



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, February 24, 2015**  
**(Part A)**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

### PETITIONS

#### CANADA POST

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I did not think it was possible, but it is. By the hundreds, people in my riding are still signing petitions calling on the government to intervene and restore Canada Post services.

Once again, on behalf of all of my constituents, I am tabling this petition, which calls on the government to review the situation at Canada Post.

[*English*]

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table today a petition that has been signed by many residents of Winnipeg North and Manitobans as a whole. It is in regard to the adoption of international aid policies that support our small family farmers, especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty.

It is important to recognize that the petitioners are calling for ensuring that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with our small family farmers and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

I understand that many members of Parliament from all sides of the House have been tabling this petition, clearly demonstrating how important it is and how much support there is for this type of petition. I appreciate the opportunity to share the petition with the House this morning.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of the climate change accountability act. The signatories to the petition are concerned about the inaction of successive federal governments to

address climate change in Canada. They call upon the Government of Canada to invest in efficient and reliable public transit systems to reduce gridlock and pollution in Canadian cities. Importantly, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support the NDP's climate change accountability act, the law that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and hold the government accountable for doing so.

#### HOUSING

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by hundreds of people in the riding that I represent. They are calling on the government to restore funding to co-ops and affordable housing projects across the country.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is removing itself from its original mandate. It is eliminating the rent-geared-to-income subsidies that provide housing for so many people in this country. On any given night, 35,000 Canadians are without shelter; 235,000 Canadians annually experience housing problems.

It is incumbent upon the current government, and it is important for the government, according to the people who have signed this petition, to renew these agreements, restore the funding to co-ops and affordable housing projects across the country and to get on with building more housing, not reducing the opportunities for Canadians. I present this petition on behalf of my residents.

[*Translation*]

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table a petition signed by over a hundred Sherbrooke residents. They are asking the Government of Canada to use all of the diplomatic resources at its disposal to pressure the Saudi Arabian government to release Saudi blogger Raif Badawi. As we all know, he was jailed and sentenced to a thousand lashes for expressing his opinions on a blog on the Internet in an attempt to kindle political discussions in his country.

The petitioners are asking the government to use everything at its disposal to try to have Mr. Badawi released and bring him back to his wife and three children in Canada.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of constituents who request that the GMO labelling be applied to all food products. The petitioners are not concerned about the GMO; they just think consumers should be aware of what is in the products they are purchasing.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The first petition has 375 signatures from the Gulf Islands, Victoria, Surrey, and Kamloops. The petitioners are calling on the government to put in place a permanent legislated ban on supertankers on the B.C. coastline.

## ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is very relevant to the debate that is about to begin. It is from residents of Victoria and Saanich—Gulf Islands. The petitioners are calling on the House to respect the will of Canadians by enacting legislation to provide clear guidelines to physicians to deal with the issue of physician-assisted death.

## AGRICULTURE

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition today demanding respect for the right of small-scale family farmers to preserve, exchange, and use seeds. This is signed by hundreds of petitioners from across the Vancouver area. They are asking that the Government of Canada and the House of Commons commit to adopting international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women. This will ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

[Translation]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

The first is about the *Kathryn Spirit*. Close to 2,000 people have signed the petition to have the *Kathryn Spirit* removed from Lac Saint-Louis in the St. Lawrence River. The boat has been there since 2011 and is continuing to deteriorate.

According to the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, the federal government may seize a ship if it has reason to believe that ship is damaging the environment or human health. I can tell the House that people are very worried because the boat is moored in a body of water that supplies drinking water to the greater Montreal area. People want assurances that the boat will be towed out of Canadian waters and out of the seaway.

● (1010)

## OPTIMIST MOVEMENT

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition supports my bill to create the

Canadian Optimist Movement Awareness Day to ensure that more and more people join the optimist movement to help young people thrive, develop their potential, and believe in themselves. The first Thursday of February would be Canadian Optimist Movement Awareness Day .

\* \* \*

[English]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

## OPPOSITION MOTION—SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.)** moved:

That (a) the House recognize that (i) the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the prohibition on physician-assisted dying violates Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice”, (ii) the Supreme Court has suspended the implementation of its ruling for 12 months, (iii) the expected federal election and summer recess limit the remaining sitting days in 2015, (iv) Canadians expect Parliamentarians to take a leadership role on this issue and engage with it in an informed and respectful way, (v) a non-partisan, deliberate and effective discussion took place on this issue in the Quebec National Assembly, (vi) Parliament has a responsibility to respond to the Supreme Court ruling; and (b) a special committee be appointed to consider the ruling of the Supreme Court; that the committee consult with experts and with Canadians, and make recommendations for a legislative framework that will respect the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the priorities of Canadians; that the committee consist of 12 members which shall include seven members from the government party, four members from the Official Opposition and one member from the Liberal Party, provided that the Chair is from the government party; that in addition to the Chair, there be one Vice-Chair from each of the recognized opposition parties; that the committee have all of the powers of a standing committee as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada, subject to the usual authorization from the House; that the members to serve on the said committee be appointed by the Whip of each party depositing with the Clerk of the House a list of his or her party’s members of the committee no later than March 11, 2015; that the quorum of the committee be seven members for any proceedings, provided that at least a member of the opposition and of the government party be present; that membership substitutions be permitted to be made from time to time, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2); and that the committee report no later than July 31, 2015, provided that, if the committee has ready its report at any time the House stands adjourned, when that report is deposited with the Clerk of the House, it shall be deemed to have been duly presented to the House.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the hon. member for Charlottetown.

*Business of Supply*

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a landmark judgment, striking down the ban on physician-assisted death. Its decision was not only unanimous; it was unambiguous. For adults who are mentally competent but suffering grievous and irremediable medical conditions, the court ruled that the current prohibition in the Criminal Code infringes the right to life, liberty, and security of the person in a manner that is not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

[*Translation*]

The court has ruled, and now it is up to us, as legislators, to act.

Death, and all the ways it affects our lives, is not an easy topic to discuss. In recent weeks, I have had several sensitive conversations with individuals who applaud the court's decision and with individuals who condemn it. Our responsibility is to create new legislation, even though the process may be difficult and may make some people uncomfortable. We are here to speak for our constituents. We must have the debate, despite how difficult it might be. We must make difficult decisions, and Canadians are aware of this.

The Supreme Court—perhaps taking into account the contentious nature of this process—judiciously set a deadline and gave us one year to draft legislation on physician-assisted death. Given this is such a deeply personal and controversial issue, one year is hardly enough. We are not talking here about an insignificant amendment to a minor law. When Quebec decided to begin drafting its own legislation on physician-assisted death, there were four and a half years between creating a new multi-party committee and passing the legislation. During those four and a half years, one full year was spent on holding hearings and public consultations, as well as proposing and debating amendments.

• (1015)

[*English*]

It took four and a half years in the Quebec National Assembly, including one full year of consultations and debate. The Supreme Court has given us 12 months, which is reasonable, but with the summer recess and the fall election, that gives barely more than 12 sitting weeks for us parliamentarians. That gives us enough time to do this, but no time to waste.

Today, we are putting forward a motion that calls on the House of Commons to take immediate action. We are asking that:

...a special committee be appointed to consider the ruling of the Supreme Court; that the committee consult with experts and with Canadians, and make recommendations for a legislative framework that will respect the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the priorities of Canadians;

As the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia has noted, the Supreme Court's decision has given us a clear path to move forward quickly but thoughtfully. There is no advantage to delaying debate. Indeed, given the timeline offered by the Supreme Court, if the House has any intention of addressing this issue before the next election, those consultations must begin immediately.

[*Translation*]

When I asked the Prime Minister about this last week, he said in the House of Commons that physician-assisted death is a sensitive topic for many Canadians, and there are strong opinions on both

sides. That is fair. I have a strong opinion. It is based on my personal experience, when I sat by my father in his final moments of life. I know that we must respect personal freedoms and choice while ensuring as a society that the most vulnerable among us are protected.

I believe that the Supreme Court made the right decision and that our laws must be consistent with its ruling because that is the right thing to do. That is my opinion, anyway. We have to hear what others have to say about this.

Last week, the Prime Minister himself indicated that he agreed. He said that we will “hold broad consultations on all aspects of this difficult issue”. Today, we can begin to keep that promise.

[*English*]

Quebec's experience shows us, reassuringly, that respectful and responsible deliberation is possible. It reminds us that when political parties set aside their differences in service of the public good, cooperation can follow. Consensus can be found, even on an issue as complex and sensitive as end-of-life care.

If we do nothing, if we do not get this important national debate under way soon, Canada will find itself without any laws governing physician-assisted death. That kind of legislative vacuum serves no one: not people who are suffering, not their anxious family members, and not the compassionate physicians who offer them care.

In the legal challenges leading up to the Supreme Court decision, one thing was constant: no one wanted to break the law. What they were asking for, and what the Supreme Court has now compelled us to provide, is a law that spells out the limitations on physician assistance to Canadians who wish to die with dignity.

[*Translation*]

The Supreme Court ruling applies to competent adults whose enduring suffering is intolerable and who clearly consent to physician-assisted death. Even within the scope of these provisions, Canadians have diverging opinions, as the Prime Minister remarked. Canadians have firmly held values. Whether those values are based on religious convictions, personal experience or professional experience, these voices deserve to be heard. In order for us to have a respectful and responsible discussion on this important issue, we need to have enough time to hear from Canadians and listen to people who are concerned by this legislative measure, their families and medical and legal experts. Part of this ruling calls for an honest look at the quality of care already being provided. Do Canadians who are suffering feel adequately supported by their community? Do they have equitable access to quality palliative care?

*Business of Supply*

• (1020)

[English]

We need to have a national conversation on dying with dignity. That conversation needs to include how we care with empathy and respect for those who are suffering at the end of their lives.

The court provided a deadline. It is our job to take it seriously, to act quickly but thoughtfully, and to live up to our shared responsibilities as legislators. I ask every member to reflect on that responsibility today and to support this motion, this process. The court has spoken; Canada and Canadians await our response.

[Translation]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leader of the third party for his speech on an extremely important issue that obviously affects all Canadians.

Since the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice said as much yesterday, we know that the government does not plan to support this motion. Does the leader of the third party still believe that it is possible to study this matter in a non-partisan way?

Furthermore, given that health, and thus end-of-life care, is a provincial jurisdiction, what are his views on the division of powers under the Constitution and the role of the federal government with respect to the Criminal Code? The Supreme Court decision in Carter deals strictly with the Criminal Code.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her two questions.

First of all, I believe that we will be able to have a non-partisan, informed and respectful debate. We know that the Quebec National Assembly, which is highly partisan, was able to have an extremely compassionate and informed debate. I believe that is possible in this place. I encourage all members of Parliament to support this motion.

Regarding respect for areas of jurisdiction, that is an extremely important issue that will have to be studied. I am personally very encouraged by the legislative framework put forward by Quebec, but the other nine provinces still have not proposed anything. I feel that a federal government must try to protect and respect the rights of all Canadians. However, I know that the provinces and the federal government are on the same page in this case. We all want the same thing: to protect Canadians and their rights.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Liberal leader has done the research and knows the answer, could he tell the House when the last time was that a special committee of the House ever actually designed legislation before? Typically the purpose of committees is to review legislation or to do studies and make recommendations to government.

As I understand it, the Liberal motion suggests that this committee would actually design the legislative response to the Supreme Court decision. I am wondering if he can tell us the history of that in this place.

Second, could he tell us why he chose a special committee rather than the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights?

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the motion we have before us is asking for a committee to make consultations and hear from experts on an issue that the Supreme Court has given to Canadians and given to us legislators to deal with, so Canadians expect their legislators to dig into this. I think a special committee in which the Conservatives will have the majority would give an opportunity to actually engage responsibly in a way that will inform the government when it chooses to bring forward legislation. This is what people expect of us.

There have been many studies on this issue. There were studies in 1995 and in 2010. As well, there was one in the year 2000 that the Senate put forward. Various people have put them forward on such issues. We can draw upon that expertise.

However, it is time that Canadians saw their legislators leaning in and dealing with this important issue so that when the government sits down and puts forward a piece of legislation, it would be informed by the views of Canadians and experts.

• (1025)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be voting in favour of the motion. In answer to the previous question, I recall very clearly when the environment committee, in the wake of the Earth Summit, held hearings and put together recommendations for the government on the ways in which a government could go forward based upon advice from experts. I think this is a very sensible approach and a good way forward.

By the way, let me put on the record that the Green Party membership, in a very difficult discussion and debate, came forward with a proposal that is completely consistent with what the Supreme Court has ruled. Our party, through a member-driven process, decided to support measures for physician-assisted death.

I do want to ask the member for Papineau, the leader of the Liberal Party, if the Liberals would consider an amendment to this motion so that members of Parliament in my situation, in a party with fewer than 12 members of Parliament, could have a seat on such a committee.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, we of course are open to all amendments to this process because we want to bring forward a multi-partisan discussion in a responsible way. We are open to any reasonable amendments that would improve the process of discussion. We look forward to hearing any such proposals and amendments and welcome them so that we can have a proper discussion.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the Liberal motion to create a cross-partisan committee to examine physician-assisted death following the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision in Carter v. Canada.

Physician-assisted death is an emotionally charged issue and a very personal one. Of that there is no doubt. Too often issues that touch the deeply held values of Canadians are used as wedges to divide us politically. However, Canadians deserve a response from this House that addresses the substance of the Supreme Court's legal decision.

It must be made clear from the outset that this is not a debate about what is right or wrong for a person confronted with an end-of-life situation. Such decisions are often tied to a person's religious or moral convictions. However, for Parliament this must be a question of the proper role of government according to our Constitution, which is the fundamental law of Canada.

Our country is a democracy, but it is a constitutional democracy. The power of our legislature is subject to the legal limits that protect minorities and individuals from the tyranny of the majority. These limits are enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the proper function of the judiciary is to interpret those limits.

On the question of how far the government can go to limit the rights of Canadians with respect to physician-assisted death, the Supreme Court of Canada has now given us clear and unanimous guidance. The criminal prohibition of physician-assisted death unjustifiably infringed the rights of Canadians to life, liberty, and security of the person. The decision was the result of the Supreme Court's rational interpretation of the law according to the evidence and best arguments. The unanimity of that decision adds special force to the Supreme Court's conclusions.

Those conclusions are not merely opinions; rather, they are the product of objective legal analysis and carefully weighed developments in our constitutional jurisprudence. The famous metaphor for our Constitution is that of a living tree. Anyone who thinks that this is an example of judicial activism should read *Carter v. Canada*. He or she will find that this new development in our constitutional law has firm roots indeed.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court makes it clear that we as legislators cannot stand in the way of a dignified choice for competent adults who are suffering from a prolonged, intolerable, and irremediable medical condition.

This decision was a powerful one. The Supreme Court ruled that the prohibition of physician-assisted dying violated each aspect of section 7 of the charter with respect to life, liberty, and security of the person. Specifically, the effect of the ban was to deny Canadians the right to life by forcing some people to commit suicide early out of fear of incapacity, to deny Canadians the right to liberty by depriving people of control over their bodily integrity and medical care, and to deny Canadians security of the person by leaving people to endure intolerable suffering.

The court found that these violations were unjustified. Constitutionally, the prohibitions went disproportionately beyond their purpose by affecting people who were not vulnerable to coercion in times of weakness. For that reason, the court held that the prohibition on physician-assisted death is of no force or effect to the extent that two conditions are met: first, that the person is a competent adult who clearly consents to dying; second, that the person has a grievous and irremediable medical condition that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances.

When I was in Charlottetown this past weekend, I had the chance to hear from many of the constituents I represent here in this House. They were pleased with the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada. They, like many Canadians, have been at the bedsides of people who

### *Business of Supply*

were terminally ill and in great pain at the end of their lives. They, like many Canadians, had a painful story of loved ones who were not given the dignity they deserved at the end of their lives. Many held back tears at the memories of being bedside when their loved ones were suffering. These conversations are why it is so important for the government to allow for a thorough debate on physician-assisted death.

• (1030)

The Canadian Medical Association supports the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. The CMA, however, requests legislative protection for physicians who, for reasons of moral or religious conviction, cannot assist in death. The CMA has requested a determination on how consent would be determined, what safeguards would be put in place, and how patients would apply for assistance.

Doctors want to help their patients in all stages of life and death. Doctors deserve direction from this House. We should not pass the buck.

We have heard concerns that the Supreme Court ruling would unintentionally create a slippery slope, leading to the victimization of vulnerable populations. It is this slippery slope that has prompted the Council of Canadians with Disabilities to ask for legislative safeguards to protect vulnerable populations and to avoid potential distraction from current end-of-life strategies and palliative care.

I also want to be clear that I do not believe that palliative care and other end-of-life strategies will be less important because of this ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada. Canadians will have all options for end-of-life care. However, going forward, we have to recognize that physician-assisted death would be one of those options. Our constitution requires it.

We would be doing ourselves and this House a huge disservice by not listening intently to the concerns raised by the Canadian Medical Association and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities. The perspectives of organizations like theirs, and so many others, are why the Liberal Party believes in striking a committee to hear from witnesses, identify concerns and solutions, and present a carefully considered report to the House. How will we adequately address the issues if we do not seek to understand them?

The Supreme Court of Canada has given us a clear directive to develop a permissive regime that respects the rights of Canadians under the charter and that also protects the rights of vulnerable populations and the freedom of conscience of our physicians. Why then would the government want to delay examining the best ways to protect Canadians while upholding their constitutional rights?

I know that some of our colleagues across the floor have not always held the same reverence for the charter and the judges charged with its interpretation. This is not surprising, given how often the government's legislation and executive actions have been ruled unconstitutional by the courts. The losing streak does not need to be recited here. I encourage the government to take this opportunity to rethink its approach to our country's Constitution.

*Business of Supply*

The Supreme Court of Canada has given us until February 5, 2016 to develop a framework before physician-assisted dying becomes legal in Canada. It is our duty as elected representatives to give this issue the respect, the time, and the thought it deserves. Looking to the work of the Quebec National Assembly and Bill 52 may prove useful, and its approach is something a parliamentary committee should consider. We must get this right.

Again, this is not an issue of personal morality or religion, nor should it be. It is an issue of constitutional rights in a free society and the limited power of the legislature. The Liberal Party is calling upon this House to remove political wedges from this issue and to support our motion.

The Supreme Court of Canada has called upon this House to set the direction for physician-assisted death. Sick and dying individuals have called upon this House to provide them with all options and to respect their rights and freedoms under the charter. Physicians have called upon this House for direction that respects individuals' freedom of conscience.

Canadians are calling on us to put aside our partisan allegiances and to work together on this historic ruling. My question is, then, are my colleagues in this House ready to put aside our political divisions, even temporarily, to respect the judicial branch of our government and talk about this serious issue?

• (1035)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is a valuable member of the justice committee, which I chair, and always has input.

I have just two questions for my colleague.

Today's motion from the Liberal Party is a procedural motion. It is about procedures moving forward. The leader indicated that it is not about reviewing legislation. It is more about setting up a committee to do a procedural thing.

The leader of the Liberal Party talked about expert witnesses. Does the member who just spoke have a definition of what experts are? This deals with all Canadians. How are they expecting to define who is an expert on this and who is not?

The standing committees now have 10 members. On a percentage basis, the Liberals have one seat. Committees have moved from what used to be the standing committee size of 12, which means that there was even less presence for the Liberal Party, in a sense, than they have now. Why did they choose 12 members over 10, which is the normal process for a standing committee of the House of Commons?

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Mr. Speaker, I must say that my colleague really goes out of his way, as chairman of the justice committee, to be fair to all members and certainly to the lone member of the Liberal Party on that committee.

His question had two parts. The first was how we would define experts. The question is frankly a bit surprising, because in our work on the justice committee, we frequently hear from experts. I would envision that the experts would include ethicists, experts in palliative care, people from the Canadian Medical Association, people from the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, and representatives from jurisdictions that have had the experience of physician-assisted death

in their jurisdictions, which would be international people. There is no limit to the advice that would be valued by Canadians in this exercise as well as by people who are living with these types of decisions every day.

With regard to the question as to why 12 members versus 10, it does not matter. These are details that are really not particularly important. The thrust of the motion is that this is a conversation we have to start. Parliamentarians need to engage Canadians. We need to trust Canadians. These details are just white noise.

• (1040)

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am not so sure that it is only noise, because history proves itself.

I will continue a bit on the same point as my esteemed colleague who chairs the justice committee.

According to the motion by the leader of the third party, the committee would have to give some recommendations. It would be such an unbalanced committee on such an important question that is so differently addressed by so many different people. I am not worried that we will be able to hear all the experts. I am a bit more worried on the recommendation side.

On what I hope is a nonpartisan question, would it not be better to have equal representation on the committee to send a signal that it will be done in a nonpartisan fashion? Exactly as the leader of the Green Party said, can we get a place for people from other parties who are not necessarily recognized in the House but who are part of the conversation because they represent a part of our population?

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Mr. Speaker, the member is another of my colleagues who, as a result of having worked with her on the justice committee, has genuinely earned my respect.

With respect to that question, the short answer is yes. It is our hope that the committee, regardless of its composition, regardless of party stripe, would really be able to put that aside and work in a nonpartisan manner in the interest of Canadians.

Is it necessary to have the committee balanced by parties for that to happen? I would hope not, but if that were the will, there is no reason we would not be open to that. I would hope that on an issue like this, the composition of the committee in terms of party members would not be that important. A balanced committee would be one we would be hard pressed to argue against and would absolutely send the right message.

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in today's debate on the way forward in responding to the recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada on the issue of physician-assisted dying.

The issue of physician-assisted dying is very complex and evokes a range of deeply held feelings and responses that depend in large part on the experiences of each individual. Perspectives cut across demographic, political, and religious lines. This is a personal issue, above all else.



*Business of Supply*

The member for Papineau, the Liberal leader, mentioned earlier that his views were informed by the last days he spent with his father. I think we have all had those personal experiences. I certainly went through that with my parents, with other family members, and with good friends. I think every Canadian has lived through a situation with a loved one where they saw a difficult end-of-life situation. We all have a view on this, and I think Canadians broadly need to be consulted in the process, because it is such a personal thing to every Canadian.

This issue will require us to confront the reality that every one of us will face death and the possibility that each of us will experience suffering at some point in our lives that may make it necessary to seek the assistance and support of others. These are fundamental aspects of what it means to be human.

I would like to assure all members that our government fully appreciates the serious nature of the challenges that lie ahead. We will be opposing the motion, because we intend to launch meaningful consultations soon with Canadians and key stakeholders so that we can hear all perspectives on this difficult issue.

It will be imperative for Canadians to also appreciate the complex and difficult nature of these issues. There are no easy answers here. We will ensure that during the months to come Canadians understand the subtleties of the issues before us and also understand the existing landscape of health care options at the end of life. For instance, every person can refuse treatment or stop treatment that has already been started, even where the result is that they will die. Many Canadians may be unaware of this existing right. Many seem to believe that physician-assisted dying means that they would now have the right to refuse life-prolonging treatment at the end of life. We must ensure that everyone understands what is already legal so that they are not confusing these measures with physician-assisted dying.

More specifically, we are here today because on February 6, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada concluded that the Criminal Code provisions on physician-assisted dying are contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In so doing, the court reversed its own previous decision in the Rodriguez case, decided in 1993, just over 20 years ago. This time, the Supreme Court found that the prohibition deprived some people of the right to liberty and security of the person, which encompasses protection for choice and autonomy in fundamental life decisions about one's own body. It also found that the provisions deprived some people of the right to life, because they have the effect of forcing them to end their lives prematurely for fear that they will be unable to do so when the suffering becomes intolerable. These deprivations were held not to be in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. The court also held that the charter recognizes the value of life and honours the role autonomy and dignity play at the end of that life.

The court came to its conclusion after having considered the situations of the particular claimants in this case, in particular Gloria Taylor. In 2009, Ms. Taylor was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS, a fatal neurodegenerative disease that causes progressive muscle weakness. ALS patients first lose the ability to use their hands and feet, then the ability to walk, chew, and swallow, and eventually to breathe. For Ms. Taylor and people like her, the court found that the prohibition on physician-assisted dying

left her with what she described as a cruel choice between killing herself while she was still physically capable of doing so or giving up the ability to exercise any control over the manner and timing of her death.

The court concluded that the charter protects the right to physician-assisted death for competent adults who clearly consent and who have a grievous and irremediable medical condition, including an illness, disease, or disability, that causes enduring and intolerable suffering. As a result, it found two sections of the Criminal Code to be unconstitutional: the criminal prohibition against assisted suicide and the rule that a person cannot legally consent to death being inflicted upon oneself. The court found that the purpose of these laws was to protect vulnerable individuals from having their lives ended in times of weakness or through the coercion or abuse of others.

•(1045)

Since these laws apply to everyone, the court found that they violated the rights of individuals who are not vulnerable and who want to have physician-assisted death when they are grievously or irremediably ill.

The court also confirmed that Parliament's criminal jurisdiction includes the power to prohibit or regulate medical treatments, because they are dangerous. At the same time, it also affirmed that both the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments can legislate with respect to health, depending on the aspect being legislated.

The court suspended the legal effect of its ruling for 12 months in order to give Parliament time to develop an appropriate legislative response. During this time period, physician-assisted dying remains illegal.

While the Supreme Court framed its judgment around the concept of physician-assisted dying, I believe it is important at this early stage of the debate to distinguish between physician-assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia. Physician-assisted suicide is when a physician provides a patient with the means to end their own life, such as by prescribing a lethal dose of medication that the patient then self administers. Voluntary euthanasia occurs when a physician actively causes a person's death at their request, typically through a lethal injection.

From the perspective of a person who is suffering intolerably and wishes to die with a physician's assistance, these two practices may appear indistinguishable. However, from the current criminal law perspective, they are different crimes with different penalties.

Under the current law, voluntary euthanasia meets the definition of murder, even when it is motivated by compassion or mercy, and even when the person requests or consents to dying. Murder is the most serious offence in our criminal law and is punishable by a mandatory life sentence. In contrast, a physician who aids a person in taking their own life falls within the offence of assisting suicide. This offence is punishable by a maximum of 14 years in prison.

*Business of Supply*

Of the few jurisdictions that now regulate physician-assisted dying, some permit only euthanasia, some permit only assisted suicide, and some permit both. There is evidence suggesting that the risks and implications of the two practices are distinct. These are important distinctions to bear in mind.

The Supreme Court was clear in stating that it was confining itself to assessing the rights of those who would seek assistance in dying, rather than of those who might be tasked with providing such assistance, namely physicians. However, the reality is that the legal effect of the ruling is to require that the criminal law free physicians from criminal responsibility for their participation in helping some people die, or in actively causing death.

The fact that the law must now permit a zone of lawful participation in bringing about the death of others, however, raises some concerns. Many such concerns were raised before the courts in the Carter litigation as reasons justifying the absolute prohibition of these practices. Although the court has now rejected those arguments with respect to an absolute prohibition, this does not mean that those concerns and risks are not important and legitimate considerations moving forward. Indeed, the trial judge and the Supreme Court were clear that those risks and concerns are real. I would like to quote from the trial judge, who said:

...the risks inherent in permitting physician-assisted death can be identified and very substantially minimized through a carefully-designed system imposing stringent limits that are scrupulously monitored and enforced.

I consider this to be a key passage in the trial judgment, and it is one that is referred to several times by the Supreme Court. There are several things to note in this passage. First, the trial judge found that there are risks inherent in permitting physician-assisted dying. These risks will be borne by vulnerable individuals. Second, the risks can be identified and substantially minimized through a carefully designed regime with stringent limits and safeguards, although they cannot be eliminated entirely. Third, the limits and safeguards must be carefully implemented, monitored, and enforced.

This passage helps us see the path that lies ahead. We will need to identify the various risks to vulnerable individuals so that we can design a regime with limits and safeguards aimed at minimizing their occurrence. We will also need to consider mechanisms to ensure that physicians are clear about the law and how to apply it, and that the relevant authorities will be equally vigilant in monitoring and enforcing any violations.

The courts agree that there is no room for complacency, either in designing a legislative response or in its implementation. In my view, we must be very careful in designing these procedures. There is a lot that we already know about the nature of these risks. A great deal of evidence was presented to the courts in the Carter litigation about those risks.

• (1050)

Some risks that have already been identified relate to the difficulties that physicians may have in detecting whether a person's request to die is affected by depression or by the influence of third parties, such as family members. This last concern is especially acute in relation to the elderly. As we all know, elder abuse is a growing concern. All too often, people take advantage of a trust that an elderly person places in them. It is far from inconceivable that an

adult child of an elderly person could suddenly suggest to him or her that he or she has lived a full life and no longer needs to suffer in a weakened or ill state. Adult children who may be eager to get at their parents' estate could conceivably try to influence their parent to choose assisted dying.

As a lawyer, I am very concerned about undue pressure on and manipulation of sick and elderly persons by unscrupulous beneficiaries. Anyone who has practised law in this country, and especially in the area of wills and estates law, would know about this. These lawyers have seen situations where elderly people have been subjected to a lot of pressure to enter into a certain will arrangement, in particular testamentary trust arrangements, which takes it to a different level. We need to be very cautious about how we proceed in this area. We would hope that such things would never happen, but in this process we will only hurt vulnerable individuals if we naively assume that such behaviour is outside the realm of possibility. The real question is how to guard against its resulting in an unwanted death.

Other risks relate to concerns that individuals could choose to seek death because of a faulty diagnosis or prognosis. While medicine is a science, diagnosing illness and disease and prognosticating over how long a person with an illness has to live are difficult medical determinations. My own father was a medical practitioner. He is retired now, currently in a hospital in Hamilton, Ontario. He told me many times about diagnoses that changed over time and test results that were inconclusive. As a child, I remember his telling me of a patient he had in Toronto about 40 years ago. A young man was injured in a high-school football accident and was in a coma for 21 years. After 21 years, he woke up and walked out of hospital one day. His mother sat by his side every single day for 21 years. Science is expanding all the time, but every day we learn more about the human body and its ability to heal itself.

My father graduated from medical school in 1953, and his entire career was about prolonging life and saving life. I worry about future generations of medical students and how they will deal now with the added responsibility to consider how to end a life.

There was also evidence presented to the court that persons with disabilities would face special risks under a regime that is overly permissive. The trial judge accepted evidence that people with disabilities face prejudice in the health care context because some physicians have subconscious biases that cause them to presume that the quality of life of disabled individuals is lower than those disabled individuals subjectively experience it to be. One concern is that a request to die from a person with a disability would too easily be accepted by his or her physician and that not enough time and energy would be spent looking behind the words to understand the reasons for the request. At a more general level, the concern of disability rights groups is that physician-assisted death would suddenly reinforce the more generalized social prejudice and stereotypes that disabled lives have less value and quality than those of other Canadians. Many disabled individuals find the assumption that life with a disability is less meaningful or somehow of lesser quality to be devaluing. We must take these concerns seriously.

*Business of Supply*

Again, my experience is informed by my own personal experience with my late mother who passed away three years ago, suffering from the effects of Alzheimer's. Her last five years were not good. She was confined to an over-sized wheelchair. She had to be lifted in and out of that chair and in and out of bed. Many times she did not know where she was or who she was or to whom she was speaking. However, even in the final year, some days, out of the blue she would say something that was extremely appropriate, that was pithy, that was apropos to the moment, that was insightful, and we never knew when that would happen.

•(1055)

My brother and sister and I struggled to bring her out of the care home she was in to attend family events. There had to be special logistical arrangements and special caregivers, but every moment we spent with her was worthwhile, and we all wish that she was still with us today.

At a more general level, to be sure, there are differing views within the disability community, but these are the concerns that have been voiced by large national organizations in Canada and abroad. Hearing all voices over the coming months will be of critical importance, so that we can develop adequate responses and safeguards that affirm the equal and inherent dignity and value of all Canadians, including those with disabilities.

Many are likely to view the question of physician-assisted dying as a private matter between patients and their doctors when viewed through the lens of the single individual who genuinely and desperately wants to die because he or she has a medical condition that is causing intolerable suffering. The question of legalizing physician-assisted dying does appear to be a private one.

From the perspective of a person who truly wants to die, the issue may seem like a relatively simple one. However, as I have described, there are many issues that must be considered from the broader public perspective.

Some people may choose assisted dying after having lived a vibrant and full life, with the support of family and friends, after having been able to accomplish all of their dreams. However, not everyone is so fortunate. Some people may choose death as the most reasonable option because they are not supported by their families, they are lonely, or they are lacking the resources necessary to make life manageable. If these individuals request assistance to die from their physicians, how should they be treated?

There are likely several different options for a possible way forward on this issue. It would be critical to review the existing regimes internationally, as was done by the courts in the Carter decision. At present, they seem to fall into two groups. In the United States, there are three states—Oregon, Washington, and Vermont—that have legalized physician-assisted suicide only through a prescription of a lethal substance for those who are terminally ill. By contrast, three countries in Europe—Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—have legalized and regulated euthanasia for persons suffering intolerably from any kind of medical condition.

Under these regimes, most people who obtain euthanasia are cancer patients at the end of life, but there are a growing number of people with psychiatric disorders and other types of conditions that

are not life threatening. Difficult choices will need to be made. Do we as a society see the suffering of those who are dying differently from the suffering of those who still have a lot of life left to live? Are we doing all that we can to alleviate suffering in various forms?

I would like to mention palliative care at this point and pay special tribute to those very special people, the caregivers, nurses, and doctors, who work in the palliative care field. They are truly special angels and deserve our supports and thanks. I have seen family members go into palliative care and have a much better situation at the end of life than without it. That needs to be part of our debate. Any time that I think I have a difficult day at the office, I think of those who work in palliative care. God bless them.

How will we ensure that suicide prevention initiatives continue to improve while we offer assistance in death to some people? How can we help Canadians be less afraid to talk to their doctors and families about death and dying and consider preparing advance directives setting out their wishes if they should become unable to express their wishes?

Physician-assisted dying raises many difficult issues of great importance to all Canadians. It involves matters of life and death, questions of human dignity and suffering, and the inherent value and equality of all Canadians no matter what their medical conditions, age, or physical limitations and challenges. These are very profound questions. Our government opposes this motion because we have committed to consulting widely with Canadians in a meaningful and effective way. This will take some time and it behooves us to take the appropriate time now to carefully consider all perspectives and options.

We must all come together to work out solutions in a respectful and compassionate way. How we resolve these often conflicting values will speak to who we are as a society for many years to come. In my view, the special committee structure and the timeframe suggested in the Liberal motion would not allow for the proper consideration of all aspects of this very serious matter.

•(1100)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some of the steps the member outlined, particularly his phrase, “we must all come together”, speaks to the need to get on with this.

I am concerned that the member for Kitchener Centre and the member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin have already decided that the “notwithstanding” clause should be implemented, and that the member for Vegreville—Wainwright already thinks there is not enough time and that the Conservatives need an extension.

Could the member explain to me why it is important for not only for his caucus to have a proper conversation? Why can we not do what Preston Manning has said and let the people speak in Parliament in a transparent way so we can get this right? What would be the way to all come together and listen to Canadians, rather than a conversation in some backroom with where Conservative members of Parliament are told what to do?

**Mr. Bob Dechert:** Mr. Speaker, I regret the partisan tone of that question.

*Business of Supply*

In fact, we are suggesting that tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Canadians need to be heard on this issue. The member will know that committees are very limited in the number of people from whom they can hear.

My colleagues who are here today and who serve on the justice committee know that we went through a similar process with the prostitution decision in response to the Bedford case last year when we reviewed the prostitution legislation. Even though we sat for quite a period of time during the summer and heard from witnesses 6 hours a day, the most we could hear from was maybe 8 or 10 witnesses per hour. There are just not enough hours in the day to hear from the number of people who need to be heard on such an important issue as this.

We need to reach out to all Canadians. We need to have a broad public consultation process. Then we need to collect that information. We need to craft a response to it. Then it will go through the committee process. That should begin soon, and I am quite confident that it will.

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, for his speech, and I want to say that I listened closely to his answer to the Liberal member.

The prostitution example the parliamentary secretary gave was not particularly comforting if we were hoping to have a non-partisan consultation.

That was one of the problems with the prostitution legislation in response to the Bedford decision. Many people told us that the government was only consulting the people it wanted to consult.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice tell the House whether the opposition parties and the members who represent non-recognized parties in the House will be able to participate in the process the Conservatives envision and whether the government will truly consult broadly?

I want to hear opinions from everyone: those who support assisted death, those who are against it, those who are undecided and those who agree to a certain extent.

I do not want to feel as though the vision of the government and the Prime Minister's Office is the only option. This is an extremely serious and emotional issue for many people. It affects a lot of the people we all represent in the House, and they deserve to be heard.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Dechert:** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the member on the justice committee.

I believe this can be done in a very broad way. We have this invention called the Internet. Many Canadians, perhaps not all, are able to access it. That is one tool we could use to ask Canadians who want to express their opinion to tell us, as parliamentarians, how they think we ought to do this.

We could set this up through a series of questions that Canadians could then answer. That could be made available to everyone. This is

one possible scenario. It would be non-partisan and it would take place across Canada. For those who are unable to access the Internet, other ways could be made available for them to participate through public meetings, the mail and other ways of communication.

Then, collectively, as parliamentarians, we should look at that and decide how we need to respond.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the speech of the member for Mississauga—Erindale was heartfelt and thoughtful. There is a reason why the people have returned him to the House several times. It is because he is able to enunciate and elaborate on many complex issues in a way that is respectful and that raises the tone, which I think most Canadians would like to see in Parliament.

The member raised concerns. He spoke about his father and the era in which his father practised medicine, protecting and trying to save and preserve life. He also raised his concern about future practitioners in the medical profession and how many of the questions we heard today would be foisted upon them.

I know, as a son of a solicitor who worked in a law office, that there are also ongoing challenges with what the member was saying regarding elder abuse, as well as establishing whether people had proper wills and that those wills were honoured and carried forward. Oftentimes, that is left up to the lawyer to carry out in very difficult situations.

Does the member also share concerns that there will be similar issues with the legal profession with this, because many Canadians still do not have wills? These are things that we all will have wrestle with collectively as this issue goes forward.

**Mr. Bob Dechert:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his kind comments.

As a lawyer, I have seen beneficiaries unfairly manipulate people who were ill and in a weakened state, and I think most lawyers have. One has to be very concerned about that. I witnessed my colleagues who were specialists in the area of wills and estates call those people out and refuse to witness a will that they knew the testator had been pressured to enter into. This takes it to another level, and people can be manipulated in that sense.

Once the will is in place stating the beneficiaries, I am concerned about the kind of pressure that those people could be put under to then say that they wish assisted suicide. We have to take the time to carefully consider those issues and ensure that the process that is put in place eliminates as much as possible the risks of this happening.

● (1110)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is the government's plan?

We have put forward a proposal to start consultation. This is a very difficult and complex issue. It is probably one that none of us really want to have to deal with, but the reality is that the Supreme Court has referred it back to Parliament and has told us we have 12 months to come up with something. Therefore, we have put forward a proposal to start the process moving in a non-partisan way.

*Business of Supply*

What is the government's proposal, other than putting something up on the Internet and talking about already asking for an extension, rather than starting to deal with this difficult issue?

**Mr. Bob Dechert:** Mr. Speaker, there will be a broad consultation process. I am not informed of the whole design of that process to inform the member today, but it will be announced by the government very soon. I assure the member that it will be very broad.

I appreciate that the Liberals are trying to do something here, but it is the wrong method. Parliamentary committees do not have the ability to hear from thousands of people.

With respect to the 12-month period, this is a standard time that the courts use in cases of this sort. However, given the special circumstances of this issue, which is among the most important that we will ever have to deal with, and in the context of this year, I do not think we should be rushed into doing something that is inappropriate and not take the time to properly and carefully consider it and hear all opinions. There is a 12-month imposed deadline. There are opportunities for the government to ask the court for an extension. Given the circumstances of the issue and this particular year, I think the court would very likely consider those arguments.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

There are times in a person's life that are of critical importance. There is nothing more important than anything that affects our health and our lives and anything that affects the lives of the people we represent. There is likely nothing more important we will debate, except security, because this is once again an issue that affects the lives and freedoms of the people we represent. It is therefore an extremely important issue.

When I was fairly young—the word “young” is relative in this caucus—I suddenly had to deal with terms that I was completely unfamiliar with. When I was 29 years old, we learned quite suddenly that my father had cancer. He had only a short time to live. The doctors gave him two or three months. Even with treatment, he would have five months at most. I had to reconsider what principles and concepts such as quality of life and human dignity meant to me. There is nothing worse in life than being faced with your own mortality or the mortality of your loved ones. How should anyone deal with all of this? I think that the most important thing to focus on is being compassionate.

I am also lucky to be a Quebecker and to have observed the process in Quebec with the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity. One of my good friends, Maryse Gaudreault, the MNA for Hull, was a member of the National Assembly when her party was in power, and she chaired the committee.

What I found fascinating was that politicians of all stripes were able to come together to address this very complex issue. There were as many different positions as there were people around the table, but they were able to put their differences aside to work for the people they represented, for the greater good, as they say. These people were all open to ideas throughout the process. It is true that they took as much time as they needed. I agree with the parliamentary

secretary: if we want to carry out a thorough study of the many different aspects of this issue, we should think about the time we will have to spend on it. That is why we cannot wait until tomorrow; we must start today.

The committee produced a report. There is an English version. I encourage members to consult the report on the Government of Quebec site by clicking on the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity tab. This is a model of political co-operation between politicians of all stripes. Call them what you will—federalists, sovereigntists or separatists—whether they were on the left, on the right, in the centre or on the centre-left, these people all sat down around a table in a non-partisan way to listen to what Quebeckers had to say and to make recommendations.

It did not stop there. Indeed, after that, a committee of experts was put together to try to create a somewhat more legal context on the issue. Three prominent individuals took part: Jean-Pierre Ménard, an authority on medical law, Michelle Giroux and Jean-Claude Hébert. Work continued, and it was agreed that if the next government was not the same as the government that chaired the committee, they would carry on and continue the process. Therefore, it did not end when the government changed hands. The Parti Québécois minister, Véronique Hivon, took over and continued to handle the file, and then the Couillard government completed the process.

This shows how a cross-section of people with different backgrounds all got involved in this issue. They took the time to listen to the public and tried to develop a humane process that is respectful of rights and of people at higher risk in order to avoid what no one wants to see happen.

That being said, under the Canadian Constitution, the provinces have jurisdiction over health. That includes end-of-life care, regardless of when that happens.

• (1115)

I have a lot of respect for Quebec law, and I fully recognize Quebec's right—and the right of every province in the same circumstances—to do what it did. We are dealing with the Carter decision, which was rendered by the Supreme Court on February 6. The decision was very clear. It deals with section 241(b) of the Criminal Code, which states that anyone who aids or abets a person to commit suicide is guilty of a criminal offence. According to section 14 of the Criminal Code, “no person is entitled to consent to have death inflicted on him”.

The Supreme Court of Canada was very clear. In the words of the leader of the third party, the court provided “clear and unanimous guidance”. The Supreme Court of Canada could not be any clearer. We must therefore examine this issue in a very specific context. The Supreme Court of Canada stated unequivocally:

Section 241(b) and s. 14 of the *Criminal Code* unjustifiably infringe s. 7 of the *Charter* and are of not force or effect [it is important to clearly understand the Supreme Court's decision] to the extent that they prohibit physician-assisted death for a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition. The declaration of invalidity is suspended for 12 months.

*Business of Supply*

In other words, there are not 36 possible scenarios. This has been discussed at length. We know the score. Everyone is talking about three possible scenarios and a fourth. The fourth scenario would be to seek an extension from the Supreme Court because we were unable to move forward with this matter quickly and do what we should have done a long time ago. The NDP started working on this long before the Carter decision, knowing full well that we must deal with this issue, even if only because Canadians asked us to. I keep getting the impression that Canadians are ahead of us on this issue.

The Supreme Court of Canada was clear. One of the three possible scenarios is to use the notwithstanding clause. We know that some Conservative colleagues are fond of that clause. I was pleased to hear the Minister of Justice say that the notwithstanding clause would not be used. Thank God. To make this clear to those watching us, using the notwithstanding clause in relation to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms means that we know we are not complying with the Charter, but we are knowingly doing that anyway. So far, every party has stayed far away from using that type of clause and I am glad about that.

The second scenario would be to say that nothing is happening and that we will not ask the Supreme Court of Canada for an extension. What is happening? A journalist asked me that question yesterday. It is interesting because the more we read the decision, the more things we see come to light. In fact, my opinion, for what it is worth, is that section 241 (b) will continue to apply, except for prohibiting “physician-assisted death for a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents...” or what I was referring to earlier. The laissez-faire or leave-it-alone scenario would mean that the courts would rule on a case-by-case basis.

The third scenario is to take the bull by the horns and provide clarification. The courts will nevertheless have to know what is meant by “competent adult”, “clearly consents to the termination of life”, “grievous and irremediable medical conditions (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering”, and so forth.

The New Democrat caucus has all kinds of opinions, just like the Canadian public. However, I think that we need to listen to Canadians, experts and people who have a special interest in this issue, so that we can be clear about how paragraph 241(b) should now read in light of the Supreme Court's ruling, and what would be an acceptable form of consent, as given by an adult, and so on. The idea of a committee is not a bad one.

We will support the Liberal motion. However, I have some serious doubts about whether the process can be non-partisan, in light of the history we have with the current government.

• (1120)

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

It is interesting to see the government's position. The Conservatives indicated that they are in favour of consulting people, but they are not in favour of a committee. Apparently, this is a role for the government only.

What role does my colleague think parliamentarians should play in the consultation process? Should their role be limited to simply

examining the work of public servants? Does she think we have a real role to play in this process as members of the opposition?

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, as MPs, we have an extremely important role to play in this because we are the people's representatives.

Each one of the 308 members of this House represents a percentage of the population, and must therefore take the pulse of his or her constituents. Do not think that I have not raised this issue during all of the activities I do in my riding. I am known for spending a lot of time on the ground in my riding. I ask people in my riding about this issue. Some people even ask me before I have had a chance to do it. They ask me what I think of the Supreme Court's decision, and I ask them what they think of it, where they stand and what they would like to see.

I get the sense that, on this issue, Canadians are maybe more mature and adult than the government. They are ready to listen to this conversation. Quebeckers have listened, but perhaps not the rest of Canada. The broad consultation that the parliamentary secretary was talking about, and rightly so, should be carried out in a non-partisan way, not by the government but by a representative group of MPs, so that we can all hear the same things instead of wondering whether we really got X, Y or Z's opinion. It has to be broad and non-partisan.

• (1125)

[English]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear through the discussion this morning and I am sure to all members of Parliament, judging by the volume of information we are getting from our constituents, that this is a very crucial and a very sensitive issue for Canadians to deal with. It is my hope that we will take adequate time to study it and to hear from a broad spectrum of Canadians.

The concern I have with my colleague's comments, both in her speech now and in her earlier question to my colleague the parliamentary secretary, was her implication that somehow this party or this government has already made a decision, or will make a decision, irrespective of Parliament.

I need to remind her and all Canadians that all parties have dealt with this issue in Parliament. Nine different private members' bills introduced from 1991 to 2012 have dealt with this exact issue. Six of those bills failed to pass.

It is not this government that is making the decision. It is not this party. Parliament has spoken to this issue, and it is clear to me that if we are to deal with this issue now, we need adequate time to consult.

My question to the member is this: why, in an election year when we have many weeks out of the parliamentary calendar to study this issue adequately, would she oppose the idea of having a full 12 months of parliamentary time to study this very crucial issue?

*Business of Supply*

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, I will correct the hon. member. I do not oppose a study. What I would oppose strongly, though, would be a consultation of 12 months, or however many months, that was carried out solely by the government. That would be a big problem with me and our caucus. I think it is too big a question to be examined only by the government side.

That said, I understand the previous decisions and the previous facts that members of different parliaments had to decide on. We now face a decision from the Supreme Court of Canada, which is the top court, and we are still a country governed by the rule of law. I used to say on all the panels on which I sat with my colleagues who kept saying, “Oh, no, it is the Rodriguez decision. It is Rodriguez. It has been decided”, that we must beware and that we might have to decide to reopen the issue because a decision from the Supreme Court might be different.

If everybody waited for this actual moment after February 6, they would already be too late. They should have started.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of rising today to speak to assisted suicide and the motion by the third party in the House.

I would like to start by echoing the comments of all my colleagues. I will not go into a lengthy debate. This is a sensitive, very polarized issue that engages people personally because we have all directly or indirectly gone through a tragic situation where someone we know has lost a loved one or we ourselves have lost someone very close to us or seen a loved one suffer. Parliament's role is to guide Canadians in this kind of situation, to reach out and tell them that we will listen, answer their questions and ease their insecurity.

The debate is necessary today, and I would like to thank my colleagues in the Liberal Party for moving this motion. As they said, we are dealing with a very important Supreme Court decision because, as my colleague from Gatineau just said, it overturns another decision, the Rodriguez decision. It sets out new principles regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide. It is important that we, as parliamentarians, consider this decision and listen to the many Canadians from all walks of life who have been asking the government to do something for a long time.

My colleague from Gatineau mentioned this, and I could perhaps repeat certain principles set out in the court's decision. In its decision, the court indicates that paragraph 241 (*b*) and section 14 of the Criminal Code infringe Canadians' right to life, liberty and security of the person. Why? Because a blanket prohibition does not achieve the objective of protecting vulnerable people from being counselled or encouraged to end their lives. The blanket prohibition infringes the right to dignity. The Supreme Court speaks of autonomy in making decisions, liberty of the person, dignity of the person. It is important to acknowledge and espouse these concepts and to go back to Canadians so they can tell us what they think and what they expect from their Parliament.

It is unfortunate that the Conservatives believe that only the government can consult Canadians. That is false. We are all here as parliamentarians, and it is the role of parliamentarians and Parliament to consult Canadians.

With regard to what was done in Quebec, on behalf of all my colleagues, I would like to congratulate the members of the National Assembly. They were truly able to completely set aside political partisanship and finally passed the bill on June 5, 2014.

Quebec's process was very interesting. It began in 2009. From 2009 to 2014, a select committee mandated by the assembly to study the issue of the right to die with dignity came up with principles and considered the issue of assisted suicide very carefully. It consulted experts from September 2010 to March 2011.

● (1130)

Then it asked legal experts to comment on its 24 recommendations and table a report on the legal issues that were raised. That report was submitted to the government on January 15, 2013, and to the Committee on Health and Social Services.

People from every field affected by this issue were consulted, including legal experts and health and social services professionals. It is worth mentioning because the provinces have to be involved in the process, whether there is a special committee or consultation. The government has to understand that the provinces are key players in providing health care.

It is therefore extremely important for the provinces to be an integral part of the government's consultations. We must consult Canadians, legal experts and health professionals, but the provinces are on the front lines of health care delivery. Their point of view must be heard by the government.

This is not the first time a bill on assisted suicide has been introduced. In this case, it is a motion, but a number of bills have been introduced, including one sponsored by my predecessor, Francine Lalonde. She was a leader on the issue of assisted suicide. She introduced a bill to amend the Criminal Code a number of times. Parliament can also draw from the many initiatives by parliamentarians and the debates that have been held in Parliament.

People often contrast assisted suicide with palliative or end-of-life care even though the two go hand in hand. My colleague from Timmins—James Bay moved a motion calling on the government to establish a pan-Canadian palliative care strategy in partnership with the provinces and territories in order to enhance the quality of life and dignity of people who are, unfortunately, dying.

All of this warrants an extremely important discussion on the role that Parliament will play in this issue. The fundamental principles of this debate are very important. They are freedom, choice, dignity and, most importantly, health and security. These are the fundamental principles established by the Supreme Court in *Carter v. Canada*.

We need to see to it that all Canadians are heard and that they can end their lives in a dignified manner. The freedom to make decisions is extremely important.

*Business of Supply*

The provinces must be the primary stakeholders consulted by the government, but Canadians need to feel that the government is listening to what they have to say and that it will do everything in its power to comply with the Supreme Court's decision and find a solution that respects the fundamental principles set out in *Carter v. Canada*.

• (1135)

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I have the pleasure of serving with her on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which deals with issues of the law such as the one before us today.

I wonder whether she thinks that the appropriate committee for this kind of study should be the justice committee of the House of Commons or this special creation. Second, I wonder if she would tell us whether she thinks the timeframe is sufficient.

Earlier in the debate we mentioned the Bedford decision and the government's response to the Bedford decision. In fact, the NDP asked at that time that the government go to the Supreme Court and ask for an extension, because it felt it needed more time for a committee review. The NDP kept saying things like, "What's the rush? Why are we rushing so hard? Why don't we take more time to deal with the prostitution issue?"

I wonder if she would comment on that and how it would apply to this issue.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have much time to answer my colleague's many questions.

It is not up to me, as a parliamentarian, to decide which committee is the most appropriate. It could be the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, a special committee or an advisory committee. That is a decision that we must make here in Parliament. Legal and health experts from every province must play an important role in this process.

It is up to the government to determine the appropriate timeframe. However, given that it took the government a year to talk about prostitution, I do not see why it could not engage in a meaningful process on an issue as important as assisted suicide.

As for my colleague's comments on prostitution, I would remind him that the government waited until the last minute to introduce a bill, and that is why we were asking why the government was in a rush. There was a rush because Parliament had one year, but the government waited until the last minute to introduce a bill and rush it through the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We even had to sit in July, when Parliament was not sitting, to study the bill, and we had one week with some 60 witnesses—

• (1140)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have been following this morning's debate very closely. I have no doubt

that the Government of Quebec led the way here and that we would all do well to look to how the process was carried out in recent years.

However, I was almost pleasantly surprised to hear the parliamentary secretary say this morning that he wanted broad consultations. I think that is a good starting point. Where I became disillusioned was when we heard that broad consultation meant an Internet survey. Perhaps my colleague can alleviate my concerns.

I think that in dealing with such an important issue, the quantitative aspect—the number of people consulted—is important, but the qualitative aspect is especially important. No Internet survey, as objective as it may be, will allow us to see the people we are talking to. We cannot see their faces and read their body language to understand their feelings about this issue. Moreover, I am not sure how objective such a survey could be.

Is an Internet survey truly an appropriate way to conduct this consultation?

**Ms. Ève Pécelet:** Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's concerns.

We know how the Conservatives do consultation. One never knows exactly who, how or when they do it. They will probably do their consultation on euthanasia and assisted suicide online, just like they did their consultation on prostitution.

With regard to the process in Quebec, one of my colleagues reminded me that the select committee travelled the length and breadth of Quebec to gather a broad range of opinions, and that cannot be done online. It is extremely important to conduct broad consultations, but most importantly, we need to consult experts on the ground in the provinces.

[*English*]

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for St. Paul's.

This motion is fairly simple. It is asking for a special committee to be set up to seek input from experts and to have a broad consultation with the public and with physicians because we are talking about physician-assisted death. The Supreme Court has actually talked about the very complex and controversial nature of the whole issue of the idea of assisted death. We know that some people are anxious and concerned that vulnerable people would be coerced. The Supreme Court spoke clearly to the idea that people could be coerced and abused and pushed into making decisions to end their life when it is not necessary. The court has balanced that with the idea that some people do feel they need to end their life for various reasons. Because of the very complex nature of this ruling and because of the very controversial nature of how Canadians see this, many groups should be consulted. It is important for us to deal with this controversy within the public realm, and also to speak to physicians who would be the people dealing with the issue of physician-assisted death.

The Supreme Court was very clear that this legislation has to be balanced. It must balance protection of the vulnerable from coercion, et cetera, and allow for that right to life, liberty, and security of the person, for people who are:



...a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.

That is particularly clear. What the Supreme Court said is that any law must have "...properly designed and administered safeguards... capable of protecting vulnerable people from abuse and error". The Court was very clear that we need to balance this. It is something about which we need to talk to the public. We need to hear from all the various groups and experts and from physicians.

The courts also said something very important. In the context of medical decision making and informed consent, physicians are fully competent and capable of assessing all of the criteria that the court spoke about earlier, which is about the adult person who is competent, et cetera. Physicians are the ones who diagnose a patient's condition, who know the prognosis of a patient, who understand all of the available choices that a patient has in order to relieve suffering and in order to look at the choices in terms of his or her life. Ending his or her life has to be one of those choices. Assessing competency is core when a physician is dealing with a patient.

Every day as a physician, I spent a lot of time with my patients, giving them the options for treatments and interventions, telling them exactly what their illness is about, what the prognosis is, and what the treatments may or may not be; and giving them every single option, so that at the end of the time patients are the ones who actually choose. It is called informed consent. They are given the information about what to do, where to go, and what decisions to make. This is just one more part of that informed consent, and physicians are the only persons capable of doing that, because they know how to assess competency. Physicians know when a patient is being coerced or abused. They know when a patient is able to understand the nature of his or her illness. Physicians are able to diagnose whether a situation is irremediable. They are able to assess whether the patient is in intolerable pain and whether there is no hope for the patient. In fact, in the context of life and death decisions, physicians are very capable of assessing these criteria.

In some jurisdictions, such as Oregon and Belgium, in Europe, we see that, in the decisions where there is physician-assisted death, there is always a second opinion. Many physicians, in the course of their discussions with their patient, will suggest getting a second opinion, so that patient hears from another qualified physician whether those options are indeed the only ones, and the patient is able to make the choices.

● (1145)

I think it is really important that physicians be able to do this, and I think the courts have said that they believe that physicians are capable of doing it.

One of the things we would have to look at, which is not widely accessible to anyone across the country right now, is an option for many patients who are finding themselves in intolerable pain or who are totally unable to have their condition remedied. That is the idea of palliative care. There is no palliative care accessible. I know that a physician would like to be able to tell a patient that there is a choice, that there is a place to go to for good palliative care, to relieve the pain a person may be experiencing and to do the kinds of things to

### *Business of Supply*

help them die with dignity. Patients could then have a choice, but this is not a choice that is currently available across the country.

I want to stress that the Canadian Medical Association and I as a physician believe that palliative care is a key component to create as some kind of parallel program that would assist us when the legislation is being written, thereby offering these kinds of informed consent and real options to patients.

Suicide prevention programs need to be maintained, because we know that many patients who face a chronic, debilitating disease or an intractable illness become extremely depressed. It is one of the first things that happens to a patient when they are diagnosed with something that is intractable or life threatening. Therefore, they are not really making competent decisions because of depression. Good mental health care for patients who have been diagnosed with these illnesses is another option that is not currently available to patients. If we look at dealing with this issue, we have to give patients real options, so we need to expand these programs where necessary.

The second piece we need to discuss is to talk with physicians about legislation. The CMA has said clearly that it believes that the medical profession should be given adequate opportunity to comment or to have input into any kind of legislation, because we see clearly that physicians will be playing a great role.

We also know that physicians themselves are quite split down the middle on this issue. We know that physicians are torn between the two primary ethics. One is to consider first the well-being of the patient, which may very well be to assist that patient in dying with dignity. Second is to do no harm, which many physicians feel is an ethic that conflicts with that.

Therefore, there need to be clear protections, as currently exist in all jurisdictions globally that have legal physician-assisted suicide. They say that physicians who do not wish to assist a patient dying, for moral, religious, or other reasons, have an ethical and moral duty to refer that patient to a physician who will assist that patient.

These are some of the reasons that physicians have to be protected if they make a decision, as is currently the case in regard to abortion. If a physician for moral or other reasons will not perform an abortion, that physician has an ethical duty to refer the patient, if the patient wishes that to be done, to a physician who will do so.

These are very important issues on which we need to hear from physicians as we are crafting legislation. We need to look at best practices in other jurisdictions. That is an important piece.

However, the procedural component of this is very clear. The House will only sit for another 12 weeks. If we in fact get a committee to go now, to travel, to listen to Canadians and meet with experts and listen to physicians, we would be able, after an election with a new government of whatever political stripe, to meet the Supreme Court's deadline with a committee report.

*Business of Supply*

Using a special committee is not without precedent. In fact, other special committees, such as the committee on solicitation, the special committee on the non-medical use of drugs, and the special committee on missing and murdered aboriginal women, have been precedents for this. It is because parliamentary committees have other roles to play in the course of their duties in looking at legislation and would not be able to carry out this job as completely and fully as a special committee could, whose only job would be to do that.

• (1150)

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we are debating today is a motion to set up a committee to try to collect information so that the government can draft legislation to meet the Supreme Court of Canada deadline.

I am concerned about the 12 weeks. That is not a lot of time. A budget is coming up. We have the regular legislative stuff that we deal with all the time. There is the summer break and then there will be an election. Nothing is really going to happen until after the election on October 20, and it will take a couple of weeks for the government to get organized, so we are looking at November. We really are talking about a couple of months.

I wonder if Parliament should not recommend to the Supreme Court an extension of the 12-month timeline. Would the member agree with that?

• (1155)

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has just made a good case for having a special committee and not the usual parliamentary committee. A special committee could dedicate those 12 weeks to crossing this country and hearing from experts. That is a good reason to have a special committee.

However, we are dealing with people who today have intolerable pain. They are living with intractable disease and their time is growing near. We cannot ask them to hold off and wait. We must move with all speed and do the best that we can to get as much input as we can. That is why we want to set up a special committee and not the usual parliamentary committee. People who are suffering and in pain cannot wait for us to make these kinds of lengthy decisions.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's perspective from her previous career as a doctor adds great value to this debate.

I want to stick to the theme of the apparent government strategy of seeking an extension of time. There is no guarantee that an extension of time would be granted. It strikes me as a strategy that is really fraught with risk. That is what I would like my colleague to expand upon. In the event that the government's strategy of asking the Supreme Court for an extension of time results in that request being rejected, what would be the consequences?

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Speaker, obviously if the Supreme Court of Canada does not grant an extension, provincial jurisdictions will craft different pieces of legislation across the country and we will have a situation similar to the one we had in regard to abortion, where some provinces did and some did not. We will see a lot of issues. Regardless of where they live, Canadians will not be able to access what the Supreme Court ruled is a constitutional right under section 7 of the charter.

This ruling came in December. The House has been meeting for quite a while. There needs to be a sense of compassion. We talk about dying with dignity and a lot of people are waiting. They have been waiting a year and we would be asking them to wait longer than a year in pain and suffering.

There are two downsides to asking the Supreme Court to grant an extension: it may not, and we have to think of the compassionate nature of this work.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with some sadness that I rise today in response to what we have heard so far from government members. This issue should have been an opportunity for Parliament to show itself at its best. It is about the relevance of Parliament and Parliament doing what the Supreme Court of Canada has asked it to do.

We on this side had hoped that this motion would nudge the government to do the right thing, as it did two years ago when we asked for a special committee on missing and murdered indigenous women. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice at the time had no objections to the establishment of a special committee. Now we have a reference, literally, from the Supreme Court and somehow, all of a sudden, government members are objecting. What is also extraordinary is that if their strategy is to get an extension, there is absolutely no reason that I can see for the Supreme Court to grant one if there seems to be no work under way on what it has asked Parliament to do.

I come from an institution whose Latin motto was *non quo sed quomodo*: it is not only what we do, but how we do it. This is the time for Parliament and parliamentarians to demonstrate to Canadians that the way we will go about making decisions will be in an open way, by tackling the tough things, hearing all points of view, and not in a closed-minded way where it will appear to Canadians as if the government has already made up its mind and Parliament will not have a say and, therefore, that citizens and Canadians will not have a say.

There is no question that this debate evokes strong feelings. Therefore, it is really important that Canadians see that we are prepared to tackle this very difficult decision and important challenge that the Supreme Court has given us to get this right and put in place the safeguards that it and all Canadians know need to exist. As physicians, the member for Vancouver Centre and I both know when it is not time to prescribe. It is not time for us to prescribe what to do; it is a time for us to listen. It is the only way that we will get it right.

It is a very serious piece of work that we have been asked to do, but it is very serious that Canadians understand that it is Parliament that has been asked to do this work and to consult Canadians. It is not okay for Parliament to abdicate from this challenge that it has been given by the Supreme Court of Canada and to abdicate it to a government that has a terrible track record in consulting Canadians, asking civil servants to attend information sessions but then not listening to what was heard. We have a responsibility to develop a very transparent and accountable process so that Canadians will know what we heard and that we listened to them.

It is about listening to people with expertise and those with lived experience. It is about an opportunity for a democracy between elections to show Canadians that they were listened to and allowed to shape public policy. It is what Jane Jacobs said, that good public policy comes when the decision-makers can see in their mind's eye that people are affected. We need to listen to the people who will be affected by this legislation and get it right.

The words in paragraph 127 of the judgment, even as my colleague said, are clear, but Canadians may have very different interpretations of what constitutes a “competent adult person”, what “clearly consents” means, what “grievous and irremediable” are, what is “enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition”, and how we can ensure that Canadians are not intimidated and the vulnerable are not put at risk.

I can only interpret this as the government's refusal to govern, its refusal to tackle the tough stuff. It is hiding from it and I hope that it still has time today to take the little offering that Liberals have given on how we can show that Parliament will do its job, and that the government is not merely an administration in campaign mode that refuses to deal with the tough decisions.

● (1200)

It is very clear that there are many ways the government could go about this, such as a white paper for consultation or a draft bill. The online consultation that it talks about just will not work unless there is an understanding of what the questions are and whether they actually will be listened to. Some of the members are already suggesting that they need an extension or that they need to use the notwithstanding clause.

There is no question that the Supreme Court of Canada did its job unanimously. It is time for us, as parliamentarians, to do ours.

I attended probably over 2,000 births in my career as a family doctor, and I felt that my job was to ensure they were safe, elegant and what the family wanted. I attended far fewer deaths, but it was also my job to see they were serene, pain-free, and that people were able to die in dignity. All of us in the House have our stories, and we know that we have to do better.

Initiating this debate will be imperative for us to get on with the other undone business in the country in terms of the serious approach to palliative care and end-of-life care, and a serious approach to a pain strategy.

Doctor Chochinov's article from *The Star*, on Wednesday, February 18, really spoke to the fact that doctors were not well trained to engage in the end of life conversations. Many of the goals of care are unclear. In view of the Supreme Court's decision, these issues have never been more important and they have to be dealt with, not only by Canadians but by medical schools and associations. We have to know that real choice in end of life does not happen if people do not have optimal palliative care and optimal dignity in their lives.

I was lucky enough that my mom, at the end of her life, was able to die in dignity with a pain pump that she controlled. With my dad, on the other hand, it was not to be the end of his life. He broke his hip. He was in unbearable pain and had unacceptable pain relief, and he died 72 hours later. We did not want him to die then. Again,

### *Business of Supply*

without a decent pain strategy and without decent palliative care, we will be unable to give people real choices.

As members know, the Canadian Medical Association has said that it wants clarity on how the courts actually distinguish between the definition of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. Canadians expect us to do differently.

We know the safeguards have to be there. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities has been eloquent in terms of the need to protect the vulnerable. We know from our history with HIV-AIDS, when it was a death sentence, that people whose physicians chose to help them take their lives woke up and realized that they were merely depressed.

We know there are power differentials. Families descend on a vulnerable senior who they say has had enough. Mainly, there is a financial reward, or they are just tired of providing care.

As the member for Mount Royal has said so often, our society is judged by how we look after the most vulnerable in our society. We cannot let them down.

There are need objectives that we could use. Ontario has an objective where 70% of people over 70 would have an advanced directive as they go forward.

We need everybody to read Willie Molloy's *Let Me Decide*. We need to get on with the kind of efforts that the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians has mentioned.

Dame Cicely Saunders said:

You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.

There is no question that too many are suffering at the end. Too few die peacefully and with dignity. We need a process that uses the research, the knowledge translation, the policies, the political will, the practice, and the applied research to ensure we design a truly excellent and exemplary process for the people who expect this of their Parliament.

We must tackle this as a Parliament. We cannot let the government do this in some sort of backroom way. We cannot deal with what is practically prorogation and padlocking this place any longer, thinking that things will happen elsewhere or will not happen at all until the next government.

● (1205)

We implore the government members to do the right thing and let Parliament do its work. The Supreme Court and Canadians ask no less of us.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member intently. I cannot help but reflect that there is an undertone of partisanship which does not suit this debate, as other members from all sides have suggested. On the issue of time, we already have 12 months and an extra 6 months seems to be reasonable if that means we get a better law.

*Business of Supply*

I would remind the House that the member and the party had years to bring forward opposition day motions or legislation on this issue and have not. The member was a minister of public health in the previous government and did nothing on this issue.

I introduced a private member's bill. I wish the member would support something in that realm.

The fact is that to now say that the Liberal Party is all for it is a little bit disingenuous. When the Liberals had the chance, they did nothing about it.

• (1210)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, with due respect, the partisan nature is coming from the other side.

We are asking Parliament to do a proper piece of work. We are not asking to prescribe with a private member's bill. We are asking to listen to Canadians properly. We are saying that to get this right, there has to be an open process and that with the summer break, with the election forthcoming, the work needs to begin now and it needs to be totally inclusive, involving all Canadians.

We do not want this to be a partisan issue. We want to come together across all parties to do a proper piece of work that includes all Canadians, instead of pointing fingers at who did what when. Canadians do not want that from us, and they certainly do not want it from that member.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member that is based on the difference of experience between my time in Parliament and hers.

Let us look at what the government appears to be proposing. At some undefined time in the future there will be a broad-ranging consultation that will take a long time. It will not involve opposition members of Parliament. It may or not may not involve government members of Parliament. There will be a request for an extension that may nor may not be granted, after which, at some undefined point in the future, there will be, or maybe not, legislation. That is what we know from the government to this point in the debate.

The Liberal plan as set forward in the motion calls for a specific time frame and a specific manner in which to perform that consultation that will end in July. I would anticipate from the first of August until the end of October that the Department of Justice drafters could do their work in putting together legislation based on the report that would be presented at the end of July. Then from November until February 6 would be the amount of time that Parliament would have to debate, amend, perfect and pass the law.

As a junior member of Parliament to a senior member of Parliament, is that reasonable?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the member's question in a slightly different way, which would be to say that the former Liberal government had to tackle some tough stuff.

I remember the assisted reproduction issue. After the task force reported, it was very important that Minister Rock come forward with something. What he chose to do was come forward with a white paper, immediately, that we then discussed at the parliamentary committee.

He then came forward with a draft bill that we discussed. There was also the opportunity, both, I believe, in that bill, but certainly in the Young Offenders Act, for Parliament to discuss it after first reading. We, as a Liberal government, were always able to understand that we had to have Parliament's input. We had to listen to experts with the lived experience.

I also think the timeline as the member lays out is not really possible unless we get on with this now.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

It is a privilege to rise today to speak to the Supreme Court of Canada's decision regarding physician-assisted dying. As we all know, end-of-life issues are deeply emotional. Questions about how our family and loved ones hope to go through their final days will not be answered easily. However, anyone who has had to support a family member during a difficult time will understand that these conversations are essential to respecting the wishes of our loved ones and ensuring that we all have dignity in our final days.

We also know from recent polls and media coverage that this is not an academic topic. Canadians are having these discussions around the dinner table, and it is important that government is equally engaged. Despite the differences Canadians experience in their respective lives, be it the jobs they have held, the lifestyle they have chosen to adopt or the contributions they have made to society, all people ultimately have one thing in common; this being that we will eventually face the end of life.

Given advances in modern medicine and care practices and the fact that we are living longer lives, the reality around this experience has changed. In the past, when deaths resulted from serious or contagious diseases, accidents or otherwise natural causes, many Canadians died in their own homes in the midst of their family and community members. Now Canadians more typically spend their last days in the clinical environment of hospitals, often after a long and arduous course of battling debilitating illnesses, disease or coping with chronic conditions.

Those who are in need of palliative and end-of-life care and who are admitted into hospital settings often find themselves surrounded by medical professionals, strangers who strive to provide the best care even when death is imminent. In such cases, people are provided with very well-meaning care, but there may be little that can be done to make patients more comfortable near their lives. These situations are distressing for both the patients and the families.

That leads me to the Supreme Court of Canada's decision. I will quote from its conclusion, which states:

—prohibit physician-assisted death for a competent adult person who...clearly consents to the termination of life and...has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.

*Business of Supply*

It is important to reflect a bit in terms of those different pieces, which I know some people who have already spoken have done. When we hear that 80% of people actually support this measure, I really think they do not understand the full scope and if they did understand it, they might have a different perspective.

I thought this was well said, when Andrew Coyne stated:

When most people think of assisted suicide...they have in mind not only a competent adult, capable of giving consent, but someone suffering unbearable physical pain and in the last stages of a terminal disease, for whom suicide is no more than a way to hasten an end that is already both inevitable and near.

He goes on to say:

First, it is clear from the ruling that the “enduring and intolerable suffering”...is not limited to physical pain, but also psychological pain—which, besides being a murkier concept by far, raises the question of how competent the subject really is. Nor is suffering defined further: it is enough that it is intolerable “to the individual.”

He continues:

Second, nothing in the words “grievous and irremediable medical condition,” the court’s other requirement for the exercise of this right, suggests that death is near, or even likely.

Certainly many people share that perspective with respect to people who are near their end of life. However, I have heard many concerns with respect to the comments “intolerable psychological pain”. The disability associations have spoken to this very articulately. We must also look at other countries, such as Belgium, where I understand assisted suicide is now provided to children. Those comments tell me that we have to be incredibly careful in how we craft the legislation.

It is important to look at the concerns I have regarding this motion.

• (1215)

The first and most obvious concern is the timeframe. The leader of the third party stood up in the House and talked about how Quebec took four and a half years to craft its legislation. It took an important length of time for Quebec to get it right. As well, it took the Supreme Court of Canada well over a year just to strike down the legislation.

Crafting careful legislation will require important conversations. My colleague talked about the special committee on missing and murdered women and girls. It is important to recognize that the committee was struck for 12 months, yet it still required an extension to complete its work. It is also important to note that it was through a unanimous motion put forward by the Liberals, which we supported. However, when we got into the special committee structure that they had presented, they soon realized that there was a real flaw in terms of a special committee's structure. We needed the Native Women's Association of Canada to be an equal partner at the table, but through the unanimous motion of the House they had not struck a committee that allowed for the important partners to play a role in that conversation.

The Liberals like to use that as an example, but there were some important flaws in how that process moved forward.

One obvious partner that I see missing in this is the Canadian Medical Association. It is going to be, and must be, intimately involved in terms of the kind of legislation that ultimately comes out.

Those are my concerns with the timeframe.

We know that there will ultimately be a committee structure to deal with this particular issue, but more importantly, how many of our 308 members of Parliament will get to sit on such a special committee? There will be only 12. Therefore, all 308 members of Parliament have a responsibility right now to be talking with groups and individuals in their communities. If every single member does not send a letter to the Minister of Justice outlining the consultations they have had, they are, in my opinion, not doing the job properly.

We do have a critical job ahead of us. We have to get it right. The motion before us today is, in my opinion, very restrictive in terms of the timeframe, and it is very restrictive in terms of the structure to be used in moving forward, since there would be no critical partners at the table. We know that committees can do great work, but they have limitations in terms of the number of witnesses they can hear from and for how long.

Again, we must do this right. Having dealt with people with ALS and terminal cancer, we know that compassion needs to be shown in what we do and how we do it. We need to move forward, but to be quite frank, the motion that the Liberals have put forward is not going to provide the comprehensive response that we are going to need.

• (1220)

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague across the way. I know that she is a nurse and understands this issue very well.

The member talked about structure and said that the structure of the suggested committee is not right. She said that she learned from the special committee on missing and murdered aboriginal women that there could have been more people at the table. However, when our leader brought forward the motion today, he said that he was very open to amendments. In that case, did I hear the hon. member suggest that we can add the Canadian Medical Association to the structure of that table? I think the leader said he was open to anything that would make it a better process, so I am asking the member if this is what she is suggesting.

Also, the member talked about a timeframe. The Supreme Court gave 12 months; the current government has done absolutely nothing to deal with the Supreme Court's ruling, and we are now moving into the third month of the year.

The bottom line is that there was time, and I think we can do it in that time. As well, I am glad to hear the hon. member suggesting an amendment to the motion. Does that mean she is supporting it?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I think what the member heard was my conversation that 308 members of Parliament need to be engaged in this very important issue. We have a responsibility to have round tables in our ridings in order to have that conversation and put forward the representations of the citizens that we represent. As the member knows, committee structures are a part of the parliamentary process, but to limit the process to 12 people with very limited time and working within a very defined structure is perhaps not going to do justice to this very critical piece of legislative work that we need to do.

*Business of Supply*

•(1225)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to comment on the parliamentary secretary's speech. He said that the government would consult people via an online survey.

Does she think that is an appropriate way to consult people?

[English]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member again misheard me. I said 308 members of Parliament have a critical responsibility to engage with their constituents, to have round tables, to receive emails. Certainly the Internet could be part of it. We saw with the prostitution legislation that many thousands of Canadians engaged. That is one tool among the multiple tools that are needed, but predominantly it is the 308 members of Parliament who have the responsibility.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's comments with great interest. I heard that dealing with this issue was urgent, but I heard that we are moving too fast. I heard that we need to talk to many more people, but 308 is too many and too few all at the same time.

We have a responsibility to respond within a year. How are we going to respond to the Supreme Court within a year if we do not get to work immediately? Why can the member not add the names of the people she wants to be consulted as part of the process? What is preventing progress and contribution to the bill?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, what I really reflected on in my comments is that we have a timeline and a critical task. I also noted that it took four and a half years for Quebec to craft the legislation it thought was appropriate and over a year for the Supreme Court of Canada to render its decision after hearing the case. Committees absolutely are an important piece of this process, but many things must be done in order to ensure that we have included all the appropriate stakeholders and all the appropriate opinions and thoughts on this issue.

**Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in today's debate on the way forward in responding to the recent decision from the Supreme Court of Canada on the issue of physician-assisted dying.

On February 6, the Supreme Court of Canada concluded that the Criminal Code provisions on physician-assisted dying are contrary to the charter. The court suspended the legal effect of its ruling for 12 months to give Parliament time to develop an appropriate response.

The government opposes our motion because we have committed to hearing from all perspectives on this issue. This consultation process would provide an opportunity for Canadians and stakeholders, such as physicians and nurses, disabled people, and patients' rights groups, to share their views and perspectives.

We cannot underestimate the importance of engaging all Canadians in this dialogue. It is hoped that everyone will work together so that we can create a regime that would meet the needs of those who are grievously ill and who want to die in order to escape intolerable pain, while at the same time protecting vulnerable

individuals and affirming our shared value that all human beings, no matter their condition, have inherent dignity and worth.

We are, thankfully, not starting at zero. There is much that we already know about the risks that are inherent in the practice of physician-assisted dying, the types of safeguards that can help mitigate those risks, and how these practices can be monitored. Much of what we know was presented at the courts as evidence in the Carter litigation. I believe it could be helpful if we consider some of the filings of the trial judge. The trial judgment itself is full of relevant information about how these laws work where they exist.

This is definitely an issue upon which people can have differing views about what is appropriate or acceptable for a societal response, but we should all be striving to form a common understanding of the facts.

One important question that was raised many years ago was whether legalization of physician-assisted dying would have the unintended effect of impeding progress in improving the quality and availability of palliative care services.

With regard to palliative care, I would remind all members that in May 2014, this chamber overwhelmingly passed Motion No. 456, calling upon the federal government to establish a pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy.

After examining the evidence from the jurisdictions that permit some form of physician-assisted dying, the trial judge in Carter found that palliative care services were not undermined in these places; in fact, in some places, more physicians now seem to have a better understanding of palliative care than they did before the legalization of physician-assisted dying.

While the court did not find that these improvements were the result of legalizing physician-assisted dying, it is nonetheless good news that palliative care can be improved alongside an assisted-dying regime. I think this will be important to bear in mind going forward.

Another concern that is sometimes expressed is that legalizing physician-assisted dying can have a negative impact upon the doctor-patient relationship, as some may come to fear their doctors once they are empowered to help end life.

Moving forward, we as a society must be mindful of this relationship. For example the trial judge found that, if a future law were carefully designed with appropriate safeguards, patients' trust in their physicians and physicians' commitment to their patients' well-being would not necessarily change for the worse. Furthermore, the risk of misconception and distrust may be counterbalanced by the possibility of enhanced trust arising from more open communications.

However, there does appear to be evidence that, in Canada, not all physicians are having honest conversations with patients about their prognosis and options at end of life to the degree we would hope.

Perhaps the prospect of legalizing physician-assisted dying presents us with an opportunity to help physicians improve their skill set in this area, for the good of all patients, not just those who would seek to have assistance to die.

*Business of Supply*

The evidence from the Carter case also revealed interesting facts about the reasons people provide for seeking medically assisted death. I think most Canadians believe that those who seek assistance to die are suffering from intolerable physical pain. The media often describe cases involving horrific diseases that lead to painful and debilitating deaths.

The data that is collected from places where people can access assistance to die tells us a very different story. In fact, inadequate pain control is almost never a reason people seek assistance to die. On the contrary, almost all people who have received assistance wanted it because they were suffering from loss of physical autonomy, reduced ability to engage in activities that made their life enjoyable, feelings of loss of dignity, losing control of bodily functions, and feeling like a burden on family.

● (1230)

People are seeking to die, not because they are in physical pain, but because they are in emotional and psychological pain. It is important to know this if we strive to provide real options to Canadians at the end of life.

The data tells that, in every place where these practices are legal, the clear trend is increasing for numbers of people accessing assistance to die with each passing year. Even in places like Oregon, where the law has been in operation since 1997, the number of people seeking assistance to die continues to grow with each passing year.

The data reveals another interesting fact about the Oregon model. In Oregon only physician-assisted suicide is legal, and only for people who are terminally ill. The law permits a physician to write a prescription for a lethal dose of medication to a person with an illness that is reasonably expected to cause death within six months.

The data tell us that, every year, about one-third of the people who receive this prescription do not use it. Are people obtaining a lethal prescription when their wish to die is temporary or they are not entirely firm in their desire? On the other hand, some say that simply having the prescription and knowing it is available for use if one's situation becomes unbearable is in itself a way to ease their psychological suffering so that they can continue to live.

The data also shows that some people who receive the lethal prescriptions die more than two years later, even though according to the law, the prescription is only available to a person who is reasonably expected to die within six months. This fact suggests there are real challenges associated with physicians' ability to predict how close a person is to death.

Our challenge would be much more difficult without all this information. This information is available to us because every jurisdiction that legally regulates physician-assisted dying has a legal requirement for physicians who provide assistance to report that they have done so on some authority. In some cases, the relevant authority is the health department of the state; in other cases, it is a specially created commission. In all cases, the relevant authorities are required to compile and analyze data and to issue public reports on key facts, such as the kinds of medical conditions of the people who are aided to die.

This data is invaluable to Canada and no doubt to other countries that are grappling with these issues. Their reporting requirements also serve as an accountability measure, which is just as important. These are just some of the important facts we must all come to appreciate as we move forward with this conversation.

● (1235)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to get the member's opinion on the idea of having the special committee established. We say the special committee in good part because we need to recognize that it actually affects more than one department. It goes beyond Justice; one could talk about Health and other departments. As opposed to trying to allocate it to a standing committee, we propose establishing a special committee.

When the government talks about reaching out and wanting to consult, there is nothing that prevents the special committee from going to different regions of our country or from being able to approach the different professionals and stakeholders.

I would suggest that it would have the potential to be very much all-encompassing, and most important, it would allow MPs to have that direct inclusivity, going through standing committees in different regions, possibly, and so forth, and to be able to reflect on their constituents and therefore Canadians. It just seems to be all that much more in terms of inclusiveness.

My question for the member is this. To what degree does he feel that consultation and coming up with the recommendations are important in resolving the Supreme Court decision?

**Mr. Robert Goguen:** Mr. Speaker, undoubtedly committees of members of Parliament will be struck, but the consultation envisioned yet not totally defined would certainly be much vaster than that of just a committee, whether it be health or whether it be justice.

The truly special committee that we envision in this consultation that affects the lives of many Canadians—most people with family members who have gone through this—would be a special committee of all Canadians with a vast and inclusive consultation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, although I did not hear any solutions in there.

He just talked about facts and what has happened elsewhere in the world. He did not talk about a concrete solution for the case before us now.

The Supreme Court just handed down a ruling, and Parliament has a year to respond. However, the member did not mention any solution that he or his government might have in mind to follow up. The decision came down in January 2015. One year brings us to January or February 2016, so we have to get going on this right away.

What kind of solutions does the member envision?

**Mr. Robert Goguen:** Mr. Speaker, the issue is very complex, and the solution is an inclusive consultation with all Canadians in a format that will enable everyone to participate.

*Business of Supply*

Frankly, providing such a quick response to such a complex issue is as difficult as predicting when someone will die. Physicians in Oregon predict that a person's death will take place within six months when, in many cases, it happens two years later.

It is very complex, and the people in Oregon do not always have all the answers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have noticed that a number of members of this House may have misunderstood some of the comments I made earlier, and I want to just clarify that I personally believe there is plenty of time for this House and this government to consult broadly with Canadians and respond with legislation within the timeframe set out by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I was, however, asked my opinion as a lawyer on whether a leave for extension would be a possibility. I certainly said that kind of application is always possible. However, it is the government's intention to consult broadly and to come back with legislation within the timeframe that the Supreme Court has set out.

• (1240)

**Mr. Robert Goguen:** I appreciate the hon. parliamentary secretary's comments.

As to the previous question about a snap solution to something so complicated that affects our lives, this is the life-ending moment of usually a dear person's life. As I mentioned in my speech, in May 2014 there was much support for the study of palliative care. The months or days leading up to the ultimate moment of death are just as important as the decision to end one's life, when it comes to the dignity of the person. Wrapped into the study as to how we are going to deal with the physician-assisted suicide, certainly we have to take into consideration the whole aspect of palliative care, which this House has looked upon very favourably.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I should say that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

I rise today to speak to the opposition motion moved by the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, my colleague, the hon. member for Papineau. This motion has two main provisions: that the House recognize the Supreme Court ruling on physician-assisted dying and that a special committee of the House be appointed immediately to consult with experts and with Canadians and present a legislative framework on which legislation on physician-assisted dying can be based.

On February 6, 2015, the highest court in the country handed down a historic decision. The ruling indicated that paragraph 241 (b) of the Criminal Code of Canada, stating that every one who aids or abets a person to commit suicide is guilty of an indictable offence, and section 14, stating that no person is entitled to consent to have death inflicted on him, will be invalidated 12 months after the February 6, 2015, ruling. These measures violate the right to life, liberty and security of the person guaranteed under section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

My parliamentary colleagues and I have a duty here. At our best, we write laws worthy of the people who elected us. Each one of us is aware of how emotionally charged this sensitive issue is, regardless of our personal opinion. This issue is both sensitive and complex. It is very difficult to set legal parameters that can apply to a wide range of unimaginable scenarios. I am supporting this motion because it calls on Parliament to face this challenge. We have 11 months left to come up with a solution, and we will have to get around a number of obstacles in our parliamentary schedule, including, of course, the election, which will interrupt the legislative work of the House this fall.

I invite my colleagues not to waste one second because we have an enormous task ahead of us. Canadians deserve a solution that will protect their rights and reflect their values. That is what we can deliver if we get to work right away and do our best. That is why we were elected and that is what Canadians deserve.

The medical field is evolving in Canada. One only need step inside a hospital to know that the aging population is putting more and more pressure on the system. The data confirm the fact that Canadians are living longer than ever, and the baby boomers have already started retiring. This new reality is a testament to the success of medicine. The new generation of retirees is essentially in excellent health. The geriatric wards of hospitals are overflowing, but the number of seniors flocking to recreation centres and yoga studios is also growing. The challenge of an aging population is the result of our success. This makes it no less of a challenge. A new generation of seniors is making itself known. They will live longer and their bodies will age differently because of medical innovations.

Once they were members of the flamboyant rock and roll generation and the largest cohort of workers in our history, and now more of them than ever before need medical care. That is quite natural; however, it shows that the reality of health care, especially health care for the elderly, is constantly evolving because of the people of that generation. Their physiological needs and their medical needs have changed. The anticipated aging of the population will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of people with cancer, for example, and other illnesses. This is the context for the debate on physician-assisted death and, more broadly, the future of palliative care in Canada.

• (1245)

As is the case for many of my colleagues and many Canadians who have been in similar situations in their lives, I thought about this when my mother died. She had to have an operation on her foot and the family asked her to agree to the operation. There were complications and she was told by her doctor that she had no choice but to have her leg amputated. Given her suffering, we told our dear mother that it was her decision to make. She immediately told the doctors that she wanted to be buried with both of her legs. It was her decision to put an end to the treatment.

I also experienced a similar situation with my children's adoptive grandmother, Olyve Pelletier, who was on dialysis. Shortly before Christmas, she brought in my children and all of her family to tell them that she was going to stop her dialysis treatment. These two people who are very dear to me were able to make that choice because justice allowed them to do so.



*Business of Supply*

I understood from those experiences that our decisions regarding palliative care must be guided by the rights and wishes of seniors. We must make dying with dignity a priority and limit suffering as much as possible. What is more, that is precisely the instruction received from the court.

Canada is in desperate need of a good palliative care system. The health care system is not prepared for the massive generation I just mentioned, which will soon need access to this type of care. The cracks are already growing. Fewer than 30% of Canadian seniors currently have access to the care they need. A new strategy, a federal leadership and Canada-wide co-operation are absolutely necessary if we want to continue to be proud of having the best health care system in the world.

I cannot help but think of my experience at the Quebec National Assembly as we take on this noble yet colossal task. A few years ago, public discourse was constantly and convincingly changing in Quebec. As we are seeing in the rest of the country today, the tides had been turning for some time in favour of new measures surrounding and allowing physician-assisted death. The premier at the time, Jean Charest, created a select committee very similar to the one called for in the motion we are debating today in Parliament.

Under the Canadian Constitution, the federal Parliament is responsible for criminal law. According to the Criminal Code, euthanasia and assisted suicide are criminal acts. However, it is up to the provinces to administer justice and enforce criminal law.

I remind members that this debate has already taken place in the Quebec National Assembly. It was a non-partisan debate, and party lines never came into play. We are asking that these measures be taken here.

I also want to congratulate my former colleagues in the Quebec National Assembly, in particular the chair of the committee, Maryse Gaudreault, from the Liberal Party of Quebec, and Véronique Hivon, from the Parti Québécois, who was the co-chair of the committee.

Since an election is impending, the Supreme Court is calling on us to immediately study this issue, which is what the motion calls for as well.

I once again congratulate the member for Papineau, the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, for having the courage to move this motion and to call on the House to immediately address this issue.

● (1250)

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Having participated in National Assembly of Quebec debates for several years, he is certainly familiar with the select committee's work.

Does my colleague think that Parliament, as a legislative assembly, also has a responsibility, as stated in the motion, to strike a committee to study this matter and make recommendations to the government?

Committees do not have the power to draft bills, of course. However, they can make recommendations to the government.

What does he think of legislators making recommendations to the government, particularly with respect to the question the Supreme Court has given us?

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said, I believe that this is an extremely important, complex and personal issue. It is important to do things this way, namely to have a committee and a nationwide debate. As he said, the committee will not be drafting the bill. However, it is important for the committee to hear from experts and individuals across the country so that we can come up with a bill quickly.

That is why we said in the motion that the government should not wait to start on this, because it has just 11 months left. We know the election is coming. We need to focus on this now and take a non-partisan approach to this debate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more that we need a better palliative care system in this country. We have worked across party lines to discuss some of those things, and my colleagues on the other side have made some recommendations in that regard.

I have two questions. First, why would we rush to have a committee present its findings by the end of July, when we could take the time in an election year to study it more fully with a bit of an extension or to at least use the full 12 months the Supreme Court has granted?

I am getting a fair bit of communication from my constituents, and just this morning, I received a letter from a doctor in my riding who asked that as we consider this issue:

...we establish policies that allow physicians to opt out of participation in activities and procedures that go against their conscience, especially when it concerns acts that would result in ending a person's life. Physicians should not be required to refer for or participate in such acts.

I am wondering if my colleague would agree that this would be a good thing to try to work into any proposed legislation Parliament comes up with.

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague had two questions.

First, he talked about why there is a rush to do this. It is quite simple. The Supreme Court has said that Parliament has 12 months to do something, so why do we not start right now? The Supreme Court is not aware of the parliamentary agenda. It knows that in 12 months we are allowed to do our job. We can meet people to discuss the issue and have debates. I can also say that we are not going to start from scratch, because the Quebec legislature already had a debate like this, so why do we not use that?

Second, he talked about the letter he received from the doctor. We are MPs, but we would like to invite people, as we always do, to explain to us the difficulties in each area: health, finance, and everything. They would help us draw up legislation that will go across Canada and that will prevent such things.

*Business of Supply*

•(1255)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address both Parliament, and of course the country, on this issue.

The Supreme Court has spoken. The Supreme Court, in a very declarative, very clear way has asked Parliament, not the government or a minister but all of us as parliamentarians, to be seized of this issue and to deliver a response quickly back to Canadians waiting for answers and direction.

This is extraordinarily important. We have a duty to respond. I understand and we all appreciate the complexity of this issue and the sensitivities around this issue. However, we also have a responsibility to make sure that we do not simply put this off for a very simple reason: people are suffering. The longer we take to make a decision on this, the longer some people's suffering will deepen and extend. As well, those who wish to seek to provide assistance to people are being held in abeyance. Their capacity to act as caregivers is limited by our inaction. We have a responsibility not to ask for a deferral while we do no work and not to put off until tomorrow what must be debated and decided today.

When hon. members stand up in this House and read emails and correspondence from their ridings, it shows us that Canadians are eager to contribute. That is good. It is very good.

We need to respond quickly, because waiting until after the next election will have the next Parliament starting flat-footed, and more extensions and delays will be required. That is just unfair.

The Supreme Court understands fully what our electoral cycle is. It understands entirely what our responsibilities are, and it has given us these responsibilities.

We are also lucky. The province of Quebec, the National Assembly, has given us context and guidance and a body of evidence from which to act. That is important, because it means that there is legislative precedence. There is also, from that process, a spirit of nonpartisanship that I think we can embrace and move forward with. I would like to thank the National Assembly and the people of Quebec for giving that gift to the rest of Canada as we consider this very difficult issue.

It is equally important to speak of the principles which need to frame our conversation around this issue. People with disabilities are also looking to this Parliament to protect their dignity, their charter rights, and their existence as part of the Canadian community.

Whatever decisions we make, they will not just be about the ease of suffering but also about making sure that charter rights and people's proper place in our democracy is protected and included in this process.

While we talk about the parliamentary process, the root of that word being "speaking", it is really a process about listening. We need to listen to the courts. We need to listen to Canadians, then we have to take on the duties we have sworn an oath to and act. We have to act swiftly.

As I said, this is an issue that defines many of our lives. We have heard from both sides of the House about personal experience in

carrying people towards the end of life and carrying them beyond. We have all had that, in my life included. As I sat with my mother and watched her live out her final days in suffering, seeking to ease the pain of her children, as all good mothers do, there was no capacity, there was no framework, to have a rational adult conversation with loving members of a family solving a crisis that is present in many households, too many households, today.

I urge members in this House not to look towards the politics of this event, not to look to the shortcomings of a parliamentary system that sometimes does not give us the space or the time to deal with these issues, but to open their hearts to this issue, to open their minds to this issue, to listen to the way people have described this phenomenon we are now charged with resolving, and to please support this motion. Make it a better a motion. Make it as nonpartisan as possible. Include those groups whose voices need to be heard on this issue. Above all, act to end the suffering, act to provide clarity, and act to provide a swift response to the Supreme Court.

Now is not the time to dither. It is not the time to debate between the libertarian values or the humanitarian values that are present in this conversation. Rather, sit down with Canadians, sit down with members of our ridings, sit down as parliamentarians, and come up with an answer Canada can be proud of.

We have a basis from which to act. We have a compelling set of arguments presented to us by the Supreme Court. We have to act.

I would ask all members to support the motion being presented to us by our leader today, to move forward together to resolve this issue as Canadians in a compassionate way, in a principled way, and above all, to act immediately to end suffering for those whose only option is to wait for us to respond.

•(1300)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening all morning to the comments on this topic, and all of us are treating this issue with the dignity it deserves.

My question is a procedural one, and the member is relatively new here, so I will bear that in mind. The leader of the Liberal Party who put the motion forward said today that this is not about legislation, but rather about studying the issues surrounding doctor-assisted death.

The report by the committee is deemed to be reported back to the House by the end of July, but an election is to be held on October 19, so the House will not sit until that is over. The message I am hearing is that we would have this resolved before the election, but in fact we are not debating legislation. This is not about legislation; it is about studying the issue.

How can a decision be made on the motion by the House prior to the election?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, the deadline is next February and between now and February there will be an election. The motion today proposes that we unlock a process and move it forward. It would start with consulting widely with Canadians and bringing forward the necessary evidence from all interested parties so that the executive branch of government would have the context and the basis and the information necessary to act and to present legislation, which the new Parliament, if it has to, would respond to and act on in time to meet the Supreme Court deadline.

The reason it is so critical to get moving on this issue is that it requires, above all, a new approach by Parliament. It requires Parliament to reach out to more Canadians and embrace the complexity and the compassion that is being asked of us. To wait until the next Parliament, and to pretend that we cannot act outside of Parliament as parliamentarians, would really limit our understanding of democracy and the parliamentary system. We have the capacity to act. The motion sets the first stage of that procedure. We can follow from there with good advice from Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have had experience in my life working with teams. I have managed construction teams, and I have worked in all kinds of fields. Every time we saw that there was a lot of work to do, we always said that we had to get started right away because we had a lot to do. We never said that we would start tomorrow or later. It is hard to reconcile that with the government's position. I think the only thing that explains this way of thinking is that the government is afraid to debate the subject.

The Conservatives know that they are unable to take any non-partisan action and do something like what Quebec did, with two different governments, over a period of four and a half years, with four different political parties. It is too much for them, and they are even unable to fathom it. I would like my colleague to speak more about that.

• (1305)

[*English*]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that it is disappointing to see complexity raised as an issue and a barrier by a party that continually invokes closure on complex issues.

We have the capacity and the responsibility to act together. The courts have asked us to do that. Canadians ask us to do that, and they send us to this chamber to do just that. On an issue like this, where there is quite clearly such a rich treasure trove of personal experience, it is perhaps the one issue that we can and should act quickly on.

I agree with the member's comments. This is so important that we need to stop and not do something so that we can understand how to do it more slowly and respond more quickly is the most complicated response to urgency that I have ever heard in my life.

I think we have a responsibility to govern here as parliamentarians. We have a responsibility to reach out across the aisle, to reach out across our life experience, to listen, to include, and to move forward.

As I said, every day this is delayed, we are extending someone's suffering. Every day this issue is undefined by Parliament, we sow confusion and distrust among those people whose rights need to be protected by new legislation.

Now is the time to act. Now is the time to govern. Now is the time to come together to give Canadians an answer, as the Supreme Court has asked of us.

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Kootenay—Columbia, with whom I have the honour of working on the justice committee. It is also an honour to know him as a former RCMP officer. I have a tremendous amount of respect for his thoughts on a number of justice issues, and he does a fantastic job on our committee.

It is also my pleasure and honour to speak today to the Liberal supply day motion. To be frank, I appreciate today's motion. We have had a number of supply day motions recently that have been less about what Parliament should be engaged in, in terms of discussion between parliamentarians. However, this one certainly goes to that point, and I do appreciate it. I also believe that this is a non-partisan issue, and the discussion has been very respectful, as it should be, on this particular tough issue.

I am going to spend most of my time talking about the procedural issues. In my view, this is a motion to deal with procedure on a policy issue. The Liberal motion today puts out a direction for, or a way of tackling, the issue. It recommends that this be done through a special committee. The Liberals have highlighted the membership of the committee, which would be roughly 60% Conservative, 30% NDP, and 10% Liberal. I made the point earlier about how the committee structure now is for a standing committee of 10 members. This would be for 12, which is the old way of doing things. It really does not matter. It is still a percentage. The new way would give the Liberal Party a little more presence on committees, with two fewer opposition members there, but that is what the Liberals have chosen to present today.

Here is why I do not think this is the right approach to this very important issue. I have been here nine years and have sat on a number of committees. I have been the chair of the justice committee for the last couple of years. In my view, the best use of time at committee for members of Parliament is to deal with actual legislation. That is when there are words on paper about the direction of the government or a member, depending on the type of bill. The wording is there, the clauses that we are dealing with are there, and the changes are all there.

Dealing with legislation is a better use of members' time. I have been on a number of committees that do studies, and they are interesting. Sometimes they are useful, and sometimes they are not. This particular item needs a very broad consultation before it goes to committee.

*Business of Supply*

The committee that the Liberals are highlighting in today's motion is would be a special committee that would not deal with an actual piece of legislation. The Liberals are saying, let us study it and have it back by July 31. I assume that out of that study, they are thinking that there would be a piece of legislation that would come after the election. The public still would not know what Parliament's direction would be, based on the study that would be done by July. It would be an overview of the issues and a number of questions might be asked. There may be directions and recommendations coming out of it, but there would be no piece of actual legislation. Of course, there are a number of options that will be available to Parliament, including not doing anything. That is one of the options.

The motion would not really advance the issue to a point where people would think that by July, they will have an answer on where the Government of Canada and Parliament of Canada are going on this particular issue. Based on today's motion, that would absolutely not be the case.

It would have recommendations. No committee study can compel the government to do anything. That is standard, whether it is a standing committee or a special committee. A study cannot compel the government of the day to do anything. Even if, God forbid, after October 19, there is a change in government, the study could not compel that next government to do anything at all.

• (1310)

Today's motion does not do what I think the Liberal Party thinks it would do and wants to present it as doing. It is a reasonable approach, and I am not saying that what the Liberals are doing is wrong. I do not think it is what the public is anticipating based on this particular motion.

The other issue is that when I consider broad consultation, I think of a variety of different groups. At present when we call witnesses to committees, as chair of the committee I try to achieve a balance. We get submissions from all parties. Normally we try to accommodate everyone's witnesses, and that has happened 99% of the time. On some occasions, we cannot accommodate everyone. Then the witness list is based on the size of the committee membership. Approximately 50% of the witnesses then would be from the Conservatives; approximately 40% from the NDP, the official opposition; and approximately 10% or so from the Liberal Party.

The record of the justice committee shows that the number of witnesses from the Conservatives is much less, maybe 45%, and that witnesses from other parties fill in that space. We deal very little there with legislation that is a matter of life or death. If we do something right, it is great. If we do something wrong, normally we can change it, or the next government changes the policy or legislation to improve it or to make changes.

The hardest vote for me thus far has been when we commit the men and women of our armed services to foreign conflicts, whether in Afghanistan or to what is going on in the Middle East right now, because we know there is the potential for a Canadian to die. In this case that is what it is all about, someone having the option to proceed in that manner.

The consultation with Canadians needs to be broader than the witnesses we pick to come to committee. There is a whole basket of

opportunities. We should all be able to contribute those we consider to be experts. There are experts in this area who have different opinions in their particular fields, but there needs to be a broader way of consulting the public.

To my view, and I might be a bit biased, I think this issue should go to the justice committee and, based on the broad consultation at committee, the government should bring forward a piece of legislation. The justice committee, in its current form, has been working very well on a number of very difficult files, including the prostitution bill. The prostitution bill only really affected a small portion of the population, but this affects everyone, so we need a broader approach.

I am not supporting the motion today, because the process gives a false image that we will have legislation by July. The leader of the third party, the mover of the motion today, indicated that this does not create legislation. He said that directly to the House, that it is a study, a consultation. I do not disagree with him that we need broad consultation. I am not sure that the committee structure in the House of Commons is the appropriate structure to use to get that consultation, to develop legislation that should go to the standing committee process and result in witnesses being called to talk about actual legislation that will be developed.

• (1315)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of things stand out in the arguments being presented by the government.

The government's logic in its first argument seems to be that we cannot finish by July, so we should not even get started. That does not seem to be a good argument to my way of thinking. We know, for example, that government members will be in a majority on this committee, so if they decide that July is too soon, they can use their majority to extend the deadline to mid-August or whatever they want, since they will be the majority party on the committee.

Second, the member is right in saying that there will probably not be legislation before the next election. We understand that. However, would the hearings that would be taking place around this issue not help inform any debate that might occur on this issue during an election campaign? Do we not want informed election campaigns in this country?

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, now we know why this motion is here: they think this is an election issue. That is what the member just asked me. He asked if this should be in the debate during an election.

In my view, this is not an election issue and should not be an election issue. This is a very personal family issue that needs proper policy discussion. It is not an election issue.

*Business of Supply*

We have not said today on this side that we are not open to broad public consultations. There are questions. For example, is the individual considering the option of assisted death by a doctor the only one to decide? Does a spouse decide, or a father or mother if it is a child? Who decides? Does one doctor do it? Do doctors have the right to refuse? Is there a panel to determine whether the person is of sound mind to make the decision? All these questions need to be addressed.

My view is that every Canadian should have an opportunity for input on what the answers are and what the questions should be. A parliamentary committee is not broad enough to be able to do that job.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, in which I heard him talk many times about the importance of a broad consultation—something I can only agree with, as long as a broad consultation does not mean an Internet survey.

The question I would like to ask is this: with a topic as important and sensitive as this, does he not think that the approach taken should be parliamentary rather than governmental, so that the next government, regardless of its political affiliation, is bound to it, if only ethically?

• (1320)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. He was making my point, in a sense, by saying that broad consultation includes people from all the opposition parties and members, including our independent members, on what questions should be asked and what information is needed.

My colleague used one example, and everyone is hanging their hat on it. It was one piece. When we do our consultations on any topic, we use focus groups, we go to experts, we ask our constituents. It is a broad mix. It is a bigger basket. We need a really big basket.

My mother-in-law had cancer of the lung. She went through very serious surgery. She went on a program as a test case with a drug company. Fortunately for our family, she survived and has been cancer free for over a decade. Many of her friends who were in the same program did not. We had called the priest to come to give her last rites at the hospital. We could have made some different decisions, but those decisions were not made.

Every family should have an opportunity to comment on this matter. My mother-in-law should have an opportunity to have input on it.

That is why the consultations need to be broad.

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join today's debate in response to the Supreme Court's decision in *Carter*, which found two Criminal Code provisions prohibiting physician-assisted death to be unconstitutional and provided one year to Parliament, to February 5, 2016, to develop its response.

Physician-assisted death raises complex ethical, legal, and medical issues. Many of these issues involve competing interests and values,

such as preservation of human life, individual autonomy, the protection of vulnerable individuals and groups, and human dignity and suffering. End-of-life decisions are very personal and sensitive questions for many Canadians, with deeply held beliefs on both sides of the issue and far-reaching implications for our society as a whole.

At this early stage of the debate, I believe the experience and evidence from foreign jurisdictions that have implemented permissive regimes by regulating euthanasia, assisted death, or both, are invaluable in providing input to our discussion, including with respect to eligibility criteria or procedural safeguards to protect vulnerable individuals from unwarranted deaths.

In the United States, for instance, there are only three states that provide access to physician-assisted death: Oregon, since 1997; Washington, since 2008; and Vermont, since 2013. Their legislative schemes all allow terminally ill patients to end their lives through the voluntary self-administration of a lethal dose of medication prescribed by a physician, although presence of the physician is not required during the self-administration of the medication.

Eligibility criteria for making such a request include that the patient be diagnosed with a terminal illness, which is defined as “an incurable and irreversible disease which would, within a reasonable medical judgment, result in death within six months”; that the patient be a competent adult, over the age of 18, able to make and communicate health care decisions; that oral and written requests be submitted to the attending physician; and that the oral request be reiterated no less than 15 days after the initial demand.

The legislation also provides procedural safeguards that address the physician's responsibilities when granting such requests, including confirming that the patient is terminally ill; is capable of making a voluntary and uncoerced decision; has been duly informed of the diagnosis, prognosis, potential risks, and alternative options to the end-of-life medication; and has been referred to a second physician to confirm the diagnosis and other eligibility criteria.

Attending physicians must also refer patients for counselling when they may be suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder impairing their judgment.

In the U.S. state approach, as is the case in all permissive regimes, reporting requirements have also been enacted. In the three American states, physicians are required to report to health departments further to prescribing the lethal dose of medication. This process allows for relevant information on the implementation of the laws to be gathered, analyzed, and reported to the public. There is no question that such information and data will be invaluable to our Canadian discussion as we delve deeper into this societal debate.

In terms of enforcement provisions, although offences for falsifying and coercing patients have been enacted in the states of Washington and Oregon, it appears that no specific enforcement mechanism has been put in place to assess physicians' compliance with the applicable rules and safeguards.

• (1325)

If we now look at European regimes, which currently allow both assisted suicide and euthanasia, we will notice subtle differences.

*Business of Supply*

By contrast to the U.S. state approach, the European countries, specifically Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, have broader laws that permit euthanasia or assisted suicide to be administered to a person who is suffering unbearably, either physically or psychologically, from an incurable medical condition, regardless of any proximity to death.

Since 2002, in Belgium adult patients or emancipated minors who are in a "...medically futile condition of constant and unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be alleviated, resulting from a serious and incurable disorder caused by illness or accident" can request to be euthanized.

Patients must be legally competent and conscious at the time of the request, and their demand must be voluntary, repeated, and not result from external pressure. Procedural safeguards in place are similar to the ones in the three states in the United States, but also include the requirement to consult with a psychiatrist if the patient is not expected to die in the near future.

The legislation in Belgium was amended in 2014 and now allows euthanasia to be practised on children of any age if they are in constant and unbearable suffering that cannot be alleviated and are likely to die in the short term. In those very sensitive cases, an explicit request must be made and parental consent must be granted.

Once euthanasia has been performed, physicians must submit a detailed report to the Federal Control and Evaluation Commission, a panel of 16 experts that determines whether euthanasia was practised in accordance with the law and that has to turn cases involving non-compliance over to the Public Prosecution Service.

In the case of the Netherlands, although euthanasia and assisted suicide are both offences under the Dutch penal code, the Termination of Life and Assisted Suicide Act came into force in 2002, providing an exemption from criminal liability for physicians who perform such practices if they report their actions and comply with the due care criteria included in the act. The criteria are even broader in this jurisdiction, since patients are eligible to request that their life be terminated if they endure "...unbearable physical or psychological suffering with no prospect of improvement", regardless of how close they may be to death.

Competent and informed adults are eligible to receive such assistance, but so too are children between the ages of 12 and 16 if their parents consent to the request, as well as minors between the ages of 16 and 18 if they consult with their parents prior to requesting euthanasia.

Here again, regional review committees are responsible for ensuring that physicians comply with the due care criteria provided in the law, and in the case of non-compliance with the safeguard measures, they must turn the case over to the Public Prosecution Service.

Most European laws also allow euthanasia of mentally incompetent individuals, such as patients suffering from dementia, when they have written, while they were still competent, advance directives requesting euthanasia under certain circumstances.

In all permissive regimes, physicians have the right to refuse to provide assistance in dying or to perform euthanasia and have at

times refused to do so when there was treatment capable of addressing the suffering of the patient.

In conclusion, these are just a few examples of the manifold dimensions of this issue that will require close scrutiny and in-depth discussions over the next months.

The government opposes the motion to appoint a parliamentary committee to consult on a legislative framework and response to the Carter decision and instead plans to engage with Canadians, the provinces and territories, the medical profession, and the many affected groups in a national conversation on these very important issues.

• (1330)

This debate is one that concerns each of us individually, as well as all of us collectively. It speaks to our shared values and our responsibilities to protect the most vulnerable in our collective aspirations as a society.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if there is any rationale for actually passing the motion today and moving on this important study, it is the speech that was just given by the member. What we just heard from the member was some important insight as to what was happening comparatively on this subject in both the United States and Europe. That is exactly and precisely the kind of information, front-line experience that should be brought to bear in a special committee.

A special committee, by the way, which O'Brien and Bosc contemplates especially this kind of study, is:

Every special committee is established by an order of reference of the House. The motion usually defines its mandate and may include other provisions covering its powers...

It goes on to say:

Unlike legislative committees...they are not usually charged with the study of a bill...but rather with inquiring into a matter to which the House attaches particular importance.

That is why the motion has been brought here.

For the life of me and for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians right now who are touched with this issue, I think people are asking why the government cannot come to its senses and see that we need to get started on this, particularly, because we have a 12-month window within which to bring forward a proper legislative response, which would build upon our own personal and professional experiences.

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, the member basically said what I was going to say. There are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who will be affected by the decision made by the Supreme Court—not hundreds, not even thousands, but hundreds of thousands—and a committee will never be able to hear from all of them.

We are going to move forward with extremely broad consultations with all Canadians, over a long period of time, to ensure we hear from every Canadian affected by this Supreme Court decision.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's speech was very thoughtful. I concur with my colleague from Ottawa South that it underscores the need to act urgently on this issue because we want to protect vulnerable groups. In fact, all individuals are vulnerable when facing death. We need to have protections and we need to have a good discussion about this.

What I would like to know from the member is this. Why would having a parliamentary committee made up of legislators who would eventually be voting on legislation be mutually exclusive from having broad public consultations?

• (1335)

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, the problem I see with an assigned committee is that it can only hear so many people in a period of time. It is impossible for that committee to hear from the broad expanse of Canadians who want to have input into this.

The problem is, what do we do? Do we exclude tens of thousands of Canadians who want to have some input into this? What is the pecking order? That is the problem with the motion. There will be a pecking order, and there should never be one.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to mix apples with oranges, but when we look at Bill C-51, the Conservatives may limit expert testimony on the anti-terror bill. They may want to limit the number of experts. Canadians want to know more about it and experts want to get involved. In this case, the Conservatives want to shut down the debate.

In the other case, it seems the Conservatives want to open the debate up to 33 million people and they want to take two years if it is possible. However, for the anti-terrorism bill, which Canadians are very concerned about it, they are saying no, that they do not want to hear from them. The Conservatives have the answer.

I would like to hear his comments, especially since his former job was a police officer in the justice system. As a justice person, he should be able to give me a good answer on this.

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, comparing Bill C-51 with Canada v. Carter is a real stretch, but I will accept that 82% of people who have responded with regard to Bill C-51 are in favour of what our government is doing, and that is pretty significant to me.

With regard to Canada v. Carter, the fact is that this is very personal, well beyond something a police officer should look at. This is about human life. This is about a decision between people and their physicians as to whether they believe they should live or die.

We need to have broad consultation on this to ensure that we get it right, because we need to get this right. I believe the best way to move forward is with extreme broad consultation, which our government will propose and move forward with.

[Translation]

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my time with my colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

I have the pleasure of speaking to this difficult subject because I think it is an extremely important one, not just for me, but for many Canadians.

[English]

I realize this is primarily a debate about process, but since my position is already on the record, I will start briefly with that point.

[Translation]

I was part of the minority who voted in favour of the Bloc Québécois bill a few years ago. Naturally, I am in favour of the Supreme Court decision.

[English]

I think I could say that perhaps I have a libertarian streak in me, because I always favour the right of individuals to make their own choices if it does not hurt other individuals.

I was in favour of the right of gay couples to make their free choice to marry because it certainly did not impact my marriage negatively by one iota. I am in favour of the right of a woman to wear a niqab at a citizenship ceremony if that is indeed her religious belief. I am in favour of a women's right to choose. I am in favour of this decision by the Supreme Court, although I would like to see in its implementation a great deal of attention paid to true consent and a great deal of attention paid as well to expanding our palliative care system, because the stronger that system, the fewer people will be obliged to take this decision.

I understand that while this is my view, Canada is a diverse country. My riding of Markham is particularly diverse, having been declared by Statistics Canada to be the most diverse city in the country. I understand that not all Canadians will agree with me, and I certainly respect their right to a different opinion for religious reasons or other reasons.

• (1340)

[Translation]

I was born in Quebec. Up to now, I spent most of my life in Quebec. I must say, as a former Quebecker, that I am extremely proud of the measure implemented by the National Assembly of Quebec. It truly took courage for the MNAs to act on this difficult issue; they put their partisanship and even their personal ideology aside. They formed a committee. They heard a number of witnesses and, at the end of the day, they reached not only a consensus, but a unanimous decision.

[English]

Therefore, what I am proposing to the chamber and my fellow federal parliamentarians is that we show similar courage that was shown by our provincial counterparts in Quebec. Indeed, it was more difficult for them because they acted before the Supreme Court decision. We will be acting after the Supreme Court decision, so in that sense the parameters or the guiding rules have already been laid down for us.

*Business of Supply*

Federal parliamentarians have often been slow or weak in dealing with these difficult moral questions and they have been left to a legal void. We should do our jobs for Canadians to take part in the debate on these difficult issues for the sake of Canadians and we should not be obsessed with our own personal ideology or partisan issues. That is what was done in Quebec and we, in this Parliament, should be willing to do no less.

I also believe it is in all of our interests to engage in such a process as we in the Liberal Party have proposed, whatever our personal views on this matter. Let us, for example, suppose that a group is opposed to the Supreme Court decision. If there is a committee and witnesses are called, those groups will be allowed to make representations to make the interpretation of the law narrow, to ensure consent is real, to ensure everything is done to increase palliative care. On some of these issues, I have already indicated that I agree.

That side will have an opportunity to make representations, but absent such a committee, absent such a process, we will be in a legal void, in which anything can happen and the people on that side of the debate may not have any influence at all on what the outcome is. Similarly, those on the other side who favour the Supreme Court decision, they too will have an opportunity to make their cases known, to present evidence and will then have an impact on the ultimate decision.

Quebec, in some ways, is more homogeneous than Canada, so I would not anticipate a unanimous decision on this issue by the federal Parliament, certainly not before the next election. However, it is incumbent on us to do our job for Canadians, to do as our Quebec counterparts did, which is to put aside our partisan inclinations and personal beliefs and get down to the very difficult, arduous work of listening to Canadians, hearing witnesses, debating and debating until we come up with a position that will not necessarily satisfy everybody, but which, one would hope, will command a large consensus in this place.

To put it briefly, we federal parliamentarians should do what we were elected to do. We should work on behalf of Canadians on a very difficult issue and follow the spirit of our counterparts in the Quebec national assembly.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his account of how the National Assembly, or the MNAs proceeded unanimously after much consultation. They reached a remarkable consensus on end-of-life care.

I want to remind the House that Ms. Lalonde, who was a member here—she passed away, unfortunately—championed this issue in the House for many months. This prompted a lengthy debate that ended with the defeat of her motion on dying with dignity. She was a trailblazer on this issue. She invited several witnesses, both from the medical profession and the social sciences, and from various former political parties. As a result, she had an exceptional wealth of knowledge. She had amassed extraordinary information.

I would say to the hon. member that since it was the Bloc Québécois that led this debate, I was a bit surprised that it was not invited to contribute to the motion or at least to pass on all the knowledge it gained at this committee and share it with everyone else.

I will close with my second point. The broad consensus achieved in Quebec must not be altered or challenged by a new Canada-wide committee that would come to a different conclusion. I believe that the debate in Quebec came to an almost unanimous conclusion and has now closed. When it comes to Quebec, that must be the policy.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his remarks. As I said, I voted in favour of the Bloc's bill. The Leader of the Liberal Party said that he was open with respect to the composition of the proposed committee. It is not the composition of the committee that is the key point, but rather the decision to create such a committee. In my view, Quebec is a model for us. I would not propose changing the decisions made by Quebecers. I would propose doing what Quebec did, but across Canada.

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for appreciating what Quebec has achieved. I would like him to talk about the fact that the difference is that, in Quebec, despite the fact that there were four political parties involved, none had a moral right-wing base that precluded them from expressing themselves, unlike our friends on the other side who must constantly weigh everything they say, and who cannot really express themselves and say something that is sensible or moderate.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, if I understood the member, I completely agree with what he said about the fact that all parties should be included. That is the challenge we are facing. Will the Conservative members who form the government support the motion? If not, we will not have a committee, because they form the government. However, as I said, I hope that most members will have the courage to take action and to do what is right for all Canadians.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is rare for a motion to contain its own purpose and justification as clearly as the motion before us today.

The motion moved by the Liberal leader, the member for Papineau, calls for a special House committee to be appointed to consider the February 6, 2015 ruling of the Supreme Court, which stated that in certain specific circumstances, a prohibition on physician-assisted death violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court gave Parliament 12 months to amend the law accordingly. This means that a new legal framework must be put in place by February 6, 2016, at the latest, or else physician-assisted death will become legal, without the necessary guidelines and parameters set out in legislation. As a result of the summer recess and the upcoming general election, we have just 12 weeks of sitting time before February 6, 2016.



*Business of Supply*

Canadians expect parliamentarians to fulfill their responsibility as legislators and hold this important discussion in a calm and reasoned way, rather than in haste. That is why we need to get started on this right now. This 12-member committee, including seven government members, four official opposition members and one Liberal Party member, should begin its work in March and report to the House no later than July 31, 2015.

That would give the committee time to properly consult legal, medical and other experts, as well as the general public. The committee would be able to travel both within and outside Canada, accompanied by the necessary staff. It would be able to make recommendations on how to give effect to the Supreme Court's decision with a view to establishing a legal framework that is consistent with the Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canadians' priorities.

Let us summarize the court's decision. Right now, under section 241(b) of the Criminal Code, anyone who aids or abets a person to commit suicide commits a criminal offence. Under section 14 of the Criminal Code, no person is entitled to consent to have death inflicted on him. Together, these provisions prohibit Canadians from providing or receiving assistance in dying.

It is precisely these provisions—section 241(b) and section 14 of the Criminal Code—that the Supreme Court has indicated violate section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

● (1350)

[English]

The prohibitions unjustifiably violate section 7 of the charter in three ways, according to the court. First, they violate the right to life by forcing some people to commit suicide early out of fear of incapacity. Second, they violate the right to liberty by denying people the right to make decisions on their own bodily integrity and medical care. Third, they violate the security of a person by leaving people to endure intolerable suffering.

[Translation]

The court was very clear about the legislator's duty.

It writes:

It is for Parliament and the provincial legislatures to respond, should they so choose, set out in these reasons.

The court describes these parameters in paragraph 127 as follows:

...[physician-assisted dying applies only to] a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life; and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition...that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.

The parameters are there: a competent adult person who clearly consents and who has a grievous and irremediable medical condition causing enduring and intolerable suffering.

The court also gives parliamentarians the responsibility of establishing how the charter rights of patients and physicians will be reconciled and notes that a physician's decision to participate in assisted dying is a matter of conscience.

The court clearly stated that the task of setting these parameters fell to both levels of government, since both the Criminal Code and health are constitutional jurisdictions.

Federal MPs have responsibilities here. We cannot hide from it. The judges did their work, and now it is our turn to do ours. We need to get started right away.

The judges are not the only ones reminding us of our responsibilities. The Canadian Medical Association wants the law to clearly lay down the legal framework within which a doctor can participate in physician-assisted dying, and the association has emphasized the importance of improving palliative care in Canada. It issued a news release about that today and expressed support for the motion by the member for Papineau. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities wants the law to establish clear guidelines to prevent abuses. Canadians in general want the best possible legislative framework.

There is no doubt that medical aid in dying is a complex and highly emotional issue, but if legislators had to resolve only simple problems, that would be too easy. It is our role to take a close look at public policy issues no matter how difficult they are.

That is why it makes no sense that the Conservative government announced its intention to vote against the motion by the member for Papineau. I would ask my Conservative colleagues to reconsider that decision. The government says that it would rather undertake a different consultation process, but it did not provide any details. That seems like a cop-out.

Why would our Conservative colleagues lack such courage? After all, the special committee we are calling for could draw on a considerable number of studies, insights, foreign examples, and expertise, including the legislative work done by our colleague from Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia and by our Senate colleagues.

This committee would benefit especially from the endless goodwill of Canadians. They would all support us throughout this process. We could move forward with confidence.

Just look at what was accomplished by our colleagues at the National Assembly of Quebec. Following an exemplary non-partisan process, they ended up voting together on legislation on physician-assisted death that can be used as a benchmark for establishing what works at the federal level.

● (1355)

[English]

In sum, because Parliament has limited time to respond to the Supreme Court of Canada's decision to strike down the ban on physician-assisted death, in order to thoroughly and comprehensively consult with Canadians and experts on this complex and emotional issue, this House must act responsibly by immediately striking a special committee of the House.

This committee would immediately begin consulting with Canadians and experts on strengthening end-of-life care and support, including palliative care, with the aim to have enacted a charter-compliant legal framework before February 6, 2016.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

That is what Canadians expect from us, their members of Parliament. That is what they deserve to get from us. That is why we must vote in favour of the motion moved by the hon. member for Papineau.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It being a couple of minutes before statements by members, we will get started with that and allow ourselves a bit of time.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this motion, likely just after question period.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### ROTARY CLUB OF MISSISSAUGA-CITY CENTRE

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to join the Rotary Club of Mississauga-City Centre on February 15 for a special ceremony celebrating Canada's national flag and the one-year anniversary of the extending seniors' horizon program, which offers training to seniors on how to use modern communication technologies and social media.

It is common for seniors to feel isolated, and that is especially true for immigrant seniors. Extending seniors' horizon allows seniors to lessen their feelings of isolation by communicating with their friends and families, often very far away. I have had the privilege of meeting happy seniors who participate in this program. Our government's funding has allowed them to purchase equipment used in special training sessions.

I applaud the Rotary Club of Mississauga-City Centre for this excellent initiative, led by Tim Iqbal, and the work of the volunteers for extending seniors' horizon. Their work is greatly appreciated. I wish the Rotarians in Mississauga, Canada, and around the world congratulations on the Rotary's 110th anniversary.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SAINT-HYACINTHE BOOK FAIR

**Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in a few weeks the Galeries de Saint-Hyacinthe will host the seventh Foire du livre de Saint-Hyacinthe.

With events geared to day care facilities and early childhood education centres, schools, and the general public and adults, the book fair will have something for everyone. The Foire du livre de Saint-Hyacinthe will put on free lectures, literary talks, free shows and meet-the-author events.

This year, there is something new: the Desjardins writing contest. Elementary school students will design a comic strip and secondary school students will submit poetry. Students in the Maskoutains and Acton RCMs will be invited to show off their creativity.

Two spokespersons have been invited to represent each category. Alex A., the cartoonist behind the well-known comic book series *L'Agent Jean*, which is very popular with children between the ages of 8 and 12, will be involved with the elementary school contest. Fredrick D'Anterny, author of young adult books such as *Les messagers de Gaïa* and *Les 7 cristaux de Shamballa*, will be involved with the secondary school contest.

It is never too early or too late to instill a love of literature and reading in children. That is why I tip my hat to the organizers of the Foire du livre de Saint-Hyacinthe, who have risen to the challenge with enthusiasm and creativity.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

[English]

## PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians tend to trust our courts, especially the Supreme Court, but this court has strayed into the role of law-making on several occasions over the past 10 years, in fact over a dozen times. Most recently, the Supreme Court has overridden its own past decision on physician-assisted suicide, and much more importantly, a clear decision of Parliament not to allow assisted death.

I want to point out that during deliberations, the court gave weight to legislative developments in Belgium, Switzerland, Oregon, Washington, and the Netherlands but ignored the legislative record of Canada's Parliament.

It is the role of Canada's Parliament to draft laws. The Supreme Court and the police are tasked with administering and enforcing them. It seems that this runaway court is more often basing decisions on the personal beliefs of the judges than on the law, so we have, in effect, a lawless Supreme Court.

\* \* \*

## ACADEMY AWARD

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate B.C. resident Dr. Robert Bridson for winning an Oscar for his innovation and technical achievements in the motion picture industry. Dr. Bridson is an adjunct professor of mathematics at the University of British Columbia in my riding of Vancouver Quadra, and he is being honoured with the Academy Award for developing the mathematical software and creating the computer-generated models used to simulate real world scenes in major blockbusters such as *Avatar*, *The Avengers*, *The Hobbit*, and the sci-fi thriller *Gravity*.

Dr. Bridson's success highlights the economic and social importance of arts and culture to Vancouver and the country as a whole. On behalf of Parliament, I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Bridson for his contributions to mathematics, the film industry, and our entertainment and to thank him for serving as an inspiration to young people considering math as a field of study or a career.

*Statements by Members***TAXATION**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a mother and grandmother, I could not be prouder to be a part of this Conservative government. As you know, we have recently introduced our new family tax plan, a plan that will be of great benefit to every family with children.

I have had lots of feedback from parents who are pleased to have a government that puts more money back in their pockets. I have also heard from many grandparents like me who are grateful that our Conservative government is helping their children and grandchildren by providing income splitting for families with children, enhancing the universal child care benefit, increasing the maximum amount that can be claimed under the child care expense deduction, and doubling the children's fitness tax credit and making it refundable.

My children have always been happy to vote for their mom, but now they, and many like them, will be especially eager to continue supporting our Conservative government and preserving this family tax-cut plan.

\* \* \*

**BRITISH-INUIT TREATY OF 1765**

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate and join with the NunatuKavut Community Council on the 250th anniversary of the British-Inuit Treaty of 1765. Our party's commitment to the NunatuKavut Inuit and the justness of their aboriginal rights and title claims is steadfast.

New Democrats have always stood up for aboriginal rights. Just last year, our party passed an extraordinary resolution recognizing the NunatuKavut Inuit and set down our solemn commitment to enter into honourable negotiations with them for a modern land claims agreement. We ask the Conservative government to follow the lead of the NDP to work sincerely and expeditiously to heal the relationship with all aboriginal people, including the Inuit of south central Labrador, and to start those negotiations.

We ask all colleagues in the House to join us in commemorating the 250th anniversary of the first and only British-Inuit treaty of its kind. I thank the NunatuKavut Community Council for helping to keep this important part of Canadian history alive.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**UKRAINE**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was one year ago this week that I was on the streets of the Maidan just following the massacre of the Heavenly Hundred. The people of Ukraine had taken to the streets and had paid the highest price for speaking out against the violent and repressive actions of the Yanukovych regime.

Tragically, today Ukrainians continue to fight for their democracy and the right to self-determination in the face of Russia's sustained efforts to seize territory and undermine Ukraine's sovereignty.

Canada strongly condemns the ongoing violations of the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine by the Putin-backed separatists. We call on the Russian Federation and their rebel proxies in Ukraine to immediately

cease their attacks, withdraw heavy weapons, halt the flow of fighters and equipment, allow OSCE monitors to do their job, and proceed with the full implementation of their Minsk commitments.

As the Prime Minister has said, whether it takes five months or 50 years, we will never, ever recognize the illegal Russian occupation of any Ukrainian territory.

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**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Yesterday Rotary International celebrated its 110th anniversary. Rotary is 1.2 million neighbours, friends, and community leaders who come together to create positive, lasting change in our communities and around the world. As one of those proud Rotarians, as a member of Mississauga Meadowvale club, I want to express my thanks to all of Rotary's members in Canada and throughout the globe.

Since forming in 1905, Rotary has taken on some of the world's toughest challenges and has helped a wide range of international and service organizations, from the UN to Easter Seals, get started.

Of course, here in Canada, we know of Rotary's unwavering support for the eradication of polio, and through its partnering with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and our government, to making this happen.

Through the application of the four-way test to better our communities and our world, Rotarians give back and make a difference each and every day. I am sure that all members of this House will join me in congratulating Rotary on its 110th anniversary and in wishing it continued success for many, many more decades to come.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION IN CHAMBLY**

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about an organization that is close to my heart. Aux sources du bassin de Chambly helps families and single people become independent in terms of food security and material security. To that end, the organization is able to provide food and material goods free of charge, all the while helping households become self-reliant. Every year this organization hosts a charity drive in Chambly and Carignan.

On Saturday evening, I had the pleasure of attending the organization's vintage fashion show and dinner. The goal was to collect money to expand the organization's facilities, which are overflowing thanks to the public's generous response to the drive and also thanks to the donations that are collected all year long. At this event I also learned about and witnessed the importance of its thrift shop first-hand.

*Statements by Members*

In conclusion—and this is the most important part—I want to extend my congratulations and support to the director of the organization, Yolande Grenier, to her wonderful board of directors and to all of their excellent volunteers. Thank you.

\* \* \*

[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is the government of lower taxes. That is why we introduced the tax-free savings account, just like we promised. It is a way for Canadians to save for retirement, their kids' education, and the down payment on a house. In fact, today we are proud that nearly 11 million Canadians of all ages and income levels have opened accounts allowing them to save tax free.

According to Manulife Financial, the tax-free savings account is the favourite investment choice for Canadians. Nearly half of TFSA account holders earn less than \$42,000 a year, and in 2013, 75% of all TFSA account holders earned less than \$70,000.

However, the Liberals and the NDP will raise taxes and reverse our benefits. The facts are clear. Only our Conservative government can be trusted to keep taxes low for Canadian families.

\* \* \*

**NORTHERN PUBLIC TRANSIT**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, northern Ontarians are tired of being treated like second-class citizens. We are tired of the ongoing attack on public transit in the north. We have seen the loss of air services, like Bearskin Airlines, and the privatization of road maintenance. Then the Liberals killed our train. When the provincial Liberals killed the train, they did it on the Thanksgiving weekend in 2012, stranding all the students who wanted to come home. The Liberal minister sneeringly told northern families that if they wanted their kids home, they should buy cars. That is not good enough.

Now they are going after the bus service. It is really unacceptable that someone who is going to Toronto for cancer treatment would have to stand outside at midnight, in -45°C weather, waiting for that bus to come down from Matheson, Kirkland Lake, and Englehart.

The Liberal and Conservative plan for northern Ontario has been the death-by-a-thousand-cuts policy. Public transit is a right. Northerners know that only New Democrats, provincial and federal, will stand up and defend them and fight for the north.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are proud to put more money in the pockets of Canadian families instead of in the government's coffers, as the Liberals and the NDP would do.

Our government created the tax-free savings account to help Canadians save money for their retirement, their children's education

or a down payment on a house. These accounts benefit the Canadian economy. Today, 11 million Canadians have a tax-free savings account. These are families from every class, but mostly low-income and middle-class families, who choose to save tax free.

While our Conservative government is cutting taxes for Canada's families and seniors, the Liberals and the NDP would increase those same taxes.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to recognize the Inuit of south-central Labrador, who are represented by the NunatuKavut Community Council and its president Todd Russell. They are in Ottawa commemorating the 250th anniversary of the first and only pre-Confederation treaty ever entered into with the Inuit in Canada.

The southern Labrador Inuit, like all Canadians, want to be respected, and they want to benefit from resource development in their land. It was 250 years ago that this treaty marked good relations between the southern Inuit and the government. Today the people of NunatuKavut want the same.

The Liberal Party will do everything possible to ensure that NunatuKavut's claim is accepted immediately and negotiated in good faith on a nation-to-nation basis. If the Conservative government will not fulfill its obligations and begin negotiations with NunatuKavut, a Liberal government will.

Celebrations will be held in many communities across my riding, and today they are being held here on Parliament Hill.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, mothers and fathers should be able to make the important decisions that affect their own children. That is why our new family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will give 100% of families with kids an average of nearly \$2,000 per child. That is nearly \$12,000 over a child's first six years.

Our government trusts that parents know what is best for their kids. Both the Liberals and the NDP are against putting money back into the pockets of hard-working families. In fact, the Liberals will reverse our tax cuts and will impose more taxes on our middle-class Canadian families. It is the typical high-tax, high-debt Liberal agenda.

On this side of the House, we will not hike taxes like the Liberals and NDP will. Rather, we are proud to ensure that moms and dads have the final say in where their money is going.

\* \* \*

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last night members of Parliament showed where they stood on protecting Canadians' fundamental freedoms. It is hard to imagine that so-called progressive Liberal members, especially from Toronto, could actually support the Conservatives ramming a bill through that encroaches on civil liberties, but the decree came down from on high, and they had to fall in line.

Far from being a new breath of fresh air, the Liberal leader and his brain trust have reverted to the same old Liberal tactics of the past. It is that sort of cynical politics that more and more Canadians have grown so tired of over the last 10 years.

Canadians know that they can count on the NDP to stand up on principle, stand up to defend their freedoms, and stand up for security. Let me be clear. Come October, they can count on an NDP government to scrap this dangerous bill.

\* \* \*

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, only our Conservative government is standing up for Canadian families. We introduced the family tax cut and enhanced the universal child care benefit. Now 100% of families with children in Elmwood—Transcona and across Canada will be better off. That includes working, stay-at-home, and single parents and one-earner and two-earner families. Indeed, all families with children will have more money in their pockets. Every parent will now receive nearly \$2,000 per child.

Rather than have parents decide where their money should be spent, the Liberals and the NDP will reverse our cuts to give bureaucrats those decisions. They will take these benefits away and implement more taxes, like a job-killing carbon tax. We will not let this happen. Our Conservative government will continue to keep taxes low and to put money back where it belongs: in the pockets of moms and dads.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1415)

[English]

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after 411 days in an Egyptian jail, Canadian journalist

#### Oral Questions

Mohamed Fahmy's retrial has now been delayed for two weeks. Everything needs to be done to get Mr. Fahmy home to Canada.

The Prime Minister's Office has said that he has been in contact with Egyptian authorities "at all levels", but Fahmy's family and all Canadians would like to know the truth. Has the Prime Minister himself spoken directly and personally to President el-Sisi to ask that Mr. Fahmy be returned to Canada? Yes or no?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the government has decried the process on many occasions and called for Mr. Fahmy's release. This has been raised at all levels by the Government of Canada, including at my level, with the Egyptian government. We will continue to press the case until we see a satisfactory resolution.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we asked a clear question of the Prime Minister, and the family deserves a clear answer.

The Australian prime minister spoke directly with the Egyptian president. Has the Prime Minister of Canada spoken with President el-Sisi of Egypt about getting Mr. Fahmy back to his home in Canada?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, we have raised this at all levels, and we will continue to do so in ways we believe are effective. We remain optimistic that this case will be resolved, but we are disappointed it has not been to this point. We will continue to press for Mr. Fahmy's full release.

\* \* \*

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, so it is a no.

[Translation]

As Mr. Fahmy's case so clearly illustrates, serious human rights violations can be committed in the name of national security. That is why, unlike the Liberals who blindly support the government, the NDP believes it is essential to seriously study Bill C-51.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that it is important to study this bill at length and ensure that security and human rights experts are not only heard, but also listened to?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this bill is strongly supported by Canadians. The idea of comparing the situation with this bill and the situation in Egypt is ridiculous. The bill is now before the committee and I encourage the committee to study it as quickly as possible in order to adopt these measures to help Canadian security during the life of this Parliament.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder they want to avoid any serious study of this bill.

Ramming Bill C-51 through without improved oversight is reckless. Despite the Prime Minister's insistence, the Security Intelligence Review Committee is not an oversight body; it is a review body that looks at what CSIS does after the fact. SIRC's spokesperson is clear: "...we are not involved in the operational decision-making".

Does the Prime Minister still maintain that SIRC is adequate oversight of CSIS when even the committee itself says it is not?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP just compared human rights in Canada with human rights in Egypt, so that tells us a bit where he is coming from on this.

Let me read what SIRC itself actually said: "Our model of ongoing and methodical review...has the distinct advantage of allowing for a full and impartial assessment of CSIS's performance, arguably better positioning it to detect potential problems earlier". That is what SIRC itself said.

In addition, if the New Democrats bothered to read the bill, they would know that it requires judicial authorization to exercise certain powers before the fact.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**ASSISTED SUICIDE**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there are more people working in the parliamentary cafeteria than there are at SIRC. With nominations like that of Arthur Porter, it is hard to believe that the Prime Minister takes the role seriously.

The member of Parliament for Kitchener Centre and other members of the government caucus are calling on the Prime Minister to use the notwithstanding clause to go around a recent Supreme Court judgment on physician-assisted dying. Can the Prime Minister assure Canadians that he will not be using the notwithstanding clause to overrule the Supreme Court's unanimous decision on end-of-life care?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government said quite clearly that we respect decisions of the courts. We are taking a look at this decision. It is on a matter that is obviously very delicate and very divisive among Canadians. I do not consider this a partisan matter at all. We will listen to Canadians from all backgrounds and do that before deciding how to respond to the decision.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court gave Parliament a year to implement legislation on physician-assisted dying. Parliament, therefore, has limited time to respond to this ruling in a manner that respects both the charter and Canadians' priorities.

Will the government support our motion to create a special committee and consult with Canadians? If not, will the Prime Minister share his plan to tackle this important issue?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the government does not consider this a partisan matter. This is a very delicate subject on which Canadians have a range of strongly held views.

There is a committee of the House of Commons, the justice committee, that has a mandate to study this, should it so choose. We will leave that decision to it.

In the meantime, the government intends to consult widely with Canadians to review the decision, and we will consult very comprehensively before deciding how to respond.

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec held a respectful and informed debate on the sensitive issue of medical aid in dying. The Supreme Court gave Parliament 12 months to address the matter.

With just 12 weeks of work left, we have time to get it done if we start right now.

How does the Prime Minister plan to meet the court's deadline? Can he tell us how he plans to tackle this important issue?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a non-partisan matter about which Canadians have a range of opinions.

As the member pointed out, the Supreme Court gave Parliament a year to respond. We are reviewing the decision and consulting with Canadians. We will consult comprehensively before deciding how to respond.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister did not answer the Leader of the Opposition's direct question either, I will ask it again.

We were concerned when we heard that one of the Prime Minister's MPs had raised the possibility of using the notwithstanding clause to overrule the court's decision.

Can the Prime Minister state clearly that he will not use the notwithstanding clause with respect to this important issue, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has always respected the Supreme Court's decisions. We are going to take a look at this decision and consult with Canadians before deciding how to respond.

*Oral Questions**[English]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-51 has been roundly condemned by security experts for being over-broad, vague, and ineffectual. It would sacrifice Canadians' rights and freedoms to give security agencies new powers without any new oversight. Rather than answer questions or address these problems, the Conservatives have rammed Bill C-51 through this House.

Are the Conservatives now also going to try to railroad it through committee? Will the government commit today to a full and proper study of this sweeping security bill?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House voted for this bill yesterday. I am disappointed to see that the NDP did not want this bill to move on.

I think we should care about terrorism in this country. As elected members, we should do what we can to give the needed tools to our police officers, law enforcement, and security intelligence. We should show them respect, a thing that the leader of the opposition has not been able to do.

We will stand for Canadians and protect them against terrorism.

• (1425)

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there we have the minister hiding behind fear again, instead of committing to a proper study. It is no wonder that he will not, when every day new information is coming out about critical flaws in Bill C-51. Experts are warning that the bill could create a legal grey area, mixing the roles of CSIS and the RCMP. Cases could be left in limbo without any possible criminal charges. Bill C-51 needs a full study, hearing from experts and concerned Canadians.

Why are the Conservatives so afraid of being accountable for a bill that affects all of us?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the media are reporting that the NDP do not even want to debate the terms of the committee or the importance of debating the bill.

I find it very deplorable that the Leader of the Opposition has attacked the credibility of members of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. These people dedicate their lives to protecting Canadians. They obey the law and do not deserve to be treated like criminals by the Leader of the Opposition.

I am asking him to apologize and to respect the people who protect Canadians. I am asking him to defend his misguided ideas with arguments and not lies.

**The Speaker:** I believe I heard unparliamentary language. I will consult the "blues".

The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear.

We know that Bill C-51, in its current form, is flawed. The government, with the help of the Liberals, is fiddling with what we hold most dear: our rights and our safety.

After ramming through the bill at second reading, the government would like us to blindly pass Bill C-51 at committee.

Will the minister agree to listen to Canadians and ensure that former prime ministers and Supreme Court judges, who are asking us to be careful, will have the opportunity to explain why they deem that Bill C-51 goes much too far?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, preventing high-risk travellers from boarding a plane, meeting with parents to prevent their child from falling prey to radicalization, ensuring that foreign affairs officers share information about national security with the RCMP, shutting down a website that posts hate propaganda, preventing an imminent attack on Canadians are all measures found in this bill. I hope that we will be able to debate them in committee.

I look forward to meeting with members of the committee to discuss the bill.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I also sincerely hope that we will be able to debate this at length in committee.

The government claims that the existing civilian oversight of secret services is sufficient. However, the spokesperson for the Security Intelligence Review Committee contradicted the minister yesterday when she said that the committee was just a limited, after-the-fact review body.

It seems quite logical to me. If the government wants to give more powers to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, we need better oversight of its activities

Why is the government refusing to adopt this common-sense approach?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the review committee is independent and reviews activities.

However, Bill C-51 provides for ongoing review mechanisms, such as judicial consent and the authorization of the attorney general. The people who protect us should not be treated like criminals. It is not true to say that they are breaking the law. We have a report from the review committee itself. The agents are doing important work and we must not undermine their credibility.

I urge parliamentarians to respect those who protect us in their debates.

*Oral Questions**[English]***FOOD SAFETY**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when news broke of a BSE case in Alberta, the Minister of Agriculture said that it would not harm exports, but within days, South Korea banned Canadian beef, and then Indonesia. Now Peru, Belarus, and Taiwan have also announced blanket restrictions. Far from there being no harm, we now have five jurisdictions banning Canadian beef.

These trade restrictions will cost our producers and our economy, and there is concern that they could grow.

Why have the Conservatives failed to effectively protect our beef exports and what are they doing to reverse the damage?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the World Organization for Animal Health recognizes Canada as a controlled risk status country.

The CFIA and the market access secretariat continue to engage our trading partners to ensure that markets stay open, and to re-open markets to Canadian beef as quickly as possible.

With regard to the countries the member mentioned, while they have imposed temporary restrictions, these markets, while important, represent a small percentage, some 3%, of our overall trade.

• (1430)

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tell that to the 3% of ranchers across this country that have actually just lost their markets, that it is insignificant.

Beef boycotts have spread to five countries now, with exports worth more than \$70 million. I do not think that is chump change. Maybe the minister does.

Keeping foreign markets open depends on a really strong regulatory system here in this country. The Conservatives have cut the Canadian Food Inspection Agency budget. They say they did not, but the reality is, according to the numbers, they did.

It is really simple. Why is the government putting that sector that is worth billions of dollars at risk, and when will Conservatives act on behalf of all farms across this country and stand up for farmers?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that since our government came to power, we have invested close to \$1 billion in the food safety system in this country. What has that resulted in? The Conference Board of Canada rates our food safety system as number one against 17 OECD countries. We will continue to invest in our food safety system and are proud of its record.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in response to recent cases of mad cow disease in Alberta, five countries have now issued restrictions against our beef. South Korea, a big market for our beef, even closed its borders. However, last week, we were told that these new cases would have no impact on Canadian beef exports. What is worse, producers were just starting to recover from the last crisis.

How does the government plan to do to protect the livelihood of Canadian beef producers?

*[English]*

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the world is certainly welcoming of Canadian red meat products, including our beef industry. That is why we have gone to the mat for them in the European Union and opened that market. Of course, the opposition voted against that. At the same time, we brought forward \$200 million more in Budget 2014 to enhance our BSE surveillance, and the opposition voted against that.

We stand firmly with our beef industry; the opposition does not.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, free trade was supposed to be the solution for stimulating the Canadian economy. The least we can say is that we are waiting for the results. The free trade agreement with Korea did not prevent it from closing its borders to our beef, and we are still waiting for the free trade agreement with Europe to be finalized. In addition, we still do not have a guarantee for our cheese producers.

When will the government finally make job creation a key part of its trade policy?

*[English]*

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hallmark of this government is listening to our industry when it comes to agriculture. We continue to work with it arm in arm in whatever is going to be required to make sure it has a bottom line. The last two years in a row we have had record returns in our agricultural sector, and a lot of the rules and regulations the government is putting in place and taking out of the way so businesses can have a solid bottom line, we will continue with. The opposition cannot support it. That is at its own peril.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, middle-class families are working harder and harder, but falling further and further behind with the current government. It seems that the Conservatives are focused like a laser on schemes to help the wealthy few. Two reports out today show that the government's plan to double TFSA limits will cost tens of billions of dollars and yet benefit only the wealthiest Canadians. Does this sound at all familiar to anyone: taking from everyone to help the wealthiest few?



*Oral Questions*

Do these troubling new reports give the finance minister any pause, or is he really so hell-bent on finding new ways to give tax breaks to the wealthy and the well connected?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are proud to put more money back into the pockets of Canadian families instead of into government coffers, as the Liberals and the NDP would do.

Our government introduced the tax-free savings account as a way for Canadians to save for their retirement, a way to save for their children's education, or perhaps for a down payment on a home. Some 11 million Canadians have TFSAs, with the vast majority of those Canadians and those accounts going to low and middle-income earners.

The NDP voted against it. We know that they would raise taxes on Canadians and we know that they would take away the TFSA. Canadians understand that they are better off with this Conservative government.

•(1435)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has slashed old age security, and infrastructure for our cities, has taxed income trusts, proposed income splitting for the rich, and now plans to double TFSA contribution limits, something the Parliamentary Budget Officer called fiscally irresponsible this morning. Doubling the TFSA limit is another expensive Conservative scheme that will only benefit the wealthy more than others.

While the Conservatives insist on giving 100% to the top 10%, working families are asking, what is left for us?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Again, Mr. Speaker, this government is proud to be bringing forward measures that would put money back into the pockets of Canadians rather than into government coffers like the Liberal Party would do. Our government introduced the tax-free savings account as a way for Canadians to save for the things that were important to them, like a child's education or perhaps a down payment on a home. There are 11 million Canadians who have TFSAs. Nearly half of those with TFSAs earn less than \$42,000.

We know that the opposition members would take the TFSA away. We know that they would take pension income splitting away. We know that as much as we lower taxes for Canadians, they want to take more out of their pockets.

\* \* \*

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what do the following cities have in common: Kitchener, Vancouver, Burlington, Sydney, Markham, Montreal, Cambridge, Ottawa, Halifax, Toronto, Mississauga, and Regina?

I have talked to the mayors of those cities, and what they have in common is a very simple thing: none of them got any federal infrastructure money last year, and they don't expect to get any money this year because of your government's policies. In fact, none of them are getting any money.

Do you understand that? None of them are getting any money. Can the minister explain why he is spending \$29 million on

billboards but not a penny on new infrastructure in these important cities?

**The Speaker:** It seemed like much of that question was directed at me and not the minister. I know the member will try to remember to direct his comment through the Chair and not directly at the minister. I do see that the hon. Minister of Infrastructure looks eager to answer the question, so I will allow him to do so.

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to remind the member that since 2006, Canada has led G7 countries in total investment as a percentage of the GDP. We are leading the way.

We introduced the largest infrastructure plan in Canadian history with \$75 billion. They want to centralize everything in Ottawa. We are doing that in partnership with provinces and municipalities, and we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard that answer before. In fact, we have heard it countless times.

What the government needs to understand is that the program it has put together is not working for cities. It does not work in cities. In fact, the program is back-end loaded. That is the problem.

What we have seen is a 90% cut in infrastructure spending. What has happened is that it was \$2 billion two years ago; it is \$200 million now. This is hurting cities across this country.

The question is very simple. Municipalities cannot wait. Cities cannot wait. Canadians cannot wait. Why will the government not fix the program now and spend the money now so that cities can get back to building infrastructure that we need in this country now?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have doubled the gas tax fund and made it permanent.

This year, since the beginning of the program, the new building Canada fund has accepted \$5 billion and is in process. Since the member was a member of a city council, we have fixed the Scarborough subways, the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension, the Sheppard light rail transit, and Union Station revitalization, and more, only in Toronto.

\* \* \*

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an investigation into the train accident near Gogama found that 29 cars derailed, 21 cars caught fire, and it took 6 days to extinguish.

*Oral Questions*

A million litres of crude oil were released. Even more disturbing, the new standards put in place in 2014 for tank cars are still inadequate. The safety board is urging Transport Canada to quickly introduce enhanced protection standards for more robust cars.

When will the minister introduce higher standards to protect Canadians?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada has already removed the least crash-resistant DOT-111 tank cars. In fact, we moved far faster than anyone else has with respect to this matter.

Second, because of the nature of the tank cars between the United States and Canada, it is very important that we work in co-operation and coordination with the United States on these matters. That is exactly what the department is doing.

• (1440)

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question.

The facts are simple. The Transportation Safety Board is reporting that the new standards adopted in 2014 for DOT-111 cars are not safe for transporting crude oil. They are simply not tough enough. The TSB is asking Transport Canada to adopt stricter standards to prevent another tragedy like Lac-Mégantic.

My question is simple. When is the minister going to put effective standards in place? When?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last April we announced some very important milestones.

We announced that we would take 5,000 tank cars out of the system within 30 days. That was completed. Transport Canada also announced that within three years, we would also be phasing out the other DOT-111 cars, to new higher standards. We also have announced that we are working with the United States on what the new tank car standard will bring.

We are continuously working on these matters. The TSB has recognized the significant progress that the government has made on the matters, and we will continue to do so.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the families of the 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls are also still looking for answers.

While they are getting ready to meet tomorrow to give their testimony to the provincial, territorial and federal delegates who will meet on Friday, we hope that their voices will finally be heard and that this government will understand that the causes of this violence need to be understood before we can move forward.

Will the government finally listen to the families and launch a national public inquiry?

[English]

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is focused and committed to preventing all forms of violence against women and girls. I think all Canadians know that our focus has been on supporting, preventing, and protecting these young women.

Our government has put forward a bill to make sure that matrimonial property rights for women living on reserve receive the support that they require. Our government has put forward a victims bill of rights. These are acts that help protect and support women when they are in the most dire need. The opposition voted against them every time.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not an either-or choice between investments and a national strategy.

Families of the 1,200 women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered in Canada deserve to see coordinated action to end the crisis. They deserve answers to understand how indigenous women, who make only up 4.3% of Canada's female population, represent 16% of all the women killed in Canada.

Will the government commit to concrete action with its provincial and territorial counterparts and call a national public inquiry?

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. We will have federal representation at the table, but we do not support a call for a national inquiry.

This government moved forward in September of 2014 with an action plan to support aboriginal women and the violent crimes that are committed against them. We made substantive investments and we are committed to them.

In addition to that, as I mentioned before, we moved forward with legislation on matrimonial property rights and a victims bill of rights. The opposition obviously did not read the action plan, because we are taking action, unlike them. They just want to talk about things and vote against them.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. This is precisely why our government has deployed the Canadian Armed Forces in the fight against ISIL.

Every day we hear new reports of crimes against humanity committed by this terrorist group. Yesterday was no exception. According to human rights groups, ISIL terrorists abducted at least 90 people from Christian villages in northeastern Syria.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs please provide Canada's update on this atrocity?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the deliberate targeting, killing, and abduction of religious minorities by the jihadist terrorist group ISIL is simply outrageous. Canada condemns these abhorrent acts in the strongest possible terms.

We will continue to work with our allies to confront and degrade this terrorist threat. This is in addition to the significant humanitarian aid our government has provided to the region.

The Liberals and the NDP are presenting Canadians with a false choice. It is not about either security or aid; we cannot effectively deliver aid without security. This is why we are committed to this fight and why it is about time the opposition got on board with us.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the unfair elections act is running into trouble in the courts, just as we knew it would and as expert testimony predicted. Provisions of this act are so problematic that two leading organizations are ready to ask for an injunction. There are sections of the unfair elections act that clearly infringe on charter rights.

Did the minister honestly believe that his flawed bill would go ahead without serious and expensive court challenges?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we had a very thorough debate on this question of whether people should be required to show ID when they vote. The opposition fearmongered and raised alarm bells, and Canadians heard all of these warnings. However, when the debate was said and done, 87% of Canadians agreed that it is reasonable for people to show ID when they vote.

That is what the fair elections act requires. We will defend that position in court, and we are very confident that we will win.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the inevitable has happened. The Conservatives' unfair elections act is being challenged in court.

A majority of experts, citizen groups and even some Conservative politicians have strongly condemned this law, which would deprive some citizens of their right to vote. The Council of Canadians and the Canadian Federation of Students are asking for an injunction, which is the logical consequence of this botched bill.

Why are the Conservatives trying to prevent students from voting in the next election? What are they afraid of?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and the New Democrats want to let people vote without showing identification. We think it is reasonable to ask people to show ID to identify themselves when voting in an election.

### Oral Questions

Fortunately, surveys show that 87% of Canadians agree with us. Our position is reasonable, and we believe that we will win in court.

\* \* \*

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the participation of foreign diplomats in partisan events, such as fundraising campaigns, may be perceived as a form of support for a political party. Foreign diplomats must not be placed in such situations. The Liberals should know that. Clearly, they and their leader really lack judgment.

Will the minister follow up with the Pakistani High Commissioner to find out why the consul-general was at a Liberal Party event?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is highly inappropriate for foreign dignitaries to participate in partisan events, and the Liberal Party event was clearly political in nature.

While there is nothing wrong with members of Parliament bringing the concerns of their constituents to foreign ambassadors in meetings, exploiting an ambassador or an official for partisan gain is clearly unacceptable. To do so undermines the relationships between nations, and the Liberal Party should know better.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians were concerned to read recent reports that the Pakistani consul general in Toronto participated in a fundraiser for the Liberal Party of Canada. It was also reported that he then went to Scarborough and participated in a partisan event with the Liberal candidate. We then understand that the Chinese ambassador pulled out of an event when he realized it was being put on by and for the Liberal Party of Canada.

This just shows a real lack of judgment. What does the government intend to do to ensure that foreign diplomats are not being used for domestic partisan purposes by particular parties?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is a wise question. I want to thank the NDP for that. This is good. This is the kind of thing we have to have in question period.

Again, it is inappropriate for foreign dignitaries to participate in partisan events. I am hoping that the Liberal Party has learned from this tragic mistake.

*Oral Questions*

●(1450)

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives pay lip service to the brave men and women who serve in our armed forces, but they fail to deliver when help is needed. The government trumpeted its plan to give ex-military members priority for public service jobs, but it is refusing to let former members transfer all of their pensions if they make such a move.

Why do the Conservatives disrespect the service of our armed forces members and why are they treating them so unfairly?

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no such barrier to hiring. I am very proud that our government has put forward the veterans hiring act in order to give priority to the men and women injured in the service of Canada.

We are looking at a specific and small situation for reservists that treats them fairly so that Canadian Forces reservists can take advantage of this excellent policy for our veterans.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, here is another failure to deliver.

Robyn Young joined the Canadian Forces as a reservist at the age of 17, serving full time until 2011. In 2009, a military doctor misdiagnosed her tumour and performed unnecessary surgery. The result is a debilitating condition that now affects her ability to work. Young now works only part time and no longer gets the medical benefits she needs to heal and return to full-time work, benefits she would have received if diagnosed correctly.

Would the minister commit today to fix this injustice for Robyn and any others who may be in her situation?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, both the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are aware of this troubling case. The Canadian Forces health services group is conducting a full review of it. While this review is ongoing, both DND and the Canadian Armed Forces are continuing to cover her medical costs and meet her medical needs relating to her present condition.

As this is a health-related matter, it would be inappropriate for me, with respect to patient confidentiality and the Privacy Act, to comment further.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***QUEBEC BRIDGE**

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the former president of the Quebec City chamber of commerce has clearly stated that the federal government is responsible for the mess in the Quebec Bridge affair and that the federal government has to pay.

Who messed up the contract in 1995? The Liberals. Who went to court and lost? The Conservatives.

While the Conservatives are trying to throw the ball back into CN's court, the people of Quebec City are still waiting.

Will the Prime Minister finally keep his promise? I repeat, will he keep his promise and get the Quebec Bridge repainted?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member has been keeping up with the information, but it is very clear that our government is committing \$75 million in order to repaint the Quebec Bridge. We are acting on exactly what we said we would do.

All three levels of government are committing \$100 million towards this important project, but it is up to CN. CN has to come to the table and commit the other funds that are necessary for this project to get done.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister claims she did her part when she put \$75 million on the table to repaint the Quebec Bridge. The problem is that her offer is conditional on CN's participation, but CN is not responsible for painting the bridge because of the Liberals' negligence. The minister's \$75 million is money that Quebec City will never see.

Is the Prime Minister gearing up for another election by promising to paint the bridge or will he finally keep his word and get on with it?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a significant contribution to this issue has been offered by the Government of Canada. CN has a responsibility for the maintenance and the operation of this bridge. As such, we call on CN to commit and come to the table and make sure that the funds that are necessary to get this work done are there.

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**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this evening our Parliament will be debating the troubling rise of anti-Semitism worldwide. It is an important issue that I will be speaking on this evening. I encourage all of my colleagues to get involved in the debate this evening.

I would like to ask the Minister for Multiculturalism if he would give us his update on why this debate is so important at this time.

●(1455)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his leadership on this issue.

Indeed, I want to acknowledge the member for Mount Royal for proposing this important take-note debate this evening. It will allow us to discuss the rising wave of anti-Semitism across the world. We see incidents from Paris to Brussels to Copenhagen, as well as right here at home. It is deeply troubling and gives contemporary expression to the most ancient and pernicious and durable form of hatred, anti-Semitism.

It is not just the old anti-Semitism, with which we are sadly familiar, but the new anti-Semitism, which is often located in particular opprobrium for the Jewish homeland of Israel.

I invite all members to participate in this debate tonight. As Canadians, we join together in condemning the brutality of anti-Semitism.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Mohamed Fahmy's struggles continue. He just learned that his new trial has been delayed. The possibility of returning to prison weighs heavily on him. He already spent over 400 days in prison in atrocious conditions.

Why does the Prime Minister not pick up the phone and call President el-Sisi to ask that Mr. Fahmy be returned to Canada as soon as possible?

[English]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Fahmy is receiving consular services, so in fact we are ensuring his well-being.

I think that instead of writing ill-informed letters to the editor, the member should take the time to understand that our government is very clear at all levels. As the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Consular, I have assured this House that our government will continue to raise the case. Canada advocates for the same treatment of Mr. Fahmy as other foreign nationals have received.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, at a time when we are all concerned about Canadians' safety, the Conservatives are forcing the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to make major cuts. That does not make any sense. The race to balance the budget is at the expense of the safety of Canadians and the bilingualism of officers.

Can the minister tell us how he plans to increase security while protecting bilingualism?

**Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we take our country's two official languages seriously.

The proof is the roadmap for official languages, the most comprehensive investment in our country's history. It is a \$1.1 million investment. There is no question about that.

#### Oral Questions

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service is proud to have a bilingual and diverse workforce, and it will continue to serve Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, constituents in my riding are concerned with the living conditions of mothers, newborns, and children in the developing world. Our Conservative government has shown global leadership on this file, and the figures are staggering. Globally, between 2010 and 2013, an estimated two million child deaths from disease have been prevented. Two million children have been saved.

Could the minister please update Canadians on our action?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kildonan—St. Paul for her hard work and her question.

[Translation]

Our Prime Minister announced a sizeable contribution that will help vaccinate 300 million children and should save up to six million lives.

[English]

We are working with other donors, the private sector, international organizations, and developing countries to deliver results.

We are especially proud of our partnership with GAVI Alliance and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Gates to Ottawa tomorrow for meetings.

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[Translation]

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after refusing to have all of TransCanada's documents on the energy east project translated into French, the National Energy Board is now refusing to suspend the consultation process, as called for by the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec.

We still do not know the final route of the project, and instead of asking TransCanada to go back to the drawing board, the board is now moving forward with no regard for the effects the route will have on Quebec's agricultural land.

Will the minister admit that this consultation is a sham and that the environmental process that must be respected is Quebec's?

• (1500)

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the National Energy Board has fulfilled its obligations under the Official Languages Act. Second, all of the documents produced by the board must be published in both official languages.

*Business of Supply*

Questions on documents filed by the applicant should be directed to the proponent.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Defence says that Bill C-51 would protect civil liberties by ensuring that the powers of oversight are vested in the courts. However, in 2013 CSIS was censured by Federal Court judge Richard Mosley for not disclosing relevant information and for deliberately misleading his court.

This weekend, retired Supreme Court Justice John Major said that he was puzzled at the government's reluctance to provide better oversight over Canada's spy agencies. The judges themselves understand that warrant obtainment alone is simply inadequate.

The government is fond of dismissing criticism from the bench, which it labels as unelected, meddling, and interventionist, so why the sudden conversion by placing such confidence in the courts to provide effective oversight?

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the Supreme Court and the Federal Court have twice enhanced the powers of our review committee. We can be very proud of that.

This is an independent review body with extensive powers to decide the scope and type of investigations it conducts. It is accountable, it certifies the report of the director of the intelligence service and it investigates activities at its own discretion, free from government involvement or partisanship.

We can be proud of our review committee.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the Gallery of His Excellency Cemil Çiçek, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness used a term during question period that I think, upon reflection, he may wish to address now.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for decorum in the House. I apologize and I withdraw the unparliamentary comments I made and may have made about the Leader of the Opposition.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for that.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[Translation]

**MAIN ESTIMATES, 2015-16**

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting the main estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 2016, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** I have received a message from His Excellency the Governor General signed by his own hand.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1505)

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PHYSICIAN-ASSISTANCE DYING

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** When we started statements by members, there were five minutes for questions and comments for the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands

[Translation]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I fully support the Liberal Party's motion. It is a good idea to get the process started as soon as possible.

Does the member think it would be a good idea to invite representatives of the smaller parties and independents to participate?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the point of consultation is to get the broadest perspective possible.

The makeup of the committee is therefore something that the Liberals are prepared to take a very close look at with our hon. colleague. The Liberal Party leader, the member for Papineau, actually made that clear in his speech. There is no problem in that regard.

The problem might be our friends across the way, who seem unwilling to participate and unable to clarify what kind of consultation process they have in mind, and that sure seems like a cop-out.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague is in regard to the need for having a special committee versus going to a standing committee that already exists. When we look at the issue, we see that one of the concerns is that inputs can come from many different aspects, whether they be the department of health, justice, or finance. It is important that it be a special committee and, in fact if done properly, that would be a very comprehensive approach to dealing with this in terms of consultations and invitations of people who would be able to participate.

Maybe the member could add some further comment to that aspect.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave the answer in the question. He gave all the reasons why we need a special committee.

However, I would add another point. If the government wanted to use an existing committee, it would have done that. In the agenda of committees, it would be clear that one of them would focus on this important task, and we know that is not the case. In fact, the government is trying to dodge the issue, to speak about it as little as possible, and we know why. It is because the government members are divided. We just have heard the S. O. 31 from our colleague from Vegreville—Wainwright, who called the Supreme Court lawless because of its decisions. They are awfully divided over there, and that is why they do not want to have this open and needed discussion with Canadians, and a non-partisan one.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask a question of my hon. colleague. Should the government continue to sit on the sidelines with this issue and not take proper action and given that the courts have said that this clause will be removed in early February, does the member see the possibility of harm for the most vulnerable, should we not have a strong and clear framework of protection?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, that is the risk. Indeed, my colleague is right. The court said that this will be legal on February 6, 2016. However, I would have a lot of concerns if no parameters are clarified by the law, and I am not alone. All of the disability associations and physician associations have said the same. We need to have the parameters identified by the court clarified by the law. That means that this Parliament has a job to do, and we should start right now.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in question period today, the Prime Minister suggested that discussions such as this should go to the justice committee. It seems somewhat disingenuous to me, because Bill C-51 has just been referred to the justice committee. We have 12 sitting weeks left to do something. Therefore, I am interested in the hon. member's response to the Prime Minister's comment.

• (1510)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right that it cannot be the justice committee, for all of the reasons he mentioned. It cannot be any other committee, because they are all packed with other issues and we have very little time. We need to start now. That is why we need a special committee. The Prime Minister knows that. The Conservatives know they are trying to dodge the issue and avoid

it because they are divided and do not have the leadership to do this difficult task and explain it to and discuss it with Canadians, in order to have a bill for February 6, 2016.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to such an important issue. I will be splitting my time with the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia.

As members know, I have been long-time friends with the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia. I am so glad he is here in Parliament today, because he is one of the smartest people I have ever worked with, and it is just a pleasure to speak to this.

When we speak about this very important issue, I am certain there is not one of us here in the chamber or listening to any speeches today who is untouched by concern about family or friends facing serious health issues, now and in the past. We are concerned about their quality of life and their happiness, and also about their ability to have timely access to the high quality care they may need, especially in the last days, weeks or months of life.

Compassionate end-of-life care affects every citizen in the nation, yet we do not know about the options that are there for them and, eventually, for ourselves. My hat goes off to all palliative caregivers and people who directly work with those who are at the end of their lives. It is a very important time.

When we think of palliative care, we often think of it only as a type of medical care focused on managing pain and symptoms, but it is much more than that. Another way to think about it is that palliative care helps patients to achieve the best quality of life right up to the end. It focuses not only on the concerns of the patients, but on their families, often using a team approach. It has issues with paying close attention to managing pain, depression or confusion, and it is very mindful of patient dignity. After someone has passed on, family members may need support as they grieve the loss of the loved one.

This is a very important issue. We all have expiry dates and all of us will one day face this issue, yet numerous barriers remain. As far as we have come collectively, we still live with the stigma associated with the end of life. A recent poll conducted by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association said that 45% of respondents had great fear of death. Society is now starting to acknowledge the end of life as a natural part of life, but it will still take some time before the majority comes around to this kind of thinking. Work has to be done there.

This morning, as I listened to the member for Mississauga—Erindale, I thought his speech was one of the most thoughtful speeches, well thought out because he touched on this. He also touched very personally upon what happened in his personal life. Society and all of us as parliamentarians have started to acknowledge end of life as natural part of life, but it will still take some time to understand all of the ramifications about it.

There is also the issue that is fundamental to public awareness, which is that palliative care is strongly associated with the end of life, but it is not uncommon for the term “palliative care” to be stigmatized.

*Business of Supply*

At the end of her life, my youngest sister had heart problems. She had wonderful palliative care toward the end. It was very sensitive to us. She passed on at a young age, and this palliative care was a critical in helping her pass on without a lot of pain but with a lot of support around her.

Palliative care units are often perceived as places as death, but in our case when my younger sister passed on, it was also a place of supreme caring, love and compassion. We were very supported, and I know a lot of people have been, but there are real issues when people are seriously ill. There are real fears. Sometimes people resist a referral to palliative care services, and then afterward ask why they did not do it sooner.

● (1515)

However, if people do not know about palliative care and other end-of-life care options, there is a fundamental obstacle to requesting it and accessing it. It is something that has to be discussed with a doctor. People might think that palliative and end-of-life care can be provided in a limited number of settings like hospitals and nursing homes, but that is not the case. Palliative care can be provided anywhere, at home, in a hospice, in a hospital, in a nursing home. The best place for palliative care is the place that best matches the patient's needs. Many health care providers continue to build palliative care teams.

In the case of this issue, when we just have 12 months to come up with a possible solution, we have the Internet, as the member for Mississauga—Erindale said this morning. We have many ways of communicating. This is a very important issue, an issue in my view that does not rest on one specialized committee. It rests on Canadians to give their feedback to Parliament. It rests on Canadians to have this open discussion. It rests on Canadians to learn more about it.

Interestingly, in the Netherlands for instance, Professor Theo Boer, was on a regional team that looked at euthanasia. He was very much in favour of euthanasia in 2007. He said:

I wrote that 'there doesn't need to be a slippery slope when it comes to euthanasia...But we were wrong—terribly wrong, in fact. In hindsight, the stabilization in the numbers was just a temporary pause.

He said that before the House of Lords. Then again later on, he said, "I used to be a supporter of" the Dutch law on euthanasia "But now, with 12 years of experience, I take a different view." In April 2001, it became law in the Netherlands.

However, in 2014 Professor Boer said, "don't go there. Once the genie is out of the bottle, it is not likely to ever go back in again."

My question would, did they do it too quickly? Did they not have extensive collaboration all across the country? I do not know, but in Canada we are a leader on many fronts and I know parliamentarians on all sides of the House are very concerned about this. As was said earlier in the House, we need to work together in a collaborative manner and not make demands that a special committee be compiled, and there we go. It is more than a special committee. It touches the lives of every man, woman and child in our country. It is deeply emotional. It is something that is deeply personal.

Professor Boer was totally in favour of it and examined it. When the law was put through in the Netherlands, all of a sudden he said that it should stop, that it should not do that. He said:

You must realize that a growing number of the Dutch are saying: for me going to a care institution would equate with unbearable suffering. I'm worried about that. Care facilities are not getting any better.

Have we examined all the care facilities? Have we examined everything that needs to be done to ease the end-of-life issues for anyone, young and old? No, we have not. This discussion has not been opened to the degree that it should. People might say that if a care facility is the reason for people to get euthanasia, then we should do something about care facilities.

Professor Boer went on to say:

If we don't have the means to do that, then I'm afraid that in 2030 a large number of euthanasias will be performed because people are in deadly fear of the care facility

Toward the end of life, an awful lot of people have issues with fear. If they do not have family around, then they get very depressed. All of these things were mentioned this morning, and I will not repeat them because the member for Mississauga—Erindale has done that.

I encourage all members of Parliament to take their time and not rush this. It is a very important issue.

● (1520)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague, particularly her passion on the issue of palliative care. Palliative care is fundamental in this discussion.

Last spring, parliamentarians of almost all stripes stood to speak on a national palliative end-of-life strategy, saying that if an end-of-life strategy were in place, the vast majority of scenarios that were promoted in the media would become unnecessary because of the support that would be given to families and patients. However, there has not been any action since then. There has been talk, but I am concerned that the lack of action on following through on palliative care is creating a vacuum for the courts to step in.

What steps will the government take to follow through on the commitment that was made in the House to ensure that we build a strong, cross-Canada palliative care strategy, working with the provinces and respecting their jurisdictions, but ensuring people have access to the end-of-life care they need.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, as we know, palliative care, for the most part, is provincial jurisdiction. We also know that from a federal point of view, we are looking now at the euthanasia issue and palliative care to open this dialogue all across the country. How we get to the bottom of all this? I think we would all agree that there should be collaboration, getting as many Canadians as we can to give us feedback about where they are coming from and what they believe, before we go to a committee. I know that will eventually happen; we have to do that. We need to search far and wide because this is a very important issue.

As parliamentarians, we all need to do our part in reaching out, in a non-partisan way. This is a very personal, very important issue in our country today.



*Business of Supply*

I dearly care for the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia and appreciate his points of view in many ways. Far and wide collaboration, reaching out to every Canadian, and doing it in a very meaningful way by using the Internet and eventually a committee to really do a good job is of paramount importance to the well-being of those who are reaching their end of life right now.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is very little I disagree on with what the hon. member just said. Unfortunately, however, we are facing a 12-month deadline. This time next year, there will be no law unless Parliament acts. The reality is that we have 12 sitting weeks to do that.

While I agree with much of what she said, I wonder whether she would agree with what Preston Manning said in *The Globe and Mail* article, in which he set out a nine-point strategy for dealing with it. As Mr. Manning rightly has said, doing nothing is not a strategy or an alternative. In his final point, he stated:

The courts, the interest groups, the academics and the commentators have had a great deal to say on the pros and cons of physician-assisted suicide. Now it is especially important that our elected officials and legislators hear from rank-and-file Canadians.

If doing nothing is not a strategy, then what is the alternative, other than what has been proposed today?

• (1525)

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I have a deep respect for the Hon. Preston Manning. His ideas are extremely good. However, what is salient in terms of what the member opposite has mentioned is that we basically have to talk to people and find out where they are coming from. It can be legislators and academics, but that is not everybody. In fact, that is a very small part of the population.

In answer to the member's concern about 12 months, which is extremely important, it would behoove us to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada for an extension so we can do it right. This is not something that should be rushed like was done in the Netherlands when one of the lead professors, who agreed with euthanasia, stood up in 2004 and said not to do that. That is not something we want to say in Canada. We want to get it right.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to table, in both official languages, the Supreme Court ruling in *Carter v. Canada*, which is essentially what we are talking about today.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this document?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I will ask again later.

The reason I wanted to table the Supreme Court ruling is to make sure that we are all clear on what we are talking about. To do that, I am going to read a large section of the ruling. It says:

Section 241(b) and s. 14 of the *Criminal Code* unjustifiably infringe s. 7 of the *Charter* and are of no force or effect to the extent that they prohibit physician-assisted death for a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.

Then it gives the 12-month extension to deal with the ruling. It goes on to say that the reason there is a shift in the debate is that there is additional information from when the *Rodriguez* case was heard:

In particular, the law relating to the principles of overbreadth and gross disproportionality had materially advanced since *Rodriguez*. The matrix of legislative and social facts in this case also differed from the evidence before the Court in *Rodriguez*.

In plain English, they got more information, more empirical information. That is why their decision is different. The court continued:

The prohibition on assisted suicide is, in general, a valid exercise of the federal criminal law power under s. 91(27) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and it does not impair the protected core of the provincial jurisdiction over health. Health is an area of concurrent jurisdiction, which suggests that aspects of physician-assisted dying may be the subject of valid legislation by both levels of government, depending on the circumstances and the focus of the legislation. On the basis of the record, the interjurisdictional immunity claim cannot succeed.

Insofar as they prohibit physician-assisted dying for competent adults who seek such assistance as a result of a grievous and irremediable medical condition that causes enduring and intolerable suffering, ss. 241(b) and 14 of the *Criminal Code* deprive these adults of their right to life, liberty and security of the person under s. 7 of the *Charter*. The right to life is engaged where the law or state action imposes death or an increased risk of death on a person, either directly or indirectly. Here, the prohibition deprives some individuals of life, as it has the effect of forcing some individuals to take their own lives prematurely...

People are taking their lives prematurely to avoid the terror of what might happen. That is what it says in English vis-à-vis the *lealese*.

I will go on and ask again if I could have unanimous consent to table, in both official languages, the Supreme Court ruling, *Carter v. Canada*.

• (1530)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this document?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** In that case, Mr. Speaker, I will encourage viewers to read the Supreme Court ruling, as it is a very interesting and really sets out the parameters on which Parliament can act.

This morning in debate, the Hippocratic oath came up. In the court ruling, it specifically says that physicians will not be in any way obliged to conduct a physician-assisted suicide. Some people have said that the Hippocratic oath forbids such an action. I have printed the Hippocratic oath and would like to share it with hon. members. This is called the modern version, written in 1964 by the academic dean of the school of medicine at Tufts University and is used in many medical schools. It says, among other things:

If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.

There we have it: the Hippocratic oath already contemplates both saving lives as well as ending lives.

*Business of Supply*

In March 2014 I introduced two private members' bills on physician-assisted death. These bills would have replaced section 241 and created a framework to ensure that someone, a competent adult, wishing to end his or her life would be able to do so after going through a whole set of procedures and review by at least three doctors, and also a lot of safeguards to make sure that the individual knew what they were talking about, that they were aware of the resources available to them, be they hospice care, home care, palliative care, and so on.

My bill also outlined situations where there would be a lag time between when the request was made and granted and when the action would take place. I was quite open to amendments. Quite frankly, legislation like that would be the preferable way to do this. I would much rather have Parliament be supreme and make the rules, and then the Supreme Court interpret those rules.

We have a situation again where the courts are trumping Parliament. That is an issue for another time, but unelected, unaccountable judges should not be making laws. It should be elected representatives.

My bill is also before the Senate, which is another pathway, if the Senate were to choose to do so, to bring the issue to committee. I throw that out on the table by way of suggestion.

I will finally say the Canadian people are far ahead of the courts and parliamentarians on this issue. A recent huge poll that was done showed that 86% of Canadians support physician-assisted dying.

• (1535)

The question asked was about a serious incurable illness or condition with an advanced state of weakened capacity that is permanent, incurable, and results in unbearable suffering.

That is a harsh question, but Canadians support physician-assisted death, and we should support the Supreme Court decision.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia for his very thoughtful comments and for tabling the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada. I know that he has done a lot of work on this issue with his two private members' bill that he spoke about, as well as the bills in the Senate.

I think the member's point is well taken that we need to ensure that there is a parliamentary process that is non-partisan. It is too bad that it did not happen earlier, but now we have the Supreme Court decision, and it is critical that it be followed up in a timely way and that we not just let the year go by.

I would like to ask the member how he sees that process unfolding. We have a motion before us today that would set up a special committee that would do consultation. I wonder if he would tell us whether or not he thinks that is the general direction we should go to make sure that Parliament itself is engaged with this issue.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Vancouver East for her thoughtfulness in this debate, and my previous colleague, the member for Kildonan—St. Paul, for her eloquent words as well.

To the question, the motion today is one way to proceed; however, it will only be a small step, because we do not have time, which is really the enemy of the process. We have 12 weeks before the end of the session. We have a budget to debate and legislation that is already underway. We then have the summer break. Also, I suspect, although I do not know and have no inside knowledge of this, that there might be an election in the fall. All of this will eat up a lot of time.

There is the possible alternative of going through the Senate. That could be done if we could get agreement among the senators.

There are alternatives, but I think the bulk of this will be done after the election.

• (1540)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the hard work he has done and the legislative work he did. I mentioned it in my speech, and it would have been a mistake not to do so. I want to tell the member that there is a lot of appreciation for what he is proposing.

I am sure that if this special committee is decided upon by the House, the member would see a lot of support from members wanting him to be on the committee. It would put his hard work and legislative proposal at the core of the discussion. However, if we do not start now, he is right that we will not have time.

I understand that, to the member, the special committee may not be enough in itself, but at least, as he said, it would be a step.

Will the member support this motion and convince his Conservative colleagues to do so?

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Speaker, I have about as much luck of convincing my colleagues as I have of convincing the member on anything. We are all of our own making, and this is a very sensitive issue.

This is not a partisan issue, but it goes to the core of what it means to be Canadian. What we decide will affect all the Canadians who are alive today and every Canadian who will live in the future. Moreover, whatever Canada does, it will be a model for the rest of the developed world.

In short, I think we should look to what Quebec did. It took four and a half years. I thought Quebec did an excellent job, and it would be very wise to look at its process.

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to the member for highlighting the poll with respect to physician-assisted death. I agree with the poll because there was only one question. However, there are a lot of questions that come out of this, such as whether the individual would have to choose or whether someone else would choose for them.

Based on your knowledge of the subject area, are there certain questions you would like the public to answer before you make a decision on where this Parliament goes?

**The Speaker:** I know the hon. member for Burlington was directing his comments to the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, so I will have the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia answer rather than give my own views on it.

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** To the member, the Speaker is a Saskatchewan Roughriders fan and could not possibly give an opinion on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that the only person who can make this decision is a competent adult. It could be no one else, not a family member and not someone who holds a power of attorney. To me, it needs to be the individual and only the individual.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member seemed to make some kind of insinuation there about being a Saskatchewan Roughriders fan. I can assume that as a Winnipeg Blue Bombers fan, he knows a great deal about suffering.

We will move on now to the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am a Bomber fan myself and I am an optimist. I believe we are going to go to the Grey Cup this year. I really believe it.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address this very important issue. If we look at the broader issue anywhere in Canada, we would find that there is a great deal of interest in the issue because at some point in time we all have to make some very important decisions. I suspect there is a great deal of interest in what is happening today in this debate.

The Supreme Court set the stage in a clear fashion. It was not a split decision. The unanimous decision of the Supreme Court was that we need to change the law. With that decision, it compelled Parliament to come up with something to replace it. We have a responsibility to demonstrate leadership on an issue that is very important to all Canadians.

That is the essence of what we are suggesting today in the opposition motion. We are asking the government and all parliamentarians to look at what we have before us, to understand the importance of the issue, as I believe most of us do, and to start participating in the debate. It is perhaps most important to recognize the need to have this special committee that we are calling for.

The leader of the Liberal Party said it well earlier today in his opening comments on the motion. He said:

Physician-assisted dying is a complex and deeply personal issue, and Canadians are looking for real conversations about strengthening end-of-life care and support, including palliative care.

I believe the leader of the Liberal Party is reflecting on the importance of the issue and why Canadians are so interested in seeing leadership from the House of Commons. I believe we have approached the debate in a very apolitical fashion and in an open way.

I will get a chance to go over the motion, but most of us were here when the motion was first brought in, and we indicated very clearly that if people have ideas about how we might make some changes to the motion, we are open to amendments. If they have ideas about ways we could make sure consultations are more comprehensive, we are open to those ideas.

The party's decision to put forward the motion today is in recognition that the clock is ticking, because the Supreme Court has said we have until mid-February of 2016 to come up with the changes required in order to have a standard that would apply coast

to coast to coast. We want to ensure that the issue is dealt with by the House of Commons. We do not want the law to lapse. If we were to venture in that direction, we would end up having different approaches to the issue that would depend on which province or territory someone happened to live in.

• (1545)

I do not believe, as we heard earlier in comments, that we have to reinvent the wheel, per se. As a number of my colleagues have already mentioned, the Province of Quebec has already made some significant advancements on this very issue. If we look at the length of time it took for the Province of Quebec as a legislature to try to come up with that consensus, it took a great deal of time. It did not occur overnight. That is, in part, why it is important for us to get started.

I listened to a lot of the answers to questions and to comments, particularly from government members. Their primary concern seems to be that they want something comprehensive. They want some sort of alternative to what the Liberal Party is suggesting that would allow for more input, whether from the average citizen, a stakeholder group, or a professional.

There is absolutely nothing that has been raised today that could not be addressed in a special committee of the House. Members know that. We all know that. A standing committee of the House has the ability to compel, to travel, to set its own hours, and to extend. The abilities of a special committee would be no different, because what we are suggesting would be modelled on a standing committee.

So that members will be as clear as possible about what the Liberal Party is suggesting, I would like to go over the motion. It might take a few minutes to do that, but it is important that people understand what the Liberal Party is proposing. As I go through the motion, I want to highlight the fact that the leader of the Liberal Party has clearly indicated that we want this initiative to be supported by all political parties by recognizing the importance of the issue and trying to address it in an apolitical fashion. I say that so that if members hear something that they might not necessarily like, we can talk about it and make changes. The principle is still there.

Here is what is being suggested:

That (a) the House recognize that (i) the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the prohibition on physician-assisted dying violates Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice", (ii) the Supreme Court has suspended the implementation of its ruling for 12 months, (iii) the expected federal election and summer recess limit the remaining sitting days in 2015, (iv) Canadians expect Parliamentarians to take a leadership role on this issue and engage with it in an informed and respectful way, (v) a non-partisan, deliberate and effective discussion took place on this issue in the Quebec National Assembly, (vi) Parliament has a responsibility to respond to the Supreme Court ruling...

The motion goes on to say:

*Business of Supply*

That (a) the House recognize that (i) the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the prohibition on physician-assisted dying violates Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice”, (ii) the Supreme Court has suspended the implementation of its ruling for 12 months, (iii) the expected federal election and summer recess limit the remaining sitting days in 2015, (iv) Canadians expect Parliamentarians to take a leadership role on this issue and engage with it in an informed and respectful way, (v) a non-partisan, deliberate and effective discussion took place on this issue in the Quebec National Assembly, (vi) Parliament has a responsibility to respond to the Supreme Court ruling...

● (1550)

It goes on further to explain the composition of the standing committee. The party was not trying to do a one-up. We based it upon current numbers of standing committees. I heard some individuals, from their seats, indicate that we should have more representation from the Liberals. That was actually coming from the other side. We did not make that recommendation in the motion, but if some members feel we should change the composition, again, it is something to which we are open, but at least we are modelling it off a standing committee, including that there be, obviously, a chair and two vice-chairs, one from each party:

...that the committee have all of the powers of a standing committee as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada, subject to the usual authorization from the House; that the members to serve on the said committee be appointed...

Again, it goes through the process of a whip and says that in fact members of the committee, no later than March 11, put together a list with respect to the committee that would be put together.

...the quorum of the committee be seven members for any proceedings, provided that at least a member of the opposition and of the government party be present; that membership substitutions be permitted to be made from time to time, if required, in the manner provided for in [a] Standing Order...

I really do think that is a very important rule that we actually have for standing committees because, at different levels, possibly in different regions, there might be different members of Parliament who want to be able to get engaged on the issue at that committee level:

...and that the committee report no later than July 31, 2015, provided that, if the committee has ready its report at any time the House stands adjourned, when that report is deposited with the Clerk of the House, it shall be deemed to have been duly presented to the House.

In reading the motion, I believe it would reinforce many points that I started off my speech by talking about—the ability of this special committee to do the things that are important to Canadians and, ultimately, respond appropriately to what the Supreme Court has challenged us to do by having that unanimous ruling.

Time does matter. We do have a limited amount of time to deal with this issue. If we want to do a thorough job, we are not in a position to do nothing or to wait until after the federal election, as some might want to suggest. We are talking about a federal election that, according to our election laws, would be on October 19. If we are going to be doing the type of consultation that is important and that Canadians deserve, I believe that is just not enough time. In terms of parliamentary days, I believe there are actually less than 50 sitting days left before the House will adjourn for the summer.

However, I know that when members of Parliament from all sides of the House collectively come together and their intentions are good and they want to build a consensus and are prepared to make the

sacrifices that are necessary—and I have seen many members of Parliament do yeomen's work in terms of getting a job done when it needs to get done—we do have enough time to be thorough and get that report.

● (1555)

We need to start the process. That is really what the motion we are discussing today is about. If members feel this is an issue that has to be addressed and is important to Canadians, then there is no fear in terms of having this special committee struck, or there should be no fear.

When I was listening to members, Conservative, New Democratic, and members from my own caucus of the Liberal Party, everyone seemed to recognize the importance of the issue. If there is unanimous opinion that the issue is of grave concern and that our constituents would see it that way, then I suggest that we have a responsibility to do what we can in a timely fashion to deal with it.

We have put something forward that is tangible, on which we can actually vote and act. If members do not believe this is the way we should be going, at the very least they should provide an alternative and tell us what we will be doing. They should tell us how that way being suggested would be all encompassing, and how it would address the issues that members on all sides have already expressed in their comments when making the statement that they wanted to consult broadly, have far and wide consultations, as well as many other statements.

In terms of the consultation being asked for, this motion deals with every aspect of that consultation, without exception. If need be, it would even allow for the committee to travel outside Canada if, through consensus, the committee felt that would be necessary. I suspect there would be the unanimous support of the House if it were deemed necessary for the committee to visit every region and possibly every province in Canada on the issue.

I know, as other members know, that there is no shortage of opinion on this particular issue. Time and time again, in listening to the debate today, I heard members give specific examples. I, too, sat at the passing of my father, who had cancer and was in a tertiary hospital, a health science centre, and then ultimately went to his apartment. This is all within a couple of months. Then from the apartment, where there was incredible discomfort, we were able to get him into Riverview Health Centre and a phenomenal palliative care program. I applaud those health care professionals for everything they did.

We all have the understanding and the experiences we could share, not only inside the House but with our constituents.

I want to give a final appeal and say that this special committee we are talking about can do the job. I know parliamentarians can respond in an apolitical fashion, and we would be able to make a difference and do what Canadians want us to do. Let us fill that gap, that vacuum. Let us do what the Supreme Court of Canada has challenged us to do, unanimously. All nine judges have come forward. We can do it. I know we can do it.

*Business of Supply*

If we put our collective minds together, we can come up with a consensus, just as the province of Quebec was able to do. I believe the will would be here if in fact we could get the support necessary for this particular motion.

I am thankful for this opportunity to share a few thoughts.

• (1600)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. I certainly believe that in the House we have the ability to work together on something so important.

I listened to the member read through the motion, which identifies how many people would sit and where they would sit and what they would do. I did not see the phrase “palliative care” anywhere in that motion. This motion is to deal with the fact, as it says, “...that the prohibition on physician-assisted dying violates Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms...”. That is the mandate being set up by the Liberal Party for this.

I heard my colleague talk about how we could work in an apolitical fashion: let us talk, let us make changes. He said we could amend the motion. He is not really speaking truth to power, is he? When attempts were made to work with this motion, to ensure we have a comprehensive view of end of life, the Liberals insisted that this motion was going to stay focused on assisted suicide. That is the problem, because we have to look at the full slate of issues with end-of-life health care. That is what is incumbent upon us. Harvey Max Chochinov, who is the distinguished professor of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba, has recently stated that under the situation we are faced with now we have the right to die but not the right to quality palliative care.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague why the Liberals have been standing up in the House all day saying we can talk about palliative care if people want to bring in palliative care. However, they cut it out of the motion so that it is only focused on assisted suicide, and we are not responding to the larger issue of end-of-life care that we need.

• (1605)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments.

The focus of the motion is on the Supreme Court of Canada decision. I would be absolutely shocked, as I am sure every member of this chamber would be, if palliative care were not incorporated into the discussions and presentations at every single level. I would be absolutely shocked if that were not the case.

The purpose of the motion is to establish the committee that would deal specifically with the Supreme Court of Canada decision. If the member can build that consensus, and if the Conservatives are prepared to say they will have the standing committee and tag on another component to it, I suspect we would be more than happy to oblige that. However, I do not know if the members actually had that discussion. If that is the only barrier from having the motion passed, I suspect we could even do something of that nature, in fact, if that were to occur.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I and others in this room are co-chairs of the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative

and Compassionate Care, and we understand the absolute value of palliative care.

I come from a community in Guelph where we have one of the best hospices in Canada. The problem is that there is no consistent palliative care across Canada, and not everyone has access to palliative care. I frankly agree with the previous speaker that it is important that we address palliative care. The notions we speak of are not mutually exclusive.

This is a divisive issue. There are people who agree with the Supreme Court decision and people who disagree with the Supreme Court decision. However, physician-assisted death is now upon us as of February 6 of next year. We have to, as a Parliament, get on with implementing what we have been charged with by the Supreme Court.

My concern is that February 6 will be upon us quickly but there will be no law at all, nothing consistent across Canada, and we will have 13 different jurisdictions across Canada dealing with it in different and inconsistent ways, having some people go from one province or jurisdiction to another seeking a physician's assistance in death. I wonder if my colleague from Winnipeg North has the same concern and if that is one of the motives for encouraging this Parliament to get on with the discussion.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague was here when our leader spoke on the issue. I will quote what he said: “It now falls on us, as legislators, to act, and that means leading a broad and inclusive discussion with all Canadians”.

I believe that the leader of the Liberal Party has it right. We do have a responsibility as parliamentarians. It would be highly irresponsible if we did not do a thorough job on such an important issue. All of our constituents would understand the need for us to not only demonstrate interest but to show action, because if the Parliament of Canada fails to address this issue in a timely fashion, we will have a piecemeal approach across this country. I would suggest that no one wins in that situation.

We need to see leadership come from within the House of Commons to fill that vacuum and to address the very serious issue the Supreme Court of Canada made a unanimous decision on. I believe that is what we are here for.

• (1610)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of the objections on the government side with respect to this motion have to do with not having enough time. As the member for Guelph rightly said, there is a looming deadline, and that is February next year. We do not have that much time to do it.

The argument then becomes that we may have to go to the Supreme Court to ask for an extension. The parliamentary secretary suggested that. The member for Kildonan—St. Paul suggested that.

Is it the member's opinion that our position to seek an extension, if in fact that was appropriate, would be much more enhanced if Parliament had engaged, started the process, and actually started to hear witnesses?

*Business of Supply*

I point to the chair of the finance committee. It is not unusual for the finance committee to hear 300 or 400 witnesses in the course of a three- or four-month hearing process on pre-budget consultations. It is doable. I would be interested in the member's opinion as to whether our position before the Supreme Court would actually be enhanced by the commencement of a process.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, it is a good point. If we collectively come to the conclusion that there is a need for an extension and looked at it from the perspective of having a consensus in the House of Commons, I suspect it would give a great deal more weight to it.

I would also make reference to having a special committee as opposed to any of our current standing committees. It is important to recognize that it is not just the Department of Justice or the Department of Health or the Department of Finance. There are a number of standing committees that might have some interest in the issue. The bottom line is that it is important to have a special committee of the House with the same powers a standing committee has. If we agree to that, we will be on the right track in terms of being able to deliver what Canadians really want to see, and that is some parliamentary leadership on this very important issue.

Time matters. If we do not address this in adequate time, tell us what the alternative is. If Conservatives do not support the motion, they should explain what the government is prepared to do to deal with this very important issue, which Canadians are obviously very much concerned about.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague to try to explain why our Conservative colleagues are so reluctant to vote for this motion. They said that there is no time, but the more we wait, the less time we will have. That is the reason to start now. They said that it is not enough to have a committee. That may be so, but they could just say that the committee is something else, whatever they have in mind. Is it not—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaine Calkins):** We are out of time. I will give the member for Winnipeg North an opportunity to address what he thinks the question might be.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the issue is the committee not having enough time. I would emphasize the fact that the Supreme Court has put a deadline on it.

We have 12 weeks. This parliamentary session has enough time to act on this motion and to provide a report, and all of Canada would benefit from the hard-working—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaine Calkins):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Timmins—James Bay.

I am very pleased to participate in this debate today. I want to begin my remarks by reflecting on the importance of this issue and on it really being a non-partisan issue.

I want to thank the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia for the bills he has presented in the House. I know that there are also two members in the Senate, from two different parties, a former Liberal and a Conservative, who have presented a bill. I

think it reflects the deep feeling that individual members of Parliament have on the issue of medically assisted dying.

In fact, the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia and I attended a forum in Calgary in August of last year. We did a forum together with Dying with Dignity Canada and other organizations. People were a bit taken aback that a Conservative member and an NDP member would be at the same meeting talking about the same issue. Yet I think it was a good discussion, and we shared very similar viewpoints on what needed to be done.

I also want to remember the incredible work that was done by a former member of Parliament, who is well known to us, Svend Robinson. He rose on many occasions in this House and spoke about medically assisted dying. In fact, he was one of the key people who worked with and helped Sue Rodriguez in her battle, both legal and medical. She had tremendous courage. Svend was someone who was by her side to support and assist her. He never gave up on that issue.

I also remember Francine Lalonde, who was a wonderful member of Parliament from the Bloc Québécois. She brought forward a private member's bill in the House on medically assisted dying. I voted for the bill. In fact, I voted twice for it, because she brought it back again. Ms. Lalonde has since passed away, but she was a tremendous advocate on this issue. We again thank her for her work.

Right there, members can see that this is a very non-partisan issue. I think it reflects the feelings on this issue in Canadian society.

I also want to pay tribute to my colleague from Timmins—James Bay for the hard work he has done on palliative care, because it is part of the debate in terms of ensuring that there is a continuum of care. To me, the issue of palliative care and medically assisted dying are not things that are mutually exclusive, where it is either/or. It is something that is part of a process and a choice people need to have. We need to have much better access to palliative care in this country.

Even with the passage of Motion No. 456 by the member for Timmins—James Bay and the debate that took place in this House, the fact is that we have made very little progress. I think there are some very serious questions as to why we have not seen the follow-through from the government, whose members actually voted for the motion.

I also want to point out the organizations in this country, such as Dying with Dignity Canada, and others. They have done incredible work, not just on the legal front but also in education and working with local communities and people who are interested in this issue.

I did a forum in Vancouver with Dying with Dignity Canada about six weeks ago. It was a very interesting meeting. There was a diversity of people who came to the meeting. We had presentations. This was before the Supreme Court of Canada decision. It was a serious discussion that reflected the seriousness with which people look at this issue. What really stood out for me was that people were very clear that this is an issue about consent and choice and that the state, and I think it is very well reflected in the Supreme Court decision, should not be in the position of making a decision for adults in terms of what they decide to do about the end of their lives, the care they have, or when they need to end their lives based on their unique and particular circumstances.

*Business of Supply*

•(1615)

I passionately believe that members of Parliament can be opposed to medically assisted dying, but can still support the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada and the premise that this is about an individual's decision. That is not something that I or anyone else in this place should be able to pass judgment on.

I do believe that we have an incredible responsibility to follow up the decision by the Supreme Court, which was unanimous, to make sure that we do not drop the ball and we do not somehow push this somewhere to the back, because we consider it to be controversial, or for some other reason. This is an issue about here and now. This is about people now who are suffering and who have very compelling situations where they need to be able to make a decision about their own life and what happens. For that reason, I thank the Liberal members who brought the motion forward today.

I agree with the last person who intervened. If we do not start now, then when will we? I have heard arguments that there will not be enough time and that an election is forthcoming. We can always come up with 1,001 reasons why this is not the appropriate time or why we should not begin our work now. I can think of one compelling reason why we should start now, which is that for some people time is running out. Unless we do our job, we are completely abdicating the responsibility that has been given to us by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Like my colleague from Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, I wish that we were not following on the heels of the Supreme Court of Canada. I wish that we, as Parliament, had been able to arrive at this in our own way and through our own process, as happened in Quebec. The process there was really quite incredible. They went through the proper consultations and eventually came forward with their legislation.

There is a vacuum now. Unless we begin today or next week, we are letting down an awful lot of people. We are copping out, and we cannot afford to cop out on this issue.

Maybe this special committee is not perfect. Maybe someone thinks that it should be slightly different. I certainly agree with my colleague from Timmins—James Bay that we wish it included the issue of palliative care in a more formal way. Should this motion pass, we will do our best to ensure that these issues are also covered.

However, the fact is that this is the motion before us today and that we will be voting on today. I cannot see any reason why we would not support it, because it is about a process. It is about us as parliamentarians doing our job to uphold this very historic landmark decision made by the Supreme Court of Canada.

In the name of Sue Rodriguez and all the people who have suffered and brought forward the current legal action and sacrificed so much, I really feel that we are compelled to take action here. It will be very disappointing if we do not meet that goal and if we do not meet that responsibility and we somehow just slough it off and say there is this excuse and that excuse. There are no more excuses.

This is a day for us to recognize what we are here to do as members of Parliament for our constituents. It is a day for us to get above partisan politics. In that way, I find the decision by the

Supreme Court of Canada very affirming. It affirms what we need to do. Let us make sure that we take it up and affirm our responsibility to work with each other and set up a process to ensure that this consultation does take place, so that within a year, we can do the job that has been set out for us.

•(1620)

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Vancouver East for her comments. I thank her for bringing up that forum that we did together. I do recall it. It was actually in July. I remember it because it was during Stampede week and there was a glorious blue sky that evening. It was hot, and the venue was in an obscure building with no air conditioning and only one fan. There was little notice for the forum, yet we had a fantastic turnout. Even some media turned out.

I would like to give the member for Vancouver East the opportunity to relay to the House some of the comments and feelings of the people who attended that day.

•(1625)

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member's memory is better than mine. I now remember that it was a hot day and that it was during the Calgary Stampede. What I remember most about that meeting is that people were so surprised that we were there, that a member from the government side and a member from the official opposition could be at the same meeting and have a respectful discussion. It spoke clearly to me as to how people in this country are so cynical about politics. They see us in question period and that is the view they have of us and they do not know that there are many instances where MPs do work together.

The motion by my colleague from Timmins—James Bay on palliative care is another very fine example of how the House can come together on the wording and approve a motion on the importance of palliative care and the need for a federal strategy.

Therefore, I would like to see us go further, to take that up and say that we are willing to work together on this issue and are willing to make sure that there is a genuine, meaningful, democratic consultation that will lead to the necessary legislative framework.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank colleagues for what I regard as a largely respectful debate throughout the day and minimal partisanship. I want to address the one specific issue that seems to be of most concern, because once people work through the issues around physician-assisted suicide, it comes down to giving an appropriate, respectful length of time to what should be the legislative response. Therefore, I would be interested in the hon. member's views with respect to the compressed 12-month timeline that the Supreme Court has given in deference to Parliament, whether she has any thoughts as to whether that is sufficient and, if it is sufficient, if this is the appropriate motion to get it going.

*Business of Supply*

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know all of the reasons that the Supreme Court of Canada justices laid down one year. I could possibly speculate that they felt this was such a compelling issue affecting the dignity of people, their right to life, and their own decision-making process that they really wanted to make sure that Parliament did not just wander off and do nothing, or do whatever over whatever period of time. Therefore, the specific timeframe of a year, which I do not think is too short, is very important because it is now moving us to do something. It has been somewhat disconcerting that we have not seen anything proactive from the government on what it wants to do. If it has ideas, then let it bring them forward. Right now we have this motion that lays out a particular cause.

I would point out that if a special committee gets going relatively quickly, there is nothing to prevent it from meeting during the summer. We have committees that meet throughout the summer all the time. Therefore, from a logistical point of view, this is very doable. If we do not start now, then we are just delaying it further.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as always it is a great honour to rise in the House and represent the people of Timmins—James Bay. I am honoured to rise following my colleague from Vancouver East who has done so much work on health care and end-of-life issues.

I have been meeting across the country with people who are very concerned about the need for a national palliative care strategy. I just met with medical doctors, nurses, and people involved in the palliative care movement in Toronto, and there is a real deep concern following the Supreme Court decision and what it will mean for families and medical practitioners. These are very deep issues that we need to deal with. I think the concern is about a vacuum, a lack of leadership by Parliament to define these issues, that will very much put the medical community in a compromised position that it does not want to be in. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to address this.

[*Translation*]

First, I would like to thank the province of Quebec for its fair and balanced consultation process.

The government of the day held a fair consultation process with the various interested parties, and it led to a plan regarding the standards for end-of-life care everywhere in the province and a definition of the process surrounding the issue of euthanasia.

Therefore, it is possible to find a solution to this issue, and Quebec is a model.

• (1630)

[*English*]

What concerns me is that the government knew that the Carter decision was coming. The people in the end-of-life care movement knew that something was happening. I heard all the time, “What is the government going to do?”

In court, one has to mitigate one's damages. One has to be able to show the court that action is being taken. If one does not take action, the court will.

What has come out of the unanimous Carter decision is that the court, rather than defining the issue, has opened it up in a way that will probably make it much broader, probably broader than Quebec

has gone, and probably much broader than Parliament would have gone. If we do not act in response, the courts will be expected to intervene again. There will be other challenges and we as a society will be put in a position of dealing with it, and who knows where we will end up in the process. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to deal with this.

The frustration is also that Parliament had a chance to act. We established in the House a commitment to a national palliative care and end-of-life strategy to work in consultation with the provinces and territories, recognizing their jurisdictions, and to work with the medical community, because there are models of good, quality palliative care out there. When Canadians know what is available, many of these fears about end of life become very different. However, the reality is that across the country there is a patchwork of services. Seventy per cent of Canadians do not have access to quality palliative care. Therefore, the other issue, the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia, draws a lot of attention in the media.

My concern about my Conservative colleagues is that if they do not act within this year, this issue could become much broader and much more difficult for parliamentarians to respond to. We have an opportunity.

I listened to the hon. members from the Liberal Party. I agree with them: Parliament can act and should act. We have a year. We knew this was coming. We can do this. My concern with the Liberal motion is that it is focused strictly on the Supreme Court ruling and not on the larger end-of-life issues that have to be part of the package.

Harvey Max Chochinov just wrote an excellent op-ed on this. He is an expert on palliative care. He is concerned that they will define through this, through Parliament, or through the courts the right to die but not the right to have access to quality palliative care. It would be a very unjust situation if we simply respond to the court ruling, which might affect 0.2% of the population. I am not diminishing those people, but 70% of the population does not have access to quality end-of-life care.

We have an opportunity right now. The Supreme Court has ruled that this has to be dealt with.

Let us put aside the usual bickering that goes on. We have a period where we can sit down, look at how to do this in a way that is just, that works with the provinces, and realizes that with the vast majority of our population aging, the issue of palliative, home care and hospice care is vitally important.

From a jurisdictional issue and from a planning issue, it is very important as 1% of Canadians use 30% of the health care budget. Many of those in that 1% are people in their final months of life. We are spending enormous amounts of money on end-of-life care, but it is being delivered in a patchwork of services. The stress on patients is enormous, the stress on families can be traumatic and there is the stress on the medical system.



*Business of Supply*

If we talk to people involved in quality palliative care, they will say that once a person is identified in a palliative program, there are no more midnight trips to the emergency ward with a loved one, trying to find a bed, not knowing what to do. It is an incredible stress on families. We have seen really good models in Brantford, Sudbury and Saskatoon. Those models can be replicated in other parts of the country.

I am very concerned that we are standing between a political vacuum on one hand and a committee motion on the other. Again, I commend my colleagues for bringing it forward, but if the motion does not address the issue of palliative care, then I have a problem. I have a problem saying that we are simply going to address the Supreme Court decision and we are walking away on the rest of it. That is problematic for Canadian society.

Some of my colleagues from other parties have said that Canadians are out on this issue. They expect us to show leadership on it. They expect us to show a level of maturity in recognizing that as parliamentarians we are entrusted with certain things. If we do not live up to that standard, the Supreme Court will act for us. I believe the Supreme Court has a fundamental role to play.

The Supreme Court has told Parliament to get its act together, to do it within the course of this year or it will be devolved either to the provinces or we will see further court challenges. Once the courts recognize that Parliament is not willing to act, I think they will start to interpret this ruling in a much broader fashion. I am not sure that is where the Canadian public wants us to go with this.

We have an opportunity right now, and it is an important opportunity, on the issue of end-of-life care. We stood in the House just five months ago, talked about palliative care and we committed to it. Since then, there has been zero action from the federal government. How does that look when the Supreme Court sees that the federal government has done nothing on this?

We have an opportunity. The federal government is mandated by Parliament to start that process with the provinces and territories to establish quality palliative care. The federal government also has a massive role to play in the delivery of health care in first nation communities, which have very little access to quality palliative care, in the military with our veterans, and in the prisons.

The federal government also has a national role to play in health care, to say that we can establish funding that the provinces can access for training. One of the big concerns that has been raised in the palliative care community is that if this moves within a year, the decisions on life and death will be handed over general practitioners who do not have the expertise in palliative and end-of-life issues. We will have to deal with very complex issues in a vacuum, without the support.

The federal government could work with the provinces and establish those norms, those standards and establish training so we could do this in a just and fair way. We could do this in a way that all Canadians would recognize, regardless of their beliefs on this issue. We all share very complicated beliefs. The quality of the lives of citizens, regardless of their station in life and as they face their final few months, has to be considered, a total value that we as Canadians and parliamentarians are willing to embrace.

● (1635)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his work on bringing the issue of palliative care in front of Parliament.

I had the privilege of being part of an all-party committee that discussed and studied palliative care for many months. We wrote a report called “Not to be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians”. We toured a number of facilities in Canada and saw the great work that many of these heroes who worked in palliative care did. I want to commend them for that great work.

One of the aspects that I think is missing in the subject matter today is this five-month period of up to the end of July to come up with some credible solutions. My feeling is that we need more time to do that kind of work. Maybe we could have done it sooner. We could all take the blame for that.

However, we are here now. My colleague used the phrase many times during his speech “we have an opportunity now”. I could not agree more, but to take advantage of that opportunity, I feel we need more than five months to do that. Would my colleague agree that it would be better for us to take more time, study it more deeply, come up with some possible solutions, even to the palliative care patchwork that currently exists in Canada?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the excellent work he has done on the palliative care committee. Coming into this, I learned a great deal, and I believe the committee has done excellent work. It has laid the groundwork that we can use to deal with this.

The issue is that we would all love more time. That is what my old man said in his final days, “I thought I’d have more time”. We always think we will have more time. The Supreme Court has ruled. That is my concern. I do not want to be in a position where we either leave a vacuum or attempt to bring in the notwithstanding clause to counter the Supreme Court. It has ruled. It has given us a deadline.

I believe we can work together across party lines. I believe we can work through the summer and do this. The report the committee did on palliative care, an all-party report, is excellent. Everyone in the House should read it and the folks back home should check it out. It shows that parliamentarians can actually do some good work together. Let us learn from it.

● (1640)

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for his passion on the subject of palliative care, which was very apparent in his remarks.

This court decision has struck down provisions of the Criminal Code and has invited Parliament to fill that void, should it see fit. My colleague protests the fact that the motion is too narrow and that it does not address the fact that Parliament is committed to a national strategy on palliative care.

*Business of Supply*

The motion calls for the committee to come up with the legislative framework that would respect the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the priorities of Canadians. If we can accept that a national palliative care strategy is a priority of Canadians, is it not indeed possible, as a result of this motion, and is it not indeed advisable that this committee would not just recommend wording with respect to changes in the Criminal Code, but would also include in its work a legislative framework that would take into account the priorities of Canadians, including a palliative care strategy, and that these things could very well be part of the mandate and, in fact, probably should be?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I fully agree that the issue of palliative care should be part of the mandate of this motion, but it is not. That is the issue for me. The issue is that we should include palliative care so we are not just looking at the isolation of the Criminal Code, but at the need to develop all end-of-life issues together. It would be a travesty to simply respond to the Supreme Court and then walk away. That is why a mandate has to clarify the role of a committee. This is the first lesson I learned in Parliament when I was young and first came here.

The fact is that the Supreme Court is telling us to go forth, make a decision on assisted suicide, and deal with the Supreme Court decision. We can talk about a whole bunch of other things, but it is not in the mandate, and that is a fundamental problem.

I want to congratulate people for being willing to establish a committee, but if a committee is being established that is not willing to look at the larger issue of palliative care in light of the Supreme Court decision, then we have a problem. I have to remind people that I would be very wary of such a limited mandate.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is in indeed an honour to stand here in this specific debate as proposed by our party, the Liberal Party of Canada, and our caucus. As we have had many discussions about this in the past, I want to talk about this.

I have some experience with palliative care in my riding in central Newfoundland. It is always a painful experience for a lot of people here, and more so for others in the House who have spoken so powerfully about it, such as the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay did earlier, and has done so in the past.

For the record, I want to read the text of the motion to the House. For great part, it is mostly about the text of the motion, which talks about the Supreme Court ruling and how we have to deal with that. However, it is also a question of process and how we as members can deal with this situation.

I neglected to mention earlier, Mr. Speaker, that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

The text of the motion is, in part:

That (a) the House recognize that (i) the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the prohibition on physician-assisted dying violates Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice”, (ii) the Supreme Court has suspended the implementation of its ruling for 12 months, (iii) the expected federal election and summer recess limit the remaining sitting days in 2015, (iv) Canadians expect Parliamentarians to take a leadership role on this issue and engage with it in an informed and respectful way, (v) a nonpartisan, deliberate and effective discussion

took place on this issue in the Quebec National Assembly, (vi) Parliament has a responsibility to respond to the Supreme Court ruling...

Let me get to that for a moment, and talk about the special committee and the history behind this.

The unanimous decision by all nine Supreme Court justices, which took place on February 6, upheld an earlier ruling by a British Columbia judge who determined that laws outlawing physician-assisted dying contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In particular, the prohibitions unjustifiably violated section 7 of the charter. It states, “the life, liberty and security of the person”, and it does that in three specific ways: first, by forcing some people to commit suicide early out of fear of incapacity, such as the case in life; second, by denying those people decisions on their bodily integrity and medical care, and that goes to liberty; and three, by leaving people to endure intolerable suffering, which goes to security of the person.

Constitutionally, the court found that the prohibitions went disproportionately beyond their purpose, by capturing people who were not vulnerable to coercion in times of weakness. That has been a large part of the debate, which I will touch on a bit later. Many groups, interest groups and citizens, have already openly discussed this, not in an official forum, which we would like to see here and which is proposed within this motion, but through social media in particular and through many special interest groups and their fora.

The court stated that the prohibition of physician-assisted death was of no force or effect to the extent that two conditions were met. The first was that the person was a competent adult who clearly consented to dying. The second was that the person “...has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition”.

This decision overturned the earlier Supreme Court decision that went back to *Rodriguez v. British Columbia*, or the Attorney General, in 1993. Everybody remembers the story of Sue Rodriguez and her fight on this issue, a valiant one at that.

The remedy was a declaration of invalidity that was suspended for 12 months. This remedy did not compel physicians to provide assistance in dying. There compels us to act as legislators by first discussing this issue within the parliamentary precinct. That is why we talk about this special committee to be struck in order to discuss this issue at length.

● (1645)

I do not think it specifies that we have to stick specifically to this position. It would be great if the committee could launch into discussions about a legislative framework, as my colleague from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, pointed out. He pointed out that we could talk about a legislative framework for this to discuss the palliative care strategy, which many people have discussed in this House, certainly in the past 10 years I have been here, and it should play a big role in this discussion.

*Business of Supply*

There is a 12-month period into which we have to fit. Time is somewhat limited, of course, as I mentioned earlier. There is a scheduled federal election in the fall, which rules out that period of time, plus of course the summer recess. That gives us the days between now and the end of June. I certainly think this would be a golden opportunity for us.

Just by way of background, the terms euthanasia and physician-assisted death should not be used interchangeably, as euthanasia means terminating someone's life for compassionate reasons with or without consent. Physician-assisted death requires consent.

In a 2014 Ipsos Reid poll, 84% of people surveyed agreed that “[a] doctor should be able to help someone end their life if the person is a competent adult who is terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asks for assistance to die”. That is a pretty comprehensive question to be asking the general public, and over 80% returned in favour of it.

However, that does not negate the fact that discussion needs to be had about how this will be implemented across the country; first, how we would adjust the Criminal Code to provide this, if this is what Canadians want, and as we study this.

I would just like to quote from an article. This is from the Canadian Medical Association. It put out a lot of material on this. Its stance, too, has softened over the past many years. I have spoken about this in my riding, to a gentlemen in my riding, Dr. John Haggie, who is a former president of the CMA. The CMA quotes several of the physicians who are close to the subject, whether it be physician-assisted dying or palliative care. For close to two years the association has been studying medical aid to dying as it is regulated in Europe and in five U.S. states.

The CMA has also held town hall meetings across Canada to canvass the feelings of the general public and doctors, and Dr. Chris Simpson, the CMA president, said in an interview:

We'd like to bring that expertise and reflect what we heard to the table, so that we can come up with a system that meticulously protects vulnerable people but one that provides access to medical aid in dying for those who need it.

That is from Dr. Chris Simpson, the CMA president. He talks about the forum that they have at their disposal; so they take this to the public, they have a discussion, and they would like to report back, but to report back to whom? This is a golden opportunity to bring this back to the committee that we are discussing in this motion today, a special legislative committee to look at this. It would be great to hear from the Canadian Medical Association, which has done so much work on this.

Here are just a few more quotes from this. Some doctors welcome the decision, including Dr. James Downar, a palliative care physician at Toronto's University Health Network who wrote a Canadian Medical Association journal commentary on physician-assisted death. That was in 2014.

Downar said it is critical that legislators involve stakeholders in crafting a process to ensure all Canadians have access to physicians who will assist them in dying if they meet prescribed conditions.

This is very important for the Canadian Medical Association:

Any process must also require doctors who have a conscientious objection to refer patients to a colleague who will medically assist them with dying.

Other palliative care physicians, however, are deeply concerned about the Supreme Court decision. It will negatively affect their relationship with their patients. Dr. Jessica Simon is one of them:

Our role is that we don't hasten the end of life, but we allow people to live as fully as they can before they die.

The intentional act of ending someone's life is not part of palliative medicine. She says:

I've never had a case where someone has had to die in order to relieve their suffering, because we have other tools at our disposal, including palliative sedation.

Whether we agree with these specific physicians is one thing, but we are saying today that these particular physicians need to be heard, to report back to our parliamentary system that we have here, and that is what this motion seeks to put in motion over the coming year.

● (1650)

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my eloquent colleague from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor for another fine contribution to the debate today. I want to ask my colleague to react to a couple of commentators on this issue. One is none other than Preston Manning who summarized his position by saying, “Let the people speak”. The other is the Canadian Medical Association, which issued a release this morning in favour of this motion and in favour of this debate and discussion. The Canadian Medical Association and the doctors are in a unique situation because the Carter decision struck down a provision of the Criminal Code that directly implicated doctors. The doctors are saying we should get on with the discussion.

I invite my colleague to respond to those two commentators from outside this chamber, who have sought to inject themselves into this debate, and get his reaction.

● (1655)

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I relied heavily on the Canadian Medical Association for its opinion, which I value greatly. There are other institutions out there that want to do the same. Whether they are on side with the idea of physician-assisted dying or not, the mechanism by which they report back a string of recommendations to Parliament and to government is a good one, and the member is right on that issue.

The CMA released this morning its support for this and this goes to what Chris Simpson said. The CMA has held town hall meetings across Canada to canvass the feelings of the general public. He said:

We'd like to bring that expertise and reflect what we heard to the table, so that [the feelings of the general public can be heard and] we can come up with a system that meticulously protects vulnerable people but one that provides access to medical aid in dying for those who need it.

Although he is at the service of the physicians across this country through the body known as the Canadian Medical Association, still he has something to say about this issue about people who are in palliative care or people who request physician-assisted dying and more information. The fact that he says he wants to report back to a body to do this, this is now a golden opportunity for the House to support the motion.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my hon. colleague's comments. One of the things I have learned from being here as long as I have, is to be a little bit cynical. The reality is that the motion could have been brought forward by anybody at any particular point in time in order to study this. Committees are the masters of their own destiny. Virtually every Parliament could be looking at this issue and creating its reports.

We have had reports out of the Senate. We have had reports done before. We have seen legislation in the form of private members' bills that are before the House. We have private members' bills that are before the Senate. This is simply one more venue or opportunity for somebody to play politics with an issue, which I think is unfortunate. This is an issue with which we should not be playing politics at all. This is an issue that is deeply divisive among many Canadians and their deeply held values.

As a member of Parliament, rather than spend my time debating something like this, I would rather be consulting my constituents personally on this matter and bringing those points back to a discussion in which the government responds to the decisions that have been handed to us by the Supreme Court.

Does the hon. member honestly believe, knowing that he is an experienced veteran member of this chamber as well, that a committee can be struck, meet all of the Canadians that the Liberal Party says need to be consulted on this issue, come back, have the technical expertise to draft legislation that would meet the constitutional requirements set out by the Supreme Court of Canada, and then table that legislation before the House and have it passed at all three stages and have it before the Senate before the end of June, which is the last time this Parliament will actually be sitting?

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I do, very much. There is no other way of stating it other than that. I definitively say yes to this, because I think it can be done. It has been done before and it certainly can be done in this particular case. The Carter decision only came down 18 days ago, so this is an opportunity. Let us get beyond looking at something like this as a wedge issue, talking about playing politics with it; let us get beyond who is playing politics with what. Let us get to the part now where we discuss the fact that we have in front of us a process set up, so that we can have this special committee to do this.

I know the member is consulting constituents, because I am doing the same thing. However, why does one have to be replaced by the other? One can dovetail with the other. As a matter of fact, what he is hearing from his constituents can also be of benefit to the committee and certainly vice versa.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been here for a good part of the day, listening to this debate, and I want to congratulate colleagues on their largely non-partisan debate. It is actually quite encouraging. I think that, for those who are watching, it is encouraging to see parliamentarians actually engage in an issue that is of deep significance to each and every one of us. I think that, frankly, over the course the day, we have done that in largely quite a respectful manner.

What brings us to this point, though, is the Supreme Court decision, which as my colleague just said, is only 18 days old and does put us under the gun, and the gun will explode one way or

another on February 6, 2016. In my judgment, it is a carefully crafted judgment; it is also unanimous, it has a date, and it is also an exercise in deference to Parliament because the Supreme Court rightly thinks that Parliament is the appropriate place to craft a legislative response to its decision.

In that light, we have basically three alternatives before us.

We can do nothing. That is an alternative. The do-nothing alternative means that, in 12 months, we will have legal chaos, and I would extend that even to emotional chaos. I really do not think that Canadians would be very encouraged by their parliamentarians if in fact we did nothing over the next 12 months.

The next alternative is to ask for an extension. That is a perfectly legitimate response and has been raised by the member for Kildonan—St. Paul, has been raised by the parliamentary secretary speaking on behalf of the government, and has been alluded to by the member from Winnipeg. That is, again, a second alternative and possibly an alternative that we might land on. However, I would not want to be the government lawyer on February 5, 2016, standing before the Supreme Court of Canada, asking for an extension. The first question out of the mouth of the Chief Justice would be to ask what we have done in the last 12 months. If in fact we have done nothing, then I would say that the Supreme Court would be very reluctant to grant the extension.

That basically drives us to the third conclusion, which is that we have to start doing something.

We have put forward to this chamber a motion to create a special committee to do something, because doing nothing or hoping like heck that somehow or another the Supreme Court would grant us an extension, in another year, are not reasonable alternatives in my judgment.

I think, because this is a decision that so uniquely affects 100% of the Canadian population, it behooves us to listen to what Canadians have to say, and so I adopt the reasoning of a former colleague and a good friend for many of us, Preston Manning, who outlined a nine-point process in *The Globe and Mail* just recently.

I will start where he ends. He says:

Let the people speak: The courts, the interest groups, the academics and the commentators have had a great deal to say on the pros and cons of physician-assisted suicide.

He is absolutely right.

Now it is especially important that our elected officials and legislators hear from rank-and-file Canadians.

Mr. Manning has put before us a challenge, as has the Supreme Court. I know Mr. Manning a bit, and I know his great respect for listening to what Canadians have to say.

In his article, he goes on to talk about when he was a member for Calgary Southwest and he actually convened a number of meetings with his own constituents.

*Business of Supply*

•(1700)

His own constituents, by and large, were in favour of legislation involving physician-assisted dying. That was, frankly, contrary to his personal beliefs, so it was interesting for Mr. Manning to be in a situation in which his own constituents were asking him to promote legislation that was not consistent with his own views.

In the process, he outlined a number of areas where we need to be concerned.

His first point was that we need to be compassionate. I have heard various members over the course of the day talking about various personal situations. Those personal situations are deeply held views and range across the entire gamut of the human experience. The first point, if and when such a committee is composed, is that it be a committee that expresses itself in compassion.

The second point that Mr. Manning raises has to do with palliative care. I think it is a relevant point, and it has been raised as well by the member for Timmins—James Bay. I think we are a bit agnostic as to whether the motion needs to be amended to include reference to palliative care, but I know the Liberal Party would be open to such a suggestion.

However, our motion was drafted in response to what the Supreme Court said. I think a lot of air would go out of the balloon, for want of a better term, if the Government of Canada and all of the other legislatures in Canada responded to the committee report that the member for Guelph, the member for Timmins—James Bay, and the member for Kitchener—Conestoga put forward. If that response was there, then maybe there would not be as much animus in this debate.

The next point has to do with provincial legislation. I and quite a number of colleagues in the House have practised law. We have dealt, from time to time, with situations in which relatives are telling us one thing and the client is telling us something else. Even absent an impending death, or even outside of an impending death, there is conflict within families. I am not telling the House anything new. There is conflict within families, and the conflict frequently spills over into conflicts involving professionals. A clarification of living wills or in some other form through provincial legislation would be very helpful.

The next point has to do with the number of letters a lot of us are receiving with respect to doctors and where they find themselves in these difficult situations. A lot of doctors got into being doctors because they are very interested in preserving life and enhancing life, et cetera. They see physician-assisted dying as inconsistent with their own understanding of why they are doctors.

That needs to be clarified sooner rather than later, because a lot of doctors, if my correspondence is similar to anyone else's in this chamber, are very conflicted about where they stand without real legislation. If this Parliament does not act by February 6, 2016, to provide some clarification of the law, there will be a very difficult situation for our physician colleagues, who will not know where they stand in the administration of this whole matter.

Let me wind up there. Again I commend my colleagues for what I believe to be largely a respectful debate. I do think it is important that the people speak. I do think it is important that we get going on

this. If we could start tomorrow morning, I would be happy about that. I am agnostic about whether it has to be a special committee, but my views are that it does have to be a special committee because all of the other committees' agendas are already filled.

•(1705)

I am conscious that we have essentially 12 weeks to get through this. It is possible. Where there is a will, there is a way, and I hope that tonight we will get that way.

•(1710)

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech. He quite rightly said that this issue of physician-assisted dying is something in which 100% of Canadians are interested.

He and his colleagues have outlined today the proposed special committee that would meet periodically between now and the end of July. I wonder if he could tell us how many witnesses the special committee would be able to hear in its deliberations. Could he give us a sense of who they would be and how they would be chosen, and if he thinks that all of the views that need to be heard could be accommodated?

I wonder if he could also clarify something that his colleague from Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor said about having legislation developed by this committee proposed and passed by the end of June. I think that the motion itself calls for the committee to sit until the end of July.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I should have said where there is a will, there is a lawyer, but in this particular case, let us hope not.

I point to the example of the finance committee. The finance committee has conducted pre-budget hearings annually for probably the last 10 or 15 years. The witness list stretches to 300 or 400 witnesses over the course of about three months.

Where there is a will, there is a way. A special committee would presumably have sufficient time.

I do not consider the legislative drafting to be all that difficult. We would be amending the Criminal Code; we do that each and every day. I would be very surprised if the Minister of Justice has not already received several draft responses from his officials to look over. Compliance with charter issues is extremely important.

There is an ability to do this if there is a will do it. If we fail to do it, we are letting down 100% of Canadians.

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the cogency with which he argued for the need for this committee or a similar process and for the analogy of the pre-budgetary hearings in the finance committee. That was particularly appropriate.

One Parliament does not have to think of itself as ending all study of an issue. We could end this in July, as it is proposed in the motion. Perhaps the committee could be mostly made up of MPs who have announced that they are not going to be running in the next election, which would give them more time.

*Business of Supply*

The report could even take the form of something rough, such as an interim report, and then go to government, since ultimately we would need some kind of legislative response or a decision on legislation. Government could be working on it while the rest of us are doing other things to prepare for an October event that we all know about. That way, when the new House came back, things would be ready to pick up. It is not as if the two Parliaments have to be completely separate from each other.

I wonder if my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood would like to comment on the possibility of putting these two parliamentary processes together. When we come back, we may well want to see government legislation at an early stage, after first reading as opposed to after second reading, and continue the process in that way.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a very thoughtful suggestion. I had not thought of dividing it between the two Parliaments so as to have a report by July and then have a draft of the legislation ready to go after the election. That is certainly an alternative.

When we first contemplated making this particular motion today, one of the suggestions that I put forward dealt with asking the government to introduce legislation at first reading. I suggested having the first reading initiate the hearings so that we would be doing the legislative hearing and the hearing on the issues simultaneously.

That said, I actually like my colleague's idea more than I like my own, so if that plan would be appropriate, I am fine with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

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

• (1755)

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

*(Division No. 340)*

## YEAS

## Members

Adams	Allen (Welland)
Andrews	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Fletcher
Foote	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Martin
Masse	Mathyssen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
or)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote	Vaughan— 132

## NAYS

## Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson

*Business of Supply*

Aspin	Barlow	Norlock	Oliver
Bateman	Benoit	O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
Bergen	Bezan	O'Toole	Paradis
Blaney	Bloch	Payne	Perkins
Boughen	Braid	Poillievre	Preston
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Raitt	Rajotte
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinooge	Reid	Rempel
Butt	Calandra	Richards	Rickford
Calkins	Cannan	Ritz	Saxton
Carmichael	Carrie	Schellenberger	Seeback
Chisu	Chong	Shea	Shipley
Clarke	Clement	Smith	Sopuck
Crockatt	Daniel	Sorenson	Stanton
Davidson	Dechert	Strahl	Sweet
Devolin	Dreeshen	Tilson	Toet
Dykstra	Egliniski	Trost	Trottier
Falk	Fast	Truppe	Uppal
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fortin	Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Galipeau	Gallant	Van Loan	Wallace
Gill	Glover	Warawa	Warkentin
Goguen	Goldring	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Goodyear	Gosal	Sky Country)	Wilks
Gourde	Grewal	Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn	Williamson	Yelich
Hayes	Hiebert	Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
Hillyer	Hoback	Young (Oakville)	Zimmer — 146
Holder	James	Yurdiga	
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)		
Kenny (Calgary Southeast)	Kent		
Kerr	Komarnicki		
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake		
Lauzon	Lebel		
Leef	Leitch		
Lemieux	Leung		
Lizon	Lobb		
Lukiwski	Lunney		
MacKenzie	Maguire		
Mayer	McColeman		
McLeod	Menegakis		
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson		

## PAIRED

Nil

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

It being 5:56 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

*[For continuation of proceedings see part B]*





## CONTENTS

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### Petitions

##### Canada Post

Mr. Aubin ..... 11563

##### Agriculture

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 11563

##### The Environment

Mr. Kellway ..... 11563

##### Housing

Mr. Vaughan ..... 11563

##### Foreign Affairs

Mr. Dusseault ..... 11563

##### Genetically Modified Foods

Mr. MacKenzie ..... 11564

##### The Environment

Ms. May ..... 11564

##### Assisted Suicide

Ms. May ..... 11564

##### Agriculture

Ms. Murray ..... 11564

##### The Environment

Ms. Quach ..... 11564

##### Optimist Movement

Ms. Quach ..... 11564

#### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski ..... 11564

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### Business of Supply

##### Opposition Motion—Special Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying

Mr. Trudeau ..... 11564

Motion ..... 11564

Ms. Boivin ..... 11566

Mr. Dechert ..... 11566

Ms. May ..... 11566

Mr. Casey ..... 11566

Mr. Wallace ..... 11568

Ms. Boivin ..... 11568

Mr. Dechert ..... 11568

Ms. Bennett ..... 11571

Ms. Boivin ..... 11572

Mr. Albas ..... 11572

Ms. Sgro ..... 11572

Ms. Boivin ..... 11573

Mr. Casey ..... 11574

Mr. Albrecht ..... 11574

Ms. Péclet ..... 11575

Mr. Dechert ..... 11576

Mr. Aubin ..... 11576

Ms. Fry ..... 11576

Mr. Fletcher ..... 11578

Mr. Casey ..... 11578

Ms. Bennett ..... 11578

Mr. Fletcher ..... 11579

Mr. Casey ..... 11580

Mrs. McLeod ..... 11580

Ms. Fry ..... 11581

Ms. Péclet ..... 11582

Mr. Vaughan ..... 11582

Mr. Goguen ..... 11582

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 11583

Mr. Dusseault ..... 11583

Mr. Dechert ..... 11584

Mr. Dubourg ..... 11584

Mr. Dusseault ..... 11585

Mr. Albrecht ..... 11585

Mr. Vaughan ..... 11586

Mr. Wallace ..... 11586

Mr. Morin (Laurentides—Labelle) ..... 11587

Mr. Wallace ..... 11587

Mr. Scarpaleggia ..... 11588

Mr. Aubin ..... 11589

Mr. Wilks ..... 11589

Mr. McGuinty ..... 11590

Mr. Scarpaleggia ..... 11591

Mr. Godin ..... 11591

Mr. McCallum ..... 11591

Mr. Plamondon ..... 11592

Mr. Morin (Laurentides—Labelle) ..... 11592

Mr. Dion ..... 11592

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Rotary Club of Mississauga—City Centre

Mr. Lizon ..... 11594

#### Saint-Hyacinthe Book Fair

Ms. Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot) ..... 11594

#### Physician-Assisted Suicide

Mr. Benoit ..... 11594

#### Academy Award

Ms. Murray ..... 11594

#### Taxation

Mrs. Block ..... 11595

#### British-Inuit Treaty of 1765

Mr. Cleary ..... 11595

#### Ukraine

Mr. Bezan ..... 11595

#### Rotary International

Mr. Butt ..... 11595

#### Charitable Organization in Chambly

Mr. Dubé ..... 11595

<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Menegakis .....	11596
<b>Northern Public Transit</b>	
Mr. Angus .....	11596
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Gourde .....	11596
<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>	
Ms. Jones .....	11596
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Daniel .....	11596
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Cash .....	11597
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Toet .....	11597
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b>	
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	11597
Mr. Harper .....	11597
Mr. Mulcair .....	11597
Mr. Harper .....	11597
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	11597
Mr. Harper .....	11598
Mr. Mulcair .....	11598
Mr. Harper .....	11598
<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	11598
Mr. Harper .....	11598
Mr. Trudeau .....	11598
Mr. Harper .....	11598
Mr. Trudeau .....	11598
Mr. Harper .....	11598
Mr. Trudeau .....	11598
Mr. Harper .....	11598
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Garrison .....	11599
Mr. Blaney .....	11599
Mr. Garrison .....	11599
Mr. Blaney .....	11599
Ms. Doré Lefebvre .....	11599
Mr. Blaney .....	11599
Ms. Doré Lefebvre .....	11599
Mr. Blaney .....	11599
<b>Food Safety</b>	
Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) .....	11600
Mr. Ritz .....	11600
Mr. Allen (Welland) .....	11600
Ms. Ambrose .....	11600
Ms. Brosseau .....	11600
Mr. Ritz .....	11600
<b>International Trade</b>	
Ms. Liu .....	11600

Mr. Ritz .....	11600
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Cullen .....	11600
Mr. Sorenson .....	11601
Ms. Sgro .....	11601
Mr. Sorenson .....	11601
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
Mr. Vaughan .....	11601
Mr. Lebel .....	11601
Mr. Vaughan .....	11601
Mr. Lebel .....	11601
<b>Rail Transportation</b>	
Mrs. Hughes .....	11601
Ms. Raitt .....	11602
Mr. Mai .....	11602
Ms. Raitt .....	11602
<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>	
Ms. Freeman .....	11602
Ms. Leitch .....	11602
Ms. Freeman .....	11602
Ms. Leitch .....	11602
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mr. Barlow .....	11602
Mr. Nicholson .....	11603
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Mr. Scott .....	11603
Mr. Poilievre .....	11603
Mr. Dusseault .....	11603
Mr. Poilievre .....	11603
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Ms. Laverdière .....	11603
Mr. Nicholson .....	11603
Mr. Angus .....	11603
Mr. Nicholson .....	11603
<b>Veterans Affairs</b>	
Ms. Murray .....	11604
Mr. O'Toole .....	11604
<b>National Defence</b>	
Ms. Murray .....	11604
Mr. Kenney .....	11604
<b>Quebec Bridge</b>	
Mr. Blanchette .....	11604
Ms. Raitt .....	11604
Ms. Papillon .....	11604
Ms. Raitt .....	11604
<b>Human Rights</b>	
Mr. Sweet .....	11604
Mr. Kenney .....	11604
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mr. Garneau .....	11605
Mrs. Yelich .....	11605
<b>Official Languages</b>	
Mr. Gravelle .....	11605



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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, February 24, 2015**  
**(Part B)**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

[Continuation of proceedings from part A]

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### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1800)

[English]

#### STRATFORD FESTIVAL

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)** moved:

That the House recognize the Stratford Festival's distinct cultural and economic contributions to Stratford, southwestern Ontario and Canada since its inception in 1953.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to ask my colleagues to support my private member's Motion No. 545, that the House recognize the Stratford Festival's distinct cultural and economic contributions to Stratford, southwestern Ontario, and Canada since its inception in 1953.

As a lifelong supporter of the arts in Canada, I have seen first-hand how arts organizations not only enrich our culture but also contribute greatly to the economy of the communities in which they are present. It is with this lifelong support of the arts that I say how very proud I am to represent the riding that is home to the world's renowned Stratford Festival.

The Stratford Festival stages some of the most celebrated theatre productions in the world, and with its distinguished reputation, attracts a wealth of prominent actors, designers, and directors. While it originated as a Shakespeare festival, the modern Stratford Festival spans April to October of each year and presents a wide variety of repertory theatre ranging from Shakespearean tragedies to musicals to contemporary pieces. It truly offers something everyone can enjoy.

However, this theatre does much more than create great plays, as it also reaches out to the community and visitors by offering a wide variety of other opportunities to experience the arts in Canada. These types of activities include musical nights, backstage tours, forum events, educational workshops, and visits to the theatre's archives. These diverse experiences entertain and inform over 400,000 visitors every year.

The Government of Canada has a strong history of supporting the Stratford Festival. On October 1, 1981, Canadian Heritage designated the Stratford Festival archives part of the moveable cultural property program. Since 2007, the festival has received significant federal funding through programs such as the Canada cultural spaces fund, the marquee tourism and events program, and

the Canadian arts and heritage sustainability program. Clearly, the Government of Canada believes in supporting the Stratford Festival because it is important, and I am asking the House to recognize that importance.

In addition to making a very significant contribution to Canada's rich culture, the Stratford Festival is also a dynamic economic force. It provides 3,000 people with full-time jobs. It attracts visitors from around the world, and the valuable tourist dollars brought into the region provide strength and prosperity to the retail, dining, and hospitality industries. In total, the Stratford Festival generates approximately \$140 million in economic activity each year. The Stratford Festival is a tremendous contributor to the economy of southwestern Ontario.

All of the people involved in the successful execution of the festival each year, since the first performance in 1953, have taken part because of their immense love of the arts. Because of this passion, these people have and continue to be dedicated to presenting quality plays that allow them to share their love of the arts, and, above all else, to entertain all the people who attend the festival each year.

My riding of Perth—Wellington has been enriched by the presence of the Stratford Festival. Over the last decade, Stratford has consistently ranked as one of the cities in Canada with the highest quality of life. It has been ranked recently as one of the most intelligent communities in the world. The recent addition of the University of Waterloo digital media campus in Stratford may not have happened were it not for the presence of this world-class festival.

The fine people of Stratford and our surrounding communities have, over the decades, welcomed people from all over who have come to see the festival and who have decided to come again and again, or even to stay. This has allowed unique communities, cultures, and industries to develop. Neighbourhoods and neighbouring towns have been able to showcase, preserve, and enhance their own heritage and cultural offerings. People who have come to work in Stratford and live in the area have travelled all over the country spreading and strengthening our artistic communities and have exported our own theatrical know-how across the globe to various corners of the world.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1800)

The Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre is one example of the Stratford Festival helping to strengthen the artistic community in Canada. The conservatory was started to help teach and prepare talented actors for the rigorous requirements of acting in classical theatre. Each year, selected graduates of the theatre training program are paid and offered contracts with the Stratford Festival following completion of their conservatory work.

Farther from home, the Stratford Festival has involved itself in the Sharing a Dream initiative, an international development project in Suchitoto, El Salvador. Suchitoto is a community and region marked by severe violence over the last several decades and lacking cultural spaces and infrastructure. The goal of the project has been to replicate the conditions that allowed the festival to flourish in Stratford over 60 years ago, helping the citizens of Suchitoto to develop and transform itself into a self-sufficient centre for the arts in Central America.

The Stratford Festival has inspired scores of people to launch their own community festivals, dramatic or otherwise. The festival has helped to teach Canadians everywhere that we can be cultural ambassadors and that we have important things to say. In 1952, when the Stratford Festival founder, Tom Patterson, proposed his idea to create a Shakespearean festival to Stratford City Council, he was given a \$125 grant to seek artistic advice. Because of the hard work, dedication, and optimism of countless workers and volunteers, that \$125 grant has resulted in a world-renowned cultural festival that creates and supports thousands of local jobs and contributes millions of dollars to the economy.

This motion is in recognition of the contributions, both economic and cultural, that Tom Patterson and each of the countless individuals involved in the Stratford Festival have made to Canada. However, passing this motion would also provide the festival with a very valuable promotional tool. Giving the Stratford Festival such a rare honour would allow festival organizers the opportunity to tell the world that it is of such cultural and economic importance to our country that it has been recognized by the Parliament of Canada.

For these reasons, I ask the House of Commons to officially recognize the Stratford Festival and to give it the special distinction it has long deserved. I strongly encourage all members of this House to support this motion.

● (1805)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for this motion. The Stratford Festival is indeed an incredible jewel of Canadian culture. We are so very fortunate.

In recognition of the artistic creativity of the festival and its contribution to our cultural identity, as well as to our economy, I wonder if the member opposite is concerned by the fact that since 2006 there has been a 2.5% decrease in funding to the Canada Council for the Arts? Would the member support a return to 2006 funding, and funding for new international touring as an opportunity to get our artists into international spheres?

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Mr. Speaker, funding for the Canada Council for the Arts has not decreased. In fact, in 2006 there was

quite a substantial increase to that arts council, somewhere around \$50 million. Right now the Canada Council for the Arts gets around \$180 million, which it disburses to its peers as it sees fit.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the motion that the member has brought forward in regard to Stratford. We can talk about the economic and cultural benefits when we have festivals of this nature taking place in our community. To have members of the House stand in their place to acknowledge those contributions that help build the social and economic fabric of our communities is a positive thing. My question for the member is more a statement of mine and to see if he might want to add any other comments on his motion.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Mr. Speaker, one thing I would like to comment on is that \$125 received by Tom Patterson back in 1952. He went to council and asked for \$100 to go to New York City to seek advice or direction on how this festival might get started. The council did not think \$100 would do it, so it upped it to \$125. The idea came about because the railroad was leaving Stratford. There were CNR shops in Stratford where locomotives were fixed and he knew that there was going to be an economic lapse for the city. That small idea has grown into the Stratford Festival and southwestern Ontario now having a \$140 million business, all told.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and neighbour for this great initiative to recognize Stratford. I have seen many plays there, going way back to my high school days. We can certainly agree that the cultural and economic impact of Stratford is a great one.

My colleague mentioned something about a village in Suchitoto, El Salvador, that the Stratford Festival is partnering with. I would love to hear a little more about that initiative. I have some very good friends from El Salvador and I have a heart for El Salvador. I would like my colleague to expand a bit on that issue that he mentioned in this context.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:** Mr. Speaker, Suchitoto is a program called "Sharing a Dream" that was sponsored by the Canadian government, the Stratford Festival, and the people in El Salvador. It took some gang members and people who were unemployed and not only made them into actors but also a theatre company. Stratford not only sends actors there when there is time off but also stagehands, carpenters, electricians, and lighting people. People are trained in lighting and to be electricians. After a couple of years in that setting, they get jobs. It has helped to stop some of the gang wars in that area and it is very positive. I give them a lot of credit, along with our government, for doing that job.

● (1810)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in House today to speak to the motion put forward by the member for Perth—Wellington, which states:

That the House recognize the Stratford Festival's distinct cultural and economic contributions to Stratford, southwestern Ontario and Canada since its inception in 1953.



Indeed, we owe great thanks to Stratford's Tom Patterson, a journalist who saw his community suffering from the withdrawal of the railway industry, and dreamed of turning his town into a cultural destination by creating a theatre festival devoted to the works of William Shakespeare. In 1952, Patterson received a grant of \$125 from Stratford's city council to begin pursuing his dream. Under the leadership of Harrison Showalter, a local soft drinks manufacturer, who chaired the chamber of commerce subcommittee for the project, their journey began.

In the spring of that same year, with the assistance of Dora Mavor Moore, an early pioneer of Canadian theatre, the committee was successful in recruiting legendary British director Tyrone Guthrie as the festival's first artistic director. Guthrie's enthusiasm for the opportunity to produce Shakespeare's works on a revolutionary thrust stage was infectious enough to attract Alec Guinness, who performed in the festival's inaugural performance of *Richard III* on July 13, 1953, on a stage created to Guthrie's specifications by world-renowned theatrical designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch. That original theatre was housed in a giant canvas tent.

The second production of the inaugural season was a modern-dress version of *All's Well That Ends Well* directed by Guthrie. Both productions met with critical acclaim, and because of ticket demands, the initial four-week season of the Stratford Festival was extended to six weeks. Tom Patterson's dream had become a reality.

Robertson Davies, Canada's celebrated novelist, playwright and critic, hailed the Festival as an achievement "of historic importance not only in Canada but wherever the theatre is taken seriously—that is to say, in every civilized country in the world".

I would add that although we engage in theatre in this House, those theatrics do not detract from the important motion that we are debating here today.

At the end of the Festival's fourth season in 1956, the tent was dismantled for the last time and work began on a permanent facility to be erected around the Moiseiwitsch stage. Designed by architect Robert Fairfield, the new building was one of the most distinctive in the world of the performing arts, its circular floor plan and pie-crust roof paying striking tribute to the festival's origins under canvas.

I would like to say that much of my research for today's motion comes from the Stratford Festival. I would like to thank the festival archivists and historians whose work is so obviously a labour of love. I congratulate the current festival director Anita Gaffney, and wish to thank her for her assistance in providing festival information for me here today.

On July 1, 1957, the permanent theatre opened its doors for the premiere performance of *Hamlet*, with Christopher Plummer in the title role. The festival was so successful that in 1956 it began renting Stratford's Avon Theatre for non-Shakespearean productions, such as musical and concert productions, as well as film screenings.

In 1971, the festival established its third stage, renamed in 1991 in honour of its founder Tom Patterson. In 2002, the festival's fourth stage was created in the Studio Theatre, which debuted with a season of new Canadian work. Ever since that first season, the Stratford Festival has set benchmarks for the productions not only of Shakespeare, Molière, the ancient Greeks and other great dramatists

### *Private Members' Business*

of the past, but also of such 20th-century masters as Samuel Beckett, Anton Chekhov, Eugene O'Neill, and Tennessee Williams.

In addition to acclaimed productions of the best in operetta and musical theatre, it has also showcased and, in many cases, premiered works by outstanding Canadian and other contemporary playwrights. The festival's artists have included the finest actors, directors, and designers in Canada and the world, and Stratford's magnificent stages have been graced by such internationally renowned performers as Brian Bedford, Douglas Campbell, Brent Carver, Hume Cronyn, Brian Dennehy, Colm Feore, Megan Follows, Lorne Greene, Julie Harris, Martha Henry, William Hutt, Loreena McKennitt, Richard Monette, John Neville, Nicholas Pennell, Sarah Polley, Douglas Rain, Kate Reid, Paul Scofield, William Shatner, Maggie Smith, Jessica Tandy, and Peter Ustinov, the glitterati of the world.

● (1815)

Tom Patterson's vision endures today in the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, recognized as a "signature experience" by the Canadian Tourism Commission. Since its inception, the festival has drawn more than 26 million visitors to the community, generating \$139 million in economic activity each year, creating thousands of jobs and stimulating tax revenues of \$75 million.

Of all the visitors to the region, more than 95% of them come for the Stratford Festival. With an annual operating budget of \$56 million, the festival receives Canada Council funding Heritage Canada funding. This and the box office revenues support training programs for actors and directors, the local community and those who provide goods and services in the region.

The New Democrats understand the value of investment in the arts for the intrinsic value of building our cultural identity. We also understand the value of investment in the arts for its economic value, creating good jobs and income for local communities and small businesses.

The NDP platform supports restoring support for Canadian culture that has eroded over the past 20 years of Liberal and Conservative neglect. The Canadian Arts Coalition reports close to \$200 million in permanent cuts to arts and culture spending to be implemented in the 2014-2015 Canadian Heritage portfolio, at the same time as cuts from the two previous Conservative budgets are still being rolled out. The cuts include reductions to Telefilm, the National Film Board and Library and Archives Canada budgets, with the majority of the cuts being inflicted on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Moreover, while the government lauds its protection of funding to the Canada Council for the Arts, the reality is that on a per capita basis, government funding to the Council has actually declined 2.5% since the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

*Private Members' Business*

All of these institutions have a valuable connection to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. The CBC has filmed and broadcast productions of Shakespeare from the festival, and in an effort to diversify and expand its audience, the festival is embarking on exciting new projects such as the live simulcast productions of its plays in widescreen movie theatres across the country.

The Canadian arts community needs the support of its government in real funding in order to thrive. These cuts not only represent a backward ideology that stifles free thinking, they jeopardize creativity and community building. In very real terms, cuts to culture and the arts represent closed storefronts and unemployment for the people and communities that take their livelihood from the arts. Cuts to arts and culture funding threaten the presence of Canada on the international stage.

It is remarkable to me that the connection between a thriving arts community and a thriving economy is lost on the Conservative government, and let us be honest here, on previous Liberal governments, which made the deepest cuts to the CBC and left promises to restore funding unfulfilled.

The NDP proposes increased funding for the Canada Council, and exploring the creation of a new international touring fund. The NDP supports these measures because they generate incredible economic activity and bring in tourist dollars. They are an important investment in Canadian arts and the Canadian people.

The value of institutions such as the Stratford Festival to Canada's culture, identity and economy is enormous. Aside from its entertainment value, the festival has incredible cultural, social and economic impact. It contributes to the education of future generations of students, artists, actors and directors.

Support for artists and creators is integral and vital to creating a thriving economy. Support for cultural events such as the Stratford Shakespeare Festival is key. In the words of Prospero from the *Tempest*, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep". Shakespeare's musings on our mortality still ring true. Governments come and governments go, but the theatre, its value, and indeed the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, endure. It is up to all of us to protect that which is so precious to ensure that it does continue to endure.

● (1820)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my speech today, in snowbound Ottawa, will be anything but a *Winter's Tale*. It will tell a story that began over 60 years ago, on July 13, 1953. On that day, what had until then been *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in journalist Tom Patterson's mind became reality.

The Shakespearean lovers among my hon. colleagues will already have guessed what my intervention is about. On behalf of the Liberal caucus, as the Liberals' spokesperson for Canadian heritage, I wish to express our support for the motion tabled by the member for Perth—Wellington, which reads as follows:

That the House recognize the Stratford Festival's distinct cultural and economic contributions to Stratford, southwestern Ontario and Canada since its inception in 1953.

The motion from the government side is all the more welcome in that, so far, most of the government's forays into cultural affairs have been a *Comedy of Errors*. Let us hope that the motion will not amount of *Much Ado About Nothing* so that Canadian artists and cultural creators can finally breathe a collective sigh of relief and declare, "Now is the winter of our discontent".

[Translation]

What is the reason for this motion? The question must be asked, because a festival as well known and prestigious as the Stratford Festival certainly does not need such a motion. The festival's fame is much greater than any motions this House may devote to it.

The House has never felt a need for a motion recognizing the economic and cultural contribution of the Quebec winter carnival or the Calgary Stampede. It would not occur to the Austrian parliament to recognize the Salzburg Festival as a great festival. It goes without saying. Even just stating that the Stratford Festival is a brilliant festival is as inarguable as saying the sun shines in the day and not at night.

Why is this motion before us? Surely it is not meant to incite a debate. There is nothing to debate, because no reasonable person could oppose this motion or oppose the Stratford Festival. Is there even one member of this House who would say, in Molière's words, not Shakespeare's, "Hide this festival that I must not see"?

No one would say that, of course, and certainly not a Quebecker, considering all the Quebeckers who have performed at this festival, beginning with the illustrious Jean Gascon, who served as its artistic director from 1968 to 1974.

Still, if we must have a debate, I can find more to talk about. I have the wit for that. I could say, for example, that the motion before us does not do complete justice to the Stratford Festival.

[English]

In order to ensure that *All's Well That Ends Well*, I could suggest adding a few words to the member for Perth—Wellington's motion as follows: That the House recognizes the Stratford Festival's distinct cultural and economic contributions to Stratford, southwestern Ontario, Canada and the whole world since its inception in 1953.

[Translation]

It is my opinion that in moving this motion, the hon. member for Perth—Wellington simply wanted to give us a farewell gift before leaving politics. He wanted to make us happy, along with everyone who loves and supports the Stratford Festival. I will happily take this opportunity to declare my admiration for the Stratford Festival.

For my own pleasure, I will continue to dot my speech with little quotes from Shakespeare, although I ask the indulgence of my anglophone colleagues to my accent, which tends a little too much towards Molière or Tremblay to be truly Shakespearean.

● (1825)

[English]

Of the Stratford Festival, nobody can say *Love's Labour's Lost*. This is because the festival has done an outstanding job of fulfilling its mandate: to set the standard for classical theatre in North America, using Shakespeare as its underpinning.

While focusing on entertaining its audience with classical, contemporary and musical theatre productions, the festival has also brilliantly fulfilled at least three other missions.

First, the festival trains, develops and nurtures Canadian artistic talent. It taps into and helps cultivate the great talent our nation has to offer.

Second, festivals like the Stratford Festival are major catalysts in strengthening the social and collective bonds of a community. The collaborative effort that goes into the organization of such festivals, the shared joyful experience of participants and spectators on the opening day and at every performance really brings a community together.

Just last month, I had the pleasure of visiting the great city of Stratford, meeting with members of the Stratford arts and culture community, as well as local citizens there. What struck me most was how much this festival is rooted in the identity of individual community members and how much this festival has helped individuals heighten their sense of community.

Third, art festivals provide economic growth. As the city's largest employer, the Stratford Festival contributes significantly to the multifaceted nature of the city and surrounding region, drawing millions of tourists, as well as art organizations and businesses, which bring them substantial economic activity, investments and local job opportunities.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, I thank everybody involved in the Stratford Festival for the great success they have achieved in promoting Canadian culture on the international stage and for showcasing what Canada has to offer to the global arts and culture scene. With no end in sight, the Stratford Festival espouses the Bard's words in *Twelfth Night*:

Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them.

The Stratford Festival's greatness was not thrust upon it. That greatness is the result of vision, talent and hard work.

Let all Canadians and people abroad celebrate the festival's great success. Let them come to Stratford in great numbers to participate in this signature world-class experience.

Now, with sincere apologies to the author of the Scottish Play, I would remind all of my colleagues that: to vote or not vote in support of Motion No. 545, that is not the question. There is no question that we must vote for it.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my colleague, who is the critic for the Liberal Party on the Canadian heritage committee stole a little of my thunder or whether I will reiterate some lines he may have used, not only because they are famous and great and written by Shakespeare but also because they speak volumes to the topic that we are addressing tonight.

Friends, parliamentarians, countrymen, I come not just to praise the member for Perth—Wellington but to ask for support for Motion No. 545:

### *Private Members' Business*

That the House recognize the Stratford Festival's distinct cultural and economic contributions to Stratford, southwestern Ontario and Canada since its inception in 1953.

My good friend was right: we must decide to support or not support, and that is the question this evening. By putting forth this motion, the member is highlighting the importance of the cultural sector to the Canadian economy in creating jobs. The Stratford Festival is a standout example of an organization that historically had an incredible cultural impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

I would like to speak about the economic impact of this festival, especially for the city of Stratford. In 2010, a Conference Board of Canada study concluded that just under \$140 million of spending can be attributed to the Stratford Festival. That \$140 million is a significant contribution to the Stratford community, which has a population of just over 30,000 people.

What is more, \$76.5 million of revenue goes directly to local businesses as a direct impact of this festival. Revenue flows through various industries, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, local cheese and agricultural producers, and local shops and restaurants. Local businesses like these are the heart of our communities. These businesses are what help our communities succeed.

The Stratford Festival achieved this by following a vision of co-operation with local business to come together and demonstrate the value of art in the community and by working hard to make this vision come to life.

The Government of Canada has been a proud supporter of the festival for many years. This government and previous governments have funded arts organizations to ensure that Canadians can enjoy our shared culture and heritage. We recognize that arts and culture give us an identity that makes us proud to be Canadian.

This House's recognition of the cultural and economic impact of the Stratford Festival is also the recognition of the positive impact that private sector partnerships with a not-for-profit community can produce: a vibrant, innovative, resilient arts organization that makes a long-term positive social, cultural, and economic impact on its community.

Since 2006, through funding programs at the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts, our government has invested significant taxpayer dollars into the Stratford Festival. This funding helps generate thousands of jobs in Ontario, including 2,500 jobs in Stratford alone.

Considering the \$139 million economic impact, it is a strong return on that investment. We know that our investment is delivering concrete economic results, and the Stratford Festival continues to think about ensuring its long-term sustainability by considering ways in which it can build other revenue streams.

The Stratford Shakespeare Festival Foundation has used this program as leverage for private sector support and for the festival's endowment fund, which is now valued at over \$62 million, making it one of the largest endowment funds held for a not-for-profit cultural organization in our great country.

*Private Members' Business*

I encourage members to support this motion to recognize the Stratford Festival, the tremendous contribution that our cultural sector makes in our communities with the support from their public and private partners, and the hard work of the member for Perth—Wellington.

I will finish my remarks a little early to help speed along the passage of this motion, but I have one final thought. Before I conclude with that final thought, I want to indicate how much I have enjoyed debating and arguing with the member for Perth—Wellington as to whether the Shaw Festival in Niagara is actually this country's epic display of both theatre and art or whether it is the Stratford Festival.

**An hon. member:** We can share the honour.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Mr. Speaker, I am hearing from across the floor, in a very non-partisan way, that we can share the honour.

● (1830)

I think if Niagara or Stratford were to be displayed to the rest of the world, they would show an amazing example of what culture, theatre, and heritage are, not just to our country but to the world.

Finally, to the member for Perth—Wellington, who announced that he is retiring at the end of this Parliament, to quote Shakespeare, “No legacy is so rich as honesty.” If that is true, the member has left a great and distinguished legacy, and I am proud to have served with him in this House. The member of Parliament for Perth—Wellington has been a dedicated public servant, serving his community as a counsellor and as a local firefighter. He was a champion for his constituents and, of course, in the very essence of the motion this evening, a champion for the Stratford Festival. His efforts are appreciated, and his presence in this House will be missed.

To borrow from Shakespeare one last time:

Farewell, my [brother], fare thee well:  
The elements be kind to thee, and make  
Thy spirits all of comfort! Fare thee well.

Good luck to my good friend, the member for Perth—Wellington.

● (1835)

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this motion. I congratulate the member for Perth—Wellington for bringing it forward.

This is a particularly warm motion for me, having spent two seasons as a company member of the Stratford Festival in 1992 and 1993.

On a trivia note, the current artistic director is Antoni Cimolino, and my first production was in *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Antoni Cimolino played Romeo with Megan Follows as Juliet, back in the day.

I wholly support the motion, and the intrinsic value of institutions such as the Stratford Festival is something that I will be focusing my remarks on.

The Stratford Festival, as we have heard, has a very long and storied history, starting off with \$125 from a Stratford citizen, Tom

Patterson. It turned into a \$56 million-a-year budget through hard work, dedication, and vision.

This massive endeavour, which now supports four stages in Stratford, started off in a tent. This massive endeavour, which started off as an idea of one man and brought in the likes of Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Sir Alec Guinness to launch this dream, has now turned into an enterprise that brings in over \$139 million worth of economic activity to the Stratford region. This is where we need to understand the intrinsic value of arts and culture and of the Stratford Festival.

As I mentioned, the budget is some \$56 million a year, but only 2.3% of that budget is funded through government grants. The project grants afforded to Stratford upon occasion are just 2.3% of its core funding, so it generates an incredible amount of money beyond its government support.

This is not to say that it should get more money. However, it is to say that the value that the government gets in return for every dollar spent on arts and culture is massive. It is not one to one, or one to five, but rather one to ten.

A 2007 Conference Board report showed that arts and culture is responsible for \$85 billion worth of economic activity in this country. In that time, I think the total arts funding was around \$8 billion.

Stratford grew from a \$125 venture to a \$139 million revenue-generating entity. To take that a little further, the value of the work that Stratford does goes far beyond just the simple dollar value. Each year, close to 200 actors are hired by the Stratford Festival. There are close to 100 creative teams, 250 artisans, 80 stage crew, 200 front-of-house personnel, and 170 administrative and fundraising personnel.

● (1840)

There are more than 2,500 jobs created around the Stratford Festival every single season, and this has been going on since 1953, albeit smaller numbers in the beginning, but it has grown to this.

Over and above, there is the massive talent that has been generated by the Stratford Festival, including Canadian icons such as Len Cariou, Brent Carver, Megan Follows, or our well-loved William Shatner, our adored Christopher Plummer, Douglas Campbell, Colm Feore, Eric McCormack, and the list goes on and on. We have had international luminaries such as Peter Ustinov. We have had John Colicos, Hume Cronyn, Uta Hagen, James Mason, Brian Bedford, Nicholas Pennell, some of whom I have managed and had the pleasure of working with. This is the calibre of the performers who have graced the Stratford stages over the years.

One of the things I find quite wonderful is the pay it forward position that Stratford has taken in the arts community and on a social level as well, in the forming of the Birmingham Conservatory, where young Canadian actors can take their skills to the next level through working on the stage as well as working with renowned performers as teachers. The festival gets some \$300,000 through Canadian Heritage for this practice.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**[*English*]

That pay it forward position is something that is really important to the longevity of arts and culture in our country. It is one thing to create work that tourists and audience members will remember. It is another thing to take that energy and pay it forward to the next generation of actors, directors, and playwrights.

Stratford has been responsible for the development and/or the premiers of many plays, including *Harlem Duet* by Djanet Sears; *The Swanne*, a massive trilogy by Peter Hinton, the former artistic director of the National Arts Centre; and *Fair Liberty's Call* by Sharon Pollock.

It is important that we and the government understand the value of arts and culture, because every dollar we pull away from arts and culture is \$10 we are taking out of the economy. Every dollar we invest in arts and culture brings to the value of the work that is being done a social consciousness, our identity, and a strength of self that is purely Canadian.

The Stratford Festival has done this for some 62 years. I congratulate the artistic directors, past and present. I congratulate all those who work at the Stratford Festival and all those who helped build the Stratford Festival. Also, I congratulate my colleague from across the way for his initiative in bringing the motion forward.

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I stand here in this place for the last time presenting a private member's motion or bill, it humbles me to listen to some of the kind words I have received here this evening.

The Stratford Festival and its management over the years has been one of the easiest things to support and promote in my riding. I am not going to make a great, long speech because I feel the warmth from everyone here for the arts and for the Stratford theatre. It is wonderful.

With that, I am just going to thank all those who have supported this motion. I will see them at the theatre, I am quite sure. The Stratford Festival invites everyone from the House to come and visit Stratford. It is a wonderful part of southwestern Ontario, with the greatest theatre not only in Canada but also in the world.

● (1845)

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, February 18, 2015, the House shall now resolve itself into committee of the whole for the purpose of considering Motion No. 16, under government business.

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

**RISE IN ANTI-SEMITISM**

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 16, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC)** moved:

That this Committee take note of the troubling rise in anti-Semitism around the world, as discussed at a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on January 22, 2015.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole:** Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how the proceedings will unfold. Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments. Pursuant to an order made on Monday, February 23, 2015, members may divide their time with another member. The debate will end after four hours, or when no member rises to speak.

Members will recall that during take-note debates, members may take a seat in the chamber as they choose.

We will now begin tonight's take-note debate.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chair, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to open this important debate in committee of the whole on the growing wave of anti-Semitism we are witnessing around the world.

I will begin with a word of thanks to my hon. colleague, the member for Mount Royal, who proposed the debate this evening following his involvement as rapporteur in the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, three weeks ago. I would also like to commend the good work done by my colleague from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, who, with our former colleague Mario Silva, co-chaired an all-party parliamentary inquiry a few years ago into the issue of anti-Semitism here in Canada.

● (1850)

[*English*]

Tonight, as a committee, we debate what is the most ancient, durable, and pernicious form of hatred: anti-Semitism.

Regrettably, in all of human history we see various forms of xenophobia and bigotry directed at religious and ethnic minorities, and minorities of all kinds. However, there is one particular kind of hatred rooted in history, which seems to transcend time and culture, which is passed from one generation and one century to the next. It has its roots in ancient history, yet it has very modern and contemporary manifestations. That, of course, is the ancient and pernicious evil of anti-Semitism.

*Government Orders*

It is difficult for the rational mind to conceive of such an irrational hatred, rooted in fear, prejudice, myth, and stereotype, yet we cannot deny the evidence. I recall in 2009 visiting and laying a wreath at the mass grave of Jews of the “Holocaust by bullets”, massacred at the ravine of Babi Yar near Kiev, Ukraine. In the course of 72 hours, troops from the Nazi SS Einsatzgruppen lined up and individually shot more than 30,000 Jewish children, women, and men for the sole crime of being Jews.

[*Translation*]

I am bound to admit that for me, being there was a kind of revelation, because in people tend to think of the Shoah as something industrial, the murder of people on an industrial scale. We think of Auschwitz and Birkenau. However, in Babi Yar, we can see a place where Nazi soldiers killed Jews one by one, one person at a time.

[*English*]

It was a killing on a personal scale, not the industrialized killing of the Nazi death camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It revealed for me the depth of the evil of the Shoah, which of course itself was a manifestation, a culmination of an unthinkable evil of centuries of European anti-Semitism, which itself had been expressed over the course of the centuries in pogroms, in attacks, in the obliteration of Jewish communities.

I went, as it happened, from that visit to Babi Yar in Ukraine a few weeks later to the teeming metropolis of Mumbai, a city with a population about two-thirds the size of Canada's population. In Mumbai, I went to visit the Chabad-Lubavitch House that had been run as a local refuge for Jewish travellers by Rabbi Holtzberg, who provided a bed and a kosher meal and spiritual guidance to young Jewish travellers passing through India.

I visited that place because just a few weeks before, the rabbi and his wife, Rivka, had been brutally murdered by jihadist terrorists who attacked the city of Mumbai. What is remarkable is that those jihadi terrorists attacked large-scale installations like the train station and the Taj hotel, but they sought out this one very small, obscure Jewish home in a back alley of this enormous city. I went up to the top, the fifth floor, of that building, quite frankly walking through the scenes of complete devastation, of death, the scenes of anti-Semitism. I could smell the odour of death in that place. As I went to the top floor, I looked out over this enormous city of 20 million people and I thought to myself that, out of 20 million people, they targeted this place, this one particular place. This one place was like a magnet for their hatred. Why? It was because it was a house of Jews. Something suddenly connected in my mind that the evil that had brought those jihadi anti-Semitic terrorists to the Chabad House in Mumbai was the same evil that inspired the members of Hitler's Einsatzgruppen in Babi Yar in 1940 to commit their massacre on the eve of Pesach, or Passover.

These phenomena are connected. They echo through time and history. It is no coincidence that the European anti-Semitism, which ultimately was culminated in the Shoah, was grounded in certain myths like the so-called chronicles of the elders of Zion. Is it not perverse that we should see the television serialization of the chronicles of the elders of Zion being played in Arab countries like Egypt on television to this day? Is it not obscene that we should see in schools around the world some of the most basic and crass anti-

Semitic myths and stereotypes being taught to young children in a form pedagogical child abuse, I submit? We must speak frankly about this.

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

When we see the attack on the Hyper Cacher store in Paris a month ago, the attacks on synagogues in Copenhagen a week ago, the attack on the Jewish Museum of Belgium in Brussels last November, and the attacks against institutions within the Jewish community around the world, what we see is the phenomenon of the new anti-Semitism.

[*English*]

We have seen this transition, from the rancid old anti-Semitism of Europe to the virulently violent new anti-Semitism that is spreading across the world. Tonight I join with colleagues from all parties in condemning both forms of anti-Semitism.

Canada is taking a leadership role in combatting this phenomenon of hate. We did so in joining the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and in chairing it two years ago. We are doing so through Holocaust education efforts. We are doing so through recognizing our own history of anti-Semitism, which our government did in acknowledging the injustice of the wartime immigration restriction measures on Jewish European refugees, in building a monument at Pier 21; by funding projects to educate current and future generations; by taking a zero tolerance approach toward Semitism; and by de-funding organizations that give expression to anti-Semitism dressed up as anti-Zionism. It was always said that Jews were denied citizenship in Europe, and now the new anti-Semites say that Israel should be denied membership in the citizenship of nations.

We will call this new anti-Semitism for what it is, which is why Canada was the first country in the world to withdraw from the tainted Durban II and Durban III process, and why we were proud to host the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism in 2010, again thanks in part to the member for Mount Royal, which published the Ottawa protocol, which provides an extremely helpful definition of what constitutes anti-Semitism.

Let me cite from it as I close. It states:

Let it be clear: Criticism of Israel is not antisemitic, and saying so is wrong. But singling Israel out for selective condemnation and opprobrium—let alone denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction—is discriminatory and hateful....

As Canadians stand in solidarity with the Canadian Jewish community, we stand in solidarity with the Jewish community around the world, including with those who, every day, live lives of dignity and courage simply by maintaining a democratic Jewish homeland in the State of Israel. For all of them, we stand on guard.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for his intervention and his passion on the discussion around anti-Semitism.

*Government Orders*

I know we have discussed in this place some concrete examples, which I will talk about in my comments, but I think we should also acknowledge the events in Montreal today, which shocked us all. Sadly, we see these events happening. What happened in Montreal—Nazi graffiti being painted on cars in the west end of Montreal—is something we can all condemn in unity and solidarity.

There is one issue I would like to touch on with the minister, which I brought up when he was Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, and that is what we have seen recently in Europe, focusing on Hungary. I have an issue with how we talk about anti-Semitism. In his comments, the minister talked about the old and the new. I come from the position of calling it what it is. When we see it, it is what it is. When we see what is happening with some political parties, one in particular in Hungary, we have seen anti-Semitism being pronounced within a political program.

I questioned the minister at the time he was Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, asking if we should look at our immigration policy if people are feeling threatened, as we have seen in Hungary. I will read a quote and then ask him a question.

The Foreign Affairs committee actually heard directly from a woman in May 2013, Regina Waldman, who is the president of Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa. She was speaking about her experiences as a Jewish person in Hungary and stated:

Personally, I was humiliated to be so surrounded by police.

She was talking about trying get around in Hungary.

The whole city has been blocked by police cars. It took me quite a long time to get here today—

She was testifying:

—simply because I couldn't get in or out of any area that had anything Jewish, whether it's a Jewish neighbourhood or a synagogue.

She could not even get to a meeting to testify without being threatened.

My question is very simple. Should we not take that into account when we are talking about immigration and the government's policy of safe countries? Sometimes the government declares a country to be safe, but testimony like that would suggest that it is not always. Would he not agree that we should be looking at allowing people, like our friend and others, to immigrate to Canada who feel threatened by anti-Semitism?

● (1900)

**The Deputy Chair:** Order, please. Before we go to the minister, I would like to remind all hon. members that there is a 10-minute question and comment period. I know there are members who want to ask questions. That was almost three minutes long. I would go to the minister, but I would ask him to be more brief in his response.

The hon. Minister for Multiculturalism.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chair, the question was, should we not permit people to immigrate from Hungary? The answer is of course we should. We receive Hungarian immigrants every year. Any Hungarian nationals, and people from any country in the world, are free to apply for immigration to Canada and to be treated fairly under our rules.

I join the member in condemning the hatred perpetrated by Jobbik, that extremist party to which he referred in Hungary, and to the even more extreme violent manifestations of hatred in Hungary. We have raised these concerns directly with the Hungarian government. I have raised them directly with Prime Minister Orban and with Zoltan Balog, who was the chairman of Hungary's parliamentary committee on Human Rights, Minorities, Civic and Religions Affairs, on several occasions. Indeed, I met with leadership of the Jewish community in Hungary. I visited the magnificent Great Synagogue of Budapest as an expression of solidarity.

I will inform the member that Hungary will be taking over the gavel as chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance from the United Kingdom. Canada was chair last year. Hungary will be chairing the IHRA next year.

While we were concerned about a lack of sensitivity on the part of Hungary in recognizing its own history of anti-Semitism during the Shoah, I am pleased to report for the member that there has been a significant change of attitude in recent months, and we hope to work constructively with our partners to work with the Hungarian government in its chairmanship of IHRA.

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Chair, the member opposite mentioned an attack, an anti-Semitic incident, in Montreal just today that was reported in the news. Swastikas were put on cars and bullets were left in envelopes on cars as a very serious signal to people in a residential apartment building. We have had the combatting anti-Semitism conference here in Ottawa and a previous one in London.

I think we all want to join together in shouting out that these kinds of anti-Semitic threats against our population of Jewish people in Canada will not be accepted in this country. I know that all members have an interest in doing that. I just wanted to ask the member to remark on this particular incident. I am not sure everyone in the House was aware of it. It was just reported today.

● (1905)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chair, I regret to say that I have been in meetings and was not aware of this, but regrettably this is not an isolated incident, this expression of anti-Semitic hatred. This is something we see all too often. Let us be honest. In the House, these days, we are also discussing the problem of global terrorism, particularly of the jihadi variety, and there have been planned attacks, thankfully prevented, against Jewish community installations in this country.

One thing our government has done is to create the security infrastructure project that provides 50% grants to vulnerable community installations, including synagogues and Hebrew schools, as well as facilities of other faith communities. If they have been subject to expressions of hatred or vandalism or threatened by this kind of terror, we will provide funding to upgrade their security facilities to help keep those communities safe, because that security, we believe, is in part a public responsibility.

This is not just about condemning rhetorical anti-Semitism; it is also about maintaining public security against the violent expressions of anti-Semitism.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Chair, all parties in the House believe that all Canadians should be able to live in peace and have peace of mind. This is the first I have heard of this, but what happened today is offensive to us all. The added security is clearly necessary and I am pleased to hear that the government is providing that.

In my remarks later on, I will talk of my own personal case, but one of the things I am concerned about is that anti-Semitism is a learned behaviour. It is sometimes handed down generation to generation, but it is still a learned behaviour. I wonder if the government has looked worldwide at best practices to confront it and to make changes before it gets to this terrible level.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chair, yes we have in fact. The best practices in combatting anti-Semitism have been and are being shared through the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism, which Canada hosted and chaired in 2010. It produced the Ottawa protocol, which I would like to table before the committee.

I am pleased to report to the committee that the Government of Canada has been the only executive branch of government in the world to date to have signed its endorsement of the Ottawa protocol, which really is a distillation of best practices in part in combatting anti-Semitism.

One of the most effective antidotes to anti-Semitism is Holocaust education, because that gets right at the heart of the issue. That is why we have placed a particularly strong emphasis on increasing Holocaust education, both in the school system by providing curricular material to provinces and school boards, and also in a general public sense.

To give the member one example, we recently launched an educational tour bus organized by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Canada that will visit schools and provide a learning platform on anti-Semitism and other forms of xenophobia. So we are supporting projects of that nature.

**The Deputy Chair:** Before we resume debate, just to respond to the minister's comment about tabling a document, we have no mechanism to table something at this time. Having said that, it is my understanding that the document is publicly available and if the minister should wish to do so, he could table it during a regular sitting of the House.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I rise tonight to speak to the issue of anti-Semitism, particularly on how we view it here in Canada and what we are doing to combat it how we are doing our part in this global community.

We all have personal stories about dealing with any form of racism and xenophobia. Certainly, growing up, anti-Semitism was very evident to me. My best friend, Ross Polowin, was Jewish. I could see how he was treated differently from other friends of mine. I was fortunate enough to be brought up in a community where we were not just brought up by our parents. We were brought up by our neighbours. Certainly the Polowins were there for me in many ways. They gave me a sense of security. They were there to be part of that tight-knit community.

What I learned from them was a lot, including the personal effect of anti-Semitism. The parents knew the story of Ross's grandparents and how they had escaped, in one case, the tyranny of Nazi Germany but also Stalinism and virulent anti-Semitism. Growing up I was certainly aware of that.

In later years, I was part of the group that confronted the horrible association called the Heritage Front, here in Ottawa. It is a very well-documented story. I joined with other activists to protest against their using the Boys and Girls Club to have their meetings. I worked in solidarity with the anti-racism community here in Ottawa to state unequivocally at that time that anti-Semitism had no place in our community. The Heritage Front was a very strong force for a period of time, but there was unity of purpose in people declaring that racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism had no place in our community.

We need to name it, be it anti-Semitism, be it homophobia, be it Islamophobia, or be it what we have seen recently as a real rise in misogyny, with the notion of rape culture. These are things that undermine our values as Canadians. We need to name it. We need to understand it. We need to deal with it. What we cannot do is turn our backs.

When we are talking about anti-Semitism or talking about xenophobia, we have to talk about our values as Canadians. When people are being isolated because of the way they look or their association of religion or their gender identity or the fact that they have come from somewhere else, we need to be present.

We know what happens when the bystander does nothing. It means that these norms we hold onto, our values of respect, tolerance, and value, actually become undervalued and vulnerable.

It is difficult. Those of us who are parents and those of us who just recall growing up know how difficult it can be to be the one to stand up and say, "No, this is wrong." However, we have to exhibit that behaviour, obviously in Parliament and obviously in our role as community leaders. When we see people who are under attack, we need to stand with them.

The minister identified that through history, the Jewish people have had to carry the weight and gravity of being targeted. There is no simple explanation as to why. What we do know is the effect. We know that when people suffer from this kind of attack, just because of a faith, in this case Jewish, they will be undermined, attacked, and identified as other. When people are identified as other, that is the slippery slope to becoming other than human.

Recent events have already been mentioned, such as the one today in Montreal. I wanted to share that with colleagues, because I know that everyone did not have a chance to see the news.

● (1910)

We have to stand up and say that this is wrong. When we see attacks in communities, just think of what it is like for those communities to go through that yet again, with swastikas painted on cars and threats made. This is more than just a pronouncement. This is an attack, and it brings back and evokes very difficult feelings for people, and they feel threatened.



*Government Orders*

I happened to be in Brussels for NATO meetings when the Copenhagen attacks happened. I watched, as many did. I was very concerned about what was happening. It reminded me a bit of what happened here in October. They were not sure how many people were killed, who was responsible, et cetera. We knew some of the facts. There was an attack on a Jewish community. We knew that someone had done the heroic thing, as we saw in this place, to save lives. We also saw something extraordinary, which I wish we could get back to in this place, and it was the unity of purpose among those who stood together to say that they would not be divided in their values and that they would join each other to combat what they had gone through. We saw that here in October 23, 24, et cetera.

What stuck with me were the comments of the rabbi who was not only a leader for his community in Copenhagen. He actually went to the family who had lost a family member and had to deliver the news. That is a very different position to be in. Not only was he bearing witness and helping the community through a tough time but he was having to share with the family that they had lost forever one of their family members.

Here is an excerpt of what Chief Rabbi Mirvis said in Copenhagen. He said:

We stand together at this challenging time.... We must never give in to terror and we must not shy away from tackling it and its root causes.

We pray that the values of respect, tolerance and peace will prevail.

He could have said something else. He could have not said anything. He could have lashed out at those who were responsible. However, he decided not to do that and gave an expression of unity.

There were others who spoke out. Another Danish rabbi said the following:

...our lives have to continue naturally. Terror's goal is to change our lives and we won't let it....This is the real answer to the vicious, cruel and cowardly act of terror.

Another voice from the Jewish community at the time said:

I don't even want to go into this way of thinking [in the response to this horrible act]. I think that the answer to terror is to fight it wherever it is.

Of course, the Danish Prime Minister was extraordinary. She said:

The Jewish community have been in this country for centuries. They belong in Denmark. They are part of the Danish community and we wouldn't be the same without the Jewish community in Denmark.

Simple words maybe, but an important message at a time when people were feeling vulnerable, at a time when the Jewish community was under attack.

When we look at the idea of anti-Semitism, it is to divide, it is to isolate, it is to pull apart people based on who they are, and it is to allow hate to climb into our communities. The best way to deal with that, of course, is by engagement, by discussion, and by protection, of course, as was mentioned by the minister, where people are vulnerable.

At the end of the day, whether it be anti-Semitism, xenophobia, misogyny, or Islamophobia, it is trying to divide people based on the other, and we must all stand up. We must do everything we can, because we know what history's lesson is. If we do not stand up and we allow hate to take over, then our humanity is challenged to the point of being inhuman.

Let us join together tonight to discuss how we can make our country and our communities better by standing up to hate and intolerance.

•(1915)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Chair, while we all, of course, condemn unequivocally all forms of xenophobia and hatred, as he did in his speech and I did in mine, would the member agree with me that there is something uniquely durable and uniquely pernicious about anti-Semitism? I ask this because it is a question of debate. The General Assembly of the United Nations decided to hold a special session very pointedly on the problem of anti-Semitism, reflecting what is broadly believed to be the uniquely durable and pernicious nature of that evil.

I recall that the Organization for Security and Co-operation, Europe, through its ODIHR Office of Development, started a process about 15 years ago of a dialogue within the OSCE on anti-Semitism. However, some member states of the OSCE sought to dilute that focus by turning it into a general dialogue about xenophobia.

I, at least, believe that it is important to condemn all forms of xenophobia and to combat them all, but I also believe that it is important for us to recognize the uniquely durable characteristics of anti-Semitism. I wonder if the member shares that view or if he could comment on that.

•(1920)

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Chair, let me read to the House the following:

Antisemitism is a manifestation of racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance. In recent years, we have witnessed increased incidents of hatred, intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals based on their religion or belief...

Based on our conviction of the need to counter all forms of religious intolerance, we therefore call all member states to:

...endeavor to eliminate Antisemitism in all its forms.

That is the UN statement the member was referring to. I agree with that. That is why we have to name it, as I said before, define it, and combat it. It is the same thing we have to do with misogyny.

Xenophobia is something that is general nomenclature, but we have to name it and understand it to combat it. Anti-Semitism is unique. It is pernicious, as the member said, and that is why it has to be understood, named, challenged, and fought against.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech expressing unity and solidarity. I found his remarks very impressive in that way.

Again last night, in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighbourhood in Montreal, we saw acts of vandalism that are obviously anti-Semitic.

Does my colleague have any comments to make on that specific situation?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her question. It affects me personally, because my mother grew up in that neighbourhood.

[English]

It is a place that is unique for the Jewish community. It is a place where we know there has been a thriving Jewish community, one that has contributed greatly not just to the great city of Montreal but to Canada. It is very disturbing that this happened at all, but particularly for this community.

As I said in my comments earlier, the ripple effect is profound. It is an incident that is not just about some graffiti and some slogan. It brings back memories for a lot of people, and it does traumatize. It traumatizes whole communities, and it should be something we name, understand, combat, and work together on to make sure that it does not happen.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, at the risk of oversimplifying this, which is not what I am trying to do, in the current context of what is going on in the world, is anti-Semitism a subset of broader terrorism and all the targets we have seen for that?

We want to prosecute it whenever we find it, but what do we do? How far do we go to stop it? Education is ultimately one of the keys, but how far do we go to stop it? It is a sensitive topic because of other legislation being debated before the House right now, but how far do we go? How far does my colleague think the authorities should go in monitoring that kind of activity to stop it before it turns to violence?

We cannot stop someone from thinking or saying things they believe, but we certainly should be able to stop them before it is apparent that they are going to commit a violent act. How far should authorities be able to go in that regard to find out who is going to do it and to prevent it from happening in the first place?

• (1925)

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Chair, one of the best ways to deal with it is through education, but the law has a place. I mentioned the Heritage Front. I worked with members in the community to counter the Heritage Front. These people were neo-Nazis who pronounced hate. They were using the Boys and Girls Club to organize. Some of us said that this was wrong, that we needed to come in with bylaws at the local level to ensure people were not allowed to do that.

There are different ways of dealing with it, but there is no one solution though. I would underscore the point that this is complex. As we have noted, it has been around for generations. What we have to do is not to turn our back. The best way we can deal with any form of xenophobia, of racism, of anti-Semitism, is to understand that if we are to defeat it, people have to work together and we have to remain united. We must not allow people to be divided, and I say that for other forms of hatred as well. When we start to select what is tolerable and what is not, and we are not united in all forms of hatred, then obviously we become lesser humans.

At the end of the day, we can use law. We can use education, but fundamentally we have to reach out to each other as human beings.

**The Deputy Chair:** Questions and comments. I want to remind all hon. members they do not need to be sitting in their own seats. The onus is on the Chair to figure out who you are wherever you are.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mount Royal.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, last month I had the privilege of participating in the first ever United Nations General Assembly forum in what I would characterize as a resurgence of an alarming global anti-Semitism. This meeting took place on the occasion of an important moment of remembrance and reminder. It took place on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the most brutal extermination camp of the 20th century, the site of horrors too terrible to be believed, but not too terrible to have happened.

There were 1.3 million people murdered at Auschwitz, 1.1 million of them were Jews. Let there be no mistake about it: Jews died at Auschwitz because of anti-Semitism, but anti-Semitism did not die. As we have learned tragically, and only too well, while it may begin with Jews, it does not end with Jews. Once again in France and elsewhere, Jews are the canary in the mineshaft of global evil.

[Translation]

This was tragically made clear by the recent attacks in France at the Hyper Cacher supermarket and the Jewish community centre in Nice, the attacks in Argentina and more recently, the shooting at a bar mitzvah in Copenhagen. These incidents are only the most recent manifestation of a more general rise in anti-Semitism in Europe and throughout the world.

[English]

I would like to share with the assembly this evening some thoughts, reflections and concerns on the Jewish condition and the human condition, about assaults on Jews and assaults on human rights, about the state of Jews in the world today and about the state of the world inhabited by Jews, of anti-Semitism as the paradigm of radical hate as the Holocaust is the paradigm of radical evil.

My underlying thesis this evening, simply put, and as I shared it at the UN General Assembly, is that we are witnessing a developing, somewhat incrementally, imperceptibly and often indulgently an old-new, escalating, global, sophisticated, virulent and even lethal anti-Semitism. We have been witnessing this now for 40 years. It is one now held to be reminiscent of some of the atmospherics of the 1930s and is without parallel or precedent in its global configuration since the end of the Second World War.

*Government Orders*

This new anti-Jewishness overlaps with classical anti-Semitism—the member for Ottawa Centre spoke about definitions and frameworks, and I will try to share some—but is distinguishable from it. It found early juridical, and even institutional, expression in the United Nations' "Zionism is Racism" resolution - which, as the late U.S. Senator Daniel Moynihan said, "gave the abomination of anti-Semitism the appearance of international legal sanction", but has gone dramatically beyond it. This new anti-Semitism almost needs a new vocabulary to define it, but it can best be identified from an anti-discrimination, equality rights, and international law perspective.

In a word, classical or traditional anti-Semitism is the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon, the rights of Jews to live as equal members of whatever society they inhabit. The new anti-Semitism involves the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon, the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations, or their right to even live, with Israel emerging as the targeted collective Jew among the nations.

Observing the intersections between old and new anti-Semitism and the impact of the new on the old, Per Ahlmark, the former deputy prime minister of Sweden, pithily, and one would say, presciently concluded some 15 years ago, given what has happened in the 21st century. He said:

● (1930)

Compared to most previous anti-Jewish outbreaks, this [new anti-Semitism] is often less directed against individual Jews. It attacks primarily the collective Jews, the State of Israel. And then such attacks start a chain reaction of assaults on individual Jews and Jewish institutions...In the past, the most dangerous anti-Semites were those who wanted to make the world *Judenrein*, 'free of Jews.' Today, the most dangerous anti-Semites might be those who want to make the world *Judenstaatrein*, 'free of a Jewish state.'

May I summarize now some four indicators of this old-new anti-Jewishness. I have also written about some 10 indicators. For reasons of time, I will seek to summarize four.

The first indicator, and the most lethal manifestation of it, is what might be called genocidal anti-Semitism. These are not words that I would use lightly or easily. I am referring here to the Genocide Convention's prohibition against the direct and public incitement to genocide, which caused our Supreme Court of Canada to write, "The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers - it began with words".

In a more recent judgment, the Mugesera judgment, the court again said that incitement to genocide was a crime in and of itself, whether or not acts of genocide followed. Regrettably, we have seen four manifestations of this genocidal anti-Semitism, which reached a tipping point in the wake of the Hamas terrorist war against Israel this past summer.

The first is the state-sanctioned incitement to hate and genocide in Khamenei's Iran. I use to distinguish it from the people and public of Iran, who are otherwise the targets of massive domestic repression.

The second manifestation is the covenant and charters of such terrorist movements as Hamas, whose charter continues to call publicly for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews wherever they may be.

If this is known, perhaps the anti-Semitic tropes in the charter are not. The Hamas charter is replete with such anti-Semitic tropes as the

Jews were responsible for the French Revolution, for the First World War, for the Second World War, for the League of Nations, for the United Nations, for the end of the Islamic Caliph. It concludes that no war has broken out anywhere without the fingerprints of Jews on it.

A third manifestation has been the religious fatwas, or genocidal calls by radical Imams. I distinguish this from mainstream Islam. I distinguish that from Islam. It is a kind of perversion of Islam. We saw this in various mosques in Berlin, Paris, in the U.K., and the like which publicly called themselves for the killing of Jews, where Jews and Judaism were characterized as perfidious enemies of Islam, where the Jews became, as it were, the Salman Rushdie of the nations.

Finally, there were hate-filled demonstrations in Europe this summer and since, which I personally witnessed, replete with genocidal chants of "Jews, Jews to the gas", joined with or followed by the torching of synagogues, the attacks on Jewish community centres, attacks on Jewish identifiable people and places which caused the president of Germany's Central Council of Jews to say to me in Berlin when we met in November, "These are the worst times since the Nazi era. On the street, you heard things like, 'the Jews should be gassed, the Jews should be burned'".

As Roger Cukierman, the president of the Council of Jewish Institutions of France, put it, these were very frightening times, "They are screaming 'Death to the Jews'" in the streets. Eight synagogues were firebombed in four weeks in the last weeks of July, beginning of August alone. Similar statements were made to me by the chairman of the Jewish community in Belgium and elsewhere.

In a word, Israel is the only country and Jews the only people who are the standing targets of state-sanctioned incitement to hate and genocide, which finds expression in terrorist assaults as manifestations of it.

The second indicator is the globalizing indictment of Israel and the Jewish people as the embodiment of all evil, as being racists, imperialists, colonialists, ethnic-cleansing, child-killing, genocidal Nazi people and state, the embodiment of all the worst evils of the 20th century and constituted of all evils in the 21st century.

● (1935)

To sum up this second indicator and to close, it is not only that the Jewish people are the only people who are the standing targets of state-sanctioned incitement to hate and genocide, but they are the only people who are themselves accused of being genocidal. That is a kind of incitement that leads, and has led, to terrorist assaults upon them.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Chair, a few years ago I was the vice-chair of the inquiry panel of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism, chaired by our former colleague, Mario Silva. Our colleague from Mount Royal was a leading member and a leading light behind that initiative.

A number of recommendations came forward from that inquiry panel. One of them, recommendation 24, reads as follows:

### *Government Orders*

The Inquiry Panel recognizes that the work of the United Nations in relation to Israel is beyond the purview of this report, and therefore recommends that the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the House of Commons undertake a study of the equity of the United Nations Human Rights Council, particularly regarding its over-emphasis of alleged human rights abuses by Israel, while ignoring flagrant human rights abuses of other member states.

I raise this point because the foreign affairs committee is not really in a position to raise this matter. The sub-committee of the foreign affairs committee on international human rights is the one that is in the right position. I chair that sub-committee, and the hon. member is on that sub-committee. I want to ask him if he would consider raising this topic for us to consider in the remaining period that we have in the 41st Parliament.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, I do think that we should raise it. In fact, if I had had more time, I would have shared something in my own remarks about this idea.

One of the more disturbing indicators of the old-new anti-Semitism is the laundering or masking of that anti-Semitism under universal public values—in other words, under the protective cover of the United Nations, under the authority of international law, under the culture of human rights and the struggle against racism, which all reflect and represent values held dearly by members in the House.

For example, with regard to the protective cover of the United Nations, in December the UN General Assembly adopted 20 resolutions of condemnation against one member state of the international community. It happened to be Israel. There were four resolutions of condemnation against the rest of the world combined. It was the singling out of one member state for differential discriminatory indictment.

With regard to invoking the authority of international law, in the month of December, the state parties to the Geneva Convention, the protective international humanitarian law, has put only one state in the docket, and this for the third time, in the last 50 years. That state, for all three times in the last 50 years, happened to be Israel. Rwanda and Darfur did not make a difference. The only state ever brought before the Geneva Convention was Israel.

The third example was what my colleague referred to in terms of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the protector of human rights and something that we subscribe to. Some 50% of all its resolutions are condemnatory of one state. Some 50% of its special sessions are condemnatory of one state.

I will conclude by saying that I spoke at and appeared before the UN Human Rights Council. I can tell members that when we look the agenda items for every meeting of that UN Human Rights Council, agenda item 7 is human rights violations by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory and agenda item 8 is human rights violations in the rest of the world.

● (1940)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Chair, over the last nine years that I have been in the House, we have spent a lot of time identifying those places and times where either Israel or the Jewish community has been singled out for violent action or at least been vilified.

When I spoke earlier, I raised the point to the minister that, yes, we have to have security in place and laws that protect all Canadians,

but I would ask the member if he agrees that an essential component of our actions has to be education. I cannot see any other way that we can stop it. We can prevent an incident or we can get to the point where we can track people, but we have to change attitudes, and that has to come from understanding.

I would like to hear his comments on that point.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, I agree with my colleague that education is crucial. Someone who is a hero to all of us, Nelson Mandela, referred to education as a transformative change agent in the struggle against racism. I think education is crucial, and the Ottawa Protocol to Combat Antisemitism makes express reference to the importance of education, along with other recommendations, as the Minister for Multiculturalism pointed out. I would recommend to this House that we act upon those recommendations in the Ottawa Protocol to Combat Antisemitism and make that our priority in our relationships with other countries in that regard.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I would ask if the member could explain why anti-Semitism is different from all other forms of discrimination and racism.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, one might ask why in fact we have a take-note debate on anti-Semitism. What about the other types of racism and discrimination that we must be concerned about, as the member for Ottawa Centre mentioned?

There are certain features that do make anti-Semitism unique.

Number one, it is the oldest and most enduring of hatreds, and is in fact the most lethal in that regard.

Second, it is the one form of racism that has a global dimension, such that we find it even in countries without Jews. I just read that in Yemen, where there are only some 55 Jews left, the militant Houthis, who are controlling Yemen, say that their primary foreign policy objective is to target Jews.

The third is that the species of racism known as anti-Semitism is characterized by what I mentioned: state-sanctioned and state-orchestrated incitement to hate, even to genocide.

Fourth, no other form of racism is laundered under universal public values, as I mentioned.

Number five, there is a dramatic global escalation in anti-Semitic attacks on Jews, Jewish property, and Jewish institutions. This pandemic of hatred has rendered the largest incidence of attacks on Jews ever, be it in France, the United Kingdom, or across Europe.

The last point is that we are witnessing a resurgence of the classical libels with respect to Jews. I will not go into it, but there are some six historical libels, such as the particular libel with regard to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, all of which have been resurrected again in a global configuration. No other people and, I would say, not other state is the object of such a litany of libels.

● (1945)

**Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Mount Royal for his remarks. I know that he has worked very closely with the Minister for Multiculturalism over the years on the issue of combatting anti-Semitism.

*Government Orders*

Could the hon. member describe his own experience in working on this important issue with the government and with the Minister for Multiculturalism in particular? Could he highlight some of the accomplishments that resulted from this co-operation?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, we had, I believe, members from all parties and all sides working together to establish the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. The Minister for Multiculturalism played an important role, which reference was made earlier. From that we both went to London for the London Conference Against Anti-Semitism in 2009. The minister was there. He played a central role in the 2010 Ottawa Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism.

In both London and Ottawa, we adopted important declarations and protocols, and the minister referred to them this evening.

I will conclude by saying that I take this to be a shared objective and a shared engagement by members of all parties. The time has come to sound the alarm about this globalizing hatred, which is the canary in the mine shaft of global evil.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, last year I had the good fortune to attend a seminar in Budapest that my colleague from Mount Royal chaired with four other European parliamentarians from Poland, Spain, Greece, and, I believe, the Netherlands. The seminar was on dealing with the rising anti-Semitism in Europe. I think my colleague should share what he heard there, because it was rather instructive and revealing.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, that was a disturbing experience. We had parliamentarians from different European countries. Most of the parliamentarians on the panel that I chaired were non-Jews, but they all spoke of their sense of alarm at the growing incidence of anti-Semitism that they were witnessing not only in their countries but even, as my colleague will recall, in their parliaments.

This was a disturbing phenomenon. I have not made reference to it this evening, but it was something to which they spoke. It goes back to the importance that was mentioned about the need for education, and the need for that education applies with regard to parliamentary assemblies as well.

I hope we will all begin to learn more about this hateful phenomenon, and in learning more about it be able to learn how to more effectively combat it.

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Multiculturalism), CPC):** Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale.

As the Minister of State for Multiculturalism I am honoured to speak this evening on this very important and timely debate. I commend the Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism and the member for Mount Royal for proposing this debate.

Anti-Semitic incidences and Holocaust denial are on the rise around the world. Whether it is the streets of Paris, the highest political offices in Tehran, or the dark corners of the Internet, we are deeply concerned about the alarming increase in anti-Semitism worldwide, because we know that history has shown that the enemies of freedom and democratic rights often target the Jews first.

We are also seeing anti-Semitism under the guise of human rights in an attempt to de-legitimize Israel.

As once Jewish businesses were boycotted, some civil society leaders today call for a boycott of Israel, the Jewish homeland. This new anti-Semitism targets the Jewish people by targeting Israel and attempts to make the old bigotry acceptable to a new generation. That is why I am proud that, for our government, Israel has an absolute and non-negotiable right to exist as a Jewish state.

As the Prime Minister said in his historic address to the Knesset:

In the democratic family of nations, Israel represents values which our Government takes as articles of faith and principles to drive our own national life. And therefore, through fire and water, Canada will stand with you.

As freedom-loving people, we have an obligation to remember the poisonous effects of anti-Semitism, the disregard for human rights and human dignity, which led to the horrors of the Holocaust. We have an obligation to learn lessons from the Holocaust and apply them to the present. We also have an obligation to recognize that the same threats exist today.

It is for this reason that our government has invested in a number of educational and remembrance projects in recent years, including the national Holocaust monument right here in Ottawa. It was an honour for me to help create this monument by bringing forward the act in this House, which was supported by all parties. The national Holocaust monument will serve as a powerful reminder about what can happen when we fail to take a stand against social injustice, xenophobia, and discrimination.

Just last month I was greatly privileged to join four Canadian Holocaust survivors, Mordechai Ronen, Miriam Ziegler Friedman, Howard Chandler, and Martin Baranek, as they bravely returned to Auschwitz as some of the 100 survivors from around the world who attended the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp.

As I stood with them at the gate of Auschwitz, I was profoundly moved. The endless courage, the incredible spirit they demonstrated to go back to that place of such evil, their own hell on earth, to remember and to ensure that future generations will never forget.

I would like to share the story of one of the Canadian Holocaust survivors, Mr. Mordechai Ronen, who returned to Auschwitz with his son Moshe Ronen and granddaughter Sari for the commemoration.

Mordechai grew up in a Jewish orthodox home in a part of Hungary that now belongs to Romania. He was only 11 years old when he was seized by the Nazis at the end of 1943 along with his parents and four siblings. The family was transported to the Nazi concentration and death camp, Auschwitz, where he, his father, and his brother were separated from his mother and sisters, never to see them again.

*Government Orders*

It was many years before Mordechai shared the horrific and traumatizing experience of the Holocaust with his family. The loss, as well as the constant terror and suffering that he endured while in the camp, are beyond comprehension to most people, but in spite of this, upon his return to the camp, he demonstrated the remarkable spirit of survivors when he stated, "I am not a victim; I am a victor. I have survived and returned to tell the world these awful things happened, and we must never allow them to happen again".

• (1950)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Chair, it has been 70 years since Auschwitz was liberated. It is troubling to us all to see the amount of hate and xenophobia in many communities around the world aimed not only at the Jews but also at others, such as the Rohingyas in Burma; and it has been 30 years since the Golden Temple. As the member will know, if we look from place to place there appears to be a movement of hate almost institutionalized at different levels with different people.

I am sure there is one word that the people watching tonight may not understand. It took me a while to understand it. I wrote it down because I thought I would raise it here. The word is pogrom, which is a violent riot aimed at massacre or persecuting a particular ethnic group or religious group. However, the definition adds "especially of Jews". I found it striking that whoever put that dictionary together saw to it that the leading evidence of what a pogrom is was with respect to how the Jews have been treated.

What does the current government see as its role in educating Canadians to prevent the growth and spread of this evil?

• (1955)

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Chair, I think it is important that we educate Canadians and future generations of Canadians with respect to this kind of hatred and of the Holocaust. Canada has taken a very strong stand in educating against anti-Semitism with a number of the projects that have been before it, and a couple more that have been mentioned, but especially with respect to the Holocaust itself, to ensure that the stories of those who survived the Holocaust are remembered.

I remember the first time I had the opportunity to speak to a Holocaust survivor, it was something that shaped me with respect to the work that I do going into the future and one of the reasons why I was able to present the bill for a national Holocaust monument. My wife was the first non-Jewish person to go on a trip called the March of the Living. For her to be able to be part of that as a young person is something that she remembers and has talked to me about. Therefore, at the end of the day, it really is about education and different forms of education.

The reason I wanted to bring forward the national Holocaust monument was that it goes beyond the textbooks. We can learn a lot from a textbook, but it is nothing like actually being somewhere and being able to see something. I have been to Yad Vashem and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Poland, and I know there are other monuments around the world that can teach us so much more than just a textbook can. That is what we need to do.

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I also had an experience visiting Auschwitz just a few years ago with a survivor whose first experience, after having been separated from

his family, hoping to be reunited, thinking it was a work camp, and going through a delousing experience, was to see an elderly Jewish man stomped to death by a Nazi guard as he groped on the floor to find his glasses. He soon realized he was not in a work camp and this was not going to end well. I am glad to say that Max Eisen did survive.

We have disturbing incidents of anti-Semitism right here in Canada. I have seen reports from Gilles Proulx, a former radio host, who wrote an article in the *Le Journal de Montréal*. When asked to explain his comments, he said the Jewish diaspora has alleged power to make Washington, Paris, or Ottawa submit to its demands. These again are the myths that the hon. member for Mount Royal raised earlier. There was also the Toronto protest about the Israel-Hamas conflict where a protester yelled, "The Jews control the media, control the banks, control the governments, control everything", according to a report in the *Toronto Sun*. Finally, *Radio-Canada* opted not to censure a host on an RDI call-in show who expressed approval for the callers who equated Jews to Nazis.

We have had these disturbing incidents in Canada, and I wonder if the member would comment on these kinds of incidents here at home.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Chair, absolutely these incidents do happen. However, the important thing is that they need to be condemned in the strongest way possible, not just by the government but also by other community leaders.

We also have to ensure that there is no grey area, that what is wrong is wrong. If it is happening in an institution or an organization by those community leaders, then we do not go to that institution anymore. We have to draw the line and say that what they are doing is wrong, that we will not stand for it anymore, and that we will speak out against them. What is important is that we take this as a right or wrong issue, and we have to always be on the right side of this.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am honoured to rise today to address the concern that all those who value human rights and dignity share, and that is the current and very troubling rise around the globe of anti-Semitism. This re-emergence of anti-Semitism is such that I believe everyone should be troubled by this most virulent of all forms of prejudice.

What is also very troubling is that anti-Semitism is like the proverbial canary in the mine, as my colleague from Mount Royal has already said today, warning of a broader poison of racial hatred that is at work in some hearts and minds in our society.

That is because when people find it easy or palatable to hate Jews simply because they are of Jewish ethnicity or faith, it is not a stretch for discrimination to then metastasize to include more and more faiths and more and more ethnicities, with worse and worse consequences. As free people, we should make sure we stand up most vigilantly and say absolutely no to this.

*Government Orders*

Other members have talked about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe as witnessed by the Paris attacks and the proliferation of websites and blogs that make horrendous fabricated allegations against the Jews and Israel. This is most disturbing and worrisome.

Unfortunately, this echoes the testimony that I and other members of the House heard in 2010 during the hearings conducted by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism, as well as the International Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism Conference that was held right here in Ottawa in November 2010.

It is why we approved the Ottawa protocol at that summit.

What we identified in 2010 and what we witness continuing in Europe and North America today is a diabolical new strategy employed by those who perpetrate anti-Semitism in the 21st century. Their strategy is not to attack people of Jewish descent directly, but rather by stealth, to launch illegitimate criticism against the Jewish homeland, Israel.

Please allow me to be clear. In a free society such as Canada, legitimate criticism of any nation and debate of policy concerns is perfectly acceptable, in fact, even encouraged. Goodness knows we put up with plenty of it here. However, when the intent is to systematically demonize a nation, not for the purpose of disagreeing with its policies but out of racial hatred, then that is illegitimate and must be called out for what it is.

I think this is what we are seeing on Canadian campuses, called Israel Apartheid Week, not a reasoned debate on policies and actions of a country, but a concerted effort to demonize and delegitimize the State of Israel to exist and the Jewish people to have a safe homeland therein.

Why would there be those who would drive support of a movement to boycott, divest, and sanction every dimension of the Israeli economy and development? Why would there be those who attempt to sanction and censure Canadian academic professors who are simply supportive of Israel?

I believe that most people caught up in these activities are either too busy to check the facts about Israel—after all, this is a democracy on a tiny sliver of land in a troubled region—or are simply naive.

However, I also believe there are some of those in these movements whose motives are prejudicial, racist, and hateful. They are using these vehicles to promote anti-Semitism. What other conclusion could one derive from these actions that only demonize Israel and the Jewish people?

Why is there no boycott initiative or apartheid week against Angola, Iran, Congo, or North Korea? Again, this is the essence that is documented in the report by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism, released in 2011.

Anti-Semitism's rise around the world concerns me, but here at home it is a much bigger worry for me. In my constituency, there has been anti-Semitic graffiti on homes and synagogues, and at McMaster University an annual Israel Apartheid Week.

We know the recommendations of the coalition's report said that the best way to combat this ignorance and prejudice is through education and the courage of all Canadians to speak out. Certainly that includes all members of the House who are speaking out tonight.

This fight requires the courage of Canadians to be vigilant when anti-Semitic words and deeds are perpetrated. They cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. It is that courage to stand up to the racist bullies who bluster insults and threats that can intimidate even the hardest of souls.

While this is always easier said than done, if insults and threats are the worst that we have to endure, then so be it, because in other countries that are not as free and tolerant as our own, we can understand why it might be a very slippery slope to harassment, perhaps even loss of property, and in some extreme cases, torture and worse.

● (2000)

We saw how the seeds of discrimination sown in Europe some 80 years ago manifested into something far more sinister. I am not suggesting that it will happen here in Canada. However, what I am suggesting is that when we say "never again", it is because we are always mindful that we must stand by those words with action. We must stop any anti-Semitism in its tracks. We must never allow it to escalate.

● (2005)

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, we have said many times tonight that education is the key. To me, that really starts at home with parents.

My hon. colleague just mentioned the apartheid weeks at Canadian universities. How do we educate people if our institutions of supposed higher learning promote and condone things like that, including at McMaster, York, and wherever else it is condoned? It flabbergasts me that administrations of institutions of higher learning would allow that to happen.

I wonder if my colleague has any comment. I know he has ties to McMaster. Has he taken that up with McMaster?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Yes, Mr. Chair, I have not only taken it up with the administration at McMaster, but I have actually gone on campus to confront some of the people who spew their hatred. Some good news, frankly, is that a lot of the comments I hear in response from the students passing those spewing the hatred and anti-Semitism are to go home, shut up, get off the campus, to take their hatred some place else. It is very heartwarming. However, we always need to be vigilant.

I mentioned earlier how much I appreciate having this debate tonight and my colleagues for standing up and speaking out against anti-Semitism here in the House, but I would also encourage my colleagues to be part of the education process too and to make sure that in our communities, and across the country and internationally when we travel, we take every opportunity to speak out against anti-Semitism and racial discrimination.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it has been mentioned that throughout history other peoples have suffered discrimination and genocide. I have a Ukrainian heritage and have worked quite a lot on issues like the Holodomor that occurred. However, the one constant throughout history is the anti-Semitic actions of governments and peoples against the Jewish people. It is important that there be education, awareness, and measures like creating a national holocaust monument and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which makes a major contribution about the Holocaust.

I want to ask my dear friend about how our role as politicians can help influence and stop anti-Semitism in Canada and around the world.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Chair, one of the ways is to get involved in the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism. Another way is what I have mentioned already, to take every opportunity to speak out and make sure that people understand where we stand on anti-Semitism.

Another way is to support people like Madeleine Levy in my community, who spends tireless hours going to high schools, trying to recruit students to join the March of the Living, to get teachers who will accept curriculum about the Holocaust, teach students about anti-Semitism, and help them at a young age to understand what racial hatred is about, and how pernicious and seductive anti-Semitism is.

The minister mentioned earlier the fact that even Canadian policy, years ago, was such that one Jew was too many. This is a terrible blot on our history and I am glad that we built a monument on the east coast called the Wheel of Conscience to make sure that we could do our part, say never again, and educate people. This even captured a free country like Canada.

Supporting private initiatives of individual Canadians who are trying to make a difference and educate people on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust is another way that we can help educate future generations.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Chair, this is one of those moments when I am particularly proud to belong to a party that has always unequivocally condemned anti-Semitism.

Fighting racism and hatred is at the heart of what it means to be a New Democrat. As early as 1938, the CCF, the NDP's predecessor, was the only party in the House of Commons to unite and fight, without reservation, to ensure that Canada became a safe haven for Jewish refugees who were fleeing the Nazis in Europe.

Throughout the Second World War, the CCF continued to fight and stand up for these refugees, despite the climate of anti-Semitism in the government and the country in general at that time.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism, like all forms of hatred, is a trend that has persisted. We are still seeing it today.

Just two weeks ago, hundreds of Jewish tombs were vandalized in a cemetery near Strasbourg, France. In May 2014, in Brussels, a gunman opened fire on a Jewish museum, killing four people.

Obviously, we are all aware of the shooting in a kosher grocery store following the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. Earlier this month, two people were killed and five police officers were wounded in two attacks in the capital of Denmark.

Last year, during the general election in Hungary, the far-right Jobbik party won over 20% of the vote, which makes it the third party in the Hungarian national assembly. One in five votes went to the extreme right party, whose leaders have called for things like putting Jews on a list because they might pose a national security risk. That is scary and it brings back bad memories. Ironically, this country was designated a so-called safe country by our current Conservative government.

Yes, anti-Semitism lives on, not only in Europe but also in the Middle East. Take for example some of the statements made by the former Iranian president and others throughout the world, including in Canada. Many people consider Canada to be one of the safest countries for the Jewish diaspora. I think we can all be proud of that. However, such has not always been the case. For a long time, anti-Semitism was far too prevalent.

For example, even after World War II, Canada's Jewish population experienced discrimination. Jewish doctors could not get hospital appointments. There were no Jewish judges, and Jewish lawyers were excluded from most firms. There were scarcely any Jewish teachers, and Jewish nurses, engineers and architects had to hide their identity to find jobs in their fields. Often certain refugees were not allowed access to French schools, which could eventually lead to very real problems trying to integrate into society. Some of them live in my riding.

I am talking about the past, but the present is not so rosy either. Here again, many Jewish Canadians say that they have been the victims of harassment and violent threats.

Last night, in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce borough of Montreal, four vehicles that were parked in a private parking garage used by Jewish Montrealers were spray-painted with swastikas. There has also been talk about bullets and death threats, which are no doubt violent acts of anti-Semitism.

● (2010)

Anti-Semitism, and religious and ethnic hatred in general, is a worldwide problem. Nonetheless, I would like to talk about hopes, because peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and productive interactions between people of all faiths and origins is also possible.

I would like to provide some examples. The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel created a network so that Jews, Christians and Muslims can meet and get to know one another with the goal of helping to shape a society that transcends war and enmities.



*Government Orders*

Last week, three Jewish organizations joined 15 other interfaith organizations to express their fear that the U.S. government is marginalizing American Muslims. These groups came to the defence of American Muslims. This type of thing gives me hope. Here in Canada, we have a program called FAST. I apologize, but I only know the English acronym. I am not sure if there is a French equivalent. It is called FAST for Fighting Antisemitism Together. These are non-Jewish business people who join community leaders to raise awareness and take various measures to fight anti-Semitism.

I would like to end my speech with a message of hope. We need to work on combatting anti-Semitism. To that end, I suggest that we look to a very important religious figure who is not Jewish, Christian or Muslim. I am talking about the Dalai Lama, who tells us that the problems we are facing today—violent conflict, the despoliation of nature, poverty and hunger—are all man-made problems that can only be resolved through human effort, understanding and the development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. We need to cultivate a universal responsibility and a universal empathy for one another and for the planet we share.

Since I started by saying I am proud to belong to a party that for decades and since its earliest days has fought against anti-Semitism, I would like to conclude with the words of Jack Layton, who also had a huge influence on me. “My friends, love is better than anger.”

• (2015)

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her remarks.

I jotted down a quote earlier today, one that has affected me for a long period of time:

New Democrats have long believed that so long as any among us are unfree, all of us are unfree. So long as any among us are persecuted, so we all are persecuted.

Earlier, my friend from Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale was talking about McMaster University. In Hamilton, people will know that following 9/11 there was a firebombing of the Hindu samaj. The racists thought it was a mosque. The member also mentioned Israeli Apartheid Week. As well, there was an event where one of the professors wore an niqab, which caused a problem.

I think it is really important to look at the Shoa, or just before the Shoa, and at what happened to Jews in Germany. They lost their voice. They lost their opportunity to be themselves and to present their case on whatever kind of an issue that was happening.

Therefore, when we have Israeli Apartheid Week, I agree that we have to engage and have to try to change the direction. Be it on the issue of a niqab, or whatever anti-racism work that we can do, we have to engage.

It does not work and has not worked to go from the top down, saying that we have an edict and that this is how we must act. We have to protect people's freedom of voice so they can deliver the message needed to change history.

Anti-Semitism has the longest history, and many speakers tonight have said this. For century upon century, the Jewish people have

been the victims of anti-Semitism. We have to protect the voice of our communities to fight that.

• (2020)

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Chair, my colleague touches a point that touches me very personally. I think people in the House know that I do not tend to get very personal when I am debating issues. This one touches me very personally. I think we are all in the same boat. We are all together, and we are all going to either float together or sink together. The politics of division is how it started in Germany. That is why the politics of division upsets me so much.

Also, we talk a lot about education. Someone mentioned that it is also at home and everything. Education is a lot of things. A few decades ago, I read a book called *Treblinka*. It was so many years ago I cannot even remember the author of that book. However, it made me understand so many things that have marked me for the rest of my life and that are a source of my social and political engagement.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate my colleague's comments and her passionate commitment to the issue. I think we are all passionate and committed to this issue.

We talked about some of the acts that are being played out, whether it is painting swastikas on cars or whatever, but some of them are violent. Some of them are destructive, and some of them hurt people. How far should authorities go in trying to stop those acts if they can see them being talked about or plotted, whether it is on the Internet or through other means where people can be observed?

This is a sensitive issue in the House right now, as I mentioned earlier about some other legislation being debated. How far does my colleague think authorities should be able to go to stop those kinds of acts when they are apparently going to be violent?

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Chair, I am not saying that there is no kind of police action or things like that needed, but what we are getting at is the crux of the debate we often have from one side of the House or the other.

For me, the wisest, most efficient, in the long term, and most profound way to work at that is to work through education, to work at the beginning and work at prevention. Of course, prevention is not 100%. Sometimes we will not be able to achieve everything. However, we will not be able to solve these kinds of problems if we do not work on the roots. It is like a diseased tree if the disease comes from the roots.

I know that some people on the other side do not like the expression “root causes”. I tend to like it. If we do not work on the origins of the problem, we can patch up as much as we want in the end, but we are not going to resolve the issue in the long term.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Chair, that is kind of what I expected, but I want to go just a little further. I agree on root causes. I agree on education. We all agree on that. How far should the authorities be able to go to detect if someone is about to commit a violent act? We are not talking about root causes now. We are talking about someone being about to commit violence. How far should authorities be able to go to detect that and stop it from happening? That would involve finding out if someone was going to do that, whether it was through the Internet or some other method. How far should authorities be able to go to stop that?

We can work on root causes, absolutely. However, we need to stop violent acts from happening. How far should we go?

**Ms. Hélène Lavergère:** Mr. Chair, it should not be so far that we destroy the very values we are trying to protect, like human dignity, civil liberties, and things like that. Every time we do that, we also need oversight.

• (2025)

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

It is truly tragic that in 2015, the House finds that it must again recognize the pervasive existence of anti-Semitism in Canada and around the world. Despite the best efforts of parliamentarians and private citizens, and the vigilance of determination of organizations such as B'nai Brith Canada, the Jewish community's foremost human rights agency, which has been active in Canada since 1875, anti-Semitism, humankind's original hatred, remains alive and hatefully well in Canada and abroad.

B'nai Brith Canada's most recent annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents, from April 2014, revealed that Canada-wide incidents of vandalism and violence increased by 21.6% and 7.7% respectively over the previous year. Frank Dimant, who has just retired as the CEO of B'nai Brith Canada after 36 years, said of the audit:

The sustained level of antisemitism in Canada when taking a ten year view which shows a 49% jump should be of great concern to all Canadians.

However, Mr. Dimant feels that numbers are only part of the story. He said:

What we are hearing from callers is a growing sense of dread among Canadians... hatred of Jews has veered so far into normative discourse that it is no longer seen as wrong.

Canadians can remember brief periods in recent decades when we might have thought, wishful thinking, perhaps, that anti-Semitism was a vile phenomenon of the past, but then came a resurgence of both classic and hybrid hate. In my riding of Thornhill, there is anti-Semitic vandalism and graffiti, with swastikas over the Star of David. In Montreal, there have been firebombings of Jewish businesses and the desecration of Jewish cemeteries. Anti-Israel rallies during periods of Middle East tension have deteriorated into openly, and in some cases, violently anti-Semitic events in Calgary, Mississauga, and Toronto. Of course, on university campuses, not all but on far too many, there is Israel Apartheid Week.

Israel Apartheid Week and the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement represent hybrid anti-Semitism. Proponents and propaganda for IAW or BDS say that they are not anti-Semites and have nothing against the Jewish people but are merely against Israel, the

Zionist state, the Zionist entity. "Zionist" has become the hate-mongers' code word for "Jew".

Our government has consistently supported Israel's right to defend itself. The only democracy in the Middle East is under constant threat and regular attack by terrorist entities and quasi states, to mention the threats both tangible and bombastic from Iran.

Israel may not be perfect. Our government also recognizes the principle of fair criticism. However, as the Prime Minister has said:

...whatever Israel's shortcomings, neither its existence nor its policies are responsible for the pathologies present in that part of the world.

I was proud to be a member of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. I believe that members will hear in greater detail about this area from my colleague from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, but in closing, I would like to refer to a central conclusion of its inquiry panel report. It pointed out that criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitic in itself but that denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction can be considered anti-Semitic acts.

The panel also recommended that police forces across Canada be better trained to deal with anti-Semitism, that universities do more to counter Israel Apartheid Week, that education regarding human rights be a bigger part of welcoming programs for new Canadians, and finally, that the House foreign affairs committee study the United Nations':

... over-emphasis of alleged human rights abuses by Israel, while ignoring flagrant human rights abuses of other member states.

Just as I believe that vigilance is the price of freedom, so too is eternal resistance essential in the fight against anti-Semitism and in the defence of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

• (2030)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I do not think there is anyone in this House who can disagree with the horrible escalation and growth of anti-Semitism as we see it around the world today. It gives me pause to wonder, because we know there are different nations, Canada included, that have looked at ways of trying to prevent it and of trying to educate people.

Can the member tell us of any successful effort in any part of the world to combat anti-Semitism and to plant the seeds so that people will actually live together in harmony?

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Chair, my colleague has asked a very difficult question.

*Government Orders*

As we have seen over the centuries, and I referred to anti-Semitism as humankind's original hatred, it is a generational phenomenon that rises and falls. After the Holocaust, there was a renewed sensitivity and there was an attempt, certainly in Germany and across Europe, to recognize the extremes to which, as the member for Mount Royal said earlier, words were the first step toward the gas chambers.

As I said in my concluding remarks, just as eternal vigilance is the basic requirement for freedom, so too is eternal resistance of anti-Semitism, wherever it may be found.

Canada regularly speaks to this in international gatherings, almost annually at the United Nations, in the General Assembly and elsewhere. I think that is something that is one of the primary continuing missions of not only Canada's domestic policies but of our foreign affairs policies abroad.

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Chair, this is a timely debate we are having, especially with the event that happened today in Montreal, where swastikas were painted on cars and bullets were left behind to intimidate a Jewish community.

Even though we are talking about increasing education and awareness and making sure that the hate of the Jewish people is removed from our society and cultures around this world, we are seeing increasing violence. We are seeing increasing avenues being used to actually promote anti-Semitism, such as anti-Zionism, people who do not want to recognize the State of Israel as a nation. We are seeing increased violence from groups such as the Islamic State, which wants to establish their caliphate and in that process get rid of all Jews and other non-believers in their idea of their religion.

I was wondering if the member for Thornhill could speak to the point that we are facing a dangerous time, again, in our history that we should get beyond. One would think that as an educated society, as a society that has more opportunities to disseminate information, we would be more peace-loving and accommodating to all cultures and all religions, yet we are still faced with this horrible hate, a scourge that seems to be spreading across the globe.

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Chair, I believe this comes back to eternal resistance of this most vile aspect of human nature. We have seen, for example, in the development and evolution of the annual Israel apartheid week on university campuses a hatred which in many cases is absolutely overt. There is no attempt to mask using the buzzwords of the hate-mongers to mask their intentions to the point that on several university campuses across the country, Concordia 10 years ago and the university across the street from my riding, York University in Toronto, have seen Jewish students refuse to take part in student activities, the normal part of university years, simply because they are intimidated. Some of them even have gone so far as to remove any vestiges that would reveal their Jewish identity.

In today's incidents that we saw in Montreal, again this is the more overt manifestation, the vile graffiti, the intimidating bullets. Again, we need to hear voices raised in the community in Montreal tomorrow, which denounce today's events.

• (2035)

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I rise today to talk a bit about some of the

experience I gained as the co-chair of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, which produced this report in 2011 based upon very extensive hearings. Some of the materials we collected have been put together with the presentations we heard into a book about anti-Semitism, edited by me and our former colleague, Mario Silva. The book is called *Tackling Hate: Combating Antisemitism: The Ottawa Protocol*.

One of the issues that arose at that time, and has arisen in the context of this debate this evening as well, is one that gives me endless frustration. Given the fact that I only have five minutes, I thought I would concentrate on this one thing.

We hear it said that we ought not to be discussing anti-Semitism unless we also discuss the other hatred that is the opposite face of that coin: Islamophobia. I want to suggest that is a false dichotomy. I understand the legitimate discussion that happens when people say, on the one hand, that perhaps we should discuss anti-Semitism on its own. Others say, no, that we should discuss anti-Semitism as the prototype for all forms of hatred of the other, for dehumanization of the other. Both of those discussions and both of those points of view are legitimate.

It is legitimate to say that the Jews have faced, unlike any other substantial numerous population in the world, an actual deliberate, methodical attempt to exterminate them completely. There is no other parallel in the world on the scale of the Holocaust, anywhere in the world. That makes what happened to the Jews in the 1940s absolutely unique. On the other hand, to refer to anti-Semitism and the Jews as being the canary in the coal mine for other forms of discrimination, abuse and hatred is also valid.

However, saying that we ought not to be discussing anti-Semitism as it occurs domestically in Canada or overseas unless we also deal with Islamophobia is really improper. The reason for this is very simple.

When we start discussing Islamophobia, it is very clear that we are normally not discussing the incidents that have occurred from time to time, for example, in the wake of 9/11 where Muslims in general have been targeted within the community. I can give many examples. In fact, I have a collection of essays that were published, presentations to the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, which say that what we ought to be talking about is the ostensibly racist actions of Israel, the so-called apartheid state. One could be very offensive in referring to Zionism as racism, as the United Nations General Assembly once did. These are almost always stereotypes that characterize Israel very unfairly, but saying that unless we deal with that issue, we ought not to be dealing with anti-Semitism. This raises an important point. It insists that Jews, in this case Canadian Jews, are somehow collectively responsible for the actions of a country of which they are not citizens. They are somehow responsible for the actions of another group of people over which they have no authority.

*Government Orders*

Let me give a parallel. Let us imagine for the sake of argument that there is today a rise in anti-Chinese sentiment of the sort that existed back in the days of the Yellow Peril in the late 19th, early 20th century, back when there was systemic discrimination against the Chinese both from government and from private citizens. There was mob violence in some cases against Chinese on the west coast both in Canada and the U.S. Let us imagine in a situation like this if someone were to stand and say that we cannot talk about discrimination against Chinese until we deal with the politics of that human rights abuse in the People's Republic of China, until we deal with the way in which the Tibetans are being treated by the People's Republic of China, that we cannot deal with domestic issues relating to discrimination against Chinese. That would be self-evidently preposterous. I submit that once we scrape off that patina of concern over the Tibetans—who, believe me, deserve our concern in real life—it would be obvious this is de facto a form of racism. That is what is going on here when we make this parallel.

It is entirely legitimate to explore and discuss Islamophobia as a form of discrimination that has no place in our society.

● (2040)

It is legitimate to discuss every form of discrimination. We can do them all as a group, we can do them as individual forms of discrimination, but we ought never to say that some group has a collective responsibility somehow for issues over which it has no authority. That is a tremendous intellectual problem. I suggest that we always ensure never to allow ourselves to fall down that particular rabbit hole.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleague for being the chair of the Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. We had many early morning meetings in the administration of developing that coalition. I was very appreciative of his efforts.

My question will be short so that the member can spend the time developing it.

The boycott, divest and sanction movement actually targeted professors academically in Canada who supported Israel. I want to give my colleague a chance to deal with that subject, as well as his subject matter about international policy versus domestic policy.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Mr. Chair, the BDS movement is a movement to essentially cause institutions and individuals to divest from companies that are part of the Israeli economy, or trade with Israel, or have operations in Israel. Sanctions of various sorts include academic sanctions and they legitimize, to some degree, the taking into account considerations other than academic merit in the promotion of professors.

Many of us have been university students. We all know that some students do not want to adopt a position that is likely to negatively affect their marks. There is a certain amount of subtle pressure there on students in many cases.

Separate from this, but I remember being very careful to write some papers for some professors without giving any clue that I was not necessarily supportive of Marxism back when I was a student in the 1980s. It is a universal phenomenon, and those social pressures are meaningful.

However, in general, the idea of singling out Israel and applying a different standard to it and then saying therefore we ought to boycott and divest, almost invariably the comparison is to apartheid in South Africa under the white regime. Any objective view of Israel makes it clear that there is no resemblance. The parallel is completely inappropriate, but that is articulated over and over again, particularly in the Israel Apartheid week, which unfortunately is cleverly crafted as a marketing slogan. It is hard to even mention it without repeating the message of those who purport that somehow apartheid in South Africa and Israel are related.

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Chair, the member mentioned Israel Apartheid Week, that disgusting manifestation that happens on our college campuses. He mentioned that apartheid comes from what happened in South Africa.

I had the privilege of being at a parliamentary forum internationally with a member of Parliament from South Africa, who is a leader of one of the parties there. He has started an opposite movement called Defend, Advocate and Support Israel, or DASI. Kenneth Meshoe is a black African who lived under apartheid. He said, "Show me anything about Israel that you call apartheid and I'll explain to you why it is not".

Kenneth has started this movement, and he is trying recruit about 25 young black Africans to help carry the message around the world that this slur against Israel, a modern form of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, is in fact totally out of touch with reality and is an insult to what people actually did suffer under apartheid.

Would the member care to comment? Was he aware of this? Is there something we might be able to do to help bring or encourage this movement to bring some of those folks to Canada to help inform our public discourse?

● (2045)

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Mr. Chair, I have to be honest, I was not aware of that movement. It sounds like a good idea.

To be honest, the best thing anybody can do for Israel and its place in the world is simply this: treat Israel like every other state in the world and apply the same rules. If Israel acts inappropriate, breaks international law, engages in aggression that is inappropriate, it should be dealt with exactly the same way it would be if any other state did the same thing. Apply the same standards and be tough about those standards, as we should with every other state in the world. That would do more for Israel's appropriate place in the world than anything else.

Also, all this concentration on Israel at the UN has the effect of distracting attention from the many human rights abuses that occur in so many other countries in the world. It has become a convenient way to simply draw attention to what is going on over there and therefore keeping attention away from a multitude of human rights abuses occurring in countries that frankly have nothing to do with Israel at all.

It is not even countries that follow or have a stake in the game of trying to de-legitimize Israel because they dislike Israel. It is simply countries that want to have attention focused on something other than their own human rights abuses that keep that whole process going.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I want to pick up a bit on what the previous speaker said. I am of the belief that until we can find a way through to ending anti-Semitism, we will not have any hope of addressing all of the other antis either, the Islamophobias or whatever. We have to confront this right on.

I want to personalize this a little bit. The member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie talked about how her experience with anti-Semitism had affected her. I have a couple of stories from my history. As a young boy in 1959 in a little town called Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, where the train derailment was last year and where I grew up, we never had a black person in our community. We never had a Jewish person in our community. We had difficulties between the English and French, but we never learned racism.

As a boy of 12, one day in the summer, I was out on the lawn in front of my home and a car went by, a 1949 Dodge. I will never forget it. That has left a mark on me. A man and a woman were on the back seat having a disagreement, and all of a sudden a shoebox came out of the window and it was full of pictures. As a boy will do, I started to collect the pictures. To me, that became the saddest day of my life for many, many years, because the pictures had to have been taken by guards at Auschwitz.

We have heard the stories of the tattoos that became lampshades. There was a picture of that. The picture I still see from time to time was of a woman, still alive, being pushed into a furnace on the rack.

I sat back for a long time trying to understand, as a 12-year-old cannot understand, how people could do this to one another. I did not have any idea that they were Jews, and I took the pictures.

My grandmother had an old sewing machine that had a cabinet. I stuffed the pictures in there to hide them, because I did not want to believe that these were anything other than pictures from some horrible movie. It took me many, many years to come to terms with all of that because I did not understand racism and came from a caring community.

Then, of course, it was around the period when the movie *Exodus* took place, and my father loved to take me to movies, and also *Judgment at Nuremberg*. That was the first point in time, in a movie, on screen, where there were pictures of bodies being bulldozed.

I cannot express the feeling, the connection between the pictures that I found as young boy and a couple of years later seeing that movie, which is when I started to understand the horror of what had taken place. It left me with a feeling to this day, enhancing the sense of justice and the need to protect all of our people.

As I went along in years and got involved in the labour movement. I was a simple delegate at the Hamilton District Labour Council. There was a gentleman there, probably in his sixties at the time, Al Smith. He was probably kindest, gentlest man you could ever hope to see. He stood about five foot two. He had spent 10 to 20 years on the human rights committee of that labour council.

I happened to be in the office one day and he was tasked with going to some event on behalf of the labour council and had paid for something. He brought the receipt in and was getting change. When the young lady gave the change back to this sweetheart of a man who

had fought for 40 years for justice for people, he shoved a nickel back and said, “Oh, no, I cannot take that. That would be Hymie of me to take that”. I remember at the time thinking how insidious this was, how it became part of our culture to the point that Jewish people out and say, “Hymie”, or whatever other nasty name we wanted to put on them.

Tonight we have heard speaker after speaker say pretty well the same thing, that once again in our history anti-Semitism is growing.

We can get into debate on Israel. We can get into debate on Gaza, the PLO, or whatever we want, but we cannot deny that anti-Semitism is on the rise. We can do many things.

● (2050)

I am a firm believer in dialogue, communication, and debate. When we are confronted with hate, we have to stand up to it. If people have different views during Israeli Apartheid Week, they have to say so. I am very concerned that if we stifle that debate in the institutions of higher education, are we not, in the long run, preparing a path for some other form of hate?

The House is the place where we should be debating these issues. Yes, they are very personal for a variety of people and for a variety of reasons. Many members here have Jewish or Muslim communities in their ridings.

I had an experience in Hamilton. There was a firebombing of a Hindu samaj three days after 9/11. A group was started, called Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative. It got together to confront racism. The two men who firebombed that Hindu samaj thought that it was a mosque. Racism does not really understand much and the people that purvey it and do these things are pretty horrific.

That created a situation where we had leadership from the Muslim community, leadership from the Jewish community, and many others, during a time when Israel was in battle, one more time, in Gaza. That group of people put out joint statements of Muslims and Jews on the activities that took place. It is proof that people can come together who have extremely different points of view. That is important. We have to find a way to bring that level of understanding across the globe. There are governments who seem to be pleased when some ethnic groups, such as the Jews or the Arabs, or religious groups like the Christians, Muslims, Rohingyas, Tamils, or whoever, can point at another group and say, “They are different. They are lower than we are. They are not as good as we are”, or that they are taking people's jobs or land.

I will give an example of what can happen if we allow that to take place, which New Democrats raise here regularly, and that is Iran, with its rhetoric and hate pointed toward Israel. While it is doing that, it is actually masking the horrific things it is doing to its own people. Last month, 90-some people were hanged in Iran. I do not know the numbers for the last year, but they will be in the hundreds. We can go back to the time when people thought there was a rising in Iran and a chance of democracy blossoming, but we remember the slaughter that took place in the streets. We all remember the young girl who was killed—actually several of them.

*Government Orders*

I do not profess to have the answer, but I understand one thing: that we have to keep communicating. Canada has to remain a leader, because this is one of the few countries that I am aware of where there can be absolute debate and public discussion. I used to joke with my friends in Hamilton. Gore Park is in Hamilton, the centre of the community, and I used to say that in Canada, we can stand on a box in Gore Park and say whatever we want to say, as long as we are not preaching hate. We can say that we do not like the Prime Minister, not that I would ever say such a thing, but that can be done in this democracy and it can be done freely. If we were to try that in the United States, going to a park in New York City, standing on a soapbox and starting to rant, we would be put in police cars, and the U.S. claims to be the freest country on the face of the earth. No, we are here in Canada, and that is why we have to have a leadership role in fighting anti-Semitism.

We are the one country that many countries listen to and we have to put the programs in place and set the agenda within our own country to ensure that everyone, be they Jews, Arabs, whoever they are, are equally welcome and equally safe. What just happened in Montreal today is absolutely offensive.

● (2055)

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I agree with my colleague on the communication aspect and the fact that we cannot stifle debate. We have to keep the communication streams open and to find a way to ensure that what is right is spoken about and what is wrong is spoken about.

I also compliment my colleague who co-chaired the Ottawa protocol meetings and the issues that came out of that, identifying true hate and other issues that the House has to be forthright in addressing. By doing this tonight, all of us are clearly speaking to that support and a consensus, the fact that we are in agreement.

I wonder when we talk about some of the institutions of higher learning. I know there are levels of accountability that play a role. In talking about maintaining open lines of communication, addressing the issues, and identifying what is wrong, how would the member address the issues around universities, as an example, where accountability has to play a role in terms of who is responsible for allowing that hate to be manifest? How do we stop it?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Chair, I will start by saying that I do not have the wisdom of Solomon. It is hugely difficult to stand as a democrat to protect our rights to democracy, our rights to that communication, but I do not think one has the right to preach hate. We have laws against preaching hate and if that occurs, those laws should be enforced.

I will not pass judgment on any particular group I have not heard directly about, but if they are teaching hate, that has to be addressed. There are boards of directors in universities. The problem is that until someone is there and says it there, they do not have jurisdiction over them. That complicates the issue, I am sure.

I would trust the judgment of most of the boards of those universities after the fact, once the hate, or whatever it is, has been preached, like the incident at McMaster about the niqab that I mentioned. They brought a group of people together. I attended because I happened to be in town that week. We spoke about the unfairness. It was not at the same level as Israeli Apartheid Week in

my opinion and the opinion of many people there. However, where will we find the wisdom to reach the point that the member is alluding to? I really cannot answer that.

● (2100)

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Chair, there is a duality to Jewish identity and Jewish life that is perhaps unique in Canadian history.

On the one hand, individually and collectively, and especially in the western democracies, the Jewish community is achieving unparalleled acceptance and an ability to contribute to society in the same way as other citizens in each of the countries in which they live. We see that in Canada, where Jewish institutions are strong and the Jewish community is able to participate at every level in every field of human endeavour.

As well, Israel, although threatened, has emerged as a strong cultural, scientific, military presence in the Middle East that can contribute to, and has contributed to, the advancement of health, education, and literature around the world.

On the other hand, we are seeing the emergence of an old hatred, a hatred that we all thought could not possibly re-emerge, a hatred that means Jewish people cannot safely walk through the streets of some of the most civilized capitals of the world if they are dressed identifiably as Jewish. They risk their physical lives, and the social and psychological oppression that they face on a daily basis in some of these capitals is quite chilling indeed.

At the same time, Israel's existence is now threatened by those who deny its very right to exist and who both deny the existence of the Holocaust and at the same time are determined to repeat it.

What is the genesis of this hatred? What are the reasons, be they psychological, historical, theological, or political? What is the genesis of this hate, and what is the reason it has been perpetuated over the millennia? To the extent that we can reach children, we can deal with it and prevent it from spreading, yet we have not been successful in doing that.

We here in this country have a diverse society, an extraordinarily successful society in which people are free to practise their religious beliefs and have different political perspectives, a society in which people of all races and religions can thrive. While this issue definitely exists, it does not pose the same kind of threat that it does in other countries of the world.

What can we learn from that, and what can we suggest that will help address the issue, protect the community, and hopefully—over the longer term, at least—prevent it from metastasizing into the kind of horror that we have seen all too recently?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Chair, I will take it as a supreme compliment that I would be asked one of the hardest questions to answer on the face of the Earth.

I think we have to go back over century after century of this hatred. It has been taught, and taught systematically. It has gone through the so-called grapevine of community after community.

*Government Orders*

Today one of the reasons it is arising is through communication. In Egypt and the revolution there, in Syria and other countries where people have risen up, the one common thing in that phenomenon is the iPhone. It is communication. If we talk to seniors in a Tim Hortons, they will tell stories of things they have read on the Internet that they absolutely believe. Nobody can say why they believe those things. Hatred is one of the things. Xenophobia is another one of the things.

The communication factor that we have today plays a role in the hatred that is spewed out there, uncontrolled, against many different people, but particularly the Jewish people. It is unbelievable and it is sad.

Again I come back to the fact that we have hate laws. If hate is purveyed by anybody on the Internet, it should be addressed. The problem we get into when trying to track these things is that they use shadow locations, going through three different servers, to get that message out. There are some people who are very sophisticated in delivering these messages.

What we are seeing with ISIS today, which is shocking the world, is how professional the things are that they are putting forward. Those videos, as horrific as they are, are professionally planned and orchestrated. The people who are purveying hate on the Internet are doing precisely the same thing.

I think that is one of the keys to the explosion that is happening. In hard times, in Europe and in those capitals where people are rising up and the hatred is boiling again, people are unemployed and there is high youth unemployment. That winds up scapegoating many people. In the old stories, the Jews are the people with money and the Jews are the business people who are affecting capital around the world. All of those stories that have been perpetuated for generations bubble back up again, but in a different context.

• (2105)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Chair, before I begin the few words I would like to say today, I want to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to this very important issue. It is crucial that we continue to educate current and future generations, as we have heard many times this evening, about the poisonous effects of anti-Semitic and xenophobic hate. We must also continue to research and teach about the Holocaust, as well as the prevention of genocide.

These are more than beliefs or convictions. They are, indeed, moral obligations. In fact, the release of the Anti-Defamation League's largest ever worldwide survey on anti-Semitic attitudes in 2013 shows us exactly why we must continue to speak out. More than 53,000 people in more than 100 countries were surveyed, and the results were alarming. Most significant is the fact that 35% of those surveyed had never heard of the Holocaust and, of those who had, roughly one-third said it was a myth or greatly exaggerated.

Canada is deeply committed to the promotion of Holocaust commemoration, research, and education around the world. It is through this commitment that we will guard against future atrocities.

With each passing year, our commitment has remained and must continue to remain steadfast. As an expression of this commitment, the Government of Canada has proudly partnered with Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Israel, and other organizations on a great number of educational and commemorative initiatives in recent year.

I had the opportunity to travel to Israel in 2013 in a delegation with members of Parliament from all parties and in 2014 with the Right Hon. Prime Minister. On both of these trips, I visited Yad Vashem and was deeply moved by what I saw and learned at this poignant museum. Jews and non-Jews around the world are able to travel to Israel and understand the massacre that was the Holocaust in this museum in the modern Jewish homeland. If we are human, we cannot help but be moved by what we see when we walk through that museum.

In addition, in November, 2010, the second annual conference of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism took place right here in our nation's capital, Ottawa. It brought together parliamentarians and experts from around the world to lead the fight against global anti-Semitism and developed what is known as the Ottawa protocol. Canada took the extra step of signing the protocol in the fall of 2011 to further underscore its commitment and to encourage other states to do so.

Canada has a proud history of promoting human rights and combatting hate and discrimination. The government supports a coordinated global effort against hatred and anti-Semitism, and the Ottawa protocol marks an important step in such an effort.

Our country's profound commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education was only made stronger when Canada took on the responsibility of chairing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2013-14, an intergovernmental body comprising 31 member states to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. In our chair year, we hosted a major international conference on Holocaust remembrance and education in Toronto. It was among many other events and initiatives designed to promote Holocaust education and research and to confront and combat the global resurgence of anti-Semitism.

At the Toronto conference, we were also proud to obtain consensus on a working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion. This placed the IHRA in a better position to effectively target, monitor, and address the most extreme form of anti-Semitism on a global scale.

Canada's chairmanship of the IHRA came to a close last year, when we handed over the chairmanship to the United Kingdom. However, our resolute dedication to this organization and to international Holocaust education, research, and commemoration continues.

In closing, we have an ongoing responsibility to resist all efforts to accept anti-Semitism as something normal or understandable, because once it is accepted as such by public opinion, it may lead to unimaginable consequences.

*Government Orders*

• (2110)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Chair, I have been moved by many of the speeches in this take-note debate tonight. When we are in unanimous agreement in condemning anti-Semitism, as we are tonight, the challenge for all of us is to find recommendations for what we can do to ensure that Canada, more than any other nation, rejects anti-Semitism. I believe that would be a good goal.

We must reject as well racism of all kinds, and we must reject prejudices, phobias, and attitudes that are either xenophobic or grounded in hatred and superstition. Goodness knows where some of this hatred comes from.

Going back to the history of anti-Semitism in Canada, I note that it is not a good record. In looking back I found that years ago Pierre Berton, one of my favourite authors, did an investigation, a little experiment, with respect to anti-Semitism. He had two young women assume different names and apply for positions as stenographers. The woman whose name was Grimes got job interviews. The woman named Greenberg, who had the same qualifications and was applying for the same jobs, did not get callbacks or was told the job was filled. He did the same experiment making reservations at a golf club.

This was back in the late 1940s. We know as well the story of the *St. Louis* pulling into Halifax Harbour and being sent away.

If we as Canadians are to really expunge, reject, and forever remove anti-Semitism from our society, we have to acknowledge that it was rather deeply embedded in our culture in the past and acknowledge that we are making improvements. There is no question that anti-Semitism is less prevalent now than it was then, but we cannot be content with the progress we have made. We must continue to move forward to condemn any acts of anti-Semitism, as my friend from Richmond Hill has said, to ensure that it has no place in our society and that it is named, outed, and rejected wherever it is found.

• (2115)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Chair, I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her comments and the point that she has made.

We do not have to look back decades to see anti-Semitism, its effects, and the fact that it existed. As the member said and as we have heard many times this evening, it very much still exists. I will give a live example of a very appalling, disgraceful, despicable, racist hatred movement right here in our own country that transpires and has transpired over the last couple of years in the summer in our provincial capital at Queen's Park in Toronto.

Quds Day is something that was initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. Its purpose is to oppose Zionism. It calls for the elimination of the State of Israel.

This is what happens. The Liberal provincial government in Ontario has given permission to the organizers to organize this rally for Quds Day in the middle of the summer right in Toronto. We have seen unbelievable hatred and anti-Semitic activities transpire at these events, yet the provincial government is not responding to the call of the people, particularly the Jewish community but also the greater

community at large, to stop providing the permit that allows these people to demonstrate in the way they have been.

A quick Google search produces images of some of the signs to be seen at this event right in the heart of Toronto. I will read off some of the signs that were held by the demonstrators there, some of who are children, I would say to my hon. friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands and to all of the members who are here this evening.

One of them says, “Israel, your days are numbered”. Others say, “For world peace, Israel must be destroyed”, “Israel is a terrorist regime”, and “Zionism is terrorism”. As if those are not appalling enough, one states, “Israel is a disease. We are the cure”. These are signs that were held by Canadians in the heart of Toronto in July or the end of June 2014. It was permitted to happen.

It is incumbent upon all of us—as citizens, as members of Parliament, as community leaders, as business people—to speak out so that these types of things do not happen in our community, because children see these acts and learn the wrong things from them.

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am very honoured to rise in this House to take part in this debate.

Just a few weeks ago, people around the world reflected on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, one of the most notorious sites of the uniquely sadistic, brutal, and unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis. They gathered together to recognize and honour the victims and survivors of this horrific and inhumane period of history. I was honoured to be among them to commemorate this most horrific of crimes.

Auschwitz-Birkenau was originally intended as a large concentration camp primarily for members of Polish resistance and intelligentsia, and in 1941-42 it was expanded for what the Germans called “the final solution”, which meant extermination of Jews. Six million men and women, including three million children, were murdered during the Holocaust for the simple fact that they were Jewish. This was what anti-Semitism had led to in supposedly civilized Europe. It was a time of horrendous nightmares.

As the world saw the end of the Second World War nearing, the enormity of the Holocaust began to be exposed through efforts of people like Jan Karski. It is critical that we continue to reflect on history in the modern context. As our Prime Minister said, our memory of the Holocaust and the suffering endured by its victims and their families:

...helps keep strong the conviction in our hearts to do everything we can—through our actions and our words—to stand firm against the forces of intolerance and remain vigilant against genocide. Only through these continued efforts can we ensure that such atrocities never happen again

To put it simply, we must never forget; we must do all we can to prevent another genocide, another Shoah, from occurring. This is the kind of resolution we must make every day and at every opportunity. This is all the more critical at a time when anti-Semitic incidents and Holocaust denial persist around the world.



*Government Orders*

Seventy years after the liberation of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the members, observer countries, and permanent international partners of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance collectively reaffirmed our unqualified support for the Stockholm declaration of 15 years ago and our commitment to remembering and honouring the victims of the Holocaust, to upholding its terrible truth, to standing up against those who would distort or deny it, and to combatting anti-Semitism and racism in all its forms.

It is why we also partner with B'nai Brith Canada to invest in the national task force on Holocaust research, remembrance, and education. The task force brings together scholars, legal experts, educators, Holocaust survivors, and community representatives to further Holocaust research and education in Canada. Canada is at the forefront of the international fight against anti-Semitism. We were the first country to announce its withdrawal from the tainted Durban process at the United Nations because we would not lend the good name of this country to a process supposedly to combat racism, which in fact promoted anti-Semitism.

This is what parliamentarians from around the world declared here in Ottawa four years ago in developing the Ottawa protocol, as we hosted the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism. Among its commitments, the protocol called for leaders of faith groups to combat all forms of hatred and discrimination, including anti-Semitism. It called on governments to establish an international task force to identify and monitor hate on the Internet, to record all hate crimes including anti-Semitism, and to express concern over anti-Semitism on campuses.

● (2120)

The Holocaust was a crime against humanity unlike any other in human history, and it fundamentally altered how the world views and treats acts of genocide.

As more and more survivors can no longer share their stories, we have the moral obligation to teach future generations about the horrors of Shoah and to draw lessons from this dark chapter in history, in order to prevent it from ever being repeated.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I grew up in a community in York Mills and went to school with a lot of colleagues who were the sons and daughters of Holocaust survivors. I, myself, came from an Estonian background. My family had seen waves of Soviet, Nazi, and then Soviet occupation before they fled, and many of those in the family who did not flee met a fate in Estonia in the Soviet Union under the communists, including in their concentration camps, similar to that met by many of my friends' relatives in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany and through their empire at the time.

We grew up and we shared those experiences. I remember how poignant that was and how important it was to learn from it all and to recognize those horrors of the 20th century and to resolve never to let them ever happen again. That is why, to me, it has been so unthinkable lately to hear things said that, in my childhood, in my teen years, I never dreamed we would hear people say in Canada and elsewhere in the world. This rising tide of anti-Semitism is indeed

very real; it is alarming, and things are said that we have never heard before.

The reason a debate like this is so important, I think, is that when I was growing up, those events of World War II, of learning the horrors of the concentration camps and the Holocaust, were really only 25 years old or a little bit older than that. It was really fresh in people's minds and memories.

Today, we have to recognize that is, now, quite some time ago. We are talking 70 to 75 years ago that people were learning of these things. That is why it is important for us to also remember the horrors that could happen if we do not take an unremitting, uncompromising stand against the hatred of anti-Semitism and the associated horrors that can occur.

I know that my friend comes from a Polish background and also saw many of those horrors happen in that country itself. He referenced Auschwitz-Birkenau. He, of course, in his own experience, has been very much affected by those tyrannical horrors of communism and fascism that really tainted the 20th century as one that almost did not have the worthy name of "civilization" that we would like to think we were, in a modern sense.

I would like to hear his thoughts and his reflections on how that experience influenced us growing up and the changes we have seen happening now and what lessons we should take from all of that.

● (2125)

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Chair, yes, I was born and raised in Poland. I was born nine years after the war, not very far from Auschwitz, actually, 120 kilometres more or less. I remember visiting Auschwitz when I was 12 years old more or less. I do not think I fully understood, at that time, the magnitude of what happened there.

Growing up, I visited it again several times. The question I always ask myself, and I do not think I will ever find the answer to it, is how people could do these things to other people. The other question I always ask myself is how it was possible that those terrible things, those atrocities, were committed by one of the most or the most advanced nation in Europe. How is it possible that it used its science and its resources to build a place, an industrial place, to kill and process other human beings?

We all know, or we should know, what we should learn from history and from what happened there. It is that propaganda of hatred and racism can lead to unthinkable things as a result, and we should always remember this, and we should all teach our young generations what can happen when we try to turn people against each other because they are different, they pray differently, they worship differently, they look different. This is something we should never let happen again, in the future.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I am pleased to add my voice, as raw as it is right now, to this debate, because it is an important one.

*Government Orders*

It is an important debate on many levels. Today we are living in tumultuous times. If we look back on history, whenever we live in tumultuous times certain things are guaranteed to happen. When we are going through bad economic times, it seems, historically, that the finger gets pointed at immigrants, that “the immigrants are here; they are stealing our jobs; they are taking away our opportunities.” When we live in tumultuous political times, it seems, historically, we see a rise in anti-Semitism.

A couple of statements were made, one by my hon. colleague from Mount Royal and one by my colleague on the subcommittee for human rights, that the rise of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism itself can be considered a canary in the coal mine in many ways.

When we see a rise in anti-Semitism, we also see a rise in other forms of hatred. Anti-Semitism is hatred, nothing more, nothing less. It is hatred. It is hatred that is geared to and pointed at a particular group of people for a particular reason that is manufactured by another particular group for their own particular reasons.

We very much need to understand that process. Our understanding of that process needs to go back further. I will submit this to my colleagues that it needs to go back further than the Holocaust. The Holocaust happened for a reason, and that reason goes back centuries.

The Holocaust happened because of a longstanding hatred of the Jewish people. It was not something that just came out of an insane man's mind. It is something that has been manifested over centuries upon centuries, as all hatred is.

It is something that has been state-sanctioned. If we were celebrating the work of the Stratford Festival, we can look back at Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. I believe it was written in 1623. That was a commentary. It is viewed by many as an anti-Semitic play. I submit that it is actually a commentary on the hypocrisy of European life back in the 1600s, and even prior to that.

We can look at the ancient rite of Passover practised by our Jewish brothers and sisters, which is so important to Jewish culture. It is a remembrance of the wrongs that have been done to Jewish people. It is a remembrance of the deliverance out of Egypt. It is a remembrance of the Holocaust. It is a remembrance of all the significant acts of anti-Semitism that have been practised throughout history.

We have been discussing and agree entirely about the importance of recognizing the evil of anti-Semitism, but we would be remiss if we did not take every opportunity that we have to learn about where this kind of hatred comes from and what we can do to abate it.

● (2130)

Hatred is a learned process, which to me implies that it can be unlearned. The education that we need to pass on to our children is: what does it mean to be Jewish and why is it different from who we are? It is the understanding that this difference is not a threat to who we are, which is the basis of all hatred. It is the basis of the hatred towards my ancestors that we still endure today. We still find ourselves in positions where we have to stand up and fight.

The saying “Lest we forget” is very important, and why debates like this are so important. We have to remind ourselves of what we are capable of.

My colleague who spoke previously talked about his surprise as to what we as human beings can do to each other. Unfortunately, I grew up in a world that was not surprised at what we can do to each other. However, that helped me understand what my job and work was in moving forward. I continue this with the youth in my community by speaking to them and encouraging them to stand tall and stand strong.

Education is key to delivering ourselves from the hatred that is anti-Semitism, xenophobia, misogyny, and all forms of hatred of another people for a particular reason. It is up to us as leaders to make sure that we practice that education. We must take the time to learn and not hide behind dogma and rhetoric. We must take the time to learn where this comes from so that we can make sure that it does not happen again.

I thank each and every person who has contributed to this discussion this evening for thoughts and contributions. As late as the evening is, it is also heartening to see that we agree that our voices have to be unified to fight both the rise of anti-Semitism and what the rise of anti-Semitism brings in terms of other horrific acts of racial and religious intolerance that are happening around the world.

My colleagues and I hear these stories on a regular basis in the human rights subcommittee. It is disheartening at times. However, it is up to us as leaders, as people, to make sure that we do not let these voices fall silent, that we do not forget what we have done, what we are capable of doing, and also to remember what we are capable of doing in bringing an end to this type of behaviour, such as what happened where I used to live in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. It is up to us to make sure that we do not let these acts go unanswered, and that we do not let the history of these acts be forgotten.

● (2135)

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I found it a little cool in here, so I went out to the lobby to grab my scarf. Perhaps it is serendipitous that I am wearing this one tonight because I call this my scarf of many colours. Maybe it is indicative that we stand in solidarity with our Jewish friends.

I am always very proud when I am able to have Seder dinner with my very good friends, Sam Goldstein and his wife, Shelly, or with my good friends Julius and Etta Suraski. It is always a pleasure when I am able to spend Second Seder with my good friends Carla and Robin Silver in Richmond Hill. It has been an education for me. They are always evenings of great delight and enjoyment, not only with food but also fellowship and new cultural experiences for me.

When I was first elected, I was part of an inquiry panel chaired by my good friend from Leeds—Grenville. It was a great investigation that we undertook. I will note from our report some comments by Rabbi Bulka. I have read this report several times through and I always come back to one part where he said:

*Government Orders*

How do we counter antisemitism? To me, the very simple answer is teach, teach, teach.... We need to create foot soldiers, and those foot soldiers are the children of the next generation. We owe it to them. We owe it to the legacy of our founding fathers and mothers that children going through any elementary or high school system will have been so inoculated against hate by the time they get to university that when they see it, they will reject it.

Could my colleague comment on his experience of how we can bring this education into our school curriculum so that as the rabbi said, children will recognize this as hatred and reject it?

• (2140)

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Mr. Chair, there is an old saying that history is written by the victors. Because of that, a lot of history about the contributions of different peoples tends to be left out of our school curriculums. This is one way in which we need to change the curriculum to recognize the contribution not only in the context of what happened to the Jewish people, but also the contributions of the Jewish people and all other people.

I would also submit that it needs to be done at home too. I do not have children, but over the years I have had many discussions with my niece and nephew. My nephew is now 25 years old and my niece is 16 years old. We talk about race relations, including the history of the Jewish people.

I have had the great pleasure of spending Seders with my dearest friend and family, the friend I grew up with and went to high school with, thereby getting the education I needed. I shared that with my niece and nephew. It starts that small. It starts with our families, our children, and if we can get the school boards and so forth to change curricula so that they are inclusive in their teachings, as opposed to simply treating oppressed peoples in terms of, this happened to them and they are the victims, I think that will begin to change the minds of children to look at Jews and others as people who are part of our society, as opposed to seeing the issue as something that happened or as things that were done to them.

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Chair, to expand on the last question, I would ask the following of the member who talks about communication with his nephew and niece and starting at a young age. One of the issues we have talked about tonight is universities as breeding grounds for some of this hate, whether it is Israeli Apartheid Week or some of the other issues that have led to a great focus on anti-Semitism in Canada. Cutting that hatred off, cutting that anti-Semitism off, at the root appears to be the key to what we need to accomplish.

I wonder if the member would expand on what he might view as a solution to that, as something that might bring some positive results out of tonight's debate.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Mr. Chair, we as leaders need to make sure that we set the example through our own actions. In the case of universities and institutions of higher learning, those institutions exist to debate, to challenge, and to learn. Therefore, we have to be careful not to create a situation where we stifle debate. The strongest test for democracy and the strength democracy has is allowing for that debate.

We do have laws in place, as my colleague, the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, said earlier, to remedy hate speech. If those laws are broken, those people should be charged to the fullest extent of the law. However, if we inhibit what we are actually

fighting for, then we do ourselves a disservice. It is up to the universities to make sure that healthy debate is maintained, and if hate laws are broken, those individuals should be charged to the fullest extent of the law.

• (2145)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Chair, I want to touch on something that I do not think has come up tonight.

It is important that we create a distinction between the appropriate response of those people who are not anti-Semitic, including Jewish people within the State of Israel, who question actions by the current government in Israel, without having any action that suggests criticism of Israel's foreign policy or domestic policy as conflated with anti-Semitism.

This is a very difficult area, and this is where we need to be very clear. Anti-Semitism is without question unacceptable at its root, but groups like Independent Jewish Voices will criticize actions by the State of Israel if it believes that they are illegal, without being anti-Semitic.

I wonder if my friend has any comments on that. This is a very difficult area and is far more sensitive than some of what we have discussed here tonight. This may not have the same degree of unanimity.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Mr. Chair, it is not a question that I, at this point, feel I can answer. I would offer, though, that we need to be careful in blurring the lines between political debate and cultural debate. Anti-Semitism is, in and of itself, an anti-cultural aspect, and the debate over what Israel does or does not do is a political debate.

I would say that, to begin with, we need to make sure that we do not blur the lines that distinguish between political discourse and cultural or anti-cultural discourse.

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, before I begin my remarks, I will indicate that I will be splitting my time with the member for Ajax—Pickering, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

I would like to begin by saying that in 1945, when the horrors of the Shoah became known to the world, the world came together and said, "Never again". "Never again" must not be seen as a hollow phrase. "Never again" must be a call to action for all people of good conscience to stand together against the scourge of anti-Semitism and racism, in whatever form it may take, and for all people to stand together and support each other when they face hatred.

My colleagues tonight on all sides of the House have spoken quite eloquently about anti-Semitism. I want to talk more about the personal side of my own experience.

My dad, as many members know, was a survivor of the Holocaust and was the only survivor from his family. My dad was in Auschwitz. He was 12 when he was interred in the ghetto in Lodz, which, before the war in 1939, had 225,000 Jewish inhabitants, out of 600,000 people. By the war's end, only 300 Jewish residents of Lodz had survived.

*Government Orders*

In 1944, my dad and grandfather were taken to Auschwitz on the last transport out of the ghetto. My grandmother and my dad's younger brother had already been taken earlier to another death camp two years earlier, Chelmno, which was located outside of Lodz, where the Germans had set up vans. These were not just ordinary vans. These were vans where the exhaust pipe fed back into them so that all of the people were asphyxiated who were put into the vans.

My dad was taken to Auschwitz in 1944 with the liquidation of the Lodz ghetto, and upon arrival there, the SS man sent my grandfather in one direction to the gas and my dad to slave labour.

My dad never spoke a word about what happened. When he came to Canada in 1947, he came with a number on his arm, a shirt on his back, but more importantly, hope in his heart, like most immigrants who come to Canada do. He built a family here. He built a life. He chose hope over despair.

I grew up in the Bathurst Manor area of Toronto, which has a large number of Holocaust survivors. Many of my friends' parents were survivors. As kids, we all wanted to know about our parents' experiences, but we did not dare ask, because we knew intuitively that we should not ask, because it just showed too much pain on our parents' faces for them to talk about, so we did not ask, and we grew up without knowing.

A couple of months ago, I was contacted by a fellow who lives in the riding of York Centre. He called and asked me if I am the Adler whose father was Abram Adler from Lodz. I said yes, and he said he had a story for me. He said he knew my dad's family in the ghetto and that there was something I should know. He said that before the Germans had sealed the ghetto, in the spring of 1940, my uncle, Chaim, was part of a group of Jewish men who would go out at night after the German curfew and smuggle food and clothes to Jewish children's orphanages. He said that one particular night, Chaim was told to drive the truck because he was the only one who knew how to drive a truck. They were caught by the Germans. They were all made to lie face down on the street outside of the orphanage, and they were all shot in the head. He then told me that the SS went into the orphanage and shot all the children. He thought I should know this story.

• (2150)

Another story is about friends of my parents. This fellow was a survivor who married a woman from Canada. I remember my parents saying that when he went to sleep at night, he would wake up almost every night, screaming and in a cold sweat. His wife had to place a Canadian and an American flag at the foot of their bed to reassure him when he woke up, he was safe. The dreams he would have were so torturous, recalling what happened to him during the Shoah.

This is the kind of environment I grew up in as the child of a Holocaust survivor. When I went to my friends' bar mitzvahs, they were attended by hundreds of people, but at my own bar mitzvah there were no grandparents.

At Rosh Hashanah, at Passover, there are empty chairs at the table because there are no grandparents, there are no aunts and uncles, there are no cousins. These are the circumstances, this is the

environment, the result of the anti-Semitism that we as Jewish people had to endure in Europe in the 1940s.

It all started with words which led to deeds. That is why it is so important. We are talking about a take-note debate. This is not a debate; it is an agreement. Let us all take note. Let us all say that we, as a people, who live in the great democracy of Canada, stand for Canadian values and as democratic people, we have a responsibility to each other to stand up for those Canadian values of democracy, of freedom and of the rule of law.

When one person is being persecuted, we are all being persecuted. It is incumbent upon all of us to stand together, to stand up for each other and to fight the evil of racism, hatred and anti-Semitism.

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I thank the hon. member for his moving commentary. As a child of Holocaust survivors, as someone who knows that history so intimately in a family setting, how are we in Canada doing as leaders and how is the world doing on the important issue of Holocaust remembrance, to which we have committed ourselves and recommitted ourselves as a government, but which obviously will require redoubled efforts globally if the tragedy and the unspeakable horrors of the Shoah are to be remembered in all parts of the world?

• (2155)

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for his very warm remarks.

As a country, Canada is doing well. We have seen our Prime Minister not go to a Commonwealth meeting in Sri Lanka. We have seen our Prime Minister stand up against Russian aggression in Crimea and Ukraine. We have seen our Prime Minister stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel. Our foreign policy is now based on principle.

As a country, Canada is doing very well in our promotion of Canadian values. What gives me great pause, however, is what we see in other countries around the world. When we see anti-Semitic incidents take place in Europe, when we see the murder of Jews in Copenhagen, in Paris, in other countries around the world, not only do Canadians need to stand up and say no, but people around the world need to stand up and say no.

Growing up, I remember what Martin Niemöller, a German pastor, had said, "First they came for the Socialists, but I was not Socialist, so I did not care. Then they came for the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist, so I did not care. Then they came for the Jews, but there was no one left to stand up and say anything".

We cannot afford to find ourselves in that kind of position ever again. That is why I am so proud as a Canadian to be part of a government and to be part of a Parliament that takes such a strong stand, exhibited tonight by every member from every party, standing up and saying no to anti-Semitism, standing shoulder to shoulder to fight this ugly rabid scourge head on.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am thankful for the honour of taking part in tonight's debate. I would like to thank members of all parties who have made it possible. Above all, I would like to thank my colleagues on this side, many of whom are here tonight, who give so much of their best to the cause that is so fundamental to the foundations on which we stand.

My colleague, the Minister of National Defence, has said tonight, as we all say to ourselves on the many occasions around the calendar when it needs to be said, that anti-Semitism is the most ancient of hatreds and the most ancient of irrational tragedies in human behaviour. It represents the very epitome of those challenges to the values we hold dear: freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Our determination tonight to set our faces against this scourge, wherever it manifests itself, is a recommitment to our Canadian values and the values that have made our country, and the broader society and humanity to which we belong, great. It is truly humbling to speak after the hon. member who calls himself the son of Abram Adler of Lodz. There can be no story more moving for any of us in a debate like tonight's than that of a Holocaust survivor.

Let us remember that, despite those tragedies and the institutionalized efforts of the international community to never forget and to never let that tragedy be repeated, we live in a world where anti-Semitism is all too pervasive a fact. Whether it is recent attacks across Europe or an aggressive, belligerent, rapacious regime in Moscow that is prepared to make donations to far-right anti-Semitic groups across Europe, it harkens back to the alliance between Stalin and Hitler that made the Second World War a much greater tragedy than it would otherwise have been.

Whether it is jihadist groups around the world but centred in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia who bring forth unspeakable tragedies and kill civilians in untold numbers and at every step of the way pepper their obscene language with the poison of anti-Semitism, it is not just ISIL. It is al Qaeda, which is still with us. It is 1,000 branch plants of those offices. It is the Muslim Brotherhood, which just apparently rededicated itself to jihad in late January.

In Nazi Germany, the Jews were stripped of their citizenship, denied their natural rights and their very right to exist. In contemporary times, there are those in these jihadist groups and in dozens of nation states who are trying to strip the State of Israel of its citizenship in the international community, circumscribe its right to exist, and attack its natural rights as a nation. All of them have in common the sin and the violation of fundamental rights that anti-Semitism represents.

We are proud on this side to be part of a government that stands up, stands behind the principles of the Ottawa protocol, and wants to monitor and end this kind of hatred on the Internet and elsewhere. We are part of a government that was the first in the world to withdraw from the United Nations Durban Review Conference, or Durban II. We refused to allow Canada's good name to be tarnished by an event where examples of anti-Semitism under the UN flag and auspices were flourishing openly, including the circulation of copies

of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and explicitly anti-Semitic symbolism.

• (2200)

Our stand was vindicated when Durban II was used by former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to purvey his particular brand of horrific high-octane anti-Semitism. We will continue down this path to ensure that Canada's name is at the forefront of those combatting this hatred, at the forefront of those reinforcing our values, and at the forefront of those calling together all around the world, who recognize anti-Semitism for the plague on our values that it has been for centuries.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, we have talked about how well Canada is doing, relatively speaking, and how other countries are doing in this area.

We brought up the United Nations several times in tonight's debate, and a lot of the time it has been about how the UN as a body, in my view, has let the side down, has let the cause of anti-Semitism down, because of all the instances where bodies of the United Nations have voted unanimously, or in a majority fashion, to condemn Israel above all other states combined.

It does not imbue one with a lot of optimism from the point of view of the international community, as embodied by the United Nations, that we in the world writ large are acting to stamp out anti-Semitism.

I know my colleague, the minister, has great experience in those kinds of environments, in the UN, international politics, and international arenas. I wonder if he could comment on the state of the United Nations and the way that body and its member states are collectively approaching this challenge, and what we can perhaps do as a smallish member of that body to help it change the course a little.

• (2205)

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Chair, that was an excellent question by the distinguished member for Edmonton Centre.

It reminds us all that the United Nations serves some purposes. It is a home for discussion of humanitarian issues. It is a home for discussion of international security issues. We do not have another forum like the Security Council. It is a home for progress on issues like maternal, newborn, and child health, where Canada has shown leadership. Our Prime Minister has shown leadership.

However, in recent years it has become increasingly not the home of issues that need a home and that deserve to be at the centre of the international community's attention. One of those issues is anti-Semitism, where the United Nations, far from being a centre of excellence or a centre of discussion and action to stamp out this behaviour, has instead been a misguided organization, throwing out the welcome mat to those who would spew this hatred and this poison and disseminate it, giving them a platform, giving them a loud speaker.

There are three ways in which that happens. First are fora like Durban, anti-Semitic fora where free rein is given to views that are not just historically inaccurate and nonfactual, but that represent hatred towards a particular group. For the United Nations to be associated with such events is shameful.

*Government Orders*

Second, there is the tolerance of many in the United Nations, state and non-state actors, who reject the existence of the State of Israel and call for a jihad war, the elimination of the State of Israel. This is a voting member of the United Nations. There is no other member state of the United Nations whose existence and borders are not recognized and indeed negated by dozens of other members of the United Nations. Instead of asking those dozens of countries what their problem is with the existence of a democracy that has self-determined its constitution and institutions, the United Nations all too often victimizes Israel.

Third, there is the inconsistency of the United Nations with regard to terrorism, particularly Islamic jihadist terrorism. There have been flashes of insight on the part of the UN, terrorist lists for al Qaeda and the Taliban, a few other contributions to the global fight, but for the most part the United Nations has been notably *schtum* in refusing to name and shame, let alone take action against, the state and non-state actors. Here I emphasize the words state actors who continue to support organizations like ISIL, al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and others who in addition to victimizing civilians, in addition to fighting wars, proxy wars in many cases on behalf of states, have anti-Semitism as one of their stocks in trade.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I would be pleased to split my time with the hon. member for Mount Royal, who is, I believe it is fair to say, our Parliament's scholar, historian, and collective conscience on human rights issues and who has been a great architect of the Ottawa protocol. I would love to hear a little more of his thoughts on that particular topic.

I have appreciated the discussion here tonight. It has been very valuable to me, and there are two essential messages that have come forward that must be communicated.

One is that anti-Semitism will not be tolerated no matter where it occurs, whether it be on the borders of Israel, in a European capital, or, God forbid, here on Canadian soil.

The second message, of course, is that this cannot be empty rhetoric. This message has to come with a resolve to protect and with a call to action. To those who are threatened by anti-Semitism, we must be firm: never again.

Members might wonder what exactly the member of Parliament for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte from Newfoundland and Labrador would be able to offer to this particular debate. I have an interesting perspective to offer.

I am an Irish Newfoundlander, and many Newfoundlanders are Irish. In 1968, my constituency decided that the best person to represent us in this chamber was a man named Jack Marshall.

Jack was Jewish. There were a lot of Jews in my riding, but we did not vote for him because he was Jewish, and we certainly did not vote against him because he was Jewish. He was the best person for the job. In fact, he was so very popular and such an effective advocate for veterans right across this entire country, as he was for his constituency in each and every matter that was important to it and to the people of Humber—St. George's—St. Barbe at the time, that the prime minister of Canada had to elevate him to the Senate, because that was the only way to free up the seat. He was a phenomenal representative.

His successor was a kind of a twist of irony. A by-election was held when Jack Marshall was elevated to the Senate, where he so well served this country and every veteran that ever served in uniform. His successor was a young man by the name of Fonse Faour, a Lebanese Canadian who was 24 years of age. We did not vote for him because he was of Lebanese descent, and we did not vote against him because he was of Lebanese descent; we voted for him because he was the best person for the job. Therefore, I come from a perspective that all things are possible. That is the way we are.

With that in mind, I went to Israel last year. I wanted to learn more. We received some great briefings and met with the Canadian representative to the Palestinian authority. Four days into the trip, Hamas started firing rockets into Israel, indiscriminately, for the sole purpose of killing innocent civilians. Hamas, the terrorist organization, was doing what it does.

That was the most profound experience that anyone could possibly imagine. It was transformative for me.

Anti-Semitism is real. It is very active in this world. The events in Montreal prove that it is on the rise. Is it on the rise everywhere? I think it is.

Yesterday, because I have been an outspoken advocate for peace and for the right of Israel to exist and to protect itself, I received a message from within my own constituency suggesting that I was acting like a Nazi for my beliefs and my sincere conviction that peace can happen, that Israel has the right to exist, and that action against anti-Semitism must be taken.

These are the perspectives that a man from Newfoundland and Labrador who sits in this chamber can offer to this debate. Not only do we have to communicate that anti-Semitism is not to be tolerated, but we have to send a message to the Jewish community, to those who would advocate for peace and for harmony, that we will not stand idly by, no matter what corner of the globe or part of Canada we are from.

• (2210)

I will conclude with that one perspective. This is an issue that should captivate us all. We have a duty to action and a duty to protect, and it is inherent in each and every one of us.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.):** Mr. Chair, I have been in the House since this debate began. I have still not asked any questions or made any comments. I was listening to the other members speak. I was also listening to my colleague who just spoke.

I must admit that I am having difficulty understanding. Is it safe to say that criticism of Israel is not necessarily anti-Semitic? Anti-Semitism is being racist toward Jewish people. Anti-Semitism is a form of hatred, racism and incredible violence.

However, as I listen to my colleagues, I feel like I no longer really understand. It is as though criticism of Israel is equivalent to anti-Semitism. I have a hard time understanding that. I think that we can be critical of a government's policies without being anti-Semitic. There are Jews in Israel who criticize the state of Israel and there are Jews outside Israel who may also criticize Israel's policies.

We need to be careful not to confuse these things. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or racism toward blacks or people of any colour is one thing. Criticizing a government's policies is quite another.

Perhaps I misunderstood my colleagues, but I must admit that I sometimes have a hard time following them. I would therefore like to ask the member who just spoke if it is possible to criticize Israel without being accused of being anti-Semitic.

● (2215)

[English]

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Mr. Chair, the hon. member has confused the message and the debates a lot. If I could offer some perspective, having been to Israel and attending the Knesset, the debate in Israel is pretty intense at times. Israelis are very forward thinking. Israel is a very democratic nation that serves its best interest by serving democracy. There is always debate.

However, to suggest that if one offers criticism to Israel, that somehow one is anti-Semitic has never been an utterance that has ever occurred on the floor of this chamber through the course of this debate. What we have said, collectively and very clearly, is that anti-Semitism is a very real phenomenon that is born in hatred. It is not born in criticism, not in public discourse of fair minded people and fair minded values. It is born on hatred. It incites violence and it will create an era of intolerance.

If that is the message that has confused her in this chamber, I also feel it becomes so painfully clear that the message could be confused elsewhere. That is why we have to speak out so loudly, so forcefully and so clearly to define anti-Semitism as a hatred and a violence that will not be tolerated. Those who seek peace, who seek discourse, as we did at Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, who embrace all cultures and all citizens will all have a place. That is the lesson maybe we can all take home from this.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I want to commend my colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador for his informed and inspiring remarks. I appreciate his reference to Jack Marshall, who was a great colleague and great contributor to Canada, and also for his reference to the anti-Semitic vandalism and threats in Montreal today. It may not be known to the members in this House that the incident actually occurred on Côte-St-Luc Road, which borders my riding. I have heard many concerned responses from my constituents since this occurred earlier today.

In particular, I am pleased that the member from Newfoundland and Labrador has kindly offered me an opportunity to split the time with him and has invited me to comment on the Ottawa Protocol to Combat Antisemitism, a central instrument for the purposes of engaging in countering anti-Semitism domestically and internationally. I am pleased to do so, because many colleagues this evening have referenced the protocol. Others have also spoken about the importance of education in combatting anti-Semitism. They both converge with regard to the Ottawa protocol as an educational, policy-making, action-oriented instrument. I just would like to excerpt from it, because I think this could be part of our learning experience this evening.

The Minister of Finance earlier asked, why anti-Semitism? In fact, the Ottawa protocol makes some reference to it. It says:

### *Government Orders*

We are appalled by the resurgence of the classic anti-Jewish libels, including:

The Blood Libel (that Jews use the blood of children for ritual sacrifice)

The Jews as "Poisoners of the Wells"—responsible for all evils in the world

The myth of the "new Protocols of the Elders of Zion"—the tsarist forgery that proclaimed an international Jewish conspiracy bent on world domination—and accuses the Jews of controlling government, the economy, media and public institutions.

The double entendre of denying the Holocaust [on the one hand]...and the nazification of the Jew[s][on the other].

Finally, the Ottawa protocol set forth a working definition for anti-Semitism. It drew on the European Union monitoring centre, now the fundamental rights agency, working definition. For some reason, it has dropped it, but because its definition is referenced in so many educational programs and in parliamentary initiatives, I am going to now reaffirm the definition, as put forth in the Ottawa protocol. I do that in two respects, both in its reference to the definition of traditional "anti-Semitism" and of the new anti-Semitism. It speaks of:

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

I will just give two examples. It gives about seven.

Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.

Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective—such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth [again] about a world Jewish conspiracy, or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.

It goes on to a matter of particular importance, and that is examples of the ways in which anti-Semitism manifests itself with regard to the State of Israel. Here it gives specific and express examples:

Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour.

I was reminded, on Martin Luther King Day, that Martin Luther King Jr. used to say that the denial to the Jewish people of the right to self-determination, a right that we affirm for all nations of the globe, including African nations, is in fact, simply put, anti-Semitism.

Another example it gives is the following:

Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

Let us be clear. Israel, like any other state, is responsible for any violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

● (2220)

The Jewish people are not privileged with respect to equality before the law because of the historical Jewish suffering or that of the Holocaust. The promise is not that anyone would claim that Israel be above the law, but rather that Israel is being systematically denied equality before the law as an example set forth this evening, particularly in the international arena. It is not that human rights standards are being applied to Israel, but that these standards are not being applied equally to everyone else. It is not that Israel must respect human rights, which she must, but that the rights of Israel deserve not more but equal respect.

*Government Orders*

Another example here is the notion of using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism, including claims of Jews killing Jesus and the like, to characterize Israel or Israelis, or drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, or holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel. But clearly as it states in the protocol, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.

Let me close with a particular statement and declaration that I take responsibility for authoring as part of the Ottawa protocol, which says:

Let it be clear: Criticism of Israel is not antisemitic, and saying so is wrong. But singling Israel out for selective condemnation and opprobrium—let alone denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction—is discriminatory and hateful, and not saying so is dishonest.

As the Ottawa protocol concludes with a call to parliamentarians in particular to adopt the EUMC working definition of anti-Semitism, which no longer appears to be in place, and to anchor its enforcement in existing law, I call on all members here to reference the Ottawa Protocol to Combat Antisemitism as the framing reference for the definition of anti-Semitism old and new, and to make that the template for our understanding of anti-Semitism, for our policy-making in that regard, and for our actions domestically and internationally.

● (2225)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Chair, this is a very sobering discussion we are having tonight and I am glad it is not a debate. I want to thank my colleague for his incredible leadership on the human rights file generally, but specifically on this issue of anti-Semitism.

I want to assure my colleague that even though I am a follower of Jesus Christ and he was using his terms about Jesus, the churches that we are part of in this party certainly see the Jewish faith as the foundation for our faith and we value the Jewish people. I know he knows that already, but I wanted to comment about that publicly and thank him for his good work.

I was appalled today to see some of the things that happened in Montreal. I wonder if my colleague who is from that area would care to comment about that. I want him and all our Jewish friends to know that we stand with them in solidarity.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, what unnerved people today in Montreal and, as I said, adjacent to my riding and partly in my riding, was not only the anti-Semitic vandalism involved, but also the threat involved. That is the thing that has disturbed and unnerved people, the nature of the hateful threat.

That is something that we have been discussing here this evening and it has to be part of a preventive approach, because education about anti-Semitism, its history, its dangers, and the fact that while it may begin with Jews, it does not end with Jews, is something that if we internalize those understandings and act upon them, then it will resonate for the welfare of not only the Jews but also the human condition as a whole.

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am honoured to participate in tonight's debate and discussion on the global rise of anti-Semitism.

Tonight I will be sharing my time with the member for Willowdale. I appreciate his intervention as well.

As is well known, promoting and defending freedom of religion are key Canadian foreign policy priorities. We believe that societies that protect freedom of religion or belief are more likely to protect all other universal rights and fundamental freedoms. Through the Office of Religious Freedoms, established within the Department of Foreign Affairs and headed by Ambassador Andrew Bennett, Canada works internationally to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance on the basis of religion or belief.

The religious freedom fund is supporting three initiatives addressing anti-Semitism.

The fund is supporting the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' mandate by providing \$500,000 to promote religious freedom, particularly given the increasing anti-Semitism and discrimination against Christians and Muslims in some OSCE member states. This project aims to promote international standards on freedom of religion, focusing on communities in central Asia and the south Caucasus.

The fund also supported the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation by providing \$400,000 to assist with the preservation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial site, part of the UNESCO world heritage list.

The most recent project supported by the fund is UNESCO's 2015 International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. The aim of this \$100,000 project was to mobilize decision makers in favour of policies that promote Holocaust education, genocide prevention, and Holocaust awareness through different educational tools. On January 27 of this year, many members of this House and our government participated in these moving ceremonies held throughout the world.

As some hon. members know, Canada became a full member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, IHRA, in 2009. Ambassador Bennett was appointed head of the Canadian delegation to IHRA in March of 2014.

Canada actively encourages all states to take a zero tolerance approach to anti-Semitism. This can be achieved in part by becoming a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and supporting the principles outlined in the Ottawa protocol. The Ottawa protocol was in response to the alarming wave of anti-Semitism in Canada, especially on the campuses of many of our universities.

I would like to also recognize the member for Mount Royal tonight and thank him for his intervention in bringing some of those definitions and important measures forward for our understanding

The Ottawa protocol urges universities to combat anti-Semitism with:

...the same seriousness with which they confront other forms of hate. Specifically, universities should be invited to define antisemitism clearly, provide specific examples, and enforce conduct codes firmly, while ensuring compliance with freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom... Indeed, there should be zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind against anyone in the university community...



Canada must keep on fighting anti-Semitism by using all the tools at our disposal. I am pleased to add my voice in calling for zero tolerance not only on our university campuses but throughout the world. It is important that we reiterate “never again” to the Holocaust and to anti-Semitism. We must fight to bring it to an end with all the force we have available to us.

• (2230)

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, because of the constraints of time, I offer my hon. colleague the opportunity to elaborate on any other point of reference within the Ottawa protocol, if he wishes. He quoted in particular with respect to universities. However, there are other paragraphs there that call upon parliamentarians to act, and I was wondering if he might like to reference one or more of those.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Chair, the Ottawa protocol was important because it brought focus and definition clearly to issues that had to be developed and discussed. Tonight, what an incredible opportunity this is for us to gather as colleagues to discuss these issues in unanimity and to arrive at a place where we clearly agree that this has to be addressed.

The member talks about the Ottawa protocol. I want to address one item that I thought was particularly poignant, and that is:

The Inquiry Panel's conclusion, unfortunately, is that the scourge of anti-Semitism is a growing threat in Canada, especially on the campuses of our universities.

The report cites numerous examples of anti-Semitism on various campuses, including the infamous incident in 2009 when Jewish students at York University were chased and barricaded themselves in the Hillel Lounge, while a mob outside taunted them with anti-Semitic slurs.

The list of examples goes on, but it is important that we identify and hold accountable those where these types of situations occur. The Ottawa protocol provides the tools and the ability for us to do just that.

• (2235)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the member for his speech, and I would also like to thank my colleague from Mount Royal for clarifying that criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitic.

I have two questions for my colleague.

First, I am a Semite. I am from the Middle East. As someone whose ancestors shared the Semitic language, I am a Semite. Does the term “anti-Semitic” mean anti-Jew or against all Semites? I would like some clarification on that definition. At the same time, does the term “anti-Semitic” refer to all Semites? I am a Semite, but I am not Jewish. I am Christian. My case is rather unusual and I wanted to make that point.

I also wanted to get my colleague's opinion. Has he noticed, like me, that there has been a rise in Islamophobia and anti-Semitism or anti-Jewish sentiment if you will? I was wondering if there was a correlation between the rise in Islamophobia and the rise in anti-Semitism. When it comes right down to it, does the fear of terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism not lead to a sort of Islamophobia? At the same time, I do not believe that all of the

### *Government Orders*

debates on the infamous secular charter and reasonable accommodation are pointless, but they have been diverted from their true purpose. It gets to the point where the public and the media are exaggerating—

**The Chair:** Order. We do not have enough time for the answer.

The hon. member for Don Valley West.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Chair, I am not sure a brief response is possible, but let me address the issue that the member for Mount Royal did earlier, and that is the quote from the Ottawa protocol. It states:

Criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is wrong. But singling Israel out for selective condemnation and opprobrium—let alone denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction—is discriminatory and hateful, and not saying so is dishonest.

The answer to part of the member's question, because clearly there was quite a bit in her comments, is that any form of hate within our society is unacceptable and we have to find ways to confront it. What we are seeing right now with ISIS and terrorism in the Middle East is a cause for serious concern for all of us, and the House is alarmed by that as a whole.

I believe that we have to find ways to address these issues. Clearly, tonight we are dealing with anti-Semitism and the growth of it across the globe, but in Canada we are able to focus a little more clearly on issues that are more relevant here, and what happened in Montreal today is a clear example of that.

I recently had the opportunity to go to Israel with the Prime Minister. I stood on the border of Syria and Jordan at one point with a group of members of Parliament, and we welcomed refugees as they streamed across the border. One of the privileges of this job is to be able to go places and see things that many people would not have the opportunity to see. I have to say that my heart was torn out for the children, seniors, and people streaming across the border with all the worldly belongings they could carry. They were fleeing from hate, loss of life due to war, and conditions that we cannot understand in our society, and that is what we are fighting.

• (2240)

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am so appreciative of all my hon. colleagues being awake at this late hour to listen to the last speaker. Not that I wish it for myself, but as the last speaker, I have the pleasure of leaving the last thought this evening on this important debate.

As my colleagues have described, the troubling growth in anti-Semitism around the world is an urgent and pressing issue that we must face internationally and also here at home.

I would therefore like to focus my remarks on what we have done and what we must continue to do in Canada to prevent the spread of anti-Semitism in our own country.

*Government Orders*

Our nationally standardized hate crime data initiative indicates that Jews are the most likely religious group to be targeted for hate crimes, even though Jews constitute less than 1% of the Canadian population. Therefore, the government has rightly taken a firm approach to organizations that promote hatred of Jews, that publicly deny the historical reality and the extent of the extermination of the Jews during the Holocaust, or that apologize for terrorism.

Canada also realizes that too often not enough is done to ensure that our societies, and especially younger generations, remember the lessons of the Holocaust, and so the Government of Canada has undertaken nationally a series of important actions to educate Canadians and to protect at-risk communities.

Among the actions at the national level, in 2011 Canada created the communities at risk: security infrastructure program, which allows not-for-profit organizations to apply for funding to improve security infrastructures and systems in places of worship and community centres that are vulnerable to hate-motivated crime. This program has been leveraged by at-risk communities, including Canada's Jewish community, to ensure a greater sense of safety in places of worship and community gatherings.

Right in my own riding of Willowdale, a Jewish synagogue and Jewish schools were the subject of some racist remarks and graffiti. They have benefited from this program by strengthening their security on their perimeter and on their premises.

The Canadian government also continues to develop its systems for collecting data on hate crimes. Combined with law enforcement training, these systems allow the authorities to better address violence against groups at risk, including the Jewish community.

In addition to these measures, the government has examined Canada's own troubled history with anti-Semitism. In particular, it is important that Canada openly examine its role in implementing the so-called "none is too many" policy that blocked Jewish refugees from finding safe haven in Canada as they fled Nazi Germany in the face of state-driven anti-Semitism. This shameful Canadian policy was represented by the turning away of the MS *St. Louis*, whose passengers were Jewish refugees, many of whom ended up being returned to Nazi-occupied Europe to their deaths in the Holocaust.

The Holocaust is a key lesson in the history of anti-Semitism, a lesson we cannot forget. Canada's national Holocaust monument will be inaugurated in Ottawa this fall to remember the victims of the Holocaust and pay tribute to the survivors.

The monument will encourage Canadians to reflect on the responsibilities we each have to protect human rights and dignity. Moreover, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, which was opened in September 2014, houses a permanent exhibit devoted to the Holocaust.

I say to my honourable colleagues that people should not be singled out just because of their faith or ethnicity, and we cannot ignore the fact that unimpeded anti-Semitism leads down a very dangerous path, as demonstrated recently in Europe. As the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness said two weeks ago at the United Nations in New York, those who threaten the existence of the Jewish people are a grave threat to all of us.

Let me end by saying that I also had the pleasure of accompanying the Prime Minister to Israel and walking through the Holocaust Museum. One of the most poignant messages that I saw said, "The Righteous Among the Nations". In Hebrew it is "khassidey umot ha-olam". It refers to non-Jews who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews from Nazi extermination. Let me just say that it did not include people from western Europe at the time.

China had two diplomats, Pan-Jun Shun and Dr. Feng-Shan Ho, who issued over 3,000 visas for Viennese to use as they transited to a third country.

● (2245)

In addition, Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara did the same for the Viennese at the time.

As Canadians and as non-Jews, let us take that as our example and guiding light. We need to stop anti-Semitism. We need to lead the way to save what we all cherish and to live in harmony in the world.

**The Chair:** It being 10:46 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53(1), the committee will rise and I will leave the chair.

(Government Business No. 16 reported)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:46 p.m.)





# CONTENTS

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Stratford Festival

Mr. Schellenberger .....	11625	Mr. Sweet .....	11640
Motion .....	11625	Mr. Hawn .....	11641
Ms. Mathysen .....	11626	Mr. Bezan .....	11642
Mr. Lamoureux .....	11626	Ms. Laverdière .....	11642
Mr. Albrecht .....	11626	Mr. Marston .....	11643
Ms. Mathysen .....	11626	Mr. Hawn .....	11643
Mr. Dion .....	11628	Mr. Kent .....	11644
Mr. Dykstra .....	11629	Mr. Marston .....	11644
Mr. Benskin .....	11630	Mr. Bezan .....	11645
Mr. Schellenberger .....	11631	Mr. Reid .....	11645
(Motion agreed to) .....	11631	Mr. Sweet .....	11646

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Rise in anti-Semitism

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 16, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair) .....	11631	Mr. Marston .....	11647
Mr. Kenney .....	11631	Mr. Carmichael .....	11648
Motion .....	11631	Mr. Oliver .....	11648
Mr. Dewar .....	11632	Mr. Menegakis .....	11649
Mr. Lunney .....	11633	Ms. May .....	11650
Mr. Marston .....	11634	Mr. Lizon .....	11650
Mr. Dewar .....	11634	Mr. Van Loan .....	11651
Mr. Kenney .....	11635	Mr. Benskin .....	11651
Ms. Laverdière .....	11635	Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora) .....	11652
Mr. Hawn .....	11636	Mr. Carmichael .....	11653
Mr. Cotler .....	11636	Ms. May .....	11653
Mr. Reid .....	11637	Mr. Adler .....	11653
Mr. Marston .....	11638	Mr. Alexander .....	11654
Ms. Bennett .....	11638	Mr. Alexander .....	11655
Mrs. Wong .....	11638	Mr. Hawn .....	11655
Mr. Bélanger .....	11639	Mr. Byrne .....	11656
Mr. Uppal .....	11639	Mrs. Mourani .....	11656
Mr. Marston .....	11640	Mr. Cotler .....	11657
Mr. Lunney .....	11640	Mr. Albrecht .....	11658
		Mr. Carmichael .....	11658
		Mr. Cotler .....	11659
		Mrs. Mourani .....	11659
		Mr. Leung .....	11659
		(Government Business No. 16 reported) .....	11660

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