject very seriously. That is why we are working with the inquest to ensure that all the information is being given forward.

More broadly, we want to ensure that Canadians understand that we have invested into our regime for supporting mental health across the country, not only in the corrections system but beyond that. We want to ensure that the tragedy and the cruelty, frankly, that Ashley Smith faced is not repeated in the future. That is why the minister has taken the responsible action to ensure that all the information is coming forward.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the government and the member for Toronto Centre paid any attention to the correctional investigator, they would know he already reviewed more than 60 hours of tape with regard to Ashley Smith and made recommendations more than two years ago. When the Minister of Public Safety was asked to implement those recommendations to ensure that no one else faces the same fate as Ashley Smith, the minister responded with an absurd partisan attack.

Ashley was a victim of the system, a system unprepared to deal with mental illness. This time could the minister spare us the talking points and platitudes. Will he apologize to Ashley Smith's family and will he commit today to implementing the correctional investigator's recommendations?

• (1130)

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note the member is reading from his talking points. What I am prepared to say in response to his talking points is that this tragedy continues to show that individuals with mental health issues do not belong in prisons but rather in professional health facilities.

At the same time, our government continues to take concrete steps on the issue of mental health in prisons. Since 2006, we have invested nearly \$90 million in mental health for prisoners and we continue to take action to improve access to mental health treatment and training for staff.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, the minister just admitted that individuals with mental illnesses do not belong in prison. However, on the Conservatives' watch the intake of inmates with mental illnesses has nearly doubled.

The system is not equipped to deal with this problem and the Conservatives refuse to fix it. Instead, they tied the hands of judges with mandatory minimums, cut the Correctional Service Canada budget and ignored the consequences inside and outside of prisons.

Again, I ask the same simple question. Will the minister listen to the correctional investigator and implement his recommendations?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our police and judges do the work that they are assigned to do by Parliament under the Criminal Code. In that context, people with mental health issues have landed up not only in our federal penitentiaries but in our provincial jails.

We sat down last week with the provincial ministers to find a better way of dealing with those who have mental health problems. I know the member is concerned about this. I can tell him that all of the ministers right across Canada are very concerned about coming up with a solution to this.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not just Ashley Smith who has not had justice. Let us look at what is happening in Alberta where judicial resources are stretched to the breaking point.

The case of an accused child molester was thrown out of court for unreasonable delays after more than three years in the court system. The Conservatives' failure to provide adequate judicial resources has real consequences.

Will the minister step up and fulfill Alberta's request for additional judges?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we consider all requests from our provincial counterparts. Quite frankly, I am pleased to see the opposition has discovered the justice file. It is an important one and one that we have made a priority over the years.

I hope this new interest will extend to supporting the legislation that we have brought forward to crack down on criminals and stand up for victims in our country. I hope we get that from the opposition. It would be great.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they say they are against bullying, but when it comes to justice issues they respond with bully tactics.

Last week, at the meeting of ministers of justice, the provinces and territories voiced their concerns about cuts to youth justice programs, underfunding of legal aid and the shortage of police officers, especially in first nations communities.

They also discussed the lack of consultation about federal crime bills. The federal government does not consult them at all.

Will the Minister of Justice address the problems identified by the provinces and territories?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been fixing these problems over the years with no help whatsoever from the NDP and their colleagues.

Under the leadership of our Minister of Finance, transfers to the provinces have been up 43% since the year 2006. That is very impressive. We support the provinces and non-governmental organizations. We have programs at the federal level, all better designed to tackle crime in our country and assist victims across Canada. This is what we should do and we should have the support of everyone in the House on that.

* * *

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on matters of justice in the provincial government, maybe the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs could work with the provinces to try and help solve some of these problems, because the Prime Minister has been alienating the provinces, even refusing to attend an upcoming first ministers meeting in Halifax. In fact, he will not even sit down with the premiers to discuss our shaky economy.

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs be attending the first ministers meeting in Halifax? Will he give us some idea about his plan to correct the problems in the relationship between the provinces and the federal government?

• (1135)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope the hon. member did not miss this, but just last week we met with our provincial counterparts. The Minister of Public Safety and I sat down with our provincial and territorial counterparts. We had a great discussion with respect to areas of mutual concern such as cracking down on crime, updating the Criminal Code, standing up for victims and law-abiding Canadians. It was a very fruitful, very productive discussion. I was very pleased to have it. I hope that has the support of everyone here.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are really trying to help the minister from Labrador, but he is not really doing much. He gets a limo, a driver and lots of staff. He gets a very generous pay from the taxpayer and for that he is supposed to be able to stand and explain himself. However, we will go with something simpler.

Why was 79% of the travel expenses as minister spent in his own province? That is on top of the \$18,000 in free flights from his campaign. We have a simple question. Is he using his ministerial dollars and taxpayer dollars to perpetually campaign around his riding?

Hon. Peter Penashue (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to strong relations with the provinces and territories based on true respect for their

jurisdictions. I work with my counterparts to ensure that a strong relationship continues to grow. I also make it a priority to ensure that our government does its part in fostering jobs and growth in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada. That is what we do and that is what we will continue to do.

* * *

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yes, but what he has not done is explain why he is blowing all this money in his riding like he has not explained about his campaign spending. The member is like a poster boy for why we need stronger laws at Elections Canada. Let us get on to that.

This past week, Elections Canada praised the New Democratic Party for pushing for stronger powers for the Chief Electoral Officer to deal with voter fraud. Meanwhile, we also learned from new affidavits that it was the Conservative Party headquarters that had the call list that went out for voter suppression.

What are Conservatives doing? Are they going to sit and wait for the next RCMP raid against Conservative Party headquarters, or are they going to come clean with the taxpayers?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has made it clear that we need to improve our electoral laws. That is why he is going to bring forward legislation to do that.

However, the problem is not always that we need to improve our electoral laws. The problem is that some parties like the NDP do not even follow our election finance laws, having accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal donations that they then were required to pay back. They decided behind closed doors what was going on with Elections Canada. They did not disclose it to the House or to Canadians. They are the ones who have to be accountable to Canadians for this and they are not willing to do that.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would think that, having been found guilty of using the in and out scheme and having the RCMP raid party headquarters, the Conservatives would be a little more humble.

After an investigation lasting a year and a half, voters are eager to find out who is behind the biggest voter fraud in the history of Canada. But the Conservatives are dragging their feet and refuse to give Elections Canada more powers.

It is odd. It is as though they had something to hide and were trying to buy time. It is more than a little suspicious in light of the fact that the Conservative Party headquarters provided the call list for fraudulent calls.

When will they stop covering for the fraudsters? When will they take their heads out of the sand? When will they give the powers—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order.

Oral Questions

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

[English]

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, those members start out by attacking the minister for spending time in his constituency and reaching out to the people of Labrador. Perhaps if the member for Timmins—James Bay spent as much time reaching out to his constituents, he would know that they did not want him to break his word and vote in favour of the much despised Liberal long gun registry. However, at the same time, he has a seat mate who will not even answer the simple question of whether he believes his province should still be in the country. I will give him a chance to stand and declare it—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in a federal court affidavit, the COO of RMG is clear. Scripts were constructed to inform voters of polling changes in the last week of the campaign. The calls were based wholly on data provided by the Conservative Party. Such unreported data is crucial for Elections Canada to complete its investigation, but there is nothing in the Elections Act to require such reporting.

Will Conservatives support my bill that would enforce good reporting of voter telecommunications during campaigns, yes or no?

• (1140)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform has made it quite clear that we need to improve Canada's elections laws. That is why he will bring forward legislation to do exactly that. We continue to gather input from other sources.

Just the other day I saw media reports of a further report from the chair of Elections Canada suggesting that we should be considering other changes. He will look comprehensively at what needs to be changed and bring forward proposals that will address those problems so we will not have the kind of issues we have had with the Liberals with loans that are not being paid back from their leadership contestants that are effectively illegal donations and the kind of illegal donations—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is again for the Minister of Public Safety. Could the minister tell us what facts and documentation in possession of the government led it to settle out of court with Ashley Smith's family? Does the government still have in its possession other videos and documentation with respect to Ashley Smith going back further than just one year? Will the government guarantee that it will not destroy the other videos and documentation in its possession with respect to the treatment of people who have mental challenges and mental problems who have ended up in Canada's prisons?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, any of the records the leader of the third party is asking for would be in the custody of Correctional Service Canada. As members know, the government has clearly directed Correctional Service Canada to work with the coroner's inquest. This matter is being dealt with in a public forum and in a fully transparent way.

* * *

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the member for Labrador is drowning in his election irregularities. The management of the relationship between the federal government and the provinces is a major job and the minister is simply not doing his job. His own website shows only three meetings with provincial counterparts, and that was all in 2011. God only knows what he has been doing in 2012. He has been ripping off taxpayers by not doing his job.

Will the minister admit to not doing his job and resign immediately?

Hon. Peter Penashue (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sometimes I just cannot believe how rude and how bullish those people can be.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Hon. Peter Penashue: Mr. Speaker, our government has a strong relationship with provincial and territorial governments. I meet with counterparts regularly and focus on the strength of the province and growing Canada's economy. New exploration and investment are occurring across Canada, especially in Labrador.

In my role as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, I get to share these success stories with people from coast to coast to coast. I am working hard to ensure that all Canadians benefit.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the government is slashing front-line services to Canadians, it is spending a record half a billion dollars on lawyers, an increase of almost 40% in the past three years alone. Instead of doing the right thing, it is telling people it will see them in court. The Conservatives are using the courts to quash first nations child rights and to fight with veterans over the clawback of their military pensions.

When will the government work with Canadians on finding real solutions rather than spending millions of dollars on lawyers?

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at any given time the federal government is involved with nearly 50,000 litigation files. The costs are based on a number of cases, including fighting on behalf of residential school survivors as well as fighting against big tobacco.

We make no apologies for defending the rights of Canadians in court.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the chief energy researcher at CNOOC recently gave a speech in Beijing. He warned oil industry executives that if Canada did not approve the construction of pipelines to China, the oil sands would become outdated.

The Nexen deal has not even been approved and CNOOC is already announcing its intentions to get greater access to the oil sands.

Why are the Conservatives letting themselves be intimidated by this Chinese state-owned company that only wants to help itself to our energy resources?

• (1145)

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member, there was a lot of fabrication in her question.

Obviously, every decision regarding foreign investment is always made in the best interests of Canadians. As for the potential CNOOC-Nexen deal, it is a matter of determining whether there is a net benefit to Canada. I repeat that the deal is now being carefully examined.

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives seem to have a hard time understanding their new investment agreement with China.

Do the Conservatives realize that under this agreement, giving national treatment to Chinese state-owned companies means that they have the same rights as those given to Canadian companies with respect to purchasing new oil leases and expanding their operations in Canada?

[*English*]

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, as I explained yesterday, the FIPA between Canada and China is about recognizing Chinese investment rights in Canada and Canadian investment rights in China. It is as simple as that. There is nothing nefarious about this.

I would ask the hon. member, though, why the NDP consistently opposes trade. Why would it allow members of the NDP, like the member for British Columbia Southern Interior, to say that trade threatens the very existence of our nation? Where does that mindset come from and what does that say about the future of the NDP?

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates worked diligently to identify key reforms to improve the capacity of MPs to deliver their constitutional duty to scrutinize government spending, reforms based on the advice of renowned parliamentary experts. Despite two similar reports over the last decade, the government voted to throw these reforms in the dustbin.

Why is the government refusing to make the very reforms needed to usher in the once-promised open, transparent, participatory democracy?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada overwhelmingly agreed with the recommendations from that particular committee. Specifically, I can say to the House that there is a direct relationship now, a new structure, for approving spending that will provide taxpayers and parliamentarians with a clear and traceable line between spending approvals and specific government programs. No other government has done this. We are proud of the initiatives that we have taken to improve transparency and improve the ability of parliamentarians to review the budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in any case, they did not listen to the key recommendation with regard to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

At the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, the Conservatives contributed to drafting and adopting the committee report, which suggested many ways to make government finances more transparent. The committee spent months and months working on this.

But yesterday, instead of standing up, doing their job and defending the report, the Conservatives supported an irresponsible amendment to shelve it and undo their own work.

Can any of the Conservative members of the committee explain this about-face?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order.

The President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we agreed with most of this committee's and the report's recommendations. It is important to have more transparency and accountability. We accept this report. It is important in order to have members' support for the budget. We accept most of the recommendations.

Oral Questions

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day is a time for all Canadians to remember the sacrifices of Canada's fallen. As parliamentarians, we are privileged to stand in the House regardless of political differences and represent the very democracy of Canada's veterans who fought and gave their lives for us.

Would the Minister of Veterans Affairs comment on the importance of recognizing the services and sacrifices of Canada's veterans?

● (1150)

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, a former RCMP officer, is absolutely right. We as Canadian parliamentarians owe a tribute to our veterans because it is due to their sacrifice that we can stand for democracy in this very House.

[Translation]

On the weekend, I invite all parliamentarians to take the time to thank the veterans, reach out to them, lay a wreath and say thank you. Canada thanks you for the sacrifices you made for our country.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of bad Conservative policies, only four lakes in Quebec are now protected.

I would reply to my hon. colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel that the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities has even said that he would not go everywhere and into every café to consult people. He believes that consultation with representatives is enough.

Can the minister tell us who in Sorel finds it acceptable that Lac Saint-Pierre is no longer protected, even though it is home to the largest archipelago in the St. Lawrence and the largest heronry in North America?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is talking about herons, while we on the other hand are talking about boats. That makes all the difference. We are talking about two completely different things. What we want to talk about is navigation. We want to manage any area where navigation is used. Environment officials will manage the environment and Fisheries and Oceans people will manage their department. The opposition members are mixing everything up.

As for navigation, we will continue to ensure that what needs to be done is done for Canada's economy. The municipalities and provinces have all asked us to eliminate delays in awarding contracts and issuing mandates.

[English]

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Muskoka minister made sure that his lakes and rivers were

protected in the budget, just not other important waterways that support recreation and fishing.

The Bowmanville Creek in the riding of Durham is a great example. The creek has recently seen salmon stocks improve due to local efforts. Sadly, the Conservatives' new budget bill would remove protection from this waterway. Bridges and impediments would go through without federal review.

Why did the Conservatives abandon the protection of this waterway?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have not abandoned the protection of waterways. We have many rules and acts to protect that. In our department, we have to protect and control navigation. That is what we have done.

I want to be clear when I say that 98% of the applications received have never posed a threat to navigation. That means that they want to invest money for absolutely nothing. This is not the case. This would not be a responsible use of taxpayers dollars and shows just how much change is needed. That is why we are reforming the act. Now our resources can focus on waterways navigation.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the aftershocks of the massive 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Haida Gwaii over a week ago was still shaking the B.C. coast last night. It was a close call, far too close.

Instead of cutting programs that help community emergency response, as the Conservatives are doing, we need to ensure that every protection is available to our towns and villages in the event of a major natural disaster.

Will the minister commit today to work with the people of Haida Gwaii and make all the necessary investments to keep our communities safe?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the majority of emergencies in Canada are local in nature and managed by local or provincial governments. We, in fact, have worked very closely with local governments.

We are now focusing on some of the things that the federal government can do better, for example, the mitigation program that was announced by the Prime Minister for Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec, the \$99 million to assist with the flooding. We are also in overall discussions with the provinces about a national mitigation program, and I hope I can get the support of that member for this.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hard truth about the Conservatives' recent monster budget bill is an affront to democracy and a direct attack on our environment. By warping a law meant to protect our rivers into a pipeline promotions act, by ignoring the good people of Victoria, Haida Gwaii and the coastal communities of British Columbia, this Conservative government is threatening the very resources we rely upon.

When will B.C. Conservative MPs actually stand up for our beautiful province in this place? When will they stand up for British Columbia and stop selling it out?

• (1155)

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the bill and its amendments will improve navigation everywhere in Canada, including in British Columbia, and do not in any way eliminate the other departments' responsibilities.

All projects must continue to comply with federal legislation, such as the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, and many others.

Many measures will continue to protect nature. And we will look after navigation.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at government assistance for veterans' funerals. Serving members of the Canadian Forces get \$12,700. Some traditional vets get \$3,600. Modern-day veterans get zero. Veterans who earn more than \$1,000 a month get zero.

It is time that we embrace one veteran, one standard. When will the government treat all of our veterans fairly and evenly?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must say that it is a big job looking after our veterans after years of Liberal neglect.

For six years, our government has invested in our veterans. I can reassure them that we have no intention of making cuts to programs, as the Liberals did to the program that we are talking about.

Every week, every month, we continue to improve the quality of life of our veterans by providing them with better services, because they deserve that.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I received petitions signed by thousands of people who are against the Conservatives' proposed changes to employment insurance. These

people understand very well that there are no jobs in the middle of the winter where we come from and that the Prime Minister is punishing them because he thinks that these people might just be lazy.

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to meet with these workers and why does the government refuse to change its plan that will punish both the people working in seasonal industries and their employers?

[English]

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has been focused on ensuring that Canadians have an opportunity to have jobs in their local areas that meet their local qualifications and their qualifications overall.

We have created 820,000 net new jobs in this country since the downturn in the economy, the recession. That is why we are focused on ensuring that Canadians have opportunities for jobs.

Just like in my riding of Simcoe—Grey, where seasonal workers have great opportunities, we are building those opportunities for Canadians in the future.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Resolute Forest Products workers and retirees are worried that their pension fund is in jeopardy. Earlier this week, the company announced the elimination of 111 jobs at the plant in Grand-Mère, and in Clermont, the workers still do not know whether they will return to work.

Canada is one of the only OECD countries that provides no protection for workers' pension funds when an employer goes bankrupt or becomes insolvent.

What are the Conservatives waiting for? When will we see a bill to protect the pension funds of Canadian workers?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is completely false. First of all, I offer my sympathies to those who are facing these challenges.

Fortunately, these people can count on a government that has taken action in the past: we improved protections for workers, we changed the legislation to ensure that regular pension payments are made before other creditors are paid, and we also expanded the wage earner protection program, to pay severance pay up to \$3,400.

I know that the member was not here during the previous Parliament, but her party voted against these changes, and that is shameful.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, Luxorama in Saint-Jérôme filed for bankruptcy without notice under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, brutally dismissing 200 employees. With a just a few weeks left before the holidays, the employees are devastated. Not only are they losing their jobs without warning, but they are also finding out that the average wait time in Quebec to get the first employment insurance cheque is 39 days, when the wait time should not exceed 28 days.

For weeks I have been listening to the Minister of Human Resources tell us that she is working on improving service delivery. I am sorry, but this minister has to stop taking Canadians for fools. She is not working—

• (1200)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources.

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority is to improve job creation and economic growth. Service Canada will use more automation to continue to work on responding better to Canadians and serving them in a quick and efficient manner.

[English]

Service Canada continues to provide improvements and update its operations so that Canadians have opportunities to access our programming.

We are using taxpayers dollars the best. We want to ensure that Canadians have opportunities to access all programming available to them.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday our nation's exporters were disappointed when the NDP voted against Canada's free trade agreement with Panama. After having delayed the agreement for more than two years, this was obviously no surprise. In fact, the leader of the opposition has said that, if given the opportunity, he would repeal agreements that promote trade, increase Canadian exports and protect Canadians doing business abroad.

Could the parliamentary secretary please share with the House how our government is standing up for the interests of Canada's exporters?

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, the hon. member for Wild Rose is correct. The NDP's vote against our agreement with Panama was predictable. This is the same party that sent an anti-trade mission to Washington to lobby against Canadian jobs. It is the same party that has consistently opposed our government's initiatives to increase trade and promote Canadian exports.

While the NDP talks down Canada to the world, our Conservative government will continue to open new opportunities to grow Canadian exports and create Canadian jobs.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, 52 Conservative senators voted en masse to block MS sufferers from testifying before a Senate committee on Bill S-204. Can anyone imagine a committee hearing on cancer not calling cancer sufferers? Given this slap in the face to MS patients, will the government commit, if S-204 comes to the House, to allow MS sufferers to testify? Will it give MS patients back their voice?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the difficulties and heartbreak faced by the thousands of MS patients and their families across Canada. We were clear all along that we are committed to funding a clinical trial for CCSVI once all the necessary medical and ethical standards were met. That is why last month at the health ministers meetings in Halifax I announced that, after a rigorous review process, clinical trials for CCSVI have been accepted and recruitment for patients to participate will begin this month.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates just completed a study on public-private partnerships. P3s are a form of insidious privatization and, as we are seeing right now in Quebec, the risk of collusion and corruption is huge if we allow private enterprise too much involvement in the management of public affairs.

One of the recommendations that we would like to see included in the final report is ensuring greater transparency and oversight when it comes to P3 contracts.

Will this government follow that recommendation?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, PPP Canada Inc. has been remarkably successful and is announcing more and more partnerships, not only with certain municipalities but with aboriginal groups and first nations in Canada, with projects from coast to coast to coast. This is a crown corporation that operates in an objective arm's length manner. It reviews applications on the basis of merit. We do not comment, of course, on applications under review.

I appreciate the interest of the member opposite in PPP Canada Inc. It does provide greater value to taxpayers and helps meet Canada's infrastructure needs.

SEALING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has long supported Canadian sealers and their families while Hollywood activists have spread false information about the humaneness and practice of the hunt.

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans please inform the House of a recent study regarding the seal hunt and its humane practices, as well as our government's support for the industry?

• (1205)

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Miramichi for raising this issue. Two veterinary researchers who have observed the hunt first-hand over several seasons have published a report indicating "...there is no reliable evidence that the Canadian harp seal hunt differs from other forms of exploitation of wildlife resources from the perspective of animal welfare".

With a record high number of seals and highly regulated humane practices used in the hunt, the government will continue to defend Canadian sealers and their families against those who do not understand the practice of the hunt or how important it is to the traditional way of life in many communities.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservative cuts to services and centralized processing of immigration applications are having a terrible impact on wait times for international adoptions.

Our constituency offices are overwhelmed by complaints from Canadians who are fed up with having to wait longer and longer for their international adoptions to go through.

Every additional month spent away from their new Canadian parents is harmful to the physical and psychological development of these children.

Can the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism tell us how he plans to fix this problem, which was created by the Conservatives in the first place?

[English]

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ministry and this government recognize the importance that Canadian families place on being united with adopted children from abroad as quickly and efficiently as possible. As the member may know, in all cases they are done on a priority basis.

There is no reason for anyone in the House to stand up and accuse this government of not doing what is absolutely right when it comes to adoption. It is about priority, placement and doing the job properly.

Business of the House

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Justice accused us of overlooking all his fine accomplishments, but he is the one who overlooked our question.

As the minister knows, he can already add terrorist groups to a list to freeze or seize their assets, and he can require banks to prevent these groups from accessing their accounts.

Why not do the same thing with the Mafia and criminal gangs who, as we have seen in the media, use the Port of Montreal as a gateway for their criminal activity because of the weakness of the inspection process there?

Is the minister willing to consider an anti-Mafia law and a list of banned criminal organizations such as the one we already have for terrorist groups? What is good for the goose must also be good for the gander.

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since forming government we have passed legislation to address auto theft, ID theft, fraud and white-collar crime. All of these are directed at criminal organizations that turn a profit at the expense of Canadians.

We have had lots of legislation dealing with organized crime. If the hon. member wants to put the mob out of business, his party should start supporting our efforts to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. This concludes question period for today.

Although we are following a Friday schedule, I believe the hon. opposition House leader has his regular Thursday question today.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

M. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NPD): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise on behalf of the official opposition to ask the government what it has planned for the House for the remainder of this week and next week.

[English]

As MPs head back to their ridings to mark the solemn occasion of Remembrance Day, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the ultimate price that has been paid all too many times by men and women, affecting all too many families, in the name of Canadians and our most cherished rights and freedoms at home and abroad. We will never forget their sacrifice particularly over the week of Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Routine Proceedings

I have two specific questions for the House leader today. First, what does he have planned for the House in the days following the Remembrance Day constituency week? Second, given the absolute disaster and sham of a process that the government has set up on the committees study of its monster budget bill in which a number of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and government MPs have contradicted one another as to what the process actually is, does the government leader simply expect more from his most senior Minister of Finance on something so important as the budget of Canada, or is this sham of a process going to suffice from now until the budget's reintroduction in the House?

● (1210)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, before we depart to our constituencies and events for Remembrance Day where most of us will be participating in remembrance services in our ridings, we will resume third reading debate on Bill C-28, the financial literacy leader act.

The week of November 19 will continue to see a lot of important action at the House committee level, where we are looking at the budget implementation act, Bill C-45, the jobs and growth act, as it advances through the legislative process. The finance committee is supported by 10 other committees looking at it and all together they will conclude the review of this very important bill and the very important job creation and economic measures that are laid out, measures that were first put before Parliament back in our March budget.

Meanwhile, on Monday the House will continue the third reading debate of Bill C-44, the helping families in need act, which we started this morning. Given support for the bill from all corners of the House, I hope it will pass that day so the Senate can pass it before the end of the year.

After Bill C-44, it is our intention to take up the report stage and third reading of Bill S-11, the safe food for Canadians act, which was reported back from the agriculture committee yesterday. I hope we will see strong interest in passing that bill quickly, just as we did for second reading.

[Translation]

Once that bill passes on Monday, the House will return to third reading of Bill C-28, the Financial Literacy Leader Act, if we do not finish the debate today.

That will be followed by second reading of Bill S-8, the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, the chamber will consider report stage and third reading of Bill C-27, the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which was also reported back from committee yesterday.

[English]

I should also advise the House that on Tuesday when we return from the Remembrance Day week, immediately after question period I will call ways and means Motion No. 14 respecting some technical amendments to tax laws. Let me assure the House that there should be no doubt about this, but the opposition will no doubt be disappointed. This motion will definitely not implement the New Democrats' \$21.5 billion job-killing carbon tax.

Finally, on Thursday before question period, the House will resume second reading debate of Bill S-8 and after question period we will take up Bill S-2, the family homes on reserves and matrimonial interests or rights act, also at second reading.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2012-13

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (B) for the financial year ending March 31, 2013, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

* * *

[English]

PERFORMANCE REPORTS, 2011-12

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table in both official languages, on behalf of 95 departments and agencies, the performance reports for 2011-12.

I invite members to access the performance reports at www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr.

* * *

● (1215)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 43 petitions.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the 18th bilateral meeting with the Japan-Canada Diet Friendship League, which was held in Tokyo and Tohoku region, Japan, from May 20 to 25.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages concerning the assessment of the roadmap and the improvement of programs and service delivery.

[English]

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

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this was the longest study on official languages undertaken by Parliament. I can certainly say that it was longer than the study of the budget. It took a year and several months to conduct this review.

We approve this report, but we have some reservations. We are going to table a supplementary opinion to address certain omissions, inaccuracies and weaknesses in the scope of the recommendations, particularly with regard to funding, seniors, the media, health, the language industry, literacy, second language, early childhood and other areas.

We recommend that the government renew this roadmap in 2013 and take it seriously. When we met with community representatives, they told us that they really wanted the roadmap to be renewed for another term in 2013.

* * *

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-465, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (Gatineau Park).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce my bill to protect Gatineau Park, and I thank the member for Pontiac for supporting its introduction.

Gatineau park's size, beauty and importance make it a real national treasure. It is one of the most visited parks in Canada, yet it does not currently benefit from protections that would allow us to ensure it will be preserved for future generations.

My bill would fix that by making some amendments to the National Capital Act. It would enshrine the park's boundaries in the act, give these boundaries parliamentary protection and prohibit the sale of public lands located within the park.

If we want to leave a healthy park to future generations that looks like the park we know today, we must take action now. I urge all members of all of the parties represented in the House to support my bill at second reading.

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

● (1220)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among all parties and I believe that if you seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights be the committee for the purposes of section 533.1 of the Criminal Code.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move, pursuant to Standing Order 56.1, and seconded by the President of the Treasury Board:

That the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights be the committee for the purposes of section 533.1 of the Criminal Code.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

And fewer than 25 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Fewer than 25 members having risen, the motion is adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

[English]

The first petition asks the government to recognize the importance of the ELA to the Government of Canada's mandate to study, preserve and protect aquatic ecosystems and reverse the decision to close the ELA research station and continue to staff and provide financial resources to the ELA.

ACCESS TO MEDICINES

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls upon the House to pass Bill C-398, without significant amendment, to facilitate the immediate and sustainable flow of lifesaving generic medicines to developing countries.

Routine Proceedings

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present today about the Experimental Lakes Area.

The petitioners who signed this petition ask the government to recognize the importance of the Experimental Lakes Area. They ask the government to reserve the decision to close the Experimental Lakes Area and also to continue to provide adequate resources to the Experimental Lakes Area.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition today. People in my riding and across Canada have signed the petition, which calls on Parliament to support my motion M-400 to protect water and public health in our rural communities.

This motion urges the government to support Canadians who need to upgrade their septic systems in order to protect the environment, public health and the vitality of our rural communities and in the interest of addressing the rural-urban divide.

I am proud to say that my motion has received a great deal of support from municipalities, citizens and environmental groups all over Canada, as well as the FCM.

•(1225)

[English]

SRI LANKA

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions on behalf of the residents of Scarborough—Rouge River as well as people in other—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Traditionally, on petitions, the Speaker will often look around and acknowledge members from different parties as opposed to one political party consistently. The lights on the ceiling are out over at this end and maybe that is preventing our members from being seen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member is quite correct that the Speaker sometimes does that but it is not a requirement. It is the prerogative of the Chair to recognize members. As such, I will continue to do that. The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, the first petition I present calls upon the Government of Canada to urge the United Nations to immediately establish an independent, international and impartial mechanism to ensure truth, accountability and justice in Sri Lanka following the United Nations report of the Secretary General's panel of experts on accountability in Sri Lanka, who found credible allegations, which have proved and indicate that, during the final stages of Sri Lanka's civil war, a wide range of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws were committed.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my second petition, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Bill C-31, which they call the punishing refugees act, and return to the framework of the Balanced

Refugee Reform Act, passed with the support of all parties in the previous Parliament, as the current bill, Bill C-31, concentrates way too much power in the hands of one minister.

[Translation]

HOUSING

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by people from across Canada, from all social classes and of all ages, who are urging the government to take action and adopt Bill C-400, which would establish a national housing strategy.

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first petition is from petitioners who are concerned about the Canada-EU comprehensive trade agreement. Their concern is that sub-national governments and public agencies will not be able to procure locally and that would have a negative impact on our economy.

They ask the government to exclude sub-national governments and public agencies, and also to have negotiations regarding the Canada-EU comprehensive free trade agreement suspended until there can be a national consultation.

PENSIONS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in regard to the changes to old age security benefits and eligibility for those benefits .

The petitioners note that OAS and GIS are very important to the financial welfare of Canadians and to force Canadians to work two years longer deprives them of their ability to have a secure retirement.

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to maintain the retirement age for old age security at 65 and to make the required investments in guaranteed income supplement that would ensure all Canadians are able to retire in dignity and to keep them out of poverty.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on CCSVI, particularly as, on Tuesday, 52 Conservative senators voted en masse to block MS sufferers from testifying before a Senate committee on Bill S-204.

I am wondering if anyone can imagine cancer sufferers not being allowed to present at a committee studying cancer. Why did the government shut down the voices of Canadian MS patients?

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call for the Minister of Health to undertake phase III clinical trials on an urgent basis in multiple centres across Canada and to require follow-up care for Canadian MS patients.

ACCESS TO MEDICINES

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table petitions on behalf of my constituent, Janet Wilkinson, and the Grandmothers Advocacy Network.

The petitions have been signed by hundreds of local residents who are urging the government to pass Bill C-398 without significant amendment to facilitate the immediate and sustainable flow of life-saving generic medicines to developing countries.

I am pleased to table these petitions this afternoon and look forward to the government's response.

• (1230)

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table a petition today with regard to the freshwater research station. The petitioners ask that the government recognize the importance of the ELA to the Government of Canada's mandate to study, preserve and protect the aquatic ecosystem and, ultimately, for it to therefore reverse the cutbacks.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first is from residents of British Columbia and Ontario. It is particularly timely given the reports that are coming out of the United States of the extensive use of robocalls to tell voters in various states that they could vote after the U.S. election had already ended on Wednesday. We need to get to the bottom of this.

The petitioners call upon the Canadian Parliament to launch an immediate public inquiry into the use of these calls in Canada. I think that all parties in the House would like to make sure that any methods of voter suppression are eliminated from Canadian elections.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Quebec. The petitioners call upon the House to ensure that the investment treaty already signed between Canada and China not be ratified. There is no duty on the Prime Minister's part to ratify the treaty. The public has been clear. Many Canadians are concerned that we not ratify a treaty that binds Canada for up to 31 years.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition on discrimination against females. The petition highlights the fact that CBC aired an investigation on gender selection, revealing that ultrasound clinics were revealing the sex of an unborn child, and that often, if it were a girl, the pregnancy were terminated. Gender selection has been strongly condemned by all parties within the House. Ninety-two per cent of Canadians believe that sex selection pregnancy termination should be illegal. Along with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, they

vehemently oppose this practice. The petitioners call upon the House to condemn, not endorse, this type of activity.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 902, 905, 909, 917, 931 and 935.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 902—**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:**

With regard to the early retirement packages in place for employees affected by reductions in the federal public service: (a) what proportion of public service employees are between 50 and 54 years old, as a figure and as a percentage; and (b) what proportion of public service employees between 50 and 54 years old have accumulated (i) over 25 years of service, (ii) over 30 years of service?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Treasury Board Secretariat is tasked with responding to this question on behalf of the government. This information is taken from the regional pay system as of March 31, 2012.

The federal public service includes the core public administration (departments and organizations listed in schedules I and IV of the Financial Administration Act) and separate agencies (federal agencies listed in schedule V of the Financial Administration Act).

These figures include only employees appointed to indeterminate positions. Employees appointed to term positions, casual employees and students are not included.

Note that similar information regarding the age of public servants is posted on the Treasury Board Secretariat website. Those figures include employees appointed to term positions, casual employees and students. These employees were not included in the response to Q-902 since the question requests statistics regarding tenure.

In response to (a), with respect to employees appointed to indeterminate positions within the federal public service, as of March 31, 2012, there were 44,509 employees between the ages of 50 and 54 years old in the public service. This figure represented 18.4% of the total number of employees in the public service at that time.

In response to (b)(i), with respect to employees appointed to indeterminate positions within the federal public service, as of March 31, 2012, 40.4% of public service employees between the ages of 50 and 54 years old had accumulated over 25 years of service.

In response to (b)(ii), with respect to employees appointed to indeterminate positions within the federal public service, as of March 31, 2012, 20.3% of public service employees between the ages of 50 and 54 years old had accumulated over 30 years of service.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 905—Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre:**

With regard to the Correctional Service of Canada and the closure of the Kingston and Leclerc penitentiaries and of the Kingston Regional Treatment Centre: (a) what does the \$120 million in savings announced by the Minister of Public Safety include and on what is that figure based; and (b) how many cells are lost by the closure of these institutions?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), CSC's budget will be \$120 million less at the end of implementation. This reflects the savings from salaries, operating and maintenance, as well as savings realized from the addition of new cells.

In response to (b), CSC has a comprehensive plan to safely move offenders impacted by these closures to other institutions. Many institutions in the Ontario region are undergoing infrastructure expansions to better manage the complex and diverse offender population. Budget 2012 was clear: the government has not built a single new prison since 2006 and has no intention of building any new prisons.

Maximum security inmates will remain maximum security inmates and be placed in appropriate facilities at this level. The same will apply for medium security offenders.

As of September 25, 2012, the rated capacity of Kingston Penitentiary is 421 cells; the rated capacity of Leclerc Institution is 481 cells; and the rated capacity of Kingston Regional Treatment Centre is 143 cells.

Question No. 909—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With respect to Sable Island National Park Reserve: (a) what are the particulars of all costs associated with its establishment since January 1, 2009; and (b) how many visitors have visited the Reserve in each operating season since its establishment?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Parks Canada has spent \$391,679 on the establishment of Sable Island National Park Reserve since January 1, 2009, including consultations with the Mik'maw, as well as the negotiation of a 2010 memorandum of understanding and the 2011 national park establishment agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia.

In response to (b), there have been a total of 125 visitors since Parks Canada assumed operations of Sable Island National Park Reserve in April 2012.

Question No. 917—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With respect to the Canadian International Development Agency: (a) what was the total cost to produce and print the Agency's fourth annual report, entitled "Development for Results 2010-11"; (b) what are the details of those costs; and (c) how many copies of the report were produced?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), through the international assistance envelope, CIDA is focusing its international assistance on three thematic sectors: sustainable economic growth, food security, children and youth, and humanitarian assistance. CIDA is ensuring that Canadian tax dollars are delivering value for money and making a real difference in the lives of the people it intends to help.

For example taxpayer's investments have caused a 53% increase in treatments for pregnant women with HIV in South and Western Africa since 2005, a six-fold increase in the amount of businesses

accessing microfinance in Indonesia, and 205,000 women and newborns benefiting from improved health services in Burkina Faso.

The total cost to produce and print the Canadian International Development Agency's fourth annual report "Development for Results 2010-2011" was \$17,834.11.

In response to (b) and (c), the translation was done by the Translation Bureau and cost \$8,562.60; the in-house design team led the design; and the printing of the 1,250 copies of the 176-page report was done by Dollco Integrated Print Solutions and cost \$9,271.51.

Question No. 931—Ms. Jean Crowder:

With regard to the proposed First Nations Education Act: (a) what is the government's timeline for consultation with stakeholders, (b) what is the government's plan for meaningful consultations with stakeholders, (c) with which First Nations organizations and communities does the government intend to consult, (d) with which other stakeholders does the government intend to consult, and (e) what is the government's plan to meaningfully incorporate and address input from stakeholders in the legislative drafting process?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), economic action plan 2012 committed the government to having a first nation education act in place by September 2014.

In the coming months, the Government of Canada will be working with first nation and provincial partners to determine the path forward on first nation education through intensive but time-limited consultation.

In response to (b), as committed to in economic action plan 2012, the government will work with willing partners to introduce a new first nation education act and have it in place by September 2014.

The government acknowledges that improving the educational outcomes of first nation students is a shared responsibility in which governments, first nations, educators, families and students all play an important role. That is why, in the coming months, the Government of Canada will be working with first nation and provincial partners to determine the path forward on first nation education.

The Government will develop legislation through intensive, but time-limited consultation with first nations.

In response to (c), improving the educational outcomes of first nation students is a shared responsibility in which governments, first nations, educators, families and students all play an important role. The Government will develop legislation through intensive, but time-limited consultation with first nations.

In response to (d), improving the educational outcomes of first nation students is a shared responsibility: first nations, educators, families and students all play an important role. We look forward to the assistance of experts from provinces and first nations, including educators, families, and students, in the development of legislation.

In response to (e), the government has committed to developing this legislation through intensive consultation with first nations and other stakeholders across the country. We look forward to the input and perspectives of provinces and first nations in the development of legislation.

Question No. 935—**Mr. Dany Morin:**

With regard to the cuts to the National Council of Welfare (NCW): (a) are there any studies on the spinoff benefits for the community of this council, and, if so, what are they; (b) are there any studies on the impact of these cuts on the community and on the government, and, if so, what are they; (c) how much do these cuts represent for fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 in (i) dollars; (ii) percentage of the government's operating budget; (d) how many jobs will be lost; (e) how many employees will be transferred; (f) following the closure of the NCW, what will the government's sources be on the issues of (i) poverty, (ii) social exclusion, (iii) reducing inequalities; (g) will organizations and groups that used NCW research be compensated for this loss?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the department has not carried out any studies on these benefits.

With regard to the NCW, and (b) in particular, the government is putting its policy resources to best use and in the most efficient manner. There are many non-governmental organizations that provide comparable independent advice and research on poverty and other related issues.

It should also be noted that the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, a private, non-profit, social policy think tank, has announced plans to continue the data and analysis of the NCW's two key reports, "Welfare Incomes" and "Poverty Profile". The Caledon Institute has indicated that it will seek continued cooperation and input from the provinces and territories.

Information on provincial social assistance rates remains publicly available from each province.

With regard to (c)(i), the economic action plan 2012 provides for savings to begin in 2013-2014. The NCW wind-down will realize savings of \$1.1 million in 2013-2014 and in future years. As for (c) (ii), the government's operating budget for 2013-2014 was not yet available at the time of this written question.

With regard to (d) and the NCW wind-down, 16 part-time Governor in Council appointments, which include one chairperson and up to 15 members, have ceased to hold office. In addition, nine full-time equivalent public service positions have been eliminated.

With regard to (e), the department has applied all the provisions of workforce adjustment agreements to help manage impacts on employees and to facilitate employment continuity, when possible.

With regard to (f), HRSDC conducts its own research and analysis into poverty, social exclusion and on reducing inequalities. Departmental officials analyze existing and emerging trends and provide the minister with evidence-based advice. The department uses a wide variety of resources internal and external to government.

Routine Proceedings

Other federal institutions, such as Statistics Canada, carry out research on related topics.

With regard to (g), the Government of Canada has maintained key NCW research papers and reports on the HRSDC website. All NCW research papers and reports have also been archived by Library and Archives Canada.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 903, 912, 941 and 951 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 903—**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:**

With regard to Employment Insurance (EI) for each calendar year since 2000: (a) how many applications for regular EI benefits have been submitted; (b) how many applications for regular EI benefits have been approved; (c) how many applications for regular EI benefits have been rejected, broken down by reason for rejection; (d) what was the average time for processing claims for regular EI benefits; (e) how many applications for special EI benefits have been submitted, broken down by benefit type; (f) how many applications for special EI benefits have been approved, broken down by benefit type; (g) how many applications for special EI benefits were rejected, broken down by reason for rejection; and (h) what was the average time for processing claims for special EI benefits, broken down by benefit type?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 912—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to Library and Archives Canada, what are the particulars of each use of the exhibition space on the main floor since January 1, 2006, including (i) the purpose, (ii) date, (iv) duration, (v) organization using the space?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 941—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to fisheries: since September 1, 2011, how many briefs, letters, or presentations were submitted concerning the fleet separation policy, or the owner-operator principle, to: (i) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, (ii) the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, (iii) the Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), (iv) the Minister of National Revenue, (v) the Minister of National Defence, broken down by the numbers submitted by provincial or territorial governments, municipal or regional governments, businesses, industry associations, trade unions, Aboriginal organizations, other organizations, and individuals?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*Question No. 951—**Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard, what are the details of the \$1.4 billion in spending which has been committed in the past six years, as mentioned in the August 24, 2012, press release by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, under the headline “New Canadian Coast Guard Ship Vladykov in St. John’s”, and, in particular, what is the nature, anticipated timeline and location of each project, investment or purchase which makes up this amount?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

FINANCIAL LITERACY LEADER ACT

The House resumed from October 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada Act, be read a third time and passed.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite a certain level of enthusiasm, financial literacy does not necessarily seem the most exciting of subjects. That being said, it is still an extremely important subject. It is important for young people who are beginning to save their money and to understand what is involved in investing and having money, and it is important for retired seniors who must manage their pensions and a significantly lower income now that they are no longer working and are taking their well-deserved retirement.

Following consultations and a study, the government introduced Bill C-28, a bill that would create the position of a leader who would be responsible for the development of financial literacy for Canadians.

Initially, we opposed this bill for the reasons I will set out. However, we will support it at third reading for the reasons that I am also going to take this opportunity to explain.

First of all, we kept up our opposition for a number of reasons. The first point, and it is not the least of them, is that the position would not necessarily be bilingual. As a matter of fact, my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent recently put forward a first-rate bill. She has done an outstanding job on this issue. However, even though the incumbent of the position would not be an officer of Parliament, it is necessary that he or she be bilingual. This person will have to interact with people from all linguistic communities, including those in Quebec, where there is a high concentration of people whose mother tongue is French, in New Brunswick, in Eastern Ontario and elsewhere. We must be able to allow people to learn financial literacy skills in the official language of their choice. This is a very important point.

We put forward an amendment to this effect in committee and, unfortunately, it was rejected by the government. Nevertheless, we

want to support the bill now because it is a very good start, but we regret that this position, which should have a mandatory bilingual designation, does not. This is a very simple, but a very important, requirement.

The second point, which led to a certain degree of consternation among our members and caused us great concern, is the fact that the people who studied this issue recommended that a board be set up to engage in consultations with the financial literacy leader. The board would be made up of people representing a variety of sectors, such as the financial education sector, unions, financial institutions and so on. The board would engage in consultations with the financial literacy leader and create a system to consult people from all walks of life. This is very important when speaking of financial literacy.

Despite the important role played by financial institutions, when teaching financial literacy to Canadians, it is important not to do so in a way that will benefit only the financial institutions. Financial literacy must consider the diverse realities of individuals and various sectors, such as the unions, and the importance of pensions, for instance. When we talk about financial institutions, there is the size of the investment. When we talk about the people who are in a position to educate Canadians and so on, I think it is very important to have a board involved.

Now we are told, following the committee study, that it is not necessary that the board be established as part of the bill. Just the same, we are concerned about the political will that currently exists on this issue.

I think that the board should be established in the bill. We would require this. Why should we wait? Why should we just hope that the board will be established? I think that if we could include the establishment of the board in the bill, we would already be ahead of the game. We are very concerned about this, but not enough to oppose the passage of the bill. I think we will be taking a big step in the right direction in order to establish a position for beginning Canadians' financial literacy education.

● (1235)

These are the reasons why we were opposed to the bill, but we also believe that we are heading in the right direction. We are comfortable with giving it our support at the moment, but we will continue to push for improvements in the measures in the bill. Now that I have an opportunity to talk about financial literacy and Bill C-28, it would be unfortunate if I missed my chance to explain how this affects the people in my riding.

First of all, I am going to refer to a resident in my riding who works for a financial institution and with whom I often have an opportunity to chat. He has become a very good friend. His name is Jacques Rémy and he is the general manager of the Caisse populaire Desjardins in Beloeil—Mont-Saint-Hilaire. When I sat down with him in my riding one Saturday evening for supper, I had a chance to discuss various problems faced by the residents with regard to their pensions, their retirement and their investments.

Government Orders

One of the major problems at the moment is debt. Many residents are going deeper and deeper into debt. It may not necessarily be the fault of the individual, but there is not enough financial literacy. I do not want to lay the blame on Canadians, but these days, there are so many opportunities to invest, to contribute to savings plans, and to use several credit cards with all the rewards they offer, and all this may be quite difficult to manage. Considering that the cost of living is going up, just like everything else, it can be very easy to wind up in debt, and this has become a very serious problem. As I said, I had a chance to talk about this with Mr. Rémy, who is the general manager of a financial institution, and he is seeing this more and more often.

For instance, in a riding like mine, there is a great deal of hidden poverty. We are a suburb, there are beautiful houses, people sometimes have two or three cars in their driveway, but this does not necessarily mean that they do not have problems with debt that could lead to poverty. As the representative for these people, I think it is so important to promote financial literacy in every way we can, and this is an idea or a value that I share with my colleagues. This is why we are going to support this positive first step, while bearing in mind the extremely important fact that we have to continue improving the measures and the systems already in place.

There is another anecdote involving financial literacy that I would like to tell. Every year, a seniors fair is held in Chambly. This is a very interesting and important event in our community. The agencies serving seniors get together with members of both the National Assembly of Quebec and Parliament in Ottawa. We and the agencies can set up booths where we distribute brochures and give out other types of information, and there are presentations given by community stakeholders.

Last year, when I attended the fair for the first time—I went this year, too—there was an extremely interesting presentation on financial literacy. It focused on, as I said at the beginning of my speech, the best way to manage our pensions, our RRSPs and all the financial resources we have, the money we save and for which we work very hard over the years.

In the case of our seniors, this is well-deserved financial support. Promoting financial literacy and helping our seniors by ensuring that they are able to use the educational tools we can offer them as a government and as representatives is a worthwhile undertaking. Often when we speak of financial literacy, it comes down to explaining how important it is.

When we speak about financial literacy, one of the traps we often fall into is thinking that people are to blame, that they are not educated and not able to manage their money. I cannot emphasize enough that this is absolutely not the issue we are discussing here today. The problem is that people feel overwhelmed by the various investment options available to them.

● (1240)

Seniors often face this problem. They frequently receive telephone calls at home from people offering different types of services. As an aside, these calls are often not legitimate. This is a big problem. It is one of the reasons why we are supporting the government's bill to impose harsher penalties on people who commit crimes against seniors.

That being said, there are many new measures that allow people to invest and to retire relatively easily. It is really important for seniors to be able to rely on someone. That someone could be the person in the position we are creating today, or when the bill is voted on, of course.

This is a troubling issue that also applies to young people. I have spoken about seniors, I have talked about their experience, but there are also young people who are beginning their working lives, who are beginning to learn what it means to have an income and money to spend.

When you are young—I have enough experience to talk about it and to say that we have all been there—you eventually reach a point in your life where you have some independence and you have money to spend for the first time. Once you reach that point, you want to know how to get the most for your money, how to spoil yourself a little, if you can, and also how to make sensible and responsible decisions.

Here again, I am repeating myself, but it is so important to underscore it: I am not trying to say that young people are not able to make sensible decisions or be responsible, but the point is that more and more frequently credit cards are being offered to very young people. When you are very young, you try to learn how to invest in an RRSP, how to invest in that famous retirement pyramid, which consists of RRSPs as well as contributions to a retirement plan. When you reach this point in your life, it is very important to have meaningful support from the government and from various agencies, which will be possible with the creation of a new position with the mandate of promoting financial literacy.

I have been talking about this issue for several minutes now. It is interesting because this shows that financial literacy can mean different things to different people. From my comments, it is clear that this can mean different things to different people of all ages.

We in the NDP firmly believe that a concrete definition of the term “financial literacy” is needed. When a position is created whose mandate is to promote financial literacy and educate citizens, it is crucial that we have a clear definition, as was the case with the infamous “net benefit”. Thus, once greater clarification and precision are brought to the definition, then we can have a leader, someone who is responsible for and able to properly manage the file.

In the past, the lack of a clear definition was one of the reasons we had decided to oppose the bill. However, the pluses outweigh the minuses at this point. Although we would like to see more clarification at this stage, we hope to achieve that in the coming months and years, as this matter evolves. We do still have this concern, and it is very important that it be raised here today.

Government Orders

While I am on the topic of our change in position on this bill, I would also like to explain the other reason we reached this conclusion; it was because of the work done in committee, particularly by our party's consumer protection critic. Financial literacy is extremely important for the protection of consumers, and the hon. member for Sudbury has done an excellent job on this. He meticulously explained to us that when the Standing Committee on Finance began examining this bill and this issue, many witnesses called for the same things that the NDP has been calling for. They had the same concerns and raised the same points that I just mentioned in my speech.

Looking at the work done in committee, it is clear that the witnesses were able to explain to the members the importance of moving forward by taking this first step.

● (1245)

After hearing this testimony, we think it would be a big mistake not to support this first step in the right direction. This testimony also allowed us to confirm the problems with this bill.

This is a good opportunity to emphasize the committee work and the importance of inviting expert witnesses from different backgrounds. Various testimony was given by a diverse group of witnesses, including economists, people representing financial institutions and people representing unions. In my opinion, bringing all these people together to have a serious discussion about something that affects us all, without allowing the discussion to focus too much on one topic and not enough on another, allows us to have a clear view of the overall picture.

Another thing that is very important in all this is ensuring that everyone's interest is served. Last fall and this past spring, we debated a bill whose number escapes me, unfortunately, that would implement another retirement savings account much like an RRSP. When we were discussing this bill, many concerns were raised about the various existing retirement accounts and plans.

We do not want to fall into the same trap. Far too often, people have watched the companies they worked for declare bankruptcy and have ended up losing their pension. We do not want the retirement plans and pensions of people who have worked so hard for so long to be tied to the fate of a company that mismanages its investments and ends up going under. In 2008, at the height of the last recession, this type of situation happened at an alarming rate in the U.S.

That is why we should make financial literacy more of a priority. Doing so would help us start a conversation on these retirement plans, on RRSPs and on all the measures available to us as individuals and workers, regardless of where we work. This allows us to recognize the risks of these measures, so that we may proceed safely. There is nothing worse than working for years, investing and contributing to various retirement plans only to lose that money because of bad decisions made by people at the head of various companies.

That is why we want to be very careful. It is very important to educate Canadians so they have the tools they need to make good decisions about their investments and for their retirement.

I would like to talk about my own experience. As I mentioned earlier, retirement may seem very far away for young people of a

certain age who are just starting to work, to have some money and to have these kinds of opportunities. People in their twenties do not think about their pension, but I believe that it is very important to start thinking about it. I always say that pensions are very important to our seniors and those who retire, but they are also important to our young people. We have to realize this and set aside our preconceived ideas about this affecting one group of people more than another or only affecting people of a certain age.

This is an extremely important matter, and I cannot stress that enough. For that reason, we support this bill and we will continue to improve these measures and work on this, so that Canadians can make good investments and have adequate financial security.

● (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see that the federal government has taken an interest in financial literacy to the degree that it has introduced a bill that would, in good part at least, move us forward a little. There is a lot more it could be doing. Part of that responsibility is to work with the different provinces. Provincial governments play a huge role in this whole issue of financial literacy. We could ultimately even pass that down to places such as our school divisions.

Does the member see a role for other ministers, specifically the minister responsible for intergovernmental relations, in taking this important file and advancing it with all provinces in Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. He is absolutely right.

In this kind of file, we must definitely work closely with the provinces because they have different programs, which are part of the great retirement investment pyramid. I am from Quebec, which has its own pension plan. That is exactly why we must work with the provinces.

My colleague asked me whether the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs should do something about this. I am sorry to say this but, unfortunately, the minister is not really up to the job these days. However, that is another debate.

My colleague also mentioned schools. He is quite right about that. I spoke about the importance of educating young people who are just heading into the work world. It is very important to have a board made up of people from various backgrounds. We must ensure that educators do not represent only the financial institutions, although they do have a role to play, but that they come from all backgrounds, in order to have a balanced approach that better represents reality.

● (1255)

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate and thank the hon. member for Chambly—Borduas for his excellent speech. Financial literacy is not easy to explain. His concrete examples and the excellent work he did in his riding allowed him to explain to us in detail the importance of this bill.

Government Orders

I have a background in education. It is indeed very important to educate and inform people and to ensure that information is distributed, present and available to them so that they can make better decisions, whether we are talking about seniors or young people, as my colleague rightly said. As far as young people are concerned, this is important in terms of their retirement and the fact that they have a higher debt load because of their maxed-out credit cards that charge exorbitant fees, for example.

The hon. member also mentioned the excellent work done by the committee. This work is not always easy. For example, in the case of Bill C-45, we should have had independent studies in various committees of the profound changes being made to various laws, instead of depending on the power of the Standing Committee on Finance.

I want to congratulate my colleague and ask him the following question. Does he think the bill will help improve Canadians' financial knowledge?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I was very happy to see that we were able to change and adapt our position after we heard from the experts in committee. That is the purpose of committees and it shows just how important they are.

As for his question regarding our support for the bill and whether it is truly a good thing, as I have said many times, it is a step in the right direction, but there is still a lot to be done. At the same time, like with Bill C-44, which we debated this morning, our support should not be misinterpreted. If we support a bill, it does not necessarily mean that we are happy with it and do not think there is still a lot of work to do. There is a difference there and it is important to point that out.

I also thank my colleague for sharing the education perspective. That is extremely important. As I have said many times, when we educate people, we must be very careful, because we must respect their intelligence, their own responsibilities and their ability to invest. We must not fall into the trap of the one-way street, meaning that we must not talk only about savings. We must make people understand the realities of our financial systems and show them how they can use these systems to secure their retirement and bring in positive returns on their investments.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

As a party, the NDP has always worked towards eliminating poverty in Canada. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that. If people were better informed of their financial rights and if they had more answers and clearer information on finance in general, would that reduce poverty?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question because this is exactly why we are saying that there is still a long way to go.

This is the kind of education, the kind of work that a government and MPs can do, in co-operation with all the other authorities, to help people escape poverty and make the most of the means at their disposal. Bearing in mind the objective of eliminating poverty, something that we as members of Parliament are trying to do, we

must continue pushing ahead with this issue, with developing the concept and clarifying the definition of financial literacy and the mandate of the financial literacy leader, the position this bill would create. It is completely relevant.

As I said in my speech when I commented on debt, very often, people who are in debt do not appear to be poor. This problem is specific to poverty, particularly in my riding, Chambly—Borduas. It is a very dangerous path. It is also what is known as a slippery slope: people can get into debt, and that can exacerbate the problem of poverty.

We can resolve the problem of debt, or at least we can do our part. We will certainly not resolve it overnight. However, once people can get proper financial literacy education, we will be able to do our part to try to resolve this issue, which is increasingly present in our society and which, I believe, is a form of hidden poverty that is of great concern.

● (1300)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to speak to Bill C-28. Off-hand, there are a couple of good reasons to speak in favour of the bill.

First, it is a step forward, as we acknowledge within the Liberal Party. We did have concerns during second reading, but many of those concerns were addressed at committee. We are pleased with the responses that we heard at committee and in the other discussions that have taken place since second reading, which ultimately bring us to where we are today. We recognize that the bill does take us forward.

The other thing that I like about this particular bill is that it points out the difference in good part between the government and the Liberal Party. On the one hand, the Conservatives have recognized that there is a need to deal with the issue, but on the other hand, they are not coming up with any sort of comprehensive plan. They did not really show evidence of any meetings with stakeholders prior to the bill coming to the House at first reading. It is almost as if they had an idea, or someone within the party had an idea, and they kept it to themselves and then tabled the bill.

Within the Liberal Party, we believe that the bill could have been so much better. Had the government actually held some consultations with different stakeholders, I believe that we would be looking at a much more detailed plan today as to where we should be going.

Financial literacy and education is critically important. We have to look at education in terms of it going beyond the House of Commons simply passing Bill C-28. That is why I referred to the stakeholders.

I might have referred in the past to the fact that I was the education critic in the Province of Manitoba. There are many battles that take place within education about what should and should not be part of the curriculum. People want to emphasize, for example, the importance of language arts and mathematics, and justifiably so. When our students graduate from high school, we want them to have a basic understanding of the language arts, mathematics and a number of other areas.

Government Orders

At the end of the day, we are suggesting that financial literacy is critically important. However, when we look at how we would disseminate that information, it is a huge mistake for us not to take into consideration the important role that other stakeholders have to play. That is why I bring up the whole area of education.

When we talk about leadership, we want leadership from the government in dealing with this very important issue. However, we are not just hoping to see legislation before the House, but also a government that is actively promoting and encouraging dialogue with the different stakeholders.

That is why I posed my question in regards to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, because this is somewhat time sensitive. This is an interesting issue and we brought it up today in question period. We must ask ourselves: To what degree does that particular minister now have responsibility in regard to this legislation?

It would appear that the bill has the support of all members of the House and will pass. I do not know for sure, but we will find out when the bill is actually voted on. However, what do we do after we have passed the legislation?

• (1305)

What is the next step? I understand and appreciate that the primary purpose of this legislation is to create a financial literacy leader. That is great, but along with that we need to recognize the importance of education and reaching out to the different stakeholders.

It is not good enough to just say, "Here is the idea, let us put it to the House and have the House vote on it" and then leave it at that. There is a responsibility for officials, like the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to go out and meet with different representatives of government, different levels of government, to say, "Here is what is happening in the House. Here is the type of thing we think we could move forward on. What do you think as a provincial entity?"

We need to recognize that different departments are involved. A provincial jurisdiction will have a department of consumer and corporate affairs. There will also be departments of education and other departments that one might want to consider. There may even be different departments within the national government itself that would have a vested interest in this whole subject matter.

I have referred to school divisions. Even our municipalities, whether large municipalities or cities, or small, rural municipalities, all have a vested interest, even in distributing information on tax rolls, and so forth, so that people can understand what a tax roll is and the obligations to pay a property tax and how that is done through automatic banking if one chooses.

There are all sorts of reasons why all these different government agencies have a vested interest. I would suggest that we need to go even beyond that. We have to look at the private sector and the important role it has to play. It is not just about the banking industry or our top banks, because some of the most progressive policy today regarding finances and consumer awareness is actually coming from our credit unions, our co-ops. Those are private companies or corporations that have seen the merit of consumer awareness or financial literacy. The private sector obviously has a critical role to play in this, and we need to encourage that ongoing support.

I did not make reference to the non-profit sector, but obviously that sector also has a role to play. I remember meeting with representatives of Winnipeg Harvest, the largest food distribution centre for people who just do not have the ability to pay for all of their food and have to go to Winnipeg Harvest as a result. I have talked to representatives of Winnipeg Harvest about the issue of finances. Non-profit organizations have a great talent pool, including social planning councils.

Whether it is government, non-profit agencies or the private sector, all have a role to play in financial literacy. Nevertheless, I would suggest that there is only one real authority with the most significant leadership role to play, and that of course is here within the House of Commons

We need to see a government that is committed to doing more than just bringing in Bill C-28 to create a financial literacy leader. We need to ensure there is a lot more than just that. Nonetheless, it is good that the government has brought this bill before us today and we will be supporting it at third reading, because see it as a move forward.

• (1310)

We believe that it will add to the importance of education on a very important issue. However, we do not want the government members to sit back and say they have done enough because there is a lot more that needs to be done.

Things have changed dramatically. It was not that long ago that teenagers would open up a bank account by providing a couple of pieces of ID. They could deposit or take money out of the bank and it was pretty simple. Loans and credit cards were more challenging at that early age, but the point is that they went to the bank. All of a sudden we have phone banking systems where you can register your bills and make payments and do transactions over the telephone. Prior to that we could make automatic deposits or withdrawals to pay our monthly bills, and now it is through the website. A vast majority now do their banking online.

I should be careful when I say a vast majority because I do not know that for a fact. I suspect as we continue to move forward, we will get a good, solid majority of people banking online. However, I know there are many people today who refuse to use the technology, sometimes for very good reason. They choose to have a face-to-face connection with the teller or to walk to the bank.

Things are changing and they are changing rapidly. We need to recognize that change. With that change all sorts of other issues arise such as credit cards and the amount of money paid in interest and service charges on credit cards. If a 19-year-old or even a 40-year-old is given a credit card, especially at this time of the year with consumer spending expected to increase significantly, those credit cards are very attractive little pieces of plastic. It does not take too much to accrue a significant amount of money on that piece of plastic.

Government Orders

Now stores have gift cards. People purchase them as a Christmas gift or as a holiday gift. Many gift cards have a short period of time before they expire and many consumers are not aware of that. These are the types of things that have an impact. This is why it is so very important that we recognize education is of critical importance. We need to ensure that whether people are 16 years old in high school, or 30 years old working on a factory floor or working in an office, there is an advocate talking about what is happening and what consumers can do to protect themselves. We must ensure that there is someone who is on the consumers' side, ensuring their rights and that they are not being taken advantage of or exploited.

●(1315)

In 2001 we saw the creation of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, which I thought was a great initiative of the former prime minister, Jean Chrétien, and his government. It was in direct response to what was happening in the real world. Gift cards were coming out big time back then and there was very little consumer knowledge about them. At least the government back in 2001 recognized the importance of consumer education and created that agency. There is a great deal to be learned if we go to its website. I have encouraged constituents to visit it.

We recognize that the government has seen the agency's merit. It has proven itself because it has now stood the test of time. Even though the Liberals brought it in, the Conservatives have now been in for a number of years and they have recognized the value of the agency because the legislation that we have before us today, Bill C-28, would create a financial literacy leader who would be reporting to the Commissioner of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada.

Today, under the Conservative banner, we see the Government of Canada recognizing that what Jean Chrétien and the Liberals created back in 2001 was a good idea. We find that governments at different levels are on board with respect to that particular agency. I believe that tying the new literacy leader to this agency will be a good thing and it will give more credibility to the financial literacy leader and the office that no doubt will follow.

I know that Canadians are very concerned about debt and the overall debt that Canadians have today, and we should be concerned. Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of Canada, raised the issue of just how much debt there really is. The number that I have heard is \$1.63 for every dollar of annual income. That is significant. From what I understand, the Governor of the Bank of Canada has highlighted the point that it is a record high for consumer debt.

The government does have to take some responsibility for that record, and I do not say that lightly. It was the current Minister of Finance who introduced the 40-year mortgage, which did not even require a minimum down payment. Even though the Conservatives have learned their lesson and are bringing it back to 25 years, that 40-year mortgage contributed to the overall debt ratio that Canadians have today.

The bottom line is that government does play a role. Financial literacy is important and we in the Liberal Party have recognized that. We are supporting the bill because it does move us forward, although not very much, but we are prepared to support it at third reading.

●(1320)

We encourage the government to do more. If it wants some good ideas, it can always turn to the opposition members, particularly members of the Liberal Party who would be more than happy to share our ideas. We recognize how important it is to talk about financial literacy.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the very last point that my colleague made with regard to the level of household debt in our country. There is no question that the level of household debt has ballooned and this is one of the reasons that undoubtedly prompted the government to say there was a need for greater financial literacy. What is ironic is that the level of household debt was caused, in part, by the decision of the Conservative government to introduce 40-year mortgages with no down payments.

My hon. colleague said that the appointment of a financial literacy officer was a good first step. Given that the situation we are in is not one that is entirely separate from the policies of the government, what measures would he propose because there is more that we could do? Could he go through some of the measures that we could undertake over and above the appointment of a financial literacy officer?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the most important thing the government could do would be to have a ministerial meeting on the issue of financial literacy. The government has an obligation to not only recognize an issue, but to consult with people, different organizations, whether it is the government or private sector, to see how it can take a more collective approach to ensure we maximize the amount of financial literacy programming. Not only would people in schools be educated, but there would also be the potential of educating people within the working environment. Whether one is 40 years old or 16 years old, that individual is being taught some sort of financial literacy. Hopefully the financial literacy officer would take a look at those types of initiatives to encourage that.

I made reference to the \$1.63 of debt for every \$1 annually that a person has. That is very close to what it was for the Americans at the time in which they had the huge housing crisis. I am not trying to raise a red flag unnecessarily, but I would suggest that people should take note that the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Mark Carney, raised the issue. We should be listening and taking appropriate action, especially on government policy.

●(1325)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to ask another question on this issue.

I have to say that the committee did a fine job. I was not there, but I heard about it. The NDP proposed six amendments in all, while the Liberals and the Conservatives did not suggest one single amendment.

Private Members' Business

One of the amendments put forward by the NDP was that the legislation should express explicitly that the incumbent of this position should be bilingual. As we have seen in the case of the Auditor General of Canada, a unilingual anglophone holds this position. However, right now, it seems he is making an effort at least to learn the second official language.

As I did not attend the committee, I would like to know whether the Liberals supported this amendment to ensure that the legislation states explicitly that the position should be filled by someone who is bilingual.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has made a very strong statement on the Auditor General, second to no other statement, saying that in positions of this nature it is a mistake not to have someone who is bilingual. I hope the Conservatives have learned a lesson on that particular issue. We will have to wait and see what they do.

In regard to the amendments, after bills pass out of second reading the Liberal Party approaches committees very seriously. We listen to what people have to say. In some bills, amendments are moved and in others they are not. With the first omnibus bill, the Liberals introduced over 400 amendments inside the House on third reading and the NDP did zero. It fluctuates. Sometimes we move amendments. It depends on the critics. A lot depends on what other amendments are being moved. Sometimes an amendment that is moved by one opposition party has the support of the other opposition party.

If there is a good idea and we feel it would make the bill better, we would support the amendment. It is unfortunate that the Conservatives did not make some of the changes some of their colleagues suggested. I suspect we might have even voted for some of those amendments. As I acknowledged at the very beginning, the bill would be just a small step in an area in which we need to make some significant steps.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member indicated that a key part to increasing financial literacy would be co-operation among the provinces.

When we look at the record of the Conservative government in terms of dealing with the provinces, we have a Prime Minister who will not meet with the provincial ministers as a group. We have a Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs who does all his work either in Ottawa or in Labrador. We have a Minister of Finance who says to the provinces, "Here is what you are getting for health care". That is the Conservatives' idea of federal-provincial co-operation. We have changes to old age security that would increase the welfare rolls in the provinces; changes in EI that are going to increase the welfare rolls in the provinces; changes in crime legislation that are going to increase costs in the provinces.

Given the state of federal-provincial relations in this country, could the member explain his level of optimism that this would achieve its objective, given the necessity of working together between the provincial and federal levels of government to get it done?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I started my speech by saying that one of the things I like about the bill is that it shows a difference between the Conservatives and the Liberal Party of Canada.

The members of the Liberal Party of Canada believe that in order to adequately deal with financial literacy in our country, in order to get the job done and get it done right, we need to work with the provinces, the different stakeholders including school divisions and so forth, and the private sector. That means having ministers who actually go out and meet with their provincial counterparts, the Prime Minister having a first ministers' meeting and so forth.

• (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I regret having to interrupt the hon. member for Winnipeg North at this time. It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-370, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada) as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

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

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC) moved that, the bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Private Members' Business

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 21, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 1:31 p.m., pursuant to an order made Tuesday, September 25, the House stands adjourned until Monday, November 19 at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:32 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, November 8, 2012

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Helping Families in Need Act

Bill C-44. Report stage.....	12095
Mr. Flaherty (for the Minister of Human Resources, Skills and Social Development)	12095
Motion for concurrence	12095
(Motion agreed to)	12095
Mr. Flaherty (for the Minister of Human Resources, Skills and Social Development)	12095
Third Reading	12095
Mr. Butt	12095
Ms. Charlton	12097
Mr. Lamoureux.....	12097
Mr. Carmichael.....	12098
Ms. Charlton	12098
Mr. Albrecht.....	12101
Mr. Cuzner	12102

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program

Mr. Goldring	12102
--------------------	-------

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Mr. Holder.....	12102
-----------------	-------

Hamilton Steel Workers' Cenotaph

Mr. Marston	12102
-------------------	-------

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal

Mr. Komarnicki	12103
----------------------	-------

Family Doctor Week

Ms. Bennett	12103
-------------------	-------

Hockey Night in Leeds and Grenville

Mr. Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	12103
-----------------------------------	-------

Employment Insurance

Mrs. Day	12103
----------------	-------

Portage—Lisgar

Ms. Bergen	12104
------------------	-------

Canadian Young Scientist Journal Awards

Mr. Leung	12104
-----------------	-------

Birthday Congratulations

Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest).....	12104
---	-------

Remembrance Day

Mr. Albas.....	12104
----------------	-------

Media Literacy Week

Mr. Angus.....	12105
----------------	-------

Veterans

Mr. Gourde	12105
------------------	-------

Remembrance Day

Mr. Cotler	12105
------------------	-------

New Democratic Party of Canada

Mr. Lizon.....	12105
----------------	-------

Taxation

Ms. Sims	12106
----------------	-------

New Democratic Party of Canada

Mr. Menegakis	12106
---------------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Social Services

Ms. Turmel.....	12106
Ms. Leitch.....	12106
Ms. Turmel.....	12106
Ms. Leitch.....	12106
Ms. Turmel.....	12106
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	12106
Ms. Leslie	12107
Ms. Leitch	12107

Parks Canada

Ms. Leslie	12107
Mr. Kent.....	12107

Correctional Service Canada

Mr. Rae.....	12107
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	12107
Mr. Rae.....	12107
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	12107
Mr. Rae.....	12107
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	12108
Mr. Garrison.....	12108
Mr. Toews.....	12108
Mr. Garrison.....	12108
Mr. Toews.....	12108

Justice

Ms. Boivin	12108
Mr. Nicholson.....	12108
Ms. Boivin	12108
Mr. Nicholson.....	12109

Intergovernmental Affairs

Mr. Chisholm.....	12109
Mr. Nicholson.....	12109

Ethics

Mr. Angus.....	12109
Mr. Penashue.....	12109

41st General Election

Mr. Angus.....	12109
Mr. Van Loan.....	12109
Mr. Boulerice.....	12109
Mr. Poilievre.....	12110
Mr. Scott	12110
Mr. Van Loan.....	12110

Correctional Service Canada			
Mr. Rae.....	12110		
Mr. Toews.....	12110		
Intergovernmental Affairs			
Mr. Andrews.....	12110		
Mr. Penashue.....	12110		
Justice			
Ms. Bennett.....	12110		
Mr. Nicholson.....	12111		
Foreign Investment			
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12111		
Mr. Paradis.....	12111		
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	12111		
Mr. Keddy.....	12111		
Government Accountability			
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona).....	12111		
Mr. Clement.....	12111		
Mr. Blanchette.....	12111		
Mr. Clement.....	12111		
Veterans Affairs			
Mr. Clarke.....	12112		
Mr. Blaney.....	12112		
The Environment			
Mr. Pilon.....	12112		
Mr. Lebel.....	12112		
Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest).....	12112		
Mr. Lebel.....	12112		
Public Safety			
Mr. Cullen.....	12112		
Mr. Toews.....	12112		
The Environment			
Mr. Cullen.....	12113		
Mr. Lebel.....	12113		
Veterans Affairs			
Mr. Casey.....	12113		
Mr. Blaney.....	12113		
Employment Insurance			
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour).....	12113		
Ms. Leitch.....	12113		
Pensions			
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe.....	12113		
Mr. Paradis.....	12113		
Employment Insurance			
Mr. Dionne Labelle.....	12114		
Ms. Leitch.....	12114		
International Trade			
Mr. Richards.....	12114		
Mr. Keddy.....	12114		
Health			
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North).....	12114		
Mrs. Aglukkaq.....	12114		
Public-private Partnerships			
Mr. Larose.....	12114		
Mr. Flaherty.....	12114		
Sealing Industry			
Mrs. O'Neill Gordon.....	12115		
Mrs. Shea.....	12115		
Citizenship and Immigration			
Mrs. Groguhé.....	12115		
Mr. Dykstra.....	12115		
Justice			
Mr. Bellavance.....	12115		
Mr. Nicholson.....	12115		
Business of the House			
M. Cullen.....	12115		
Mr. Van Loan.....	12116		
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Supplementary Estimates (B), 2012-13			
Performance Reports, 2011-12			
Mr. Clement.....		12116	
Government Response to Petitions			
Mr. Lukiwski.....		12116	
Interparliamentary Delegations			
Mr. Wallace.....		12116	
Committees of the House			
Official Languages			
Mr. Chong.....		12117	
Mr. Godin.....		12117	
National Capital Act			
Ms. Turmel.....		12117	
Bill C-465. Introduction and first reading.....		12117	
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed).....		12117	
Committees of the House			
Justice and Human Rights			
Mr. Van Loan.....		12117	
Motion.....		12117	
(Motion agreed to).....		12117	
Petitions			
Experimental Lakes Area			
Mr. Ravignat.....		12117	
Access to Medicines			
Mr. Ravignat.....		12117	
Experimental Lakes Area			
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe.....		12118	
The Environment			
Ms. Freeman.....		12118	
Sri Lanka			
Ms. Sitsabaiesan.....		12118	
Citizenship and Immigration			
Ms. Sitsabaiesan.....		12118	
Housing			
Ms. Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot).....		12118	

International Trade	
Ms. Mathysen	12118
Pensions	
Ms. Mathysen	12118
Multiple Sclerosis	
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	12118
Access to Medicines	
Mr. McGuinty	12119
Experimental Lakes Area	
Mr. Lamoureux	12119
Voter Suppression	
Ms. May	12119
Foreign Investment	
Ms. May	12119
Sex Selection	
Mr. Warawa	12119
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lukiwski	12119
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lukiwski	12121

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Financial Literacy Leader Act	
Bill C-28. Third reading	12122
Mr. Dubé	12122
Mr. Lamoureux	12124
Mr. Choquette	12124
Mr. Dusseault	12125
Mr. Lamoureux	12125
Mr. Casey	12127
Mr. Dusseault	12127

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canada National Parks Act	
Bill C-370. Report stage	12128
Mr. Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	12128
Motion for concurrence	12128
Division on motion deferred	12129

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:

Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

En cas de non-livraison,

retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>