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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

● (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

AIRDRIE CENTENNIAL

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the community that I am proud to call home is celebrating its centennial on September 10 of this year.

Airdrie is proud of its 100 years of progress and has certainly come a long way since the first homesteaders arrived to begin building a community that has now become one of Canada's fastest growing cities.

The celebration of this heritage has already begun. Centennial events have been ongoing for months and will only intensify in September with a homecoming weekend, including concerts, historical re-enactments and a centennial legacy art project, among many other events.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the city of Airdrie and the organizing committee that has pulled together months of great community events on the occasion of the centennial anniversary.

I know that Airdrie will enjoy even greater prosperity in the next 100 years ahead.

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DAVENPORT COMMUNITY BUILDERS AWARDS

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to pay tribute to the recipients of this year's Davenport Community Builders Awards which recognize outstanding contribution to our community.

Welcoming new Canadians, the Abrigo Centre is an organization that provides comprehensive assistance to Portuguese speaking newcomers as they transition to their new life in Canada.

David Anderson is the artistic director of the Clay and Paper Theatre which brightens our urban spaces with a range of public art, puppetry and theatre.

Donna Cowan, the chair of Dig In, has worked tirelessly to help beautify Toronto through the cultural, social, environmental and economic vitalization of our neighbourhoods.

Gabrielle Langlois is a co-founder of GreenHere and works daily to help preserve and expand green space in our city and assists the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre in dealing with issues of poverty, violence and social alienation.

Lisa Rainford will receive an award for her excellent work with the *Bloor West Villager* newspaper which keeps residents of Toronto's west end well informed.

On behalf of the residents of Davenport, I invite all members of Parliament to join with me in congratulating these outstanding community leaders. They help to make the Davenport community and Toronto a vibrant and beautiful place to live.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MAXIME TALBOT

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): I rise today in the House to extend my very warm congratulations to Maxime Talbot, a little guy from Lemoyne in Longueuil, for his great exploit last Friday evening. He brought together the collective efforts of his entire team by scoring the two goals that won the Pittsburgh Penguins the Stanley Cup. In a game that was super exciting from the first minute to the last, Maxime Talbot scored his team's only two goals and took it to a historic, and totally unexpected, win against a club that seemed to be invincible on home ice.

His enthusiasm, his open camaraderie and his determination are what made this young player, once a leading light for the Gatineau Olympiques, so appreciated by all of his team members. May I take this opportunity to congratulate everyone on the Pittsburgh Penguins team, and most particularly the other Quebecers, whose names will be engraved on the Stanley Cup for posterity.

Our little guy from Lemoyne played a defining role in achieving the impossible dream.

Statements by Members

[English]

MAKE IT SEVEN

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NHL wants Canadians to believe that when it comes to Jim Balsillie's efforts to bring the Coyotes to Hamilton, the court said, "three strikes and you're out", except this is not baseball and our field of dreams is the ice at Coppins Coliseum.

This Friday, hockey fans in Hamilton and from all over southern Ontario are rallying to keep the dream alive at a rally to bring the NHL to Hamilton. It coincides with Make it Seven Day throughout the rest of the country as hockey fans show their support for a seventh NHL team in Canada.

The three NDP MPs from Hamilton were among the first to show their support by signing onto makeitseven.ca and if we were not in Ottawa this week, we sure would all be at the rally on Friday.

On behalf of the member for Hamilton Centre and the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, I am proud to rise in the House to support bringing an NHL team to Hamilton.

The final buzzer has not sounded. We still have hope. I ask all members of Parliament to join us in signing on to makeitseven.ca and help us keep the dream alive.

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● (1405)

MILLENNIUM EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has awarded four Londoners with prestigious Millennium Excellence Awards. What superb students and community role models.

Younjei Chung of Oakridge Secondary School has achieved great success in Junior Achievement and fundraised for charities. During one campaign, he organized 14 events and raised \$13,000. As well as being musically inclined, he also campaigns against child sweatshops.

Alyssa Craik, also from Oakridge Secondary School, has put her heart and soul into Make a Wish Foundation. She is a leader among her peers and has raised school spirit immeasurably and participates in many sports.

Ifrah Hashi rounds out the trio from Oakridge. She has a passion for environmental causes and helping the less fortunate. She started Reading Sisters to help girls in Somalia learn to read. She has also started a micro-credit organization called Barrows of Hope.

Radha Joseph, from London Central Secondary School, is editor of the school newspaper and a phenomenal violinist and concert master. She also helps less fortunate children afford participation in music through Arts for All Kids.

Congratulations for their achievements. I know we will hear much more from these four remarkable Londoners.

LOWELL CORMIER AVENUE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week Cape Breton Regional Municipality renamed Breton Avenue in New Waterford, Lowell Cormier Avenue.

Lowell is a community leader. He is dedicated to education, but he is also a strong advocate of sports throughout the region. Lowell's dedication to sports is highlighted by 20 years as a high school basketball coach and a founding member of the Coal Bowl high school basketball tournament, one of the most famous high school tournaments in the country.

Right next door to Lowell Cormier Avenue is the Veterans Memorial soccer field, one of Cape Breton's finest sports venues that would not have existed without the driving determination of Mr. Cormier.

He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Dr. J.A. Roach basketball courts, the refurbishing of the tennis courts and the Rotary ball hockey rink, to name only a few of his achievements throughout the community.

I therefore want to congratulate Lowell, or "Crowbar", on this recognition and salute him for his dedication to the community, to sport and to this country.

* * *

LETHBRIDGE VIADUCT

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago the highest and longest steel rail bridge in the world was completed just west of Lethbridge, Alberta spanning the Oldman River and overlooking Fort Whoop-Up and the scene of the last great Indian Battle. This bridge played an integral part in opening up the west to commerce and development.

Officially named the Lethbridge Viaduct, it is simply known to everyone as the High Level Bridge. It was completed in exactly one year. At just over a mile long and three hundred feet high it was originally dubbed "one of the wonders of the world", an engineering and construction marvel then as it is now.

The High Level Bridge has been in continual service since 1909, carrying ever longer and heavier rail traffic, a testament to the foresight and ingenuity of the pioneer builders of the time.

In 2008, the bridge was commemorated as a nationally significant aspect of Canadian history. This September the In the Shadow of the Bridge Festival will help us celebrate 100 years of the bridge.

I want to invite everyone to come to Lethbridge to see this engineering marvel and all the other fantastic attractions in southern Alberta.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, during the vote on the Bloc Québécois motion calling for maintenance of the securities commissions system, we witnessed the Liberals' centralist views resurfacing under the reign of the Leader of the Opposition.

Not only does he support the Conservatives in their desire to impose a Canada-wide regulator, but what is more, he even lacks the courage of his convictions and abstained from voting, along with all the members of the Liberal Party.

The Liberal leader is completely following in the footsteps of Chrétien, Martin, and especially Trudeau, those Liberal leaders with such disdain for Quebec and no compunction about violating Quebec's constitutional areas of jurisdiction. Disdain is certainly the right word to describe a decision to thumb their noses at a unanimous motion by the National Assembly and ignore the demands of Quebec.

Since 11 NDP members also opposed that motion, there is no doubt whatsoever that the only party in this House that stands up for the people of Quebec is the Bloc Québécois.

* * *

●(1410)

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when our Conservative Party first formed government, we introduced a \$500,000 capital gains exemption for fishers. The following year we expanded that amount to \$750,000.

We have made the largest investment in history to small craft harbours, the lifeblood of our fishing communities. We have made huge investments to the Canadian Coast Guard. We have increased funding to science, enforcement and aquaculture.

In contrast, the Liberal Party's main platform policy is to introduce a carbon tax which would kill the fishing industry.

Our Conservative government has defended the seal hunt with a strong and united caucus and will continue to do so, while a Liberal senator works to ban the hunt.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans recently announced \$75 million to support our lobster industry. This investment is just another example of how this Conservative government is getting the job done.

* * *

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate two businesses in my riding of Etobicoke North which have demonstrated exemplary corporate social responsibility.

First, I recognize Harmony Printing. Harmony is its name and that is its guiding principle. It has developed and is maintaining an

environmental management system to help achieve its goals in reducing its environmental footprint.

Second, I recognize Molson Canada. Recently the head office in Toronto participated in the 20 minute cleanup. Employees cleaned up nearby grounds and collected donations of clothes, computers and furniture that were distributed across my riding of Etobicoke North.

These two companies are taking action, making a difference and serving as a catalyst for change. They are outstanding role models for other businesses in Etobicoke North and for the rest of Canada.

On behalf of the House of Commons, I thank Harmony Printing and Molson Canada for all their hard work and commitment to our communities and our planet.

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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Ms. Candice Hooppner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 15, I rose in this House and brought forward a private member's bill, Bill C-391, to repeal the long gun registry.

Since that time, opposition members and their leaders have done everything possible to stop the bill from coming before the House to be publicly debated and voted on. They are trying to make the bill non-votable even though the Standing Orders do not allow them to do so. They are trying to keep this bill from the House even though it appears to have the support of the majority of MPs.

Why is the opposition so afraid of Bill C-391? This bill has support from many opposition members who have spoken publicly against the long gun registry. This support would allow Bill C-391 to pass in this House. However, the opposition leaders are so determined to kill the bill and safeguard the firearms registry they are prepared to defy parliamentary rules.

I would remind the opposition leaders and members that they are not above the rules of parliamentary procedure. I ask them to respect the rules they have sworn to uphold and allow Bill C-391 to come before this House for debate.

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TRANSCONA, MANITOBA

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, June 6, I had the pleasure of attending the Transcona Hi Neighbour Festival. The festival is the celebration of Transcona's rich culture and proud history. Thousands gathered to watch the Hi Neighbour parade, which included floats from businesses and non-profits across Transcona.

That same week, I had the deep honour to attend the Transcona Legion No. 7 for its celebration and remembrance of the 65th anniversary of D-Day. I stood with Paul Martin, a D-Day veteran and former mayor of Transcona, one of hundreds of brave Transcona residents to defend Canada and the world on the beaches of Normandy.

Oral Questions

As part of the occasion I was able to lay a wreath at the Transcona cenotaph. My wreath, along with that of Daryl Reid, MLA for Transcona, and Russ Wyatt, councillor for Transcona ward, represented all levels of government coming together to honour Transcona's heroes and Canada's heroes.

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[*Translation*]

QUEBEC NATION

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition reached agreement today to create a working group charged with drafting proposals for reforms to employment insurance eligibility that would enable self-employed workers to participate on a voluntary basis in the EI program and would improve eligibility criteria in order to ensure regional equity.

The federal members from Quebec who have the interests of Quebec nation at heart and who are responsible for keeping this country running properly in the best interests of Canadians are showing non-partisan leadership in order to allow Canada's economic action plan to bear fruit, unlike the Bloc Québécois and New Democratic Party members who seek only to create crises with no regard for the negative repercussions on the economy that a forced election would have.

The Quebec nation will remember the Bloc Québécois and the NDP for their lack of judgment and for their real agenda in Ottawa.

* * *

• (1415)

MARTIN DUBÉ

Mr. Pascal-Pierre Paillé (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois wishes to honour the memory of Corporal Martin Dubé of the 5 Combat Engineer Regiment based at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, and member of the 53rd Canadian Counter-IED Squadron, who lost his life on June 14 while carrying out his duties dismantling an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan.

Quebec is proud of this soldier and his regiment. We wish to honour the courage it takes to practice the trade Corporal Dubé was engaged in, as well as the courage it takes to choose a military career in the field. The men and women who choose that career path are fired by great passion, which they devote to serving the international community, with the ultimate goal of achieving a lasting peace. We must salute with pride the work that they do and their unflinching commitment in the service of peace.

I join with the rest of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois in extending our most sincere condolences to the family, friends and comrades of Corporal Martin Dubé. Be brave, our thoughts are with them all.

* * *

[*English*]

SEALING INDUSTRY

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sealing has thrived in Newfoundland and Labrador for hundreds of years. Today, as in the past, the seal harvest remains an

integral part of our economy, employing over 6,000 people. The focus remains on a sustainable harvest that is based on solid science, an industry based on the full utilization of the animal and humane harvesting methods with no tolerance for any inhumane practices.

Despite misinformation being spread by animal rights extremists, the seal population continues to thrive and is nowhere near being an endangered species. The northwest Atlantic harp seal population is now estimated to be approximately 5.4 million animals, nearly triple the population it was in the 1970s.

Despite what the animal rights groups say, there are no seal pups or baby seals being killed. In fact, such activities are against the law. The marine mammal regulations prohibit the trade, sale or barter of fur.

I would like to thank the members of our caucus for wearing symbols of their support for sealers today.

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today our government is introducing amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. We want to give immigration officers the power to deny work permits to those who may be trafficked into Canada and forced to perform humiliating and degrading jobs.

The previous government issued hundreds of special stripper visas to exotic dancers, with media reports of senior government members consorting with strippers and handing out ministerial permits. We know that these visas have resulted in the exploitation and degradation of foreign women.

Canada is taking action to protect the most vulnerable and to fight exploitation. I hope the House supports today's announcement, which gives immigration officials the tools they need to stop the trafficking of vulnerable women into Canada.

I would also encourage the Bloc Québécois to truly represent all Quebecers, especially those under 18, and support Bill C-268. Traffickers of children must receive sentences that reflect the severity of this horrific crime.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has finally said for the first time that it does not make sense to have different employment insurance eligibility criteria in each of the 58 regions.

Will the Prime Minister promise to work constructively to put the necessary legislative changes before Parliament to make the employment insurance program fairer for all Canadians?

Oral Questions

•(1420)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had a good discussion about this with the Leader of the Opposition. Our representatives will continue to talk about this issue over the summer, and I hope that we will end up with a better system for everyone.

All the same, it must be acknowledged that this government has paid Canada's unemployed workers \$5.5 billion more in employment insurance benefits in response to the global recession.

[English]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has now said for the first time in public that it does not make any sense to have 58 regional standards of eligibility for employment insurance, and the premiers of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario agree.

Will the Prime Minister now pledge to work constructively to bring before Parliament proposals that will make employment insurance fairer and more equitable for all Canadians from coast to coast?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, we are always willing to look at realistic, affordable proposals that will respond to the real needs of the labour force and to the unemployed during this recession. That is why we introduced a number of reforms in the budget that have allowed for an additional \$5.5 billion of benefits to be paid to the unemployed of this country this year.

That is important, and of course I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition and our parties to continue the constructive dialogue that we have begun on this matter.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the self-employed are the largest group of Canadians without EI coverage. Last election, the Conservatives promised only to make maternity and paternity leave available to the self-employed.

Are Canadians to understand that the Prime Minister is now willing to make the full complement of EI benefits available to the self-employed who contribute, and will bring forward legislation, if agreement can be reached on this subject, in the autumn session?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I indicated some time earlier that this government is looking at ways that we can bring the self-employed, on a voluntary basis, into the system. This is not an easy matter. We would of course welcome any proposals from the Liberal Party.

We have made a commitment to work over the summer to see if we can find common ground on frankly a major improvement to the system, which would be of benefit to a lot of Canadians.

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IRAN

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the government on the subject of Iran.

We recognize that over the last three days, there have been extraordinary developments taking place in Iran that have had a dramatic effect on the people in that country. Hundreds of people

have now been arrested. Many people have been killed. Both President Obama and Prime Minister Brown have issued strong statements with respect to the situation in Iran.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he would perhaps like to take the opportunity to reflect on Canada's position with respect to this most important event taking place in the world today?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no secret to the Government of Canada's position. We have been outspoken for a very long time in the councils of the United Nations and elsewhere about the unacceptable ideology, democratic practices, and human rights record of the government of Iran.

We are obviously strongly displeased by the reaction of authorities to events this week. We encourage those authorities to respect people's basic human rights and to move forward on democratic progress in that country. We find the behaviour of that regime unacceptable in so many ways that I cannot even begin to name them.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fortunately, we have diplomatic relations with Iran. As such, our embassy can tell us exactly what is going on in Iran right now, and what further measures Canada and our friends, the United States and the European Union, among others, can take.

Can the government tell us what it plans to do to help bring true democracy to Iran?

•(1425)

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that this government has been very active on the Iran file, particularly in terms of condemnation and the commitment we made at the United Nations to condemn human rights abuses. We have also very strongly condemned the latest elections. We demanded that the elections be transparent and that every vote be counted. We are following up on this issue, and I hope that today, the opposition will support the motion outlining our next steps.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the newly formed Liberal-Conservative coalition is definitely against the interests of Quebec and the public. Having introduced and supported a budget that is inappropriate and inadequate for Quebec, now the new coalition is setting up a panel on employment insurance that will report in the fall. They are abandoning the unemployed to their fate for the summer at least.

Does the coalition realize that real action must be taken now to help the unemployed?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has already introduced measures in Canada's economic action plan that have greatly benefited unemployed workers in this country. We have paid the unemployed an additional \$5.5 billion in employment insurance. It is the Bloc Québécois that abandoned these unemployed workers by consistently opposing, at all cost, the reforms that benefited them.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-Conservative coalition agreement covers only two aspects of employment insurance: the Conservative election promise and eligibility. The Conservative election promise was only for parental leave for self-employed workers, and Quebec already has that. As for the 360-hour eligibility threshold, the Liberal leader is already willing to give in.

Do the Prime Minister and his new Liberal friend realize that what the unemployed need is a complete overhaul of the employment insurance system?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government and the Liberal Party have agreed to discuss future amendments to eligibility criteria and voluntary benefits for self-employed workers.

But if we talk about more comprehensive reform, I am sure that the Bloc Québécois will vote against measures to help the unemployed in this country in any case.

That is the problem with the Bloc Québécois: it can never deliver the goods.

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to undermine the 360-hour eligibility threshold that the Liberals have proposed, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development is making a perverse calculation by adding together the 9 weeks of insurable employment represented by those hours, the 39 weeks of benefits and the 2 week waiting period to conclude that workers have one year of benefits. What a gross misstatement! Wages and a waiting period are not benefits.

Why does the minister refuse to understand that an immediate overhaul of the employment insurance system is needed?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand that this is a very disappointing day for the leader of the Bloc and his team because we again avoided a crisis that they wanted. They wanted another crisis, they wanted an election, they wanted to waste half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money on an election.

But no, we came to an agreement. We are working in the interests of the unemployed and workers and we will already be taking action this summer to improve the employment insurance system.

● (1430)

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the reform of employment insurance that the Prime Minister spoke about during the election campaign will provide parental leave to the self-employed, a limited measure already available to these workers in Quebec. Once again, there is no consideration for Quebec.

When will the Liberal-Conservative coalition realize that more than piecemeal changes are needed, that employment insurance must be overhauled now?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again I wish to remind them that, although they are disappointed, there is no crisis today. We have come to an agreement and we have avoided an election. The Bloc does not like it and only wants the downfall of the country. For our part, we want to make Canada thrive and we are attempting to contribute to the economic prosperity of the country.

We recently extended unemployment benefits by five weeks and they voted against it. This summer we will work on further enhancing the system. However, they might vote against it again.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the marriage of convenience between the Conservatives and the Liberals has blossomed into true love.

What is their message to Canadians? If they have H1N1, they should take an aspirin. If they need isotopes, they should use soap. Are people putting groceries on a credit card? The big fonts will show them just how deep they are sinking. If they have lost their job, there is a blue ribbon panel and they should sit tight till the fall.

When will these partners in crime get real? Instead of appointing panels, why will the Prime Minister not act for jobless Canadians today?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have already taken important action for the unemployed, but the NDP voted against it. NDP members decided they would vote against it before they even knew what it was. They have decided they will be against any further proposals before they know what they are. In effect, we have le Bloc anglais down there.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I think the Prime Minister will have to wait for the next question.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, workers need help now, not months from now.

Oral Questions

When New Democrats negotiated budget 2005, we delivered. We turned \$4.6 billion in corporate tax breaks into billions for housing, post-secondary education, transit, and more.

After all that tough talk from the Liberal leader, all Canadians get is a blue ribbon panel. That is cold comfort for laid off workers.

When will the Prime Minister stop playing at his opponent's low level and start acting to help those Canadians who are jobless?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem for the NDP is that the lowest level game being played in this Parliament is by the NDP.

The NDP does not seem to accept that the people of Canada re-elected this government, and this government wants to work with other parties. As long as the NDP decides it will oppose everything before it even knows what the proposals are, it will remain completely irrelevant to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberals were yelling that unemployed workers were going to starve. Today, the Liberal deputy prime minister is effectively saying, "Let them starve!" The worst is that the Liberal-Conservative coalition offers no hope to the hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers caught up in the economic crisis. It is shameful and tragic.

Why does the Prime Minister insist on spreading falsehoods to the detriment of unemployed workers? Is it possible that he does not know that 60% of those who lose their jobs are not eligible for employment insurance? Or, like the Liberal deputy prime minister, does he just not care?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the NDP had read our economic action plan, they would know that we have done many things, and we continue to do so, to help unemployed workers in Canada. For instance, we have provided five extra weeks of benefits and expanded the work sharing program, which is protecting over 130,000 jobs at this time.

No matter what we propose for employed workers, the NDP votes against it.

* * *

• (1435)

MEDICAL ISOTOPES

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the former president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission said yesterday that the MAPLE reactors could have been working and producing isotopes. She said that the government's decision to prematurely shut down the MAPLE reactors a year ago was shocking.

Why did the Conservatives abandon the MAPLE project, when the reactors were still being audited? Was it because producing isotopes did not fit into their privatization plans?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the testimony of the former president of CNSC has actually turned up something else which I find very interesting. Indeed, she indicated to the *Globe and Mail*, not more than three weeks ago, that

she was told that the MAPLEs had problems in 2001, which I presume she told the member for Wascana. As well, the quote was, "You know, we are going to be bringing out the cement machines to fill that in".

Now, is that something the member for Wascana actually knew about? If so, why did it take him so long to alert the world that Canada was not in a position to provide—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Halifax West.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know the government refuses to explore every possible solution to the isotope crisis.

The government prematurely shut down the MAPLE reactors. It did not treat a proposal to create isotopes at McMaster University as a priority. It denied, for months, there was even a crisis. Then it made matters worse by announcing isotope production would die on its watch.

Why does the government believe Canadian cancer patients should be dependent on other countries for isotopes when it is clear we can be world leaders in this field?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, the one thing that the hon. member said that was, in fact, a fact is that we are world leaders.

We are absolutely world leaders in leading the globe in coming together to come up with contingency planning with respect to reactor schedules to ensure that we have a global supply of medical isotopes.

With respect to McMaster, this government has funded McMaster, both on the side of research with respect to the reactor as well as the infrastructure side of the reactor. Indeed, on May 28 of this year we announced an expert panel to review the call for proposals for alternate ways to produce medical isotopes for the long-term.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has finally admitted that there is an isotope crisis.

Canadians urgently need a triage system where the most urgent cases go to the front of the line. The nuclear medicine community yesterday criticized the research announcement for doing nothing to calm the fears of anxious patients waiting for tests, like in Saskatoon, Windsor, Kitchener and Kingston, where there are no alternatives to technetium bone scans.

When will the Minister of Health provide an actual plan for the worried patients in Canada?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, back in 2007 the medical isotope experts, in partnership with the provinces and territories, established contingency measures. Those measures have been implemented and the provinces and territories continue to work with them. Part of that plan was to identify alternatives. Alternatives were made available to the provinces and territories and are available now.

The Tc-99 shortage is being managed by front-line health care providers and we will continue to work with them.

Oral Questions

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows the alternatives are not equally available across Canada. This is a crisis and it deserves to be treated as such.

Ministers must be accountable to Parliament and to Canadians during times of crisis. The minister and her medical adviser must appear tomorrow at the health committee and reveal her proper plan for the patients in Canada.

Will she agree to table the source and security of the isotope supply for all 240 nuclear medicine clinics in Canada, their access to the alternatives and their capacity to help the other areas that have no access to alternatives?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work with the provinces and territories, which deliver health care, on this issue. I will continue to work with the medical experts on medical isotopes in identifying alternatives.

Yesterday I announced \$6 million to be allocated for research. Canada is a world leader in research. This is the first of its kind. For the very first time, experts on medical isotopes are coming together to look at alternatives to Tc-99.

* * *

• (1440)

[Translation]

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, thanks to pressure from the Bloc Québécois, a few pulp and paper plants will be receiving assistance, but this is not enough. Only two Quebec companies will receive any of this support, with the rest going essentially to British Columbia. We must provide the other forestry companies whose need is also great with liquidity and loan guarantees.

What about the sawmills in Girardville, Roberval, Mistassini and other places in Quebec that have closed down? When will the government finally give them the loan guarantees they are asking for?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Québécois is trying to take credit for the government's work. And once again, it is not the case.

Thanks to the work of the Minister of Natural Resources and of our government, we have successfully put in place a program that will support the pulp and paper industry and improve its competitive edge, as well as making it greener in response to market trends.

Once again, the only thing the Bloc Québécois wants is to again stir up a political crisis by pitting one province against another. Why do they not always give the full picture?

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. lawyers are using statements on loan guarantees made by the Prime Minister and his ministers in this House to undermine the case Canada's lawyers are trying to make in the London tribunal, which is that the loan guarantees are absolutely legal.

Would it not have been a better idea for the government to do and say what its own lawyers are proposing, and give loan guarantees to the forest industry rather than back up the U.S.?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois members continue to focus on the lawyers' needs, while we focus on the workers' needs. That is why, with the cooperation of Export and Development Canada, we have put in place support in the order of \$8 billion-plus to help Quebec forest industries to continue to operate during the financial crisis.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services said yesterday that, if the government were to fall, funds that have already been voted on would be blocked and that payments to municipalities would in turn be suspended, which is false. What is more, funds that were voted on in 2007 still have not to be spent.

Of the money earmarked for infrastructure in budget 2007, can the minister tell us how many projects have already begun, how many are about to begin and how many have been completed?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

We are working very hard with the Government of Quebec. We are in the midst of signing a detailed agreement. It is absolutely crucial that we continue to work with the Government of Quebec and make the necessary investments to create jobs, because economic growth in Quebec and Canada is our top priority.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Allan Maslove of Carleton University has said that nearly 90% of the stimulus package funds would continue to be distributed, regardless of the political situation, and the Treasury Board has confirmed this.

So how can this government claim to be worthy of the confidence of the House, when it does not hesitate to brazenly twist the facts like that?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is wrong.

It is absolutely crucial to have a real government to sign accords and detailed agreements. If the House is not sitting, if we do not have a real government, we cannot take action.

We are taking action; we are creating jobs across Canada and in all regions of Quebec. Quebec has a strong team working for it on this side of the House, one that is achieving real results for the province.

*Oral Questions***LOBSTER FISHERY**

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the lobster fishery in the Northumberland Strait is experiencing its worst slump in a generation. During the election campaign, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans promised to establish a licence buyback program to help fishers, which would be funded by the federal government. Although she made an announcement last week, the minister remained silent about the licence buyout program.

Has the minister forgotten her election promise?

• (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, I committed to helping the people in my riding. One of the issues they identified was the need for rationalization. That is why last week we announced \$65 million to support the lobster industry, some of which will go to rationalization.

We are working on plans with the different fisheries organizations right now all across Atlantic Canada to assist them and to address their issues.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fishermen in the minister's riding were not expecting a loan from the government to pay for a rationalization program. What she was talking about was a federally financed licence buyback program. That is what she talked about in the election, that is what the fishermen in the Northumberland Strait were expecting, and that is precisely what is absent from the minister's comments now.

Why did the minister let down the fishermen in her riding and the fishermen in my riding on the other side of the Northumberland Strait?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to clarify something. I did commit to working with the fishermen on a rationalization program. I never once said "a government funded rationalization program".

What we do have here is a contribution agreement to help the fishers carry out their plans, which I must point out is \$75 million more than the Liberals ever put on the table for the lobster industry.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY INDUSTRIES

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a Conference Board study showed that medium-sized cities are bearing the brunt of the current recession. In Quebec, cities like Saguenay, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke are dealing with it every day, and we are all worried about their weakening economies. Since 2006, this government has done nothing for the manufacturing industry. Nor has it done anything particularly good for the forestry industry.

When will the Conservatives give us specific answers about the stimulus package funds that are supposed to go to these crucial sectors of our municipalities' economies?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, federal and provincial governments are working very hard in all regions of Canada and Quebec.

Our budget included major measures, such as the gas tax. We have increased the municipal refund by 200%. We have already begun paying that money out to every municipality because we know that municipalities are at the heart of this country. It is critical that we support municipalities.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not have to look far to find specific examples. In Saguenay and Trois-Rivières, the forestry crisis has decimated sawmills and paper mills. In Sherbrooke, the Conservatives stood by while the manufacturing industry took a nosedive. In every one of those cities, behind all of the Conference Board numbers, there are families struggling to survive.

When will the Conservatives offer a little hope instead of empty political slogans?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, Canada is not an island. Economic turmoil is affecting the whole world.

Our government's economic action plan, with billions invested in infrastructure, training and renovation credits, is generating economic activity, and we are beginning to see a recovery. We do not need rose-coloured glasses to see that things will get even better. We are hard at work. We must be given the opportunity to keep working. Thank you for allowing us to keep working to stimulate this country's economy.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach the summer months, all members of the House are anxious to return to their ridings and speak with their constituents about the performance of their respective parties and their leaders.

I know that members on this side of the House will be seeking the opinions of their constituents with respect to our crime agenda, an aggressive agenda that would ensure that the rights of law-abiding Canadians and victims trump the rights of criminals.

Would the Minister of Justice explain this government's most recently tabled crime legislation and how it would help victims of crime in this country and how it would fit into the government's overall crime agenda?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those who commit serious crimes should serve their time behind bars and not in the comfort of their homes. This is why we introduced legislation to make sure that those who have house arrest for something will not be able to go home if they have committed a serious crime.

Oral Questions

I hope we get a change of support from the opposition parties on this. They have not supported it up to this point. I have said this in view of the fact that the NDP last week did not support our drug bill. Now they have problems with identity theft. What is it about the NDP that they can never stand up for victims in this country? Would it be so bad for them to, for once, support victims of crime?

* * *

● (1450)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party just changed his mind. He just duped workers.

The 360-hour threshold is no longer necessary. What a sad spectacle. The people responsible for misappropriating funds from the employment insurance fund are agreeing with the Conservative insults about a “45-day work year”.

This new coalition between the people who sabotaged the employment insurance system and those who see EI as lucrative is disturbing.

Why is the new coalition hiding behind a phoney panel and not taking action now to help the unemployed, as the Liberal leader suggested two days ago?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as promised, we are trying to provide self-employed workers with employment insurance benefits. These people currently do not have access to employment insurance. What is more, the NDP promoted this.

Why has it changed its position, and why is it now against the efforts of the Liberals and the Conservatives to create a system of access for self-employed workers?

[*English*]

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, workers do not want a summer of talks. They need action now.

More and more workers across Canada are falling off EI and onto welfare. In the past year, B.C. has seen a 25% jump in social assistance claims. Ontario has seen an increase of 225,000 single people or families on welfare, the largest in its history.

We know the problems. We know the answers. Why is the government hiding behind another blue-ribbon panel when workers will continue to suffer this summer?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been taking very strong action to help all those who have been unfortunate enough to lose their jobs, by adding an additional five weeks and by protecting jobs through our work sharing program.

Now we are taking it one step further by working with the Liberals on this panel this summer to develop a program that will help those who are self-employed get access to EI benefits.

This is a group that has been largely ignored. We are working to help them. I do not understand why the NDP members are against

that. It is not something that can be done overnight, but I am glad we are going to have the input from the Liberals to make this a viable program.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MEDICAL ISOTOPES

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government thinks it is dealing with the medical isotope shortage by suddenly freeing up \$6 million for research. But an expert in the field, Dr. Lamoureux, says that this announcement is nothing but a media diversion and that it will do nothing to solve the crisis immediately.

Will the government limit its action to spur-of-the-moment announcements, or will it come up with a real plan to deal with the isotope shortage?

[*English*]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the announcement I made yesterday with regard to research to find alternatives to Tc99 is the first of its kind in the world. Canada is a world leader in research, and this will help deal with the shortage of Tc99. We need to look at those alternatives, and we are doing so.

I will continue to work with the medical isotope experts to look at other alternatives, and with my colleague, who is dealing with the supply situation in this country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Linda Keen, whom the government fired last year, confirms that there was no plan to secure the supply of isotopes. In short, the Conservatives, like the Liberals, dragged their feet and today are making patients and doctors pay the price.

What real measures does the government plan to take so that Canada stops depending on other countries for its isotope supply?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our plan has been in action and we have been very active on the file.

In December of last year, we released a statement to the public, indicating that we were pursuing the supply of medical isotopes around the globe in terms of the security of supply. Two areas on which my department was concentrating were reviewing the actual ability to produce alternatives to medical isotopes in another way and to explore how to better coordinate the reactors around the world.

We have had great success on both of those, culminating with an expert panel review for the long-term with respect to new ways to produce medical isotopes and the global response of both Petten and France coming on line.

*Oral Questions***PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY**

●(1455)

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for more than two weeks, trade and tourism have been ground to a halt in and around Cornwall as a result of the closed border. Businesses already hard-hit by a recession are wondering how they are going to keep their doors open, how they are going to keep going.

The fault rests with the government. It has refused to even try to resolve the dispute between the Akwesasne people and the CBSA, a dispute to which all agree no ground exists. The public safety minister has closed his ears. He did not consult the Akwesasne before and he refuses to try to work with them now.

Why is the minister so indifferent to the suffering of this community? Why does he refuse to try to intervene and find a solution? It is his job.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we care a great deal about the safety of the community and communities all across the country. That is why we took a decision three years ago to arm our border service officers at every land crossing across the country.

We also want to see the safety and security of the travelling public of the community and our border services officers maintained, including at the Cornwall border crossing.

The implementation of this policy was undertaken by the Canadian Border Services Agency, with consultations that went on close to a dozen times, I think, in the past year. Those discussions continue, and I encourage those them to continue, so we can have a satisfactory resolution in the interests of the community, which maintains, number one, safety and security.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the minister does not even understand the concerns. Over the last three years, the Conservatives knew the situation was coming. They knew the concerns of the Akwesasne.

In a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in Cornwall today, it called the situation a crisis for its local economy, and the minister refuses to intervene. The minister has ignored every request to meet with the Akwesasne, instead taking an uncompromising position with no concern for the damage it will cause.

The minister's position has to change. When will he step in, do his job, start to work with the Akwesasne and find a solution to the crisis he created?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on one question the hon. member raises, I agree. We will not compromise safety and security for anybody in the country.

I know the hon. member has a long record of being on the record as opposed to the arming of our border service officers. We will not put them at risk of being shot by criminals and being forced to do their jobs without the tools they need to be safe. We will not compromise safety and security, not like he is prepared to do.

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's forestry package has totally missed the mark. While New Democrats welcome aid for pulp and paper producers to make their operations more efficient and environmentally friendly, the government has failed to deal with some fundamental issues.

Where is the commitment to make EI more accessible? Where is the pension protection for AbitibiBowater retirees? Where are the guarantees for small businesses and suppliers that are owed huge sums of money by large bankrupt corporations?

With hundreds of thousands of jobs at risk across the country, does the minister really think this plan will save them?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to announce today the government's new program with respect to forestry, and I will give more details of it later on. However, if the member actually bothered to talk to the industry, he would find out that it embraces it, that it will help save jobs and help us maintain our edge as the greenest supplier of pulp in the world.

What it particularly appreciates about the announcement is it demonstrates a commitment to the future of the industry through its support to capital improvements, exactly what industry needs to prepare for the return of markets.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, will the minister guarantee that no jobs will be lost at all as of today? That is the question. The U.S. black liquor subsidy has hammered our pulp and paper industry and it needs help today or 100,000 jobs are on the line. The failure to negotiate an end to the U.S. subsidy has brought our industry to the brink of extinction.

As the manager of Zellstoff Celgar in Castlegar said today, a three or four month delay will be too late. The mill will no longer be viable.

Will the minister commit today to immediate funding that will arrive in time to save the pulp and paper industry?

●(1500)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the government announced today the pulp and paper green transformation program. This program is being put in place specifically to allow the pulp and paper industry to transform itself. It is already doing very well in terms of renewable energy, but even more so it is becoming more clean and more green. That is exactly what we should be doing at this point in time.

As I have already indicated, the industry has embraced this and has been very vocal about the fact that it is the right thing to do.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is determined to minimize the damaging effects this global recession has had on our forestry sector. The Kenora riding was delighted to hear today that our Conservative government announced new funding for Canadian pulp mills that produce black liquor to invest in new green technologies which will increase the environmental performance of their facilities.

Could the Minister of Natural Resources tell us more about this exciting new program and how it will help our Canadian forestry sector and its workers?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kenora for his work on the file and all the other Conservative MPs who have brought this matter to my attention. He continues to serve his constituents in northern Ontario very well.

As indicated, Canadian pulp mills will be eligible to access \$1 billion in funding through our government's pulp and paper green transformation program. It will help ensure Canada has a pulp sector, both commercially and environmentally sustainable for years to come. Every dollar made available through this program will benefit forestry communities across Canada and provide them with a brighter future.

By making a smart investment today, we are laying the groundwork for a greener, more secure future for pulp and paper workers and their families.

* * *

BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

Last year Rogers Telecom applied to build a massive cell tower in a residential neighbourhood right in the middle of the city of Charlottetown. The neighbours did not want it. The people who lived in Charlottetown did not want it. Our democratically elected city council voted against it.

The Minister of Industry, since the tower was not in his neighbourhood, overruled the decision of the city council and ordered the construction of the tower to proceed.

My question is very simple. Why did he disrespect the wishes of the residents of Charlottetown and the decision of their elected council?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member knows there is legislation in place that ensures we have a well connected network throughout the country. If there are legitimate concerns, those concerns are then addressed.

Health Canada reviews the concerns from a health and safety point of view. Health Canada did its job and reviewed for health and safety concerns. Those concerns were not valid. On that basis, that is why these are left to the national level to ensure we have the network capacity that is necessary for health and safety reasons, for instance 911 calls and things like that, of which I think the people of Charlottetown would in fact approve.

[Translation]

TRADE

Mr. Claude Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Colombian soldiers have assassinated civilians to receive compensation offered by the government. They disguise their victims as guerrilla fighters to inflate the figures in the anti-terrorist fight and collect promised cash rewards. Justice officials have opened more than 1,200 inquiries. The UN has condemned this practice, which human rights organizations are describing as “systematic and widespread”.

How can the government be considering a free trade agreement with a country that puts a bounty on people's heads to get rid of guerrillas?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have seen a great deal of progress with Colombia on human rights. The Colombian president was here last week to answer members' questions. In addition, we have a very strong agreement that they signed to determine and continue progress on human rights issues. The agreement also includes sanctions if they do not comply with certain parts of the agreement.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of three provincial fishery ministers: the Hon. Tom Hedderson of Newfoundland and Labrador; the Hon. Rick Doucet of New Brunswick; and the Hon. Neil LeClair of Prince Edward Island.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services and Minister Responsible for Status of Women, Persons with Disabilities, Seniors and the Homeless for the Northwest Territories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1505)

[English]

ARTISTS

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:05 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 16 the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 297 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

Private Members' Business

● (1515)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 92)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Beaudin	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brison
Brunelle	Byrne
Cannis	Cardin
Carrier	Charlton
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Crombie	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dorion
Dosanjh	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Easter
Eyking	Faillie
Folco	Footé
Fry	Gagnon
Garneau	Gaudet
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	Harris (St. John's East)
Holland	Hughes
Hyer	Jennings
Julian	Kania
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
McGuinty	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mendes	Minna
Mulcair	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nadeau
Neville	Olipphant
Ouellet	Pacetti
Paillé	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Proulx	Rae
Rafferty	Ratansi
Regan	Rodriguez
Rota	Roy
Russell	Savage
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Siksay	Silva
Simms	Simson
St-Cyr	Stoffer
Szabo	Thi Lac
Tonks	Trudeau

Valeriote
Volpe
Wilfert

Vincent
Wasylycia-Leis
Zarac — 144

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Ashfield	Baird
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Brunoogoe
Cadman	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casson	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cummins	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauson	Lebel
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mark	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Paradis
Payne	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scheer	Schellenberger
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson
Tilson	Trost
Tweed	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young — 142

PAIRED

Nil

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The House resumed from June 11 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, June 16, 2009, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 295 under private members' business.

• (1520)

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

(Division No. 93)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Beaudin	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brunelle	Byrne
Cannis	Cardin
Carrier	Charlton
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Crombie	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dorion
Dosanjh	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Foote
Fry	Gagnon
Garneau	Gaudet
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	Harris (St. John's East)
Holland	Hughes
Hyer	Jennings
Julian	Kania
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mendes
Minna	Mulcair
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Oliphant	Ouellet
Pacetti	Paillé

Paquette	Patry
Pearson	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Ratansi	Regan
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Siksay
Silva	Simms
Simson	St-Cyr
Stoffer	Szabo
Thi Lac	Tonks
Trudeau	Valeriote
Vincent	Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis	Wilfert
Woodworth	Zarac — 146

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Ashfield	Baird
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Cadman	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casson	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cummins	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mark	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Paradis
Payne	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scheer	Schellenberger
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson

Tilson
Tweed
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wong
Young — 141

Trost
Uppal
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson

Yelich

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1525)

[English]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF CANADA FOR THE REGION OF NORTHERN ONTARIO ACT

The House resumed from June 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-309, An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 16, 2009, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-309 under private members' business.

● (1530)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 94)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashiton	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Beaudin	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brunelle	Byrne
Cannis	Cardin
Carrier	Charlton
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Crombie	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dorion
Dosanji	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Easton
Eyking	Faillie
Folco	Foote
Fry	Gagnon
Garneau	Gaudet
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Guarnieri

Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	Harris (St. John's East)
Holland	Hughes
Hyer	Jennings
Julian	Kania
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mendes
Minna	Mulcair
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Oliphant	Ouellet
Pacetti	Paillet
Paquette	Patry
Pearson	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Ratansi	Regan
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Siksay
Silva	Simms
Simon	St-Cyr
Stoffer	Szabo
Thi Lac	Tonks
Trudeau	Valeriotte
Vincent	Volpe
Wasylcia-Leis	Wilfert
Zarac — 145	

Private Members' Business

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Ashfield	Baird
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinoooge
Cadman	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casson	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cummins	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komaricki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel

Routine Proceedings

Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mark	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Paradis
Payne	Petit
Poillievre	Prentice
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scheer	Schellenberger
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson
Tilson	Trost
Tweed	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young— 142

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

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

* * *

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 90(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in respect of the Conflict of Interest Act for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON MARITIME TRANSPORT

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House and pursuant to the standing orders, I would like to table, in both official languages, the agreement entitled “Protocol amending the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Maritime Transport”, signed in Ottawa on May 6, 2009.

● (1535)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 17 petitions.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

Hon. Rob Merrifield (for the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

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

* * *

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-45, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the parliamentary mission to Sweden, the country that will hold the next presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the second part of the 2009 ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe held in Stockholm, Sweden, and Strasbourg, France, April 23-30.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on National Defence entitled “Doing Well and Doing Better: Health Services provided to Canadian Forces with an Emphasis on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder”.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their excellent work.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources entitled, “Combining our Energies: Integrated Energy Systems for Canadian Communities”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government respond to the report and the recommendations contained therein.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade entitled, “An Examination of Selected Canada-U.S. Border Issues”.

I would like to particularly thank the committee at this time for a non-partisan visit to Washington. We met with congressmen to push Canada's position against buy American.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates in relation to its study on supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010. I am pleased to report that the committee considered some of the votes referred to it and reports the same.

Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates in relation to its study on the federal government procurement processes and small and medium-sized enterprises.

HEALTH

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act. The committee examined the bill and has decided to report it with amendments, and has ordered its reprint.

I wish to especially thank all members of the health committee for all their hard work, dedication and co-operation.

● (1540)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs entitled, “Shared Experiences: Comparison of Veterans Services Offered by Members of the Commonwealth and the G8”.

* * *

CANADIAN FOOTBALL ACT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-423, An Act to support Canadian professional football.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my seconder, the member for Edmonton—Strathcona, a big fan of the Edmonton Eskimos.

As we all know, we are celebrating a century of the Grey Cup in Canada. Canadian professional football is like football nowhere else on the planet. It has older traditions dating back further than anywhere else on the planet. Our athletes in Canadian professional football have shown time and time again that they contribute to Canadian culture and the economy in local communities across the country.

Tonight the pre-season begins for the Canadian Football League. This bill would help to protect the CFL in perpetuity, making sure that fans not only for today and next year but a decade from now can enjoy Canadian professional football. We know that fans are lining up from British Columbia to Montreal and we hope soon they will also be able to see Canadian professional football in Ottawa and why not Quebec City or Halifax.

Unlike the NHL, where an American lawyer can decide whether Winnipeg or Hamilton gets a team, Canadian football is our game. Tonight the CFL begins. The NDP is supportive of the CFL.

If I can be permitted a final partisan note, I would like to say for 2009, go BC Lions.

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

* * *

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-424, An Act to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act (protection of the public).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Ottawa—Vanier for seconding this bill.

This bill strives to fully implement all the federal recommendations stemming from the Nunn commission in Nova Scotia. It is in response to the tragic death of a Nova Scotia teaching assistant, who was killed in 2004 in a car crash by a repeat young offender. It encompasses all of the Nunn recommendations, including those that were ignored by the Conservative government.

I should emphasize the work of Mr. Justice Nunn. I also want to thank Hugh Wright, the lawyer for the family of Theresa McEvoy, for his invaluable assistance with drafting my bill.

In meeting with Halifax's police chief and other law enforcement officials, and at town hall meetings I have held with residents of my riding, it is clear that the changes I am bringing forward are necessary. I am sure my colleagues from Nova Scotia have heard the same thing from their constituents.

A senseless stabbing in my riding just a few short weeks ago also reminded me that we have to do a better job of dealing with young offenders.

Routine Proceedings

I look forward to the input from all sides of the House on this bill. I hope everyone in this place recognizes that the changes my bill proposes for the Youth Criminal Justice Act would help make our streets and neighbourhoods safe for everyone.

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

* * *

FOREIGN CREDENTIALS RECOGNITION ACT

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-425, An Act respecting the recognition of foreign credentials.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from British Columbia for seconding this bill.

There is a problem in this country in that new Canadians and professionals who have arrived in Canada are not able to reach their full potential, not because they are not skilled, but because their foreign credentials are not recognized.

This bill would do three key things. It would require registration of all foreign credential practices throughout the country in order to coordinate what is going on in the provinces. All provinces would have to meet transparent objectives and partial assessments for foreign-trained professionals. It would establish a foreign credentials recognition fund to provide funding for provinces and municipalities to integrate foreign-trained professionals into the workplace. Finally, it would ensure accountability by asking the minister to report to Parliament on the progress of addressing this important challenge.

This is something we could do by opening up spaces right here in Ottawa in the public service to allow foreign-trained professionals to get that elusive Canadian experience they so desperately need to get further in their careers.

I want to thank the members of the immigrant community. This bill was written by them. It is from their input and it is why I am here today introducing the bill. I hope that the House will adopt this bill.

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

* * *

• (1545)

AN ACT CREATING ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST NATIONAL PARK RESERVES

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual, there have been countless discussions, negotiations and consultations among all the parties, and I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following two motions. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House begins debate on the second reading motion of Bill C-38, an Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act to enlarge Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada, one Member from each recognized party may speak for not more than ten minutes, after which the Bill shall be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole, deemed considered in Committee of the Whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CRACKING DOWN ON TOBACCO MARKETING AIMED AT YOUTH ACT

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act, be deemed concurred in at report stage; the said Bill be ordered for consideration at third reading stage later this day; and that when the House begins debate on third reading motion of Bill C-32, one Member from each recognized party may speak for not more than ten minutes, after which the Bill shall be deemed read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill deemed concurred in at report stage)

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, discussions have taken place with all parties and I believe you will find consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in the opinion of the House, September 21 of each year should be declared International Day of Peace.

I hope we will have unanimous consent because we would like that day to be celebrated everywhere as International Day of Peace.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: "That in the opinion of the House the government should draft and implement a plan of action for addressing human trafficking in Canada for the period leading up to, during and beyond the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games, to reduce the sexual exploitation of vulnerable individuals in Canada and as a follow-up to the United Nations Palermo Protocol signed by Canada in 2000 and ratified in 2002".

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

COSMETIC PESTICIDES

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present another petition by the residents of Victoria calling for an immediate moratorium on cosmetic pesticides until they are proven safe and until the long-term health and environmental consequences are known.

We are witnessing the collapse of the bee population. We are witnessing increasing allergic reactions in our population. These petitioners recognize that while pesticides may continue to play a role in insect infestation, the cosmetic use of pesticides does not warrant the risk that we are taking.

Victoria has many beautiful gardens without using pesticides. These petitioners are calling on the government to enact Bill C-368 for an immediate federal moratorium on pesticide use.

● (1550)

VICTORIA HARBOUR

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a few of the 7,000 signed petitions from Victoria residents opposed to a proposal for a large mega-yacht marina in Victoria harbour.

These petitioners represent a wide cross-section of Victoria residents who are opposed to this proposal which would essentially privatize what is a public good and a defining characteristic of our city. They are concerned that this project would affect safety in our harbour. It is a very busy harbour. In fact it is one of Canada's top five busiest harbours. They are concerned about the quality of life for residents because it would impact a very popular walkway.

The petitioners are asking the transport minister to deny the application under the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

LIBRARY MATERIALS

Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have on the past several days presented several petitions, I am pleased to present four more from the provinces of Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba. The petitioners request an amendment to the Canada

Post Corporation Act (library materials) to protect and support the library book rate and extend it to include audio-visual materials.

MAIL DELIVERY

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here on behalf of my constituents of Brampton who have signed a petition urging the government to reinstate mail delivery which has been abandoned by Canada Post. It has replaced the door-to-door delivery with community mailboxes. These residents feel that because of the increased traffic in the area, having to go to a community mailbox is a detriment to their safety. They also find that the community mailboxes are contributing to increased environmental damage. They are urging Canada Post to reinstate door-to-door delivery in neighbourhoods in Brampton which have been impacted.

INTERNATIONAL AID

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am also here on behalf of my constituents of Brampton and the Canadian Grandmothers for Africa which is a national advocacy network.

The petition urges the government to set a timetable by 2015 to ensure that we as a country contribute 0.7% of our GDP toward developmental assistance, to ensure that we contribute as a country our fair share to the global fund to fight HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria, and to ensure that the necessary legislative changes are made for Canada's access to medicines regime to ensure the medications required by individuals are received.

We hope that the Grandmothers for Africa, the national advocacy network which has done a great job, will be recognized for its work and that these changes will be implemented by the government.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions with hundreds of names on them. The petitioners request that the Parliament of Canada recognize that Canada is a nation that has a great record of human rights and a high regard for life. Since 1988, there has been absolutely no restriction on access to abortion. The petitioners call on Parliament to pass legislation for the protection of human life.

SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Government of Canada from a number of citizens who wish to express their profound concern with the proposed implementation of the security and prosperity partnership of North America. The SPP further advances NAFTA's goal of continental economic integration by pushing Canada toward establishing common policies with the United States and Mexico in key areas such as security, energy, food and health standards, while shrinking the range of choices open to Canadian policy-makers.

Routine Proceedings

The SPP encompasses over 300 wide-ranging initiatives, many of which reduce protection in areas such as pesticide use and food safety, and reduces environmental protection and air safety, while securing even greater U.S. control over Canadian resources and national standards, including energy and water. Under the SPP, Canada would possess less and less ability to adopt autonomous and sustainable economic, social and environmental policies, including public programs like universal health care and public education. Therefore, the petitioners ask the Government of Canada to stop further implementation of the security and prosperity partnership of North America with the U.S. and Mexico until there is a democratic mandate from the people of Canada, parliamentary oversight and consideration—

• (1555)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Langley.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. The first one states that there are a number of severe, potentially life-threatening conditions that do not qualify for disability programs because they are not necessarily permanent. The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to enact legislation that would provide additional medical EI benefits at least equal to the maternity EI benefits.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is regarding identity theft. It is estimated that identity theft costs Canadian businesses and residents more than \$2 billion annually. The petitioners call on the House of Commons to pass government legislation that would create three new offences: obtaining and possessing identity information intent for criminal crimes; trafficking in identity theft; and unlawfully possessing and trafficking government issued documents.

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is regarding the long gun registry. It calls upon the House of Commons to support legislation to cancel the Canadian long gun registry.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition with the signatures of hundreds of Canadians speaking to an issue close to my heart, multiple sclerosis.

Our current disability programs are ill-suited for the 75,000 Canadians affected by MS, because it is an episodic disability.

The petitioners urge more flexibility in EI sickness benefits to allow for part-time work and partial benefits. They also call for making the disability tax credit refundable. The petitioners ask that the spouses who play a key role in the well-being of people with MS be allowed to claim the caregiver tax credit.

WIND TURBINES

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today. The first petition relates to wind turbines.

Multiple wind farm sites are being considered by the Government of Ontario in the county of Renfrew. In the absence of independent, science-based studies of the long-term effects on the health of residents and wildlife in Renfrew County in close proximity to the wind turbines, the petitioners are calling upon Parliament to reject any funding applications for federal government assistance for the building of wind towers in Renfrew County.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition states that, since 1988, Canada has had no law to protect the lives of unborn children.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception until natural death.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition regarding the situation in Sri Lanka.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to use every means possible to end the violence in Sri Lanka and begin the process of working towards lasting peace and reconciliation between the government and the Tamil Tigers that would see full respect of the human rights of all Sri Lankans.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a total of four petitions that have been submitted to me by concerned constituents.

The first petition is signed by roughly 400 constituents who request specific action be taken by the government to help Canadians who have to cope with multiple sclerosis.

• (1600)

RESPECT FOR LIFE

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other three petitions are signed by almost 600 of my constituents who call on the government to respect the sanctity of life and bring abortion on demand to an end in Canada.

CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to present a petition on the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement.

Thousands of trade unionists and activists in Colombia have either been murdered or disappeared. The petitioners call upon Parliament to reject the Canada-Colombia trade deal until an independent human rights impact assessment is carried out.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many petitioners from the provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario note the fact that Canada is a country that respects human rights. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that everyone has the right to life.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception right through until natural death.

CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tens of thousands of petitions have been received with respect to the controversial Canada-Colombia trade deal.

I am pleased to rise today in order to present some petitions that call upon the government to reject the Canada-Colombia trade deal until an independent human rights impact assessment takes place, and that it be replaced with a fair trade agreement that addresses not only environmental and social impacts but also respects labour rights as well as those parties impacted.

I thank all those who have signed these petitions in the hope that the government will recognize the need to act immediately given the serious concerns regarding the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to present this petition, which calls for the protection of human life from the time of conception until natural death.

The petitioners note that Canada is a country that respects human rights and includes in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms the right to life. They note that it has been 40 years since Parliament changed the law to permit abortion, and that, since 1988, Canada has had no law at all to protect the lives of unborn children.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception until natural death.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House to present the signatures of more than 1,000 students across the country. They petition Parliament to act on climate change, which they say is a crisis facing the country.

They are concerned that the government has not responded to its international obligations. They want to increase funding for public transit, meet our Kyoto commitments and beyond, and adopt official sustainability standards for buildings, public buildings in particular.

UNSOLICITED MAIL AND FLYERS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present from Canadians asking that Parliament take action so that all unsolicited mail and flyers will be produced on recycled paper, and by 2012, use hemp paper. That is from residents of Saskatoon and Edmonton.

Routine Proceedings

FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have an additional petition to present from people in Edmonton on behalf of the people suffering in China who practise Falun Gong. They petition that we take action to address the Chinese practice of detaining, torturing, and killing and seizing the organs of people practising Falun Gong.

CARBON TAX

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my final petition is from residents of Ontario, calling on the Government of Canada to institute and support a carbon tax.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by hundreds of residents of Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia. These petitioners are recognizing that people who experience depression and mental illness need to be protected by law and that predators are currently encouraging and counselling suicide, without penalty, through the Internet.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to enable prosecution of those who encourage or counsel someone to commit suicide, by updating the Criminal Code to reflect the new realities of 21st century broadband access, and to fund education programs that will empower people who experience depression and mental illness and Canada's vulnerable youth to protect themselves from online predators and find appropriate community support resources.

ANIMAL CRUELTY

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition signed by a number of residents from my riding of Wild Rose and from neighbouring areas. The petitioners are calling upon the government to support a universal declaration on animal welfare.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time has expired for petitions today.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 166, 169 and 170.

[Text]

Question No. 166—**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:**

With regards to the operations of the Canada Desk of the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) and the Government of Canada's response: (a) when was the government first made aware of possible improper activity of the desk; (b) what were the immediate steps taken by the Canada Revenue Agency to allegations about the desk; (c) what is the estimated value of money that the desk held for each year from Canadian clients beginning in 2004 and ending this year; (d) what role has the government played in the Justice Department's investigations; (e) what is the estimated amount of tax leakage from this operation; (f) what were government departments able to determine about the locations in Canada that were used; and (g) what potential fines or penalties is the government considering at this time?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to a) The confidentiality provisions of the acts administered by the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, prevent the disclosure of any taxpayer information. However, the CRA can say that it was first made aware of the possibility of a “Canada Desk” when the report entitled “Tax Haven Banks and U.S. Tax Compliance” issued by the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, was made public on July 17, 2008, and through subsequent media reports in November 2008, more specifically a *Globe and Mail* article dated November 14, 2008, “Swiss banking's \$5.6-billion man”.

In response to b) The confidentiality provisions of the acts administered by the CRA prevent the disclosure of any taxpayer information. However, as a matter of course, the CRA takes all allegations of possible non-compliance very seriously. Where the CRA is made aware of or provided with information on possible non-compliance with Canadian tax laws, the CRA reviews the information to determine whether non-compliance exists. If non-compliance is detected, the CRA takes appropriate actions, which could include audits or investigations.

The confidentiality provisions of the acts administered by the CRA, prevents the CRA from providing a response to parts c), d) and e).

In response to f) As noted in a), the CRA reviews information available to determine possible level of non-compliance in any sector of the economy. The confidentiality provisions of the acts administered by the CRA prevent the disclosure of any taxpayer information

In response to g) The confidentiality provisions of the acts administered by the CRA prevent the disclosure of any taxpayer information. With regard to penalties and/or interest, in general, the CRA would levy those in accordance with legislation. In Canada, only the courts have the power to levy fines in cases involving possible tax evasion or avoidance.

Question No. 169—**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:**

Are there Canadian Heritage or Canada Council grant programs under which Les Grands Ballets Canadiens could receive more than \$51,000 to stage a production outside the country and, if so, what are the programs?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are no programs offered by the Department of Canadian Heritage which fit the requirements listed above.

The Canada Council for the Arts offers financial assistance for international touring through its Dance Touring Grants—International (Pilot Program). Like all dance organizations, Les Grand Ballets Canadiens de Montréal can receive up to \$50,000, which is the established maximum for the program.

Question No. 170—**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:**

Are there Canadian Heritage or Canada Council grant programs under which a dance or theatre company or a performing arts organization could receive more than \$51,000 to stage a production outside the country and, if so, what are the programs?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are no programs

offered by the Department of Canadian Heritage which fit the requirements listed above.

Programs offered by the Canada Council for the Arts award grants for international touring in dance, theatre, and performing arts through the following three programs: Dance Touring Grants—International (Pilot Program), Theatre International Program, International Touring Assistance in Music (Pilot Project). The maximum for each program is \$50,000.

* * *

• (1605)

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 162 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 162—**Mr. Paul Dewar:**

With regards to the Canada's operations in Afghanistan: (a) what is the total amount of money spent on translation of documents from Dari and Pashto to English and French in the past five years on a yearly basis and in total; (b) what is the number of staff in the Afghanistan Task Force who can speak, read and write in Dari in Kabul, in Kandahar and in Ottawa in the past five years on a yearly basis and in total; (c) what is the number of staff in the Afghanistan Task Force who can speak, read and write in Pashto, in Kabul, in Kandahar and in Ottawa in the past five years on a yearly basis and in total; (d) what is the total budget of Afghanistan Task Force for translation in the past five years on a yearly basis and in total; (e) what is the total budget of Afghanistan Task Force for communications in the past five years on a yearly basis and in total; (f) what is the number of staff on the Afghanistan Task Force responsible for communications in the past five years on a yearly basis and in total; and (g) what form of protection is offered to local Afghans working for Canada's operations in Afghanistan who are citizens of Afghanistan at the end of their service with the Canadian government?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from June 16 consideration of the motion that Bill S-4, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (identity theft and related misconduct), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 27 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill S-4, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (identity theft and related misconduct).

The bill would amend the Criminal Code to create offences of identity theft, trafficking in identity information and unlawful possession or trafficking in certain government-issued identity documents, to clarify and expand certain offences related to identity theft and identity fraud, to exempt certain persons from liability for certain forgery offences, and to allow for an order that the offender make restitution to a victim of identity theft or identity fraud for the expenses associated with rehabilitating their identity.

Like Bill C-26, which we discussed the other day, the auto theft legislation, this bill is only one part of a multi-pronged approach to attack the problem of identity theft. In both cases, the auto theft legislation and the identity theft legislation, we must begin our battle with strong changes to the Criminal Code, which itself was written in 1892 and is in dire need of a rewrite. Judging by the number of lawyers in this chamber, we are shortchanging the public if we do not embark on that rewrite sooner rather than later.

The legislation will go a long way to help the police investigate and take action regarding credit card fraud. All too often I have heard constituents complain that they feel abandoned by the police after their credit card has been stolen and has been used in a fraudulent manner. When they go to the police station they are told to take a number and wait until it is their turn. When their turn comes they are told that there were 30 similar cases that day, and without tough legislation, it is better to deal with it as a civil matter.

By bringing in tough new Criminal Code legislation, we take away that argument that we should deal with it as a civil matter because we are not going to get anywhere with it anyway in the absence of the legislation. Therefore, I think this is a very positive move to deal with that important area.

This happened in a case where the complainant did his own investigation of suspicious transactions, once he found out that the credit card was being misused, and in effect identified the guilty party. He basically turned the entire documented, solved case over to the RCMP, hoping to be thanked for all the hard work and a job well done. However, in fact, the person was told to go home, that the credit card company would just simply absorb the loss and that he would not be out any money.

Government Orders

That certainly did not make him very happy about this whole process, not to mention all the trauma involved in actually having the credit card stolen in the first place and a lot of transactions being put on the credit card, and all the phone calls, and so on, that it takes to resolve this issue.

That type of action merely encourages criminals to do it again and tell their friends, “Don't worry. You can't get caught, and if you do get caught, nothing will happen to you”. This is not a good signal to be sending to the public. We need this tough legislation to allow the police to take action.

If we had had it, the police probably would not have had 30 new cases that morning, because the criminals would know that something was going to happen to them in the first place and they might have thought twice about stealing the credit card.

The next area is to properly resource the police. In Manitoba's case, the parallel I draw is the gang suppression unit and the auto theft suppression unit of the police force. It is basically setting up a special unit in the police department that is resourced and tasked to deal with the problem at hand, to target the highest risk-level of offender. In the case of the auto theft group, I believe level 4 is the highest group. We are not talking about a lot of people. We are talking about perhaps 50 people in the high-risk groups.

We have to dedicate a special unit to go after identity theft.

•(1610)

As with the auto thieves, we are looking at a very small group of people. I would submit that is the situation with identity theft. When I go to one of the seniors' homes in my riding where there are 500 people, it would be safe to bet that not one of them would contemplate committing identity theft, stealing or misusing a credit card, or anything of the sort.

If we eliminate those people and other large groups, we come down to very small numbers. My submission would also be that those small numbers would be the repeat offenders who are doing it essentially as a profession, as a job. We have to aggressively target these offenders.

As I indicated in the case of the debit card and the bank card skimmers, often gangs with overseas connections may be operating here because it is easy. They have little chance of being caught, and certainly they are not treated very badly when they are caught.

There was a ring uncovered in the last couple of years, I believe from eastern Europe. The members of the group came to Canada for the sole purpose of going to various banks and credit unions across the country and putting credit card and debit card skimming equipment on ATMs. Over a three- or four-hour period they collected several hundred pieces of people's information. Using that information, they then proceeded to clean out people's bank accounts and make new copies of credit cards for further use.

In addition, clearly more consumer alerts are required. Part of the answer is getting consumers up to speed in this whole area.

Government Orders

I have had many tea parties in seniors' homes in my constituency of Elmwood—Transcona over the years where I have invited a member of the police force to talk about this very problem. The constable always has the same message: "Don't carry a big purse when you go out. Leave your ID at home. You're only going to Safeway. You're only going across the street. Why do you insist upon carrying a big purse with all your identification and enough contents to go on a trip somewhere when you are going to be back in a half hour?"

In some ways, we are all easy targets for thieves.

Fortunately we are seeing an explosion in the use of shredders. People are shredding more of their documents, and we can all agree with that. They are not throwing their bills out in the garbage like they used to; they are shredding them, which is a good sign.

However, I also juxtapose that to other people, maybe the same people who are happily shredding their documents, who attend the boat shows, the garden shows and the home shows at the convention centre in Winnipeg. I see them there on the weekends happily giving out their personal information when they are filling out applications for different free draws that exhibitors have. They do not consider that this information could be used improperly.

There are a number of other things we are told we should not be doing. Certainly mailbox fraud is a big area, and it is dealt with in the bill. Nowadays a lot of people have their mailboxes locked. That is a very good thing, because people do steal other people's mail and use that information for bad things.

On the last day of debate on this bill, a number of people mentioned we should reduce the number of mailed statements to our houses, that maybe we do not need monthly statements from our financial services people, that perhaps we could get by with quarterly statements.

•(1615)

They also suggest that sensitive information should be kept in a locked box. All too often we see people leaving information out. I guess the government has had some very bad experiences itself over the last couple of years with some members of Parliament leaving information in places when it should have been returned to its rightful place and locked up. We should be more organized in all of that.

Having said that, I may be one of the worst offenders, so I really do not want to go too far there.

It is also recommended that we do not let our credit cards out of sight at restaurants and gas stations. The reality is that we do this every day. Are we supposed to tell a waiter at the restaurant, "Sorry, I have to follow you to the machine to make sure you do not clone or skim my card"?

Another point was not to give credit card information over the phone unless one actually knows the person.

What is the answer? Clearly there is a bigger solution we have to deal with, and that is the whole area of technology and the inception of smart card programs.

I have followed this issue for a number of years. I recall back in 1990 or 1991, the Ontario NDP government at the time, led by somebody in this House I cannot mention, embarked on the first smart card idea. By the way, it was an idea that was way ahead of its time. Only France had embarked on a rudimentary smart card program at the time.

The Ontario government at that time set up pilot projects in Fort Frances and Windsor. It was trying to track the number of Americans who were coming across the border, getting OHIP cards, Ontario health cards, and then coming for free operations and health care.

At the end of the day, the project determined that Ontario had issued more OHIP cards than it had residents in the province. Beyond that, though, the government decided not to proceed further with the smart cards. I am not sure why it did not proceed; perhaps there was a change in government.

The NDP government was succeeded by the Harris government, which announced a new smart card program to run parallel to the program that was being introduced by the big banks at the time. I met with representatives in Toronto, and they gave me a tour through their nice new building. They had a very impressive program.

The government was going to start issuing smart cards at around \$10 apiece. There was to be a health card on there and I think a driver's licence. Members should understand that these cards have the potential to have about five different things on them. Smart cards can have a driver's licence, a health card, a fishing licence, and a number of things. The government's plan was to roll out the program at a cost of \$8 to \$10 a card. Over time the price of the cards dropped, as we know.

While all of this was going on, the banks were going to roll out their system. They actually put off rolling it out for a few years, all the while knowing that people were being victimized. It was cheaper for the banks to pay the losses from the thefts and the misuse of the cards than it was to bring in the smart card technology. They were directly responsible for letting people go through all sorts of anguish for an extra five or six years because they did not want to put out the extra dollars. It was cheaper to lose the hundred million dollars, or whatever it was, per year in the thefts. We could have done something a long time ago in terms of smart cards because the technology was there, but it was going to be a little more expensive at the time.

In fact the banks are just rolling out their cards at the moment. Some members may have them, but if they do not, they certainly will be getting them within the next few months or the next year. I believe they had a plan where they were rolling out in certain areas a year or two ago, but the mass rolling out is just beginning.

These cards are a huge improvement over the old striped cards. The old cards are essentially obsolete and should be phased out as quickly as possible, because they are the easy ones to skim and counterfeit. Hopefully this will drastically reduce the credit card and debit card fraud and give consumers a breather, until these criminals can figure how out to compromise those cards. We may be ahead of the curve for a little while.

Government Orders

I am hoping we are going to have a huge overnight reduction in credit card and debit card fraud, similar to Manitoba's experience with its auto theft program. These cards, as I have indicated, are the answer in the same way that the immobilizers on cars were the answer in stopping auto theft.

● (1620)

Once again, the NDP are supporting actions that actually work. We do not want to head off on crime legislation like the Conservatives do, bringing in a bunch of things that have been proven not to work in other jurisdictions. We want to promote and initiate good ideas that actually have a history of working somewhere else.

We have a multi-pronged approach. We have tough criminal legislation. We have, for example, the auto theft suppression unit of the police, which is working well in Winnipeg and it could be working well nationally. We have the constant monitoring of suspects. We have to do that here as well. There is the whole idea of the mandatory immobilizers in the cars, and the GPS ankle bracelets.

To my friend from B.C., because I know he is upset about this bait car idea that I am not highly supportive of, I want to extend an olive branch. Since we are all trying to get along here in the House, I want to tell him that if he brings that bait car to Winnipeg in February and he can get it to actually work, I will be very happy to support his idea that we should try that as well. I do not think we want to exclude good ideas. Some ideas work better in some parts of the country than others.

In terms of identity theft, once again we have the tough criminal legislation in Bill S-4. We are reasonably happy with this bill. I think there are a couple of changes we would like to see, particularly for lawyers. It was pointed out yesterday that the whole area of mortgage fraud and so on is not covered by this bill. Lawyers across Canada have to be vigilant about that, because they are being presented with false identification from people attempting to get mortgage funds.

Once again, the police identity theft suppression unit has to be set up. We need more consumer alerts, which I have indicated, and the education programs, which we delved into. There is always room for more ideas. I do not think we should in any way exclude anybody with a good idea. Better smart card technology is the key here, because we have to keep ahead of the curve.

One of the members mentioned yesterday that we are dealing with almost \$2 billion of losses. In fact identity theft has become so common that insurance companies have been selling identity theft coverage as an extension to house insurance policies for some four or five years now. Insurance companies would not do that if there was not a big market and a considerable demand for these programs. These programs are costly to set up. They need to have negotiations for re-insurance for the whole program.

Clearly this is a program that people are buying, because insurance companies are selling it. It pays to restore people to where they were before the loss. There is a considerable expense involved in trying to get credit cards and ID restored. Has anyone tried to get a driver's licence or a birth certificate replaced? It is a lot of work.

A lot of the identity theft is aided and abetted by the Internet. Criminals trade in stolen information. None of this existed 20 years ago. As one member mentioned yesterday with his Commodore 64, we did not have Internet access in those days and we did not have to worry about these things. The Internet and computers today mean we have a whole new exposure that we did not have before.

The criminals are passing on the information about where to buy these skimming machines and devices on how to clone credit cards. All this information is readily available to up-and-coming criminals who want to expand their lines of work.

● (1625)

Yesterday, the member for Winnipeg Centre asked about requiring the credit card companies to pass on to customers the results of their investigations. I agree totally. It is not included in the bill, but it is an important issue.

If people steal the identities of other people and use their credit cards, the credit care company will not give them any information about where they are at unless they investigate it. They are left to wonder who did it. It can be as traumatic as having one's home broken into and not knowing who did it.

I will proceed with the rest of my speech during the question and answer period.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member like to elaborate on the additional finer points in his argument?

Mr. Jim Maloway: Mr. Speaker, that is the shortest question I have heard any lawyer in the chamber ask since I was elected.

We have some serious concerns about organized crime involvement, credit and debit card fraud and identity theft. That is really a big concern. I guess the isolated cases can be dealt with, but when they are part of organized crime, particularly when there is an international flavour and international connections to them, we have cause for serious concern.

Criminals who are involved with this type of activity are often the same people involved in the drug activity. They are all tied together at a certain point. I mentioned that the member for Windsor—Tecumseh had noted that lawyers were faced with real estate buyers presenting false identity to get mortgage loans. That is not within the bill, but it is another fertile area for organized crime.

We have mentioned that there is a huge rise in identity theft. The bill has an exemption for law enforcement, such as undercover police to use identity documents, called lawful excuse. This is a very important point. In addition, there is a five-year parliamentary review of the legislation, which we are very happy to see.

Government Orders

In terms of losses, computers get blamed for a lot of things, but a member mentioned yesterday that online losses were still only 15% of the total, whereas in-person losses were at 25%. People are still experiencing losses with credit card fraud and debit card fraud in person at a higher rate than they are online.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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. Barry Devolin): Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

• (1630)

IRAN

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among all parties and I believe you would find consent for the following motion in regard to the ongoing situation in Iran. I move:

That the House express:

its solidarity with, and support for, the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people;

its concern with ongoing violations of civil and human rights in Iran, and calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners; and

its support for a transparent electoral process that respects the genuine will of the Iranian people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; the hon. member for Don Valley East, Employment Insurance; the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Employment Insurance.

[*English*]

AN ACT CREATING ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST NATIONAL PARK RESERVES

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC) moved that Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act to enlarge Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in my place today to speak to Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act to enlarge Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada, an act effectively creating one of the world's largest national park reserves.

As I being, I would like to express my gratitude to my colleague, the Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, , without whom today would not be possible. I also acknowledge the contributions of the Hon. John Baird, who was my predecessor as minister of the environment, as well as the Hon. Gary Lunn and the Hon. Lisa Raitt, the current and previous—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The minister is an experienced parliamentarian. He cannot refer to members of the House by their given names.

Hon. Jim Prentice: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the other parties in the House as well for their co-operation and agreement to expedite the bill so we can move it ahead quickly today.

The bill represents a landmark conservation achievement for Canada, the greatest achievement in a generation. The magnificent Nahanni, its tributaries, canyons, waterfalls and mountains comprise the very essence of Canada and, in fact, the very essence of what it is to be a Canadian. We are people of the great outdoors, proud of our stewardship over the most beautiful and expansive land mass in the world. We protect and nurture our country and it, in return, nurtures and protects each of us.

As a young man, I read R.M. Patterson's book, *Dangerous River*, which remains a Canadian classic of the Nahanni. I resolved many years ago to visit the Nahanni, to canoe this mighty river and hike its majestic mountains. For me, as the minister responsible for Parks Canada, today has a special meaning.

This summer, as a guest of the Deh Cho, I will fulfill my personal dream to see the Nahanni, but today in the House we have the opportunity to fulfill the dreams of all Canadians relative to this park.

The legendary South Nahanni River is the heart of Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada. It was first created in 1976. In 1978 the park reserve was designated by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

[*Translation*]

This is the home of the Deh Cho First Nations, as well as a sacred site on which Dene legend and spirituality are based.

Government Orders

[English]

With the passage of the bill, the park reserve will be expanded from approximately 4,800 square kilometres to more than 30,000 square kilometres. Nahanni will become the third largest national park in Canada, covering an area that is a little less than the size of Vancouver Island.

Nahanni National Park Reserve will now protect the highest mountains and the largest glaciers in the Northwest Territories. The Nahanni region is also home to a remarkable variety of wildlife. There are twice as many grizzly bears in the Nahanni as can be found in all of Canada's mountain parks combined.

[Translation]

It provides range for two large woodland caribou herds as well as habitat for Dall sheep and mountain goats. It is also the trumpeter swan's breeding grounds

• (1635)

[English]

It will protect much of the South Nahanni River watershed and the globally significant karst landscape. It will protect a vast area of boreal forest and will enhance Nahanni's designation as a UNESCO world heritage site.

[Translation]

I would, however, like to remind hon. members that cooperation and collaboration played an important role in this undertaking, right from the very start.

[English]

I especially want to note that the bill would not be before us today were it not for the co-operation and leadership of the Deh Cho First Nations. Like all Dene people, the Deh Cho First Nations are inseparable from the land.

I was deeply moved by this quote in particular from the Deh Cho, "The land is a living being given to us by the Creator. We live as part of it. The land takes care of us, and we take care of the land".

[Translation]

The Deh Cho First Nations have been totally and unfailingly in support of the expansion of the park reserve. For them, the region to be incorporated into the expanded national park reserve is a place of mystery, spirituality and healing.

[English]

In the future, the Deh Cho people will participate in the management of the national park. The treaty rights of all aboriginal groups will be fully protected within the boundaries of the expanded park reserve. The traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and spiritual activities of the Dene people will continue.

At the same time, the bill also represents a conservation achievement that also takes into account sustained economic development in the north.

Hon. members will note that the park reserve will exclude many areas of high potential for minerals and oil and gas extraction.

[Translation]

The prosperity of the Northwest Territories, with its vast resource potential, is important. We must adopt an approach that strikes a balance between conservation and development in order to ensure sustainability.

[English]

The bill is also the result of the vision of the Prime Minister. He has been unerring in his focus on the north, on its needs and its future. The bill before us is part of a larger pattern of a northern vision he has outlined. The expansion of the Nahanni is a key component of this government's northern strategy and it is part of Canada's vision for a new north.

Our northern strategy rests on four key pillars: protecting our fragile northern environment; providing northerners with more control over their own destiny; promoting northern economic development; and asserting Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic.

[Translation]

The boundaries of this magnificent park reserve have been extended to encompass 30,000 square kilometres of some of the most extraordinary and unique landscapes on this earth. This region will be preserved for future generations.

[English]

Expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve has been a government priority for many years.

[Translation]

Protecting this vast and magnificent region through legislation will be proof to the Canadians of the future that we were forward looking and courageous enough to take steps to protect one of the wonders of the world.

[English]

I referred to R.M. Patterson earlier in my comments and I would quote to give some context to the Nahanni, from page 127 of his book, *Dangerous River*, where he says:

I climbed quickly up the creek bed in sunshine, mist and rain, and at 3000 feet above the Nahanni I came to the last of the trees—a little wood of stunted firs. The creek valley ran on up into the bald hills and the blue sky, walled in by grey scree and grassy, rock-strewn hillsides running up to the naked rimrock....

So I perched on a block of stone that crowned a little round grass hill, 4,500 feet above the river, and watched the movements of the sheep and tried to set in my memory the whole amazing view from Nahanni Butte to Deadmen's Valley so that I might have something of it to look back on in the years to come. Time slipped easily by on that flower-starred plateau: the sun slid down the tremendous sky, the shadows lengthened and the wind grew cold— and I went down again into the valley of the great stones and back to camp on the Nahanni in the gentle twilight of a perfect summer's day.

This park space is central to our identity as a people, is central to our identity as a country. This is a significant achievement and a contribution to Canadian and to world conservation. It is, in effect, the Deh Cho and Canada's gift to humanity.

I am pleased to be here on behalf of the government.

Government Orders

•(1640)

Mr. David McQuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is more than an honour to rise this afternoon to speak to a bill which is the culmination of decades of work by thousands and thousands of Canadians, previous governments, previous cabinets, previous caucuses, previous prime ministers and existing prime ministers. It really is an act which transcends decades of goodwill and good faith from Canadians from across the country and of course the great people of the Deh Cho First Nations.

This is indeed a spectacular moment for Canada. It is spectacular because we are one step closer to maintaining precious and increasingly rare natural capital. This is a legacy for all, as the minister has pointed out, a legacy not just for Canadians but for the world and we need more of it. We need more of it in this country, we need more of it on this continent, and we need more of it on this planet.

For Canadians watching or reading, the bill is really an effort to overcome some challenges in a major expansion of territory from some 5,000 square kilometres to over 30,000 square kilometres of what is spectacular mountain terrain, unique geological land forms and crucial wildlife habitat.

In so doing, what we are really allowing for here as parliamentarians is to accommodate certain third party interests in this expansion area. As the official opposition we are satisfied. We have been assured by Parks Canada, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the leadership and the people of the Deh Cho First Nations, and the minister and his officials themselves that these changes to the Canada National Parks Act are indispensable to bringing about the legislative and regulatory changes that are required in order to enlarge the Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada.

We are satisfied that these new powers, these new regulatory changes, are a reasonable balance, but we do have residual and continuing concerns about, for example, whether we are setting the right precedent. This is not only important for the expansion of Nahanni but also possibly for the expansion of other parks and reserves across this magnificent country.

We want to be careful not to create weaknesses in the park system, not to create unnecessary precedents for economic activity for example.

Therefore, as parliamentarians I am sure we will all be monitoring closely the exercise of these new or amended powers as set out in the bill which allows for careful crafting, a collage, the bringing together of an expanded territory to, as I said, expand our natural capital.

It is important to reflect back on the fact that this has been in motion since 1972. If there is any originating group or effort led by a particular political personality it would have to go to former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau who set aside as a national park reserve in 1972 the Nahanni, gazetted in 1976 under the National Parks Act.

Since then, in 1984, a previous government worked with Parks Canada to increase the size of the Nahanni, building considerably in due course on the very good work of all those hundreds of Canadians who participated on the panel on ecological integrity. That panel was struck by a previous government, a Liberal government at that time,

and examined fundamental questions around the ecological integrity of our park system, not just the ecological integrity but the degree to which our park system was connected and whether it was working particularly for our large predatory species. It raised questions and concerns which linger not only for our parks right across the country but, yes, even in the context of this expansion.

•(1645)

It raises questions around the notion of buffering our national parks and ensuring that economic activities such as mining or petroleum exploitation which abut or come up to the edge of a national park is in fact properly buffered.

The very words in the ecological vision for the Naha Dehé are striking. This is an excerpt from the park management plan. It states:

Dene are inseparable from the land. Traditional subsistence harvest will continue to be an integral and sustainable part of the ecosystem and will occur in accordance with Dene laws and principles.

Naha Dehé will continue to be revered as a place of mystery, spirituality and healing. Naha Dehé will be a model of cooperative management with First Nations of the Dehcho where ecological and cultural integrity is protected, visitor access and enjoyment is encouraged within the limits of ecological integrity and wilderness experience, and messages of natural and cultural heritage are communicated with excellence.

The magnificence in the creation of the expansion and the expansion of this Nahanni National Park Reserve speaks to our future and whether or not we will be wise enough as a species to learn how to live within the caring capacity of the planet itself.

This territory, this expanded land mass, will serve as a reminder that we can do better and we must do better, that we have the know-how, we have the science. It is now the question of will and the question of managing our way forward so that we can increase understanding, so we can enhance ecological integrity, not just within a parks system or a specific park such as the Nahanni but right across this incredible country and continent.

We have satisfied ourselves that the work we launched in 2003, through the Deh Cho First Nations and Parks Canada memorandum of understanding, has been more than productive. That expansion working group in 2003, set by the Nahanni, looked at the grizzly bears, the woodland caribou, the Dall sheep and the bull trout, the vegetation, the forest fires, the glaciers, the landscapes, tourism and the socioeconomic implications, and the impact for the park.

It is true that extensive public consultations have been held and that will be important in the context of remaining engaged with our citizenry and our first nations people as we go forward to complete this job.

We know that 9% of the Deh Cho part of the greater Nahanni ecosystem has been excluded from the expanded national park reserve. We know this represents virtually all of the hydrocarbon potential, and about half of most of the important mineral potential identified in the area, as well as 100% of the existing mineral claims and mineral leases.

As parliamentarians, we will be watching closely. All of us have that obligation. We will work co-operatively to ensure that our parks system and our reserves systems are properly connected, that they are properly buffered, so that we can enhance our natural capital as opposed to draw it down.

Government Orders

In closing, I would like to congratulate all previous governments, all parties here today, all non-governmental organizations that have been involved in this process over decades, the Deh Cho First Nations, the people of Canada, and the wisdom of all who have seen fit to bring this to a successful conclusion for Canadians today, citizens around the world, and future generations.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act to enlarge Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada.

I think this bill shows that the federal government and the Nahanni first nations can cooperate and work together to better protect our ecosystems while safeguarding the values of the first nations and ensuring the economic development of a sector that permitted great progress in the past.

We must remember that the efforts to gain recognition of Nahanni National Park date from 1972. However, it was in 1976 that it was created—a park with over 4,700 square kilometres of steep mountains, wild rivers and hot springs along the banks of the South Nahanni River, at the southwesternmost end of the Northwest Territories.

Early on in the 20th century, prospectors arrived, believing the legends of lost gold mines and of hidden tropical valleys. They found neither gold or tropical valleys, but an area of incomparable beauty. The South Nahanni River snakes through the park over more than 320 kilometres. It hurtles through three huge canyons over 1,000 metres in depth, drops 90 metres in the Virginia Falls and rushes at full tilt into the hot springs, icy caves, dizzying mountains and whitewater rapids.

The vegetation is boreal and alpine. There have been frequent and serious fires in much of the forest. The park is home to 32 types of mammals including Dall sheep, moose, woodland caribou and grizzlies. Peregrine falcons, trumpeter swans and the golden eagle are some of the 120 species inventoried, not to mention species that are endangered or at risk.

In 2007, there were over 950 visitors. They can relive the adventures of those who came in search of gold and follow in their path, canoeing, hiking or wilderness camping. This site, a UN world heritage site, recognized in 1978, is one of the jewels of Canada's national parks.

Bill C-38 proposes to expand it to six times its current area and will make it the third largest park in Canada. It will protect over 30,000 square kilometres, an area a little smaller than that of Vancouver Island. This represents nearly 91% of the ecosystem of the greater Nahanni area within the Deh Cho region.

This expansion will improve the quality of the UNESCO world heritage site as a protected area and will now include almost the entire South Nahanni River watershed.

This bill shows the ongoing commitment of the Deh Cho First Nations to expand the park. They have shown their commitment

through the many resolutions adopted by the chiefs and their willingness to work with Parks Canada to bring the bill to fruition.

In 2003, the Deh Cho First Nations and Parks Canada signed a memorandum of understanding by which they agreed to work together to expand the national park reserve. Subsequently the Nahanni expansion working group was formed.

• (1655)

The working group carried out technical studies, held public consultations, and prepared options on the borders for the Deh Cho portion of the great Nahanni region.

The bill was supported not only by a resolution of the Deh Cho First Nations, but also by a number of groups, including the Canadian Boreal Initiative. In a press release on June 9, the Initiative's executive director commented:

Today's announcement represents a balanced approach to protecting key lands while deciding how to responsibly develop others. This is particularly relevant, given the heightened interest in Canada's North and increased awareness of the global importance of these unique ecosystems.

The Canadian Boreal Initiative thereby acknowledges the many years of effort put into the expansion project by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

Basically, the bill confirms the importance of protecting the land, of entering into agreements with the first nations, in this case the Deh Cho, while at the same time acknowledging and ensuring that there is economic development on part of this land, mining at present, but with a potential for oil as well.

What is vital in this matter we have before us today is for us to move promptly, after discussions among the parties, to pass this bill. It will demonstrate the importance the parties attach to Canada's north. We wish to see this ecosystem with its remarkable resources and biodiversity protected, in the best interests of the first nations and of biodiversity, but with due consideration to enhancing economic development while ensuring that it is harmonious and respectful of the biodiversity of the flora, fauna and aquatic life.

This bill, which is small in size but reflects huge efforts over time, will provide visitors with greater access so that they may enjoy the beauty of this land with its rich biodiversity.

As I said, more than 950 people visit this area annually. I hope to have the opportunity to be one of them in the coming weeks or months, perhaps even this summer. I hope to be able to explore this wonderful river by canoe or kayak in order to get a true idea of the beauty of this northern area with its inestimable resources that must be protected.

We are only too pleased to support Bill C-38.

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[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act to enlarge Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada, and I am glad that all members in this House will move this bill forward as quickly as possible. To the Dehcho First Nations, this legislation represents their gift to Canada.

The Nahanni is one Canada's most beautiful places. With its mountains and karst canyons, wonders like Rabbitkettle Hotsprings, Virginia Falls and unspoiled wilderness, home to a variety of species such as Dall sheep, mountain goats, woodland caribou, wolves, black bears, grizzlies and trumpeter swans, the Nahanni is truly a wilderness paradise.

As the Premier of the Northwest Territories said:

It is a region that holds great cultural and traditional value to the people of the NWT and represents our spirit, beauty and potential to travellers from around the world. The size and nature of this expansion highlights our shared commitment, as Northerners to protect and sustain the value and wonder of our region for the future.

For years, the first nations of the area, the Dehcho First Nations, have been unwavering in their commitment to expand the park. This commitment has been shown through numerous leadership resolutions through their general assemblies held every year.

In 2003, the Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada signed a memorandum of understanding, agreeing to work together to expand the national park reserve. As a result, the Nahanni expansion working group was formed, with Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada members. It directed research studies, managed public consultations and developed boundary options for the Dehcho portion of the greater Nahanni ecosystem.

The Nahanni expansion working group studied grizzly bears, woodland caribou, Dall sheep, bull trout, vegetation, forest fires, glaciers, karst landscapes, tourism and the socio-economic impact of a park of this magnitude. These studies provided the working group with scientifically defensible conservation targets to assist in the development of boundary options.

Extensive public consultations were held concerning the park expansion. The first round was centred around the local communities, and the second round was national in scope. The consultations indicated, both in the region and in Canada, overwhelming support for the expansion of Nahanni National Park.

That co-operative effort has resulted in the bill before us today. Once enacted, this bill would protect large areas of vital habitat for several key species currently listed as species of special concern. Specifically, this would mean the protection of habitat and ranges for about 500 grizzly bears, two herds of the northern mountain population of woodland caribou, Dall sheep and mountain goats, trumpeter swan nesting areas, and entire bull trout systems.

Having lived next to Canada's largest national park, Wood Buffalo National Park, for many years—in fact, my lifetime—I recognize the importance of protecting complete ecosystems if we want to preserve for the future the kind of beauty and the kind of diversity that we have in Canada's wilderness areas.

As part of the development of this expansion, I am told Parks Canada worked with Indian and Northern Affairs, Natural Resources Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories to undertake a mineral and energy resource assessment for the study area. This study ensured that the economic and strategic significance of mineral and energy resource potential was taken into consideration when the park was established. The result was a boundary that balances key conservation targets and potential future economic benefits.

Because of the potential of these mineral resources and hydrocarbon development, 9% of the Dehcho part was excluded. Also excluded were the existing mineral claims and mineral leases, such as the operating Cantung mine and the Prairie Creek mine currently under development. All the community lands around the community of Nahanni Butte remain outside the park.

I would like to take a moment to thank those in the Dehcho region who worked so hard to bring about this expansion. I would like to thank the members of the expansion working group: Jonas Antoine, Petr Cizek and Laura Pitkanen of the Dehcho First Nations; and Steve Catto and David Murray of Parks Canada.

● (1700)

I would like to recognize the superintendent of Nahanni National Park Reserve, Chuck Blyth, for his hard work as well.

I would like to recognize the three grand chiefs of the Dehcho First Nations whose unwavering support to develop the park made it happen. They are Grand Chief Gerry Antoine, Grand Chief Mike Nadli, and Grand Chief Herb Norwegian.

At the same time I would like to recognize the important and significant contribution that the elders of the nine communities of the Dehcho made to this process. Without their support, without them standing and saying that this park was required, we would not have seen the politicians and the chiefs take such a strong position. So the elders of the region have played a significant role in making this happen.

To all the other community members, to the people of the region who provided advice and many hours of hard work, our thanks go out as well.

Three summers ago, my wife, Joan, and I accompanied the leader of our party, the member for Toronto—Danforth, and the member for Trinity—Spadina on a canoe trip down the Nahanni River. We all found this trip to be awe-inspiring, in a canyon that had never been glaciated, the walls of which are hundreds of millions of years old, truly spectacular, truly something that I would recommend to all members of the House as one of the things they may look at on their bucket list.

The Nahanni has a special place in the hearts of northerners. Virginia Falls is a place of pristine beauty. Now with the protection of the entire watershed, those waters will remain pristine for generations to come.

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To the first nations people of the region, the Dehcho, the Nahanni is sacred. I only have to say, to take the trip on the river, to go into that region, is to understand their history and their reasons to hold it the way they do.

When this bill was introduced, I had hoped we would have time to go to committee and go through the process of Parliament, to give the minister the opportunity to explain how the expansion would be implemented. In the interests of moving forward, the minister has been very kind in providing written commitments on the implementation of the expansion and I want to thank him for those today.

In a letter, the minister advised that Canada will invest \$1.4 million in ongoing annual operations and maintenance funding to the existing park. The letter also contained a commitment to capital funding to build facilities for the expansion. Officials at Parks Canada advised me that the amount of this capital expansion will be in excess of \$5 million.

The minister also committed to the ongoing cooperation with the Dehcho First Nations in the management of the park and that the co-management regime will be part of a final agreement on land, resources and self-government with the Dehcho First Nations.

As I already told the minister, I will be keeping a close eye on how the implementation of this expansion is proceeding. If there are any delays, I will certainly be calling on the minister to explain why things are not proceeding, something that any member of the House would do.

I thank the members of this Parliament in showing unanimity today in moving the bill forward. I thank the minister for his hard work and for his direction to his government to move this forward. I trust that the Senate will provide us equal respect.

To the Dehcho First Nations, to the people of the Northwest Territories, *Mahsi Cho*, for a gift that will keep on giving to Canadians for all time.

• (1705)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to an order made earlier today, Bill C-38 is deemed read a second time, deemed referred to a committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

(Motion agreed to, bill deemed read the second time, considered in committee, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

* * *

CRACKING DOWN ON TOBACCO MARKETING AIMED AT YOUTH ACT

Hon. Steven Fletcher (for the Minister of Health) moved that Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Tobacco Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak once again in support of Bill C-32, an act that would bring important changes to our tobacco legislation.

By now members of the House should be aware of the urgent need to update the laws governing the marketing of tobacco products. The changes in Bill C-32, appropriately titled “cracking down on tobacco marketing aimed at youth act”, are needed in order to protect our children and youth from the dangers of tobacco use.

The reason is simple. A vast majority of adult smokers became addicted when they were in their teens. We know that if someone has not started smoking by the age of 19, it is unlikely that individual will ever become a lifelong smoker.

The current legislation allows tobacco advertising in publications that can spill over to youth. The proposed amendments in Bill C-32 will put an end to this practice.

We know that overwhelmingly the publications that carry tobacco ads are free publications. Many of these are found at bus stops, on street corners and malls. This makes them easily available to teens and children. We also know there was a 400% increase in the number of ads that appeared in the beginning of 2009 when compared to the same period of 2008.

We all want to protect our young people from advertising that might entice them to try smoking and potentially become addicted to a product that has many serious consequences for their health.

Following the last amendments to the Tobacco Act over a decade ago, there was a lull in advertising by the tobacco industry, but that has changed over the last two years. We have seen a new wave of advertising and this practice must end now.

The proposed amendments in Bill C-32 will eliminate potential spillover from tobacco advertising to children and youth, but Bill C-32 does not stop there. It will also make tobacco products less appealing to young people and less affordable too.

In 2007 more than 400 million little cigars, also known as cigarillos, were sold in Canada. Many of those were flavoured to taste like tropical punch, chocolate cherries and a host of other flavours that would appeal to a young person. I have a young family, and my son is 15 years old. These products look like markers, they look like toys, they look like anything but a tobacco product.

Flavoured sheets or tubes made from tobacco known as blunt wraps are also flavoured and marketed to young people and sold individually for as little as \$1 or in low price kiddie packs. Tobacco is not candy and there is no good reason to make it taste like something other than what it is. Our proposed legislation will make it illegal to add flavours to cigarillos, cigarettes and tobacco wrappers known as blunts.

Another factor that encourages young people to try smoking is the price of the products. If a tobacco product is inexpensive, more young people are likely to try it. For that reason, the proposed legislation will require that cigarillos and blunts be sold in packages containing a minimum of 20 units. This will increase the cost of these tobacco products and make them less accessible for our young people. We eliminated the sale of individual cigarettes or cigarettes in kiddie packs a long time ago. It is time that the same rules apply to cigarillos and blunts.

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All of these changes would help protect our children from marketing practices designed to entice them into smoking. By amending the Tobacco Act, we can help prevent more young people from experimenting with an addictive substance. We can protect them from laying the foundation for a possible lifelong addiction, with potentially serious health consequences.

Through this proposed legislation, we are taking a tougher stand against tobacco products that are packaged, priced and flavoured to appeal directly to young people.

Tobacco is a killer. Some 37,000 Canadians die every year from illnesses related to tobacco. It is linked to lung cancer, emphysema and cardiovascular disease, to name but three. The negative effect of the health of those people has been an affect on all health care. Smoking costs the health care system over \$4 billion every year.

Sales of little cigars nearly quadrupled between 2001 and 2007, making them the fastest growing tobacco product on the market. Who is buying them? Health Canada's Canadian tobacco use monitoring survey gives us this insight.

● (1710)

In 2007, 25% of youth aged 15 to 17 reported having tried smoking a little cigar at some point in their lives and over 8% said they had smoked one some time in the 30 days before the survey. These results confirm that there is reason for concern and we need to take action. I would like to remind the House that the proposed legislation does not seek to get rid of little cigars altogether, but we do want to put a stop to the marketing of them to youth, whether that is through price, flavouring or advertising.

In closing, I would like to thank members of the Standing Committee on Health for their thoughtful and timely consideration of this very important legislation. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the hon. member for Winnipeg North and all the important work she has done to raise awareness of the dangers that candy-flavoured tobacco products pose to our country's young people.

All of my colleagues on the health committee have done a wonderful job with this legislation. I thank the stakeholders, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health for their support. I found this a great experience and an example of working co-operatively, not in a partisan way, especially on an issue that is very important to all of us here as parents, which is the health of our children. It is an example of how committees should work.

I hope the bill gets a very speedy passage through the Senate.

● (1715)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow my hon. colleague in speaking to Bill C-32, as I believe it is vitally important to curb tobacco use among children.

Most smokers begin smoking in childhood or early adolescence. Ninety per cent smoke before the age of 18. Early starters are more likely to become addicted daily smokers. Partly because the tobacco industry targets adolescence, 82,000 to 99,000 young people start smoking every day.

Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, 60 of them known or suspected carcinogens, such as arsenic, DDT and methanol. Cigarette smoke is directly linked to an increased risk of many

diseases, including cancer, heart disease and even sexual impotence. In fact, 30% of all cancer deaths can be attributed to smoking. Cancers other than lung cancer that are limited to smoking include bladder, cervical, kidney, liver, pancreatic and stomach cancer.

Even light smokers risk their health. For example, a 2005 *British Medical Journal* study showed that smoking only one to four cigarettes per day was associated with a significantly higher risk of dying from heart disease. According to the World Health Organization, smoking accounts for one in ten deaths worldwide. As a result, Gro Harlem Brundtland, former director general of the organization, repeatedly and angrily spoke out against the tobacco epidemic, "Civilized nations protect their people under 18—they do not let them play around with a product which statistically kills one out of two of its permanent users".

The Standing Committee on Health did work collegially and heard testimony from anti-smoking groups to small business owners to the tobacco industry. Much of the questioning focused on contraband tobacco, smokeless products and menthol flavouring and whether more work needed to be done in these areas.

We have a crisis in Canada, namely contraband tobacco, which lacks government control, inspection, taxation, is cheap and is easily bought by youth. Research tells us that the price of cigarettes is an important factor in determining whether young people begin to smoke, whether current smokers continue and how much they smoke. We know low cost contraband cigarettes are particularly attractive to vulnerable populations such as young people. Lab analysis of contraband shows that dead flies, insect eggs, mould and even human feces have appeared in contraband cigarettes.

Our children are smoking contraband cigarettes in disturbing numbers, 25% of youth in Ontario and 32% of youth in Quebec. Dave Bryans, president of the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco, reports:

We've got the wild west of illegal tobacco manufacturing and distribution right under our noses and most Canadians don't know it's happening.

The reality is that trade in cigarettes undermines prevention and smoking cessation strategies.

In a 2009 example from Hamilton, Hamilton's public health department and the Canadian Cancer Society blame the jump on easy access to contraband and tax-free cigarettes that sell for a fraction of the regular price. Smoking increased by a third in one year. Public Health estimates that contraband cigarettes cost \$8 to \$15 compared with the usual \$55 to \$80.

A last point regarding contraband tobacco is that while it may rob government of enormous tax revenue, at least \$1.6 billion each year, it is statistically likely to kill one in two of the youth it sucks in.

While contraband is growing in popularity among youth, so too is smokeless tobacco, better known as chew, snuff or spit tobacco. Spitless tobacco is a cleaner, friendlier version of chewing tobacco, developed in an effort to convince more smokers to consider using smokeless products in places where smoking is prohibited.

Regardless of the name or form, smokeless tobacco causes serious health problems. Chewing tobacco hooks users on nicotine, similar to the way cigarettes do, and makes it difficult to stop using chewing tobacco. Over time, users develop a tolerance for nicotine and need more tobacco to feel the desired effects of the drug. Some switch to brands with higher nicotine content or use tobacco more frequently and longer.

● (1720)

Severely addicted users may leave the chew in their mouths overnight and swallow the tobacco juices. Smokeless tobacco causes gum disease to tooth decay because it contains high amounts of sugar as well as coarse particles that can scratch away tooth enamel, making teeth more vulnerable to cavities.

More seriously, smokeless tobacco increases blood pressure and heart rate, and may increase the risk of heart attack. Smokeless products also increase the risk of developing small white precancerous patches inside the mouth where the chew is most often placed or worse, oral cancer, including those of the cheek, gums, lip, mouth, throat and tongue. Surgery to remove cancer from any of these areas can leave the chin, face, jaw or neck disfigured.

Smokeless is not harmless. Joe Garagiola, a former spit tobacco user, played major league baseball and later worked in broadcasting. He reported:

I chewed tobacco because it seemed to be the thing to do if you were playing baseball. Everybody chewed when I was playing, and nobody knew the dangers of it.

He has since become a crusader against smokeless products because he lost three close friends to oral cancer. He said:

You won't die of gum disease or yellow teeth, but develop oral cancer and it's a terrible way to go. Here you are with oral cancer from using spit tobacco, your jaw has been removed and you have to eat through a tube. You die one piece at a time. Spit tobacco is a horrible, horrible thing. I just wish I could get this message across to everyone.

Today, more than 600 additives including caramel, cocoa, coffee extract, vanilla and menthol can legally be added to tobacco products.

Many appear to be present simply to add flavour, but some may have more sinister effects. For example, cocoa when burned in a cigarette produces bromine gas that dilates the airways of the lung and increases the body's ability to absorb nicotine.

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health explored tobacco industry manipulation of menthol levels in specific brands and found a deliberate strategy to recruit and addict young smokers by adjusting menthol to create a milder experience for the first time user. Menthol masks the harshness and irritation of cigarettes allowing delivery of an effective dose of nicotine. These milder products were then marketed to the youngest potential consumers.

Howard Koh, professor and associate dean for public health practice said, "For decades, the tobacco industry has carefully

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manipulated menthol content not only to lure youth but also to lock in lifelong adult customers".

We know that younger smokers use menthol at higher levels. About 44% of current smokers, age 12 to 17, have tried menthol. That compares to 31% with older smokers.

To be fair, a spokesperson for Philip Morris said:

We disagree with the author's conclusion that menthol levels in our products were manipulated to gain market share among adolescents...The company's various brands, including our menthol brands, are designed to meet the diverse taste preferences of adults who smoke. We believe kids should not use tobacco and our marketing methods are designed to minimise reach to unintended audiences—

Regardless, there are significant knowledge gaps regarding menthol: the role of menthol in tobacco reinforcement and addiction; the relationship between menthol cigarettes and cancer of various sites; the effect of menthol cigarettes on cardiovascular disease; and the association between use of menthol and illicit drugs.

Importantly, this year there will be a second scientific conference on menthol cigarettes.

In closing, Bill CC-32 is important and necessary. I am encouraged that it is receiving strong support from anti-smoking and health groups. Rob Cunningham, senior policy analyst at the Canadian Cancer Society, said, "We're hopeful that MPs will adopt this bill quickly. It's a very important gain for us".

Going forward, however, we have to close the loop on contraband tobacco. This may mean looking at the Criminal Code as 49% of cigarettes smoked in Canada are contraband. We also need to look at smokeless tobacco and menthol cigarettes.

● (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear at this point that the result of the vote on Bill C-32 is no longer a secret to anyone, because, as hon. members will have noticed during routine proceedings today, a motion was unanimously adopted in this House to pass Bill C-32 unanimously at the end of this debate, which my NDP colleague will close.

I imagine that the reason is quite simple: all the parliamentarians in this House—on the advice of the Standing Committee on Health, on which I sit with my colleague from Repentigny—decided that all the measures in Bill C-32 were in keeping with the objective of the bill, which is to place greater limitations on young people's access to cigarettes and tobacco products.

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This objective is very much in line with the purpose of the Tobacco Act that was enacted in 1997 and that stipulates in paragraph 4(c) that the purpose of the act is to protect the health of young persons by restricting access to tobacco products.

We know that Bill C-32 aims essentially to eliminate any attractive packaging that resembles candy and contains a single little cigar or just a few units. In fact, the weight limit is 1.4 grams. Removing these flavoured products from circulation broadens the scope of the act to include blunt wraps.

It is important to try as much as possible to remove from circulation and make inaccessible to our young people tobacco products that could introduce them much more easily and quickly to tobacco use, which we all know is harmful to health and leads to addiction.

Of course, in a few moments, when this debate concludes, we are going to make our decision, which, as I said earlier, is a unanimous vote in favour of this bill. It will be sent to the Senate to be studied there.

It is clear, however, that our actions as parliamentarians must not stop with this bill. As we know, manufacturers have a great deal of imagination and could try to find other ways to make tobacco more appealing and more accessible to young people. We must always remain vigilant. We mentioned this and talked about it during our examination at the Standing Committee on Health. We said that the government and this Parliament must remain truly open to adding any other products that might appear or are already on the market, and for which we do not have any evidence on how appealing they are to young people.

The ISQ revealed that more than one-third of secondary students had smoked a cigarillo in the month before the survey. I think that number speaks for itself and illustrates the importance of taking action.

I was also pleased to hear my colleague from Etobicoke North describe cigarette smuggling as a scourge and say that it encourages our young people to use tobacco products.

•(1730)

Indeed, according to the statistics I found by doing a little research, 200 illegal cigarettes can be purchased for about \$6. What young person today does not have \$6 in his or her pockets? And 200 cigarettes translates into a lot of heavy smoking.

It is therefore important that we make a greater, more concerted effort to put an end to cigarette smuggling. I am pleased to have my Liberal colleague's support on this, because our work as parliamentarians should focus on finding a solution to smuggling as quickly as possible. The problem is already well entrenched and critical.

The government also loses out because of smuggling. According to the most recent figures I could find, federal and provincial governments lose \$1.6 billion in tax revenues every year because of cigarette smuggling.

I would like to talk about another matter for future consideration by all my colleagues. We heard in committee from cigarillo manufacturers that stopping the production and sale of cigarillos

will lead to a substantial reduction of their revenue, not that generated by sales to young people but revenue from sales to adult clients who currently smoke these products. Lost revenue translates into future job losses. Out of concern for these workers, it is our duty as parliamentarians to reflect on the impact of this legislation on those workers in the industry who may lose their jobs and consider possible assistance for them. The government should also think about this when implementing the bill.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge all witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Health during the course of this study. When we have to study a bill it is important to hear from experts and also from those people who make the fight against smoking a priority every day.

It is also important, as we deal with this matter, to congratulate and acknowledge all those who have quit smoking, something I wish to highlight. By quitting they have decided to do something positive for their health and we should give them credit for that.

I would also like to thank all stakeholders, including groups of young people who, every day, try to get the message out to our youth about the harmful effects of smoking and urge them to not start down the road to this addiction. As years go by, it becomes increasingly difficult to stop smoking. I am not speaking from experience because I have never smoked a cigarette or any other tobacco product. However, I have met many people and, in my previous speech in this House, I gave the example of Louis Lemieux.

•(1735)

[English]

Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a historic day. This is a day when Parliament has worked well and produced a piece of legislation that will make a huge difference in the lives of Canadians everywhere. It will help save people from unnecessary death, reduce costs to our health care system and enhance the quality of life everywhere. It is a historic day for all members in the House because together we have accomplished something very significant.

For me personally, it is also very fulfilling. As a member who has been here for 12 years, plodding along and trying very hard to make change step by step, to actually see a small initiative come to fruition, a private member's bill become a government bill and the power of persistence over many years with the support of many citizens gives me great faith in this place and in the whole democratic process.

I want to thank all of my colleagues from all parties for their support around this initiative, in particular the members of the health committee who worked very co-operatively. We had some very good hearings. We heard from many witnesses and produced a bill, with a few changes, that is excellent by all accounts.

Government Orders

It is not everything we had hoped for. In the process of reaching this great moment in our history, we had to compromise. We had to bite our tongues and agree that we would not get everything we wanted in this bill. That was the case with respect to smokeless tobacco, which was an amendment I had hoped to introduce, and also with respect to the menthol flavour still being permitted, something which the Bloc had tried to remove from the bill.

In the interests of getting this bill through before the end of the spring sitting, have it become law before the summer and to have these dangerous flavoured tobacco products and individual cigarillos which are so enticing to young people removed from store shelves before the young people go back to school in September is a victory.

There are people aside from members of the health committee who worked very hard on this. I have to acknowledge the work of the health minister and her staff for recognizing a good idea and running with it. All members of her government saw this private member's bill a year ago when I introduced it. They decided to make it an election commitment and they followed through on it.

I want to thank her and her staff and, in particular, one of her assistants, Regan Watts, who helped shepherd this bill through the process and ended up with a broken knee just before the final hearings at committee. He certainly played a valuable role in bringing information to the committee and being a go-between for the minister's office and the committee.

I also want to thank the people in the department who never get much credit for their tireless work in fighting the spread of tobacco use and trying to reduce addiction to it.

There is a long-standing branch within government that has been vigilant about trying to reduce the level of smoking among all people, particularly young people. Specifically, I want to thank Paul Glover, the assistant deputy minister, who is with the Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Cathy Sabiston, the director general of Controlled Substances and Tobacco Directorate, and Denis Choiniere, director, Office of Regulations and Compliance with the tobacco control program.

Those three people and all of their staff have worked tirelessly for many years trying to strengthen our tobacco legislation, trying to reduce the amount of advertising that takes place and attempting to figure out how to stop young people from getting hooked on smoking in the first place. As they told the committee, they made great leaps from 1998 when the smoking incidence rate among young people was about 28% to the present where it is at 15%. That took a lot of legislation, a lot of regulations and a lot of controls on advertising. However, we are stuck at 15%.

At the moment we are trying to figure out how to get unstuck and reduce that level even lower, along come the tobacco companies with their clever ways to manipulate the marketplace and entice young people to smoke by putting on the market these lovely smelling, beautifully designed, trendy products, these individual cigarillos that are very enticing and do not appear to be harmful. However, they are as dangerous as normal cigarettes. In fact, they have higher amounts of nicotine, tar and other dangerous toxins in them and they are even more addictive than regular cigarettes. Young people were trying them. Despite all of the nonsense we heard from

some of the large tobacco companies and some of the promoters of tobacco products, we know that young people were getting hooked on these products.

• (1740)

In 2001 there were about 50,000 of these products being sold on the market. Presently, there are about 80 million products being sold in the marketplace every day. That is a huge leap. We know that people are trying them.

Young adults are the age group with the highest smoking rates in Canada. We are trying to change that and deal with this pervasiveness of the tobacco industry to try to trap young people. The tobacco companies try to get them to smoke, because then they have a lucrative group they can sell to for the rest of their lives because they are addicted for a lifetime. Addiction to tobacco is deadly. It kills. It leads to cancer. It is absolutely devastating for individuals and families. We have an obligation to stop that kind of menace in our society.

The bill before us is also a lesson in terms of citizen participation and persistence of non-governmental organizations. We would not be here today with this bill, I would not have brought forward the private member's bill and the government would not have acted if it had not been for a whole number of groups, including Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society, Non-Smokers' Rights Association, Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac, Action on Smoking and Health, Northwestern Ontario's Youth Action Alliance and its Flavour...Gone! campaign, the Area Youth Coalition of Eastern Ontario which is part of the smoke-free Ontario initiative, public health unit staff who were so supportive of the youth initiatives, Sisler Teens Against Nicotine and Drugs, Manitoba Youth for Clean Air, the Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance. There are many other individuals and groups who have been tireless about trying to stop the spread of these products on the market and ensure their prohibition.

That is what we have accomplished today as a result of their hard work, their determination, their wonderful campaigns such as Flavour...Gone! and advertisements that said to put an end to tobacco industry gimmicks. The Change the Rules campaign used the depiction of a strawberry milkshake with a cigarette straw to show what the industry is trying to do. I thank them all for their incredible contribution to our society.

We will continue to work on improving this law. We have a commitment from the officials in the department to continue to gather data on smokeless tobacco and tobacco chew products, to verify what the youth are telling us. Among certain segments of our population and young people in certain communities, as we have heard from other speakers, the level of using chew is very high. It is producing very dangerous consequences for the health and well-being of individuals, including serious teeth problems, mouth decay, cancer of the mouth and so on.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is a problem that has to be dealt with. Even though we did not win that today, we have a commitment from the government to collect the data, review the information and come forward within a year with some suggestions on how we might include smokeless tobacco in the regulations so that those products are also captured by this prohibition on flavoured tobacco products.

Let us also remember that although the menthol issue may not be a big factor in terms of this whole industry, it is still there enticing people to smoke. We did not win an elimination of menthol in this bill, but I am sure the department will also keep track of information on that issue and bring forward recommendations as we proceed about how menthol may be enticing non-smokers to begin smoking and how it might pick up in terms of interest of young people once this bill is passed. We are going to continue to monitor that situation. We will be as vigilant as possible.

Today I am very excited about what this place has accomplished. We have come together over very important legislation and we have agreed with unanimous consent to put aside some of the regular procedures that a bill must go through in order to make this happen today. It will pass today and will go to the other place, where we hope it will be dealt with very promptly so that it can be given royal assent and take effect immediately.

•(1745)

Then, by the time young people return to school in the fall, when they walk by corner stores, they will no longer be tempted by the lure of these lovely-smelling cigarillos that look like lipstick and magic markers and appear so harmless but are so deadly.

Together we have made a great difference. Together we will continue to save the lives of people and rid our society of tobacco altogether.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made earlier today, Bill C-32 is deemed read a third time and passed.

(Motion agreed to, bill deemed read the third time and passed)

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:57 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall I see the clock as 5:57 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:57 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

(Bill S-216. On the Order: Private Members' Business:)

June 17, 2009—Second reading of Bill S-216, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament)—the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1, a private member's item may only be considered by the House after a final decision on the votable status of the item has been made.

[*English*]

Although Bill S-216, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament), is scheduled for debate in the House today, no report on the votable status of the bill has been presented and concurred in as is required before the bill can be debated.

[*Translation*]

I direct the table officers to drop the item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence. Private members' business will thus be suspended for today.

[*English*]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you see the clock at 6:57 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall I see the clock as 6:57 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again I have the honour and pleasure of taking part in the adjournment debate to revisit questions I have raised in this House and for which I have had no satisfactory answers from the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

On March 25, I asked questions about the CBC, which is currently in a very critical situation. It has a deficit of \$171 million and has had to lay off 800 people, people who worked directly for the CBC and are now out of work. We need to keep in mind that 800 direct CBC jobs represent 3,200 indirect jobs. This is a very serious situation in Quebec as it is everywhere in Canada. These people losing their jobs are information and television specialists. There is no other CBC or Radio-Canada in Quebec or in Canada.

I asked a question of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages and my leader asked the same thing that same afternoon. All the CBC was asking for in order to avoid this real catastrophe and tragedy was a simple cash advance. Nothing complicated about that. It would have made it possible to save 800 direct and 3,200 indirect jobs. These are people, men and women, professionals who are now out of work and lining up for employment insurance. We do not know what kind of summer they will have, and neither do they.

Adjournment Proceedings

This is a terrible situation and must not be looked at merely in terms of figures or statistics. We have to think about these individuals who are experiencing a real tragedy and we must have compassion for them, something that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages showed no sign of. He told us that even if he had given \$125 million to the CBC, there would still have been 800 people laid off. We know that is not true. What is more, he claims to have increased its budget, when in fact he has kept it the same. Sometimes he says it has been kept the same, sometimes he says that he has increased it. This is clear evidence of lack of clarity.

What is clear, though, is that an organization called Friends of Canadian Broadcasting has provided a table which shows that, in 2009 dollars, the parliamentary votes for the CBC have decreased drastically. I cannot show that table, but I could table it with unanimous consent, which would give me immense pleasure. This table shows that under the Mulroney government in 1990 and 1991, the CBC received \$1,589,700,000, and now under the Conservative government of this present Prime Minister, it is getting \$1,052,600,000. That is a difference of \$500 million. How can this government boast that it is maintaining the CBC budget, or indeed that it has raised it? The figures show the opposite.

If there is one thing in life that does not lie, it is numbers. A person can do all sorts of things to manipulate words, but not numbers. The budget went from \$1,589,700,000 to \$1,052,600,000. The truth is that the government has not maintained the CBC budget. On the contrary, it is constantly decreasing. The Conservatives will argue that the Liberals did worse than that in 1995 when they slashed \$400 million from the CBC budget, and they will be absolutely right in saying so.

That said, I am again asking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages to answer my question.

• (1750)

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not clear why the member keeps asking the same questions when she is getting the straight goods on the answer. She could look it up herself if she did not believe the answer, but she knows the truth. She knows that the CBC is receiving in excess of \$1.1 billion from this government, which is more than it received from the previous government, substantially more than it received from the previous government.

She also knows that the executive vice-president, Richard Stursberg, of the CBC said that an extension of a line of credit, and I am reading from her question, or a loan to CBC would not have had any impact on the job decisions that were being made at the CBC. She is simply not being forthcoming with the House. Despite the fact that the member continues to get the exact answer. Why is it the exact same answer? Because it is factual, because it is the truth. That is why we keep giving the same answer. The CBC is receiving more than \$1.1 billion from this government.

I did go into this last week and I am very encouraged on the one hand by this debate because I am always encouraged when the Bloc Québécois stands and sees the value in national institutions like the

CBC. Maybe in her supplemental she might talk about some other Canadian institutions or things about Canada that are really valuable to Quebec, maybe having a Canadian passport, Canadian citizenship, maybe that is really important in Quebec. I believe it is. It is certainly important to Canadians in other parts of the country and I believe it is something that Quebeckers cherish greatly. Perhaps she would talk about the RCMP, a great institution that has provided so much to the country, the Canadian Forces, or maybe national museums, several of which are located in Quebec.

I gather the Bloc would also stand and support these national institutions and that is really encouraging because Canada is such a great country with great strengths. It is wonderful that we can talk about national institutions. The CBC, for example, a Conservative creation, is a public broadcaster that tells Canadians our story and has done so since it was created in the 1930s.

Our government made a promise in the last election that we would maintain or increase funding to the CBC. That is what we have done. We acknowledge that there are challenges in broadcasting right now. In fact, the member was part of a committee that worked on a broadcast study that should be tabled shortly in the House, so we know full well what is going on as the member does as well.

She also knows the truth with respect to the CBC. She knows there are headwinds facing all the broadcasters, that advertising revenues have declined, but government support for the CBC has in fact increased. She knows that full well.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, last year's report by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage indicated that the CBC had some very specific requirements if it was to overcome its financial difficulties. The report called for it to receive funding equivalent to \$40 per capita. It called for the \$60 million this government is forcing the CBC to beg for year in and year out to be integrated into the budget. It called for the CBC to have stable, predictable funding and a memorandum of understanding that would run for a minimum of seven years. Recently, the Bloc Québécois called for the 5% reduction resulting from the strategic program review not to be taken away at the end of the review period.

I am asking the Parliamentary Secretary to respond favourably to each of these requests.

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, and as I have indicated, we have already increased funding to the CBC, but the member also knows that the Bloc came forward with two economic stimulus packages. Neither of them targeted any money to the CBC. Thank goodness that in our economic action plan, in our budget, we did put more money into the CBC, and the member knows that. The member also knows that she voted against it.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is really difficult to say put more money into the CBC and when a budget comes forward that actually puts more money into the CBC, she voted against it and claimed it was in the interests of Quebec. I thought the member wanted Radio-Canada and the CBC in Quebec, but when more money came forward, she voted against it. It is really confusing.

I do not know where to go with the member's questions on this, or questions on the arts, and so many things. On the one hand Bloc members forget completely about this when it comes to their stimulus plans, and on the other hand they vote against more money. They are really confused.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three months ago I asked the minister about difficulties in accessing EI benefits.

At that time, the answer I received was the same tired answer that Canadians are used to from the government. That answer was that extending benefits for five weeks was all that would be done to help unemployed Canadians in this time of economic crisis. The only other thing that was told to them was that EI call centres would be open on Saturdays, but that was to inform them that they were not eligible for benefits.

Too many Canadians are falling through the cracks and are left with no alternative but to join the municipal welfare rolls, and that is unfair to the provinces and municipalities.

Nationally, according to the June labour force survey, unemployment increased by 42,000, led by further manufacturing losses in Ontario. The unemployment rate rose to 8.4% nationally, the highest in 11 years. Ontario experienced a substantial employment decline in May. It was down 60,000 jobs, bringing the total losses since October to 234,000, or 3.5%.

While Ontario accounts for 39% of the total working age population, it experienced 64% of the overall employment losses. The Ontario unemployment rate is higher than the national average and has risen to 9.4%, the highest in 15 years, yet the government was doing nothing, nothing until today, when our leader finally managed to convince the Prime Minister that change is needed.

The government has recognized, for the first time, the importance of regional fairness in expanding eligibility for EI, along with the need to allow self-employed Canadians to voluntarily participate in the EI system. A six-person working group, with three Liberals and three Conservatives, will work through the summer to develop proposals in these areas and report back to Canadians.

The government has also agreed to bring Parliament back early and deliver an additional accountability report to Canadians the week of September 28, to be followed by a Liberal opposition day that gives us the opportunity to bring forward a confidence motion if needed, a guarantee we have never had before.

The next accountability report must include the government's deficit forecast as well as progress on job-creating stimulus spending. The Conservatives have agreed to support this Friday's Liberal opposition day motion, which sets a timetable throughout the

fall for all opposition parties to hold the government accountable through confidence motions if needed.

Would the member tell me why it took the threat of defeating the government to get it to finally take this situation seriously?

• (1800)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we always take these matters seriously and there is no doubt about the fact that we are absolutely committed to helping Canadians who are going through this difficult time, through no fault of their own, to get through the difficult time. That is why we have already taken unprecedented steps to ensure that Canadians in need get the help they deserve.

To say we have done nothing is like someone saying he is driving a North American GM Chevy when he knows he is not. We are doing things. We are taking steps.

Over 85% of Canadians have easier access to EI now compared to October of last year. Through our Conservative government's economic action plan, we have lowered taxes and we have made unprecedented investments to help vulnerable and unemployed Canadians.

We have added five weeks to EI benefits, taking the pilot project national. We have increased EI's maximum duration to 50 weeks. We are preserving over 130,000 jobs through a better work-sharing program, less red tape and more flexibility.

We have added significant funds to help speed up processing. We are investing significantly in skills training for Canadians so they can get the jobs of the future.

We have committed \$5.5 billion in total this year to EI benefits. That is interesting in light of the comments of my colleague. We need to keep our economic action plan moving forward. We are pleased that the official opposition, and this hon. member, will work with our government to keep our stimulus measures flowing to Canadians.

We are also looking forward to working with the official opposition on employment insurance. While it knows that we will not accept the 360-hour, 45-day work year proposal, there is room to find common ground on many issues.

We are pleased that the Liberal Party is willing to work with us toward finding constructive, responsible and affordable common ground on employment insurance, so that we can continue to help those Canadians going through tough economic times and move toward a more prosperous future. It is the responsible thing to do. It is the kind of thing that Canadians expect of us.

Once again, I thank the hon. member for her support of our economic action plan and the steps that we are taking.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the government recognized that it took the leader of the Liberal Party to convince the Prime Minister to ensure this change.

The blue ribbon panel announced today will include senior members from both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, along with senior policy people. The task force will, over the summer, formulate necessary changes to the EI system. We need to be sure that the work of the task force will not simply be cast aside without a second look.

Now that we have the government's attention, will it make a commitment to bring in the changes that will be recommended by the bipartisan panel to change our EI system during the economic crisis?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear the member back off the 360 hours, 45-day work year and go forward with something far more constructive.

Our Conservative government's economic plan is helping Canadians keep their jobs. It is helping Canadians to get new skills. It is helping Canadians to get through these tough economic times and move toward a more prosperous future.

I am pleased the Liberal opposition is willing to work with the Conservative government to ensure we help Canadians in a responsible, effective and affordable way so we can move toward economic recovery as quickly and as responsibly as we can.

I invite the member to work with us, get behind us, as she said she would.

• (1805)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the excellent question by my colleague on EI.

When I asked a question back in April, the minister indicated that her system of EI was working because more people were eligible. More people were eligible because more people were not working. In other words, the success of the government's program was measured by the fact that more people were unemployed. That is a death spiral sanctioned by the government. That is no way to run a government in an economically difficult time.

There may be an opportunity now to work on this issue as a result of the agreement made between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. I want to commend the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister for seeing this needs some work.

We have to do something for the unemployed in our country. Employment insurance is the best stimulus that we have. If we compare employment insurance to infrastructure or tax cuts, it is the best stimulus bar none.

Tax cuts are not an effective way to deal with stimulus. There are all kinds of economic advantages to them, but as stimulus they fail. Infrastructure is a good project in an economically difficult time and it can be a good stimulus, but the money has to get out the door, and the government has had trouble doing that. Employment insurance

goes directly into the hands of people who have no choice but to spend it.

There are 58 different regions across the country and there have been some good reasons for that. These regions determine who is eligible, how quickly they become eligible and how long they will get benefits. It makes a lot of sense. It is more difficult to get work in an area with chronically high unemployment.

On the other hand, people in areas that have not suffered from high unemployment in years past are now suffering from it. I am speaking of places like Alberta, like my colleague's province of Saskatchewan, and B.C. We need to have something that equalizes the opportunity.

The Premier of Alberta and the Premier of B.C. have called for a national standard. It makes sense. Everybody is calling for it. One may argue about whether it should be 360 hours, or 390 hours or 420 hours, but we need a national standard for EI eligibility. Maybe we can still look at how long a person would draw that benefit. However, people need to know that everybody is equal in our country. If they lose their jobs, they need to know they will be treated well by the government.

It is not acceptable to say that the employment insurance system works because as more people become unemployed they will qualify. That means people are in the position of having to hope that their friends, their neighbours and their colleagues will lose their jobs so they can qualify for EI. Nobody wants that. That is not the way to run the system.

I have been asked by my leader to be on the panel that will have a look at this, along with one of my colleagues and some members of the Conservative Party. I do not know what will happen. I pledge to the House that I will do my best to work hard to find some solutions. I hope the government will do the same thing.

This is the single biggest economic issue that we have in Canada. It goes to the issue of fairness and it goes to the issue of helping people who need it the most. At this time, when Canada is suffering, when we are having trouble getting infrastructure money out the door, we should be putting money in the pockets of people who need it and who will spend it, not only because it is good for them, but because it is good for Canada.

The parliamentary secretary should join the committee. We could work together on this and find some solutions. I hope we will have an eventful summer. I have to go home now and explain to my wife why we have to change our summer plans, but this is a positive thing for Parliament and for Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour in being appointed to the blue-ribbon panel. Certainly it is good to see this member getting on board in a constructive fashion. I know, despite the fact that he sometimes blusters, he is a very sincere and reasonable person, and I have no doubt whatsoever that he will make an important contribution to the end result. I do think we will see some productive work done through the summer. Certainly I congratulate the member in his role and wish him the best as he goes forward through the summer with the hearings.

As I have just said, we are certainly pleased that the member opposite will help our government to get our stimulus measures out to help Canadians. We are absolutely committed to helping Canadians get through tough economic times in order that they can move towards a more prosperous future. Our government has taken strong and unprecedented steps to help Canadians.

I think, in fairness, if one is to be objective, one has to look at what we have done. We have added five weeks to EI benefits. We have taken the pilot project national. We have increased EI's maximum duration to 50 weeks, up from 45 weeks. Over 130,000 Canadians are benefiting from improvements we have made to the work-sharing program. We have added significant funds, \$60 million, to help speed up EI claims processing. We are investing significantly in skills training for Canadians, and we have lowered taxes for all Canadians.

When one looks at the total package, I think if one is to be objective and fair, one would have to say we are doing a significant amount. We have said we would continue to monitor the situation. As the Prime Minister said this afternoon, we need to keep our economic action plan moving forward, because it, too, will create jobs. We are pleased that the official opposition will now work with our government to keep our stimulus measures flowing to Canadians.

We are also pleased that the official opposition, including the member opposite himself, will be working with our government towards finding a realistic, responsible and effective common ground on employment insurance so that we can continue to help Canadians get through these economic troubles and move toward a strong recovery.

The member opposite knows from the many times that we have discussed it here in the House and that I have mentioned it, the 360-hour, 45-day work year proposal is not realistic and it is a non-starter. The Prime Minister alluded to this earlier today. However, he also said he hopes we can find common ground.

I am sure we will be able to do that if we work in a constructive fashion. I look forward to finding this common ground, and I think Canadians do, too.

So that is what we expect from this group and from the member opposite. I am hoping that, when we come back, we will see some very positive, constructive recommendations.

• (1810)

Mr. Michael Savage: Mr. Speaker, the summer is almost here, and I deviate from my usual message to compliment the parliamentary secretary for the work he has done in the committee. I do enjoy working with him.

The human resources committee, I think, is a model for all committees. I see my colleague here from Cape Breton—Canso, who was on the human resources committee in the last Parliament before being demoted to whip in this Parliament. He knows how well this committee has worked.

I want to commend the chair of the committee, the hon. member for Niagara West—Glanbrook, who has been a very effective chair and has often put issues, policy and principle ahead of politics.

If we can make this committee work, it is by using the principles we have used in the human resources committee, which is that we have to put Canadians first. Let us look at solutions.

I have always said, in talking about EI, I believe in a 360-hour national standard. I do not like the way it is characterized by some members. They are insulting Canadians by implying that they are lazy.

On the other hand, we have to go forward and we have to have some way of determining what is the best thing for Canadians. If we can work on that this summer, we can get some productive work done.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, I have been here a number of times in the last while and I have had to repeat the message quite often because the opposition members cannot seem to get it. So we have had to go through the number of things we have done. They have been very significant things. We have taken strong steps, unprecedented steps, to help Canadians get through this difficult time. We will continue to work to help Canadians. We look forward to finding that common ground with the official opposition through the summer months to find a realistic, effective and responsible way to do that.

Certainly I compliment this hon. member in his work and interest in this area. I wish him well in the summer. I am sure it will detract from some of the things he wanted to do, but overall, I think it is important for Canadians to see that we can work together for common good in those areas where we believe we need to do that to help Canadians through this difficult time.

When members see us going forward with only that portion of our plan, the economic action plan, and as they see that hitting the ground, they will see how it will be helping our economy and Canadians. I think that is why we are here. That is why we work when we do. I hope for the best for the committee.

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

(The House adjourned at 6:14 p.m.)

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