



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 145 • NUMBER 103 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

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*]

GREY CUP

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton East will be home turf for what undoubtedly will be a grand exhibition of grit and determination as two Canadian professional football teams square off in the 98th Grey Cup championship.

At stake are bragging rights for a year, a ring of some personal significance, and the victorious team's coveted possession of Governor General Earl Grey's contribution to football in Canada, the Grey Cup.

Two proud seasoned teams do battle this Sunday to contest the prize. The Montreal Alouettes, victors in the Eastern Conference will do their utmost to wrest this prize from the Saskatchewan Roughriders, who most certainly will have something to say about this effort.

As the Grey Cup game approaches, the party has already begun as players and visitors converge in Edmonton as we speak.

All that remains to be said is, “Go, Riders, go”.

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NATIONAL CORD BLOOD BANK

Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we knew something could save a life, would we throw it away? Probably not.

Every time a baby is born and the umbilical cord is discarded, that is exactly what we are doing. We are throwing away the chance for someone to receive a life-saving transplant.

Expanding the use of umbilical cord blood in Canada can have a tremendous impact in the treatment of leukemia and 70 other diseases. Fifty-two countries have already set up cord blood banks to enhance medical care and research. We have not.

The need for a national cord blood bank is urgent. It would provide physicians with easy access to the tools required to save lives. Most important, it would give hope and care to sick Canadians and their families who are waiting for treatment.

For every three successful transplants performed, one patient on the waiting list dies for lack of an appropriate match.

We need the government to take leadership on this important issue, and we need all members of this House to support any and all initiatives designed to increase the availability of cord blood to save lives. We need a new national approach. We need action now.

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

MONTREAL DRUZE HOUSE

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, November 14, the Druze house was inaugurated in Montreal. The house sends a strong signal that the Druze community has put down roots in Quebec. It also says that these people have chosen to build their future there.

The children of the five-coloured star enhance Quebec's identity with values on which great peoples are founded and endure: the importance of solidarity, the duty of remembrance and the love of children.

Gilles Vigneault's words are still relevant today:

In this land of blizzards

My father had a house built

And I'm going to be true

To his ways, to his example

My guest room will be the one

That you come back to, season after season

To build beside it

Statements by Members

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining, FNWARM, is in Ottawa this week to meet with MPs and discuss their ideas on how to protect British Columbians and others from poor mining practices.

They have learned first-hand how the promise of riches can turn into destroyed lands and low-paying jobs.

FNWARM seeks to promote environmentally sound mining exploration and development processes that respect first nations' rights and full participation.

This coalition of women from around northern B.C. believes it is possible to find environmentally committed companies that genuinely want to build partnerships with first nations. Companies realize that times are changing and that their future depends on shifting the way they do business.

These women support efforts to resolve rights and land title as they know it will be a catalyst to mining reform. They are also committed to building better relationships with industry so the necessary changes to legislation and business practices are made.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating FNWARM for its work.

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JUNIOR HOCKEY

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, volunteers in Fort McMurray have organized the first outdoor junior hockey game in Canadian history.

This Friday night, November 26, fans will cheer on Fort McMurray Oil Barons and the Drayton Valley Thunder hockey teams in the biggest gathering of fans in the history of the Alberta Junior Hockey League.

The rink, ice machine and native youth flown and bused in from isolated communities are all courtesy of local businesses, and all proceeds of the game will actually be given to local charities.

This sold-out Northern Classic event represents the spirit of northern Alberta: big dreamers that make their dreams a reality.

Today I would like to congratulate the Northern Classic organizing committee and all the citizens of Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo for showing us once again that we in northern Alberta are really Canada's northern light.

This Friday night I ask everyone to tune into TSN for the best quality hockey in the country. And, of course, "Go, Oil Barons, go".

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we knew the Conservatives had no plan for Canada to take action on climate change but, sadly, we now know their strategy is to obstruct others' actions.

[Translation]

A report released this week reveals that the governments of Canada and Alberta have been working together to soften climate policies outside our borders. Instead of reducing pollution from the oil sands, the Conservatives are shamelessly trying to undermine other countries' efforts.

[English]

Last Tuesday, the Conservatives killed a climate bill in an unprecedented and undemocratic move. Without a single word of debate, unelected Conservative senators defeated climate legislation already studied and passed by the majority of elected members of Parliament.

[Translation]

Just a few weeks before major UN talks on climate change, the environment portfolio has been handed to a minister who has shown that he cares little about Canadian accountability on this issue.

[English]

The government has no plan to fight climate change. Its ministers have made our country a climate laughingstock. As the world's heads of state converge on Cancun to contribute to solutions, perhaps Canada should simply stay home.

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ARTS AND CULTURE

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each year, the Governor General and the Canada Council for the Arts collaborate to honour the finest in Canadian literature.

The Governor General said, "These artists, through their passion, ignite our love of reading with every new book".

I wish to especially celebrate the achievement of a Richmond constituent, a teacher and librarian at A. R. MacNeill Secondary School. Wendy Phillips won the 2010 award for her children's book *Fishtailing*.

The jury stated, "In this highly inventive, poetic narrative, four compelling characters take the reader on a wild ride through the dangerous terrain of friendships threatened by manipulative acts. Wendy Phillips creates a powerful momentum in *Fishtailing* that leaves the reader breathless".

I congratulate Wendy on her fine achievement in literature. Richmond is proud of her.

•(1410)

[Translation]

JOLIETTE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate the local development centre in Joliette, which won the Grands prix de la ruralité award for excellence in innovation for its project entitled “Vieillir en demeurant dans sa communauté rurale”.

This innovative project aims to stop the exodus of seniors to urban centres and proves that people can grow older without having to leave the community they grew up in and spent their lives in.

I would particularly like to congratulate Céline Beaudoin, the coordinator of the project, René Vincent, the president of the Pacte rural of the RCM of Joliette, and Dominique Masse, the rural development advisor for the LDC in Joliette, who all made this project possible.

The LDC in Joliette has no plans to stop anytime soon. It is continuing to discuss and to explore the possibility of opening a mobile library and of offering information sessions to seniors on nutrition, safety and transportation.

I congratulate the organizers of this project once again and I encourage them to continue the excellent work they are doing for seniors in the RCM of Joliette.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to express my deepest condolences to the government and the people of Cambodia in the aftermath of Monday's devastating stampede in Phnom Penh. Cambodians were celebrating the final day of their national water festival when the tragedy struck, resulting in over 450 deaths with hundreds more injured. We also wish a speedy recovery for those injured.

I also wish to express our deepest condolences and sympathies to the Government of New Zealand for the deaths which resulted from the mining explosion. I would like to extend our sympathies to the families and friends of those who were killed. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time.

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WORK FROM HOME DAY

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to lend my voice to over 50,000 Canadians who have joined a Facebook campaign calling for a national work from home day.

Studies indicate that working from home increases overall employee productivity by 10% to 20%, improves employee morale and opens up opportunities for underemployed Canadians, such as those with disabilities.

If one million Canadians worked at home just one day a week, we would save 250 million kilograms of CO₂ emissions, 100 million

Statements by Members

litres of fuel and 800 million fewer kilometres of mileage on our highways every year.

Our changing economy needs to embrace the new ways of working which also appreciate the social responsibility we have to our environment.

I congratulate Workopolis, its president, Gabriel Bouchard, and the many thousands of Canadians who are asking the government and the House to join the campaign for better productivity, better work-life balance, more inclusion and a better environment.

I say, way to go. Let us work from home. It works for all of us.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the global economic recovery still fragile, Canadian families are taking a hard look at their budgets, tightening their belts and making tough choices about how they spend their money. They expect the same of their government. Controlling spending is key to a balanced budget, whether running a household or governing a country.

Today we are continuing to show respect for taxpayer dollars by toughening the rules on spending by bureaucrats. These new actions include ensuring that all spending by bureaucrats on travel, conferences and hospitality are approved by deputy ministers and reported to the public each year. We are also restricting all spending on alcohol and entertainment.

Today's action is another example of our efforts to eliminate waste, to ensure the government lives within its means and to keep taxes low for hard-working Canadian families.

* * *

FOREIGN TAKEOVERS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on the devastating impact of foreign takeovers gone wrong on women and our communities. Time and time again it has been proven that women experience greater hardship when economic conditions are more difficult.

While the government has claimed that it is working for economic growth and the creation of jobs, its support for Vale says the opposite. Instead of sticking to its commitment to growing communities, Vale is ripping apart my home community, Thompson, by announcing the stripping of over 600 jobs. The loss of these jobs affects women working in the smelter and refinery, but it also affects women working hard to raise their families and hold up our community.

Oral Questions

Women in Thompson and across the north, as well as women in resource-based communities across Canada, have worked hard to give our country the wealth we have. They deserve to have a federal government stand up for them and their communities. We all deserve to have a federal government that comes to the table to find solutions, leaves corporate welfare aside and looks out for the people, the Canadian people.

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●(1415)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today our government announced tighter guidelines for civil servants who attend conferences, travel for business purposes or spend money on hospitality in the name of the federal government.

With the global economic recovery still fragile, Canadian families are taking a hard look at their budgets, tightening their belts and making tough choices about how to spend their money. They expect their government to do the same. After all, whether you are running a household or governing a country, controlling spending is key to a balanced budget.

The guidelines announced today further prove that our government is making an effort to eliminate waste, to ensure that it is living within its means and to keep taxes low for hard-working Canadian families.

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CHILD POVERTY

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 21 years ago today, this Parliament unanimously adopted a motion calling on the federal government to establish a plan to eradicate child poverty.

It is difficult to understand why barely any progress has been made in this area. Two decades later, the problem still exists and one in ten children lives in poverty.

Campaign 2000 confirmed this in its annual report, released today, which focuses on the absolutely devastating effects that poverty has on children's health: increased risk of diabetes, asthma, malnutrition, addiction, mental illness, physical disabilities and premature death.

We know how to end poverty. All that is lacking is the government's political will to act.

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EVELINE APOKO

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Eveline Apoko is a hero.

[English]

When she was 10 years old, Eveline was abducted by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, a vile group engaged in mass rapes, mutilation, murder and the kidnapping and sexual enslavement of more than 20,000 children. During her

abduction as a 12 year old, a bomb ripped off half of her face while she was protecting a baby. Eveline escaped the LRA by walking through the bush.

Today she is a voice for the hundreds of thousands of children worldwide who are forced to become child soldiers, their childhood stolen from them. Her charity, Strongheart Fellowship, will give hope to these children.

On behalf of Parliament, I would like to honour Eveline Apoko for her courage, love and compassion as a messenger for peace and a beacon of hope to the world's most brutalized children.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the member for Ajax—Pickering stood in the House on a point order, saying questions should have, in his words, a “modicum of truth”.

Here is the real question. The member says that he wants the truth. However, can he handle the truth? At Monday's public safety committee meeting, the Liberal public safety critic gave credence to pleas from convicted criminals who wanted to keep Canada's pardon system as is. He said, “Aren't we in fact endangering public safety by saying to those people there is no light at the end of the tunnel?” We disagree. When will the member start showing as much compassion for the victims of crime as he does for the perpetrators?

I am proud to say that the Conservative Party has always been on the side of victims. We call on the opposition to finally listen to victims and to support Bill C-23B, a bill that would deny child sex offenders the right to ever receive a pardon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

●(1420)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government lost Canada's seat on the UN Security Council. It lost the military base that our soldiers in Afghanistan depended on. Last year in Copenhagen, it lost all influence over the fight against climate change. Next week in Cancun, it will be sending a part-time environment minister.

Does the Prime Minister understand just how much his indifference to the environment has cost Canada's reputation around the world?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the Copenhagen accord has targeted greenhouse gas reductions that are three times larger than the Kyoto protocol's targets. I would call that a success. I hope that at the Cancun conference we will reach an agreement for mandatory greenhouse gas reductions.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been five years of the Conservative government, three and a half ministers of the environment and still no plan. Last year the government did nothing during the Copenhagen debate. Next week it will send the part-time Minister of the Environment. He might as well go on a beach holiday for all the good he will do.

Why does the government not listen to those Canadians who long for leadership by Canada on the environment on the international stage?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the reductions that various countries have committed to under the Copenhagen accord are apparently three times larger than those foreseen in the Kyoto protocol. Therefore, there is a success that Canada was a part of last year. I hope at Cancun this year the world will continue to build on that success.

Our position is clear. All major emitters have to make reductions. I know that is not the position of the Liberal Party, but we think countries like China have to contribute.

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the opportunities we are missing that are staring us in the face. We could be leading in clean energy. We could be leading in emissions control. We could be leading in energy efficiency. Instead we are falling behind because the government does not have a plan, does not have an environmental vision. We are losing the chance to be green energy leaders to all the other countries.

When will the government understand that its indifference to the environment is costing Canadian jobs and costing our kids their future?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in all of these things, in the development of clean energy and clean technology, this government is spending a lot of money as a world leader. It is only the Liberal Party and its allies that have voted against these investments.

Canada is moving ahead. It is only the Liberal Party that is falling behind.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister lost all fiscal credibility with Canadians when he sole-sourced the biggest Canadian military contract ever without giving a single credible reason for not holding a competition. This new anti-tendering habit will waste billions of Canadian taxpayer hard-earned dollars and cost Canadians thousands of jobs, and the price of the fighter jets is still rising with no end in sight.

Could the Minister of Finance think of a better example of a risky scheme involving taxpayer dollars?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, it was his party that started this process. We will continue to pursue what is the best aircraft on the planet with tremendous benefits to the Canadian

aerospace industry, including in and around the city that the hon. member purports to represent.

I would encourage him, as a former member of the Canadian Forces, to support what is the best thing for the Canadian Forces, our aerospace industry and our economy, bringing thousands of jobs and great benefits to our country.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that the Minister of National Defence learn how to do his job properly.

[Translation]

According to the Pentagon, the economic spinoffs for Canada are two-thirds lower than what the Bloc-Conservative coalition claims. Furthermore, we are no longer talking about 5,000 planes, but rather 3,000. The Prime Minister and the Bloc Québécois are misleading Canadians and cannot guarantee any spinoffs from those contracts.

Does the coalition know that it is going to waste \$3 billion of Canadian taxpayers' money and lose thousands—

● (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of National Defence.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all appreciate the histrionics and the feigned indignation from the member opposite, but as I have already indicated, this is the best way to proceed for the air force.

Certainly it has great benefits for the aerospace industries. Yesterday they said this will allow them to compete for the production of roughly 3,000 to 5,000 aircraft, which represents, from their estimates, more than \$12 billion in opportunities, for the partners' fleets.

Does the member, as a former astronaut, want the Canadian air force to go forward in antiquated aircraft? Would he go up in Sputnik now as an astronaut?

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*[Translation]***OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, an offshore oil production platform off the coast of Newfoundland was evacuated in secrecy. Since Thursday, toxic sour gas has been building up in the storage tanks and the platform is having ventilation problems.

Did the Prime Minister receive a report about this? If not, will he require one, knowing full well that incidents on such oil platforms off the coast of Newfoundland can have very serious consequences for the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence?

Oral Questions

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will look into this situation with the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board and make decisions accordingly.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is therefore saying that he did not receive a report. Clearly, that is his answer.

The Prime Minister should know that oil spills know no borders.

Accordingly, does the Prime Minister agree that such incidents can have devastating repercussions on the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence, and that he should therefore join his voice to that of the National Assembly of Quebec and order a moratorium on oil and gas exploration and development in the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, there is the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board. An agreement has been reached with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Discussions are being held with Quebec as well. We have faith in our independent regulators. The National Energy Board is also addressing the matter with regard to federal lands.

The Bloc is just trying to instil fear and stop everything from moving forward; we will end up going backward when it comes to energy.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here is a perfect example of a minister who does not know his own file.

We learned that in 2009, greenhouse gases reached their highest levels ever since the pre-industrial era, yet the Minister of the Environment is heading off to Cancun with no plan and no objectives. If there is no plan, we can only assume that the oil lobby will represent Canada in Cancun.

Will the government finally decide to present to the House a detailed plan to effectively fight climate change before the summit in Cancun, as the European Union and the African Union have done?

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, for the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, we have established absolute targets to reduce greenhouse gases by 17%. We are working with the Obama administration and our United Nations partners to flesh out the Copenhagen accord. All major emitters must participate in reducing greenhouse gases.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since they want to head to Cancun to undermine the climate change negotiations and since the Conservatives have nothing constructive to offer, more and more observers think that the Minister of the Environment should stay home.

We want to know whether the minister will be a spokesperson for the oil companies in Cancun or whether he will defend the interests of Quebec, which wants to see an effective plan for reducing greenhouse gases.

When will we see this plan?

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all have a great interest in coming to an agreement focused on absolute greenhouse gas reductions in the fight against climate change. Our position in Cancun will be to work with all the major emitters and to negotiate an agreement that will reduce greenhouse gases in all countries.

* * *

• (1430)

[English]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everybody used to agree that there had to be a vote in the House before there was an extension of the mission in Afghanistan. It was in the Conservative platform and it was in the throne speech.

Hon. Gary Goodyear: It is not a military mission.

Hon. Jack Layton: As recently as last March, the leader of the official abdication asked—

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Abdication?

Hon. Jack Layton: Mr. Speaker, it is the truth.

He said:

The government did not bring this before the Canadian people. This is no way to conduct foreign policy.

Will the government commit to putting any deployment in Afghanistan past 2011 to a vote in Parliament?

That question still remains.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, the answer is the same. The government has never submitted missions that do not involve combat to the House of Commons. This is a training and technical assistance mission and that is why we are acting on executive authority.

[Translation]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I imagine that everyone can understand why the Prime Minister is worried that his allies are again changing their position, but that is no justification for pushing Parliament aside. Our soldiers are too important. Canada has done more than its share in Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister needs to acknowledge that and bring our troops home.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the New Democratic Party has been against any involvement in Afghanistan from the outset, but the reality is that our troops have done very important work for us and the world. We very strongly support them.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a study has estimated that the total cost of the war in Afghanistan, including long-term veterans' benefits, would be more than \$22 billion, and that was before the extension. Let us face it, the Prime Minister has no idea when our troops are going to be coming home. He has already extended the mission twice, breaking his promise on each occasion.

There are already 3,000 Afghanistan veterans receiving disability benefits. Is 3,000 not enough? Did they not do their share? Why is our Prime Minister keeping our troops in harm's way for three more years?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Of course, Mr. Speaker, this is a decision that is strongly supported by the Canadian military. The members of the military have done an excellent job in Afghanistan. The security that they and others provide allows for the education of children and the immunization of children. It allows for development of infrastructure such as irrigation.

Two-thirds of our soldiers will be coming home next year and the combat mission will end, but those who remain will continue to do a great job for this country and for Afghanistan.

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RIDING OF VAUGHAN

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year a petition was circulated condemning the actions of Julian Fantino as OPP commissioner for his actions at Caledonia. The petition denounced “flawed policing” and demanded “a public inquiry into the actions and decisions made by the Commissioner of the OPP Julian Fantino”. Thousands of Canadians signed this petition, and so did the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Does the Conservative government continue to support an inquiry into the actions of Julian Fantino?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has been repeatedly stated in the House, there was an agreement signed in March 2010 by Ontario Minister Rick Bartolucci, who is someone the member opposite should recognize as they are both Liberals.

I would ask again, what is Tony Genco hiding? Why will his friends at Downsview Park not release his full and complete expense reports? When will the Liberals stop the rhetoric, and more importantly, when will Tony Genco's full expense reports cease to be a secret?

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of cabinet, the minister represents the views of the government. The petition went further. Not only did she want an inquiry, she wanted him suspended without pay, and pending the inquiry, fired altogether.

If the minister did not have confidence in the Prime Minister's hand-picked candidate then, how can she, the Prime Minister and anyone else in that cabinet have any confidence in him now?

● (1435)

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we have here is an outstanding public servant, someone who has made great contributions to Canada, someone who served as chief of police in London and York Region, someone who had a great record as the chief of police in Toronto, and someone who was so good that Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed him to be commissioner of the OPP. Can anyone get any better than that for validation?

* * *

*[Translation]***PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Paul Sauvé, under oath with his hand on the Bible, said that it cost him \$300,000 to have access to a system organized by the Conservatives and to obtain a contract. Every contract requires a 3% rebate and, if that was not enough, someone has to raise funds for the Conservatives as a thank you.

He also mentioned that he learned that Senator Nolin, his assistant Hubert Pichet and Bernard Côté, when he was former minister Fortier's assistant, were directly linked to the awarding of the contract. Why is this minister still in the government?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the public servants who are responsible for this have confirmed that the contracts were managed entirely by the public service and that there was absolutely no political interference. We have learned something about Mr. Sauvé, that he has met with one member of Parliament in this House, and it is the member for Bourassa. It appears that the member for Bourassa was trying to get him to be a Liberal candidate in what riding? Outremont. Why will he not leave Martin Cauchon alone?

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is as smooth as cashmere.

Yesterday in committee, Paul Sauvé, under oath with his hand on the Bible, said that a Conservative 3% kickback contract award system exists: “we paid, we received”.

Varin implied to him that Senator Nolin, Hubert Pichet, and Bernard Côté were involved. Further to the 3% kickback, contractors have to raise money for the Conservative Party.

The Prime Minister has called the RCMP and fired the member for Simcoe—Grey for less than that. Why will he not call in the RCMP this time, for this minister?

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in recent months we learned that public servants in the Department of Public Works have ensured that the contracts were all handled by non-partisan public servants and that they were fair, open and transparent.

Oral Questions

What is also fair, open and transparent is that Paul Sauvé is a major contributor to which party? The Liberal Party. Just a few short years ago, he donated \$1,000 to a senior Liberal cabinet minister, and just last year he donated almost \$1,000 to the Liberal Party. I wonder why.

* * *

[Translation]

SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the list of those opposed to a single securities commission is growing. Now the head of the B.C. Securities Commission, Paul Bourque, is opposed to the minister's plan. According to Paul Bourque, "Canada's ability to finance small business, the lifeblood of economic growth and employment, will be put in serious jeopardy," if the minister's plan goes through.

Will the minister finally understand that his plan, openly rejected by Quebec, Alberta, Manitoba and now British Columbia, is headed for disaster?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this initiative is optional and voluntary for the provinces. We are respecting provincial jurisdiction in this area.

Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how wilfully ignorant the minister is. Yesterday, at the Standing Committee on Finance, he openly admitted to me that he had not heard about Pierre Lortie's study. Lortie is the former president and head of the Montreal Exchange.

This study clearly demonstrates the harmful nature of his plan and, notably, the false impression of voluntary membership. But he does not listen to or read anything unless it suits him, and he is not interested in differing opinions.

Does he not simply want to concentrate financial market power in Toronto, to the detriment of all the other financial markets and Montreal?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the proposal with respect to a Canadian securities regulator is purely voluntary and purely optional. I am pleased that 10 provinces and territories are working with the Government of Canada on the initiative.

As the member knows, the Government of Quebec referred the matter to the Quebec Court of Appeal. We have referred the draft legislation, which was tabled in this House, to the Supreme Court of Canada for the opinion of the court on the jurisdiction of Parliament to legislate in this area. We anticipate hearing from the court next year.

* * *

● (1440)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have lost count of the number of times that the Prime Minister and his Justice minister have complained about the big, bad Liberal senators

getting in their way. The member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup claims that it is legitimate for unelected senators to block bills passed by elected members of the House of Commons, as they did with respect to a bill on climate change. Does this not further demonstrate how hypocritical it is on the part of the Conservative government to have no qualms about taking advantage of the system, once it gained control of the Senate, even if it meant abandoning its so-called democratic principles?

[English]

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is so concerned about democracy, it would be very helpful if she and her party would support our legislation to reduce Senate term limits from up to 45 years to 8 years, support our legislation to have Senate elections and support our legislation to bring accountability in political loans and expand voting opportunities.

We are being very aggressive with our democratic reform agenda. I ask her to please support us.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now that the Conservatives control the Senate, they seem bound and determined to take advantage of that to quash those decisions made by the elected members of the House of Commons that do not suit them. Never mind democracy. After blocking the climate change bill, the unelected senators are set to go at it again by scuttling the legislation requiring Supreme Court judges to understand French.

Is the Prime Minister not ashamed of using the unelected Senate to overturn decisions made by the elected members of the House of Commons? How can he—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of State.

[English]

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for bringing up this important issue.

We do have a situation where the Senate of Canada is not consistent with the democratic values of the 21st century. That is why we are bringing forward our legislation for eight-year term limits. This is why we are bringing in Senate elections.

What we cannot have is a Senate that has appointments made three decades ago holding up government priorities, like a strong economy, and Bill C-311 was bad for the Canadian economy.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister wraps himself in the flag of austerity, but it is made of Cellophane.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for Wascana has the floor. Order, please.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, the member's flag is made of Cellophane. The emperor has no clothes.

Oral Questions

He rails against big, risky spending schemes, but what about a \$1 billion for fake lakes, glow sticks and a wasted weekend on the G20? What about \$16 billion for stealth fighters, \$10 billion for jails and \$6 billion every year for extra tax breaks for the wealthy?

Why are these big, risky Conservative schemes exempt from austerity?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest deficits in the G7 and the best overall fiscal position.

Our deficit this year is lower than originally forecast. As we have said all along, once our recovery is assured we will return to a balanced budget.

The stimulus package was necessary to protect Canada and protect Canadians, and that meant running a deficit for a short period of time.

I know it was the right idea, because the member for Kings—Hants, my critic, said, “The Canadian stimulus package undoubtedly created economic activity and jobs”.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, look at the Minister of Finance's sorry record in Ontario.

While the federal government of that day moved transfers to provinces up and up to the highest level in Canadian history, including \$43 billion for health care, the minister's Conservative government in Ontario borrowed billions for unaffordable tax cuts. The Conservatives drove up the deficit, left massive debt, closed 23 hospitals, fired 8,000 nurses, fired food inspectors and wrought the deadly Conservative disaster of Walkerton.

How can Canadians trust such an awful record?

• (1445)

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, none of that is accurate, of course.

Our government will not reduce the transfer payments for health and social services to the provinces.

I was there in Ontario when the member's government back then cut the transfer payments. We had to close hospitals. Nurses were laid off. We could not educate doctors properly. Teachers were laid off. Schools were closed. It was all because of the Liberal government.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We do not need any more yelling. We are going to have a little peace and quiet.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants has the floor.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the finance minister is lecturing Canadian families about risky spending schemes, he is letting the defence minister spend \$16 billion on untended fighter jets, throwing away \$3 billion because the contract is sole-sourced. Even the Auditor General and the Pentagon are calling this risky.

I ask the finance minister on behalf of Canadians: Will he show some respect for taxpayers and stop the Conservative gravy train and just say no to the defence minister's risky spending schemes?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one knows how to spend like Liberals. How do I know this? I know this because it has confirmation from the finance critic, the member for Kings—Hants.

Here is what he thinks of Liberal spending. He says that neither the Liberal caucus nor the Liberal Party “has ever encountered a problem that they did not believe to be best solved by throwing copious quantities of taxpayers' money at. They are tax and spend-aholics”. He would know.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to risky spending, the Conservatives should practise what they preach. They originally promised that their prison bill would only cost \$90 million; then they said it would cost \$2 billion. Now the Parliamentary Budget Officer is telling Canadians it will cost between \$10 billion and \$13 billion.

Will the finance minister show some respect for taxpayers, stop the Conservative gravy train and just say no to his justice minister's risky new spending?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have always been clear in our priorities so that the safety of Canadians comes first. I know it is difficult for a Liberal to understand why we would not put the interests of criminals ahead of public safety. I know that the Prime Minister and this government will stand with ordinary Canadians to ensure that our streets are safe and we will not turn criminals out into the streets to prey upon the innocent.

* * *

AIRPORT SECURITY

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous media reports about the enhanced security screening methods used by other countries. Although terrorism is a real threat in today's world, passengers expect their government to provide security and safety while being respectful to the passengers.

Can the Minister of Transport tell the House what this government is doing to increase the safety and security of the travelling public?

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government agrees that the safety and security of the travelling public is of the utmost importance and that passengers must be treated respectfully. Unlike the United States, CATSA has not instituted and has no intentions of instituting more aggressive pat-downs.

Oral Questions

As of yesterday, additional privacy screens are being installed in airports countrywide. Unlike the American body scanners, ours do not pose the same health risk because they use a millimetre wave technology rather than X-ray technology. Passenger security is extremely important and our government is committed to balancing that by ensuring that passengers are treated respectfully and properly.

* * *

• (1450)

TAXATION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is bleeding billions of dollars every year, money super-wealthy Canadians and corporations hide offshore to avoid taxes. Even with the record deficit, the government is sitting on its hands. It does not even know the size of the problem, or if it does, it is not telling Canadians the truth.

The U.S., Britain, Sweden and Mexico do it. When will the government come clean and tell Canadians just how much they are losing to wealthy tax cheats every year?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and this government have taken decisive action to give CRA the tools and resources needed to aggressively pursue those Canadians who avoid paying their taxes. We are cracking down to recover money owed to hard-working Canadians. The number of full-time employees working on international audits is up 44%, and we have doubled the number of people working in our aggressive tax planning program since the government took office.

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the minister sincerely wants to curb tax evasion, why does he not adopt the U.S. IRS model, which was recently adopted by Quebec?

In the future, large corporations using the services of financial or tax planning experts will be required to proactively disclose all their tax tricks. That is a simple and practical solution that Quebec is applying to both corporations and individuals.

Why not implement it at the federal level? Is it because it would hurt their friends too much?

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we are working very aggressively on the offshore tax files. Through the measures in budget 2010, we are eliminating tax loopholes and making it harder for Canadians to hide assets offshore.

Since 2006, CRA has audited more than 6,700 cases, identifying approximately \$3.7 billion in unpaid taxes through international efforts.

Last year alone, CRA uncovered over \$1 billion in unpaid taxes internationally, nearly 10 times the amount uncovered in the last year the Liberals were in power.

*[Translation]***COPYRIGHT**

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the National Assembly of Quebec has unanimously adopted a motion calling for major amendments to Bill C-32 on copyright. The elected members in Quebec are calling on the Conservative government to protect Quebec creators better against illegal copying of their works and to compensate them better.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage listen to this call from Quebec and recognize the role of the creators of content and the importance of intellectual property to the vitality of Quebec culture?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have listened to that call. It was the Conservative government that engaged in unprecedented consultations with the artists of Quebec and Canada in order to draft Bill C-32 to modernize the Copyright Act. It is for the benefit of all Canadians, consumers and creators alike. Where we disagree with the Bloc Québécois is on a new tax on iPods. It would not be in the best interest of consumers.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has to stop saying that everyone applauds its bill because that is not true. In Quebec, artists, creators, authors, composers, editors, the Union des consommateurs, which represents consumers, and the National Assembly are unanimously calling for major changes to Bill C-32.

Does the minister understand that he has to change his big-business-friendly bill substantially, finally recognize creators' copyright and compensate them properly?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our bill is fair and responsible and it reflects consultations that were held across Canada.

[English]

Our copyright legislation, Bill C-32, is now before a legislative committee to consider how Canada could best move forward.

We have put forward our proposals. The only thing we have heard from the opposition side, the only proposal it has come up with to help consumers and protect the creative communities, is to impose a massive new tax on consumers on iPods, cellphones and Black-Berrys. We reject that. It is bad for consumers. It is bad for the creative community to make it more expensive for Canadians to consume the creative community's creations. We are opposed to an iPod tax. We stand with consumers.

*Oral Questions***STATUS OF WOMEN**

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only does the Conservative government refuse to call a public inquiry into the shocking number of missing and murdered aboriginal women but it has lost the support of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

NWAC has said that the government's recent funding announcement is not specific to aboriginal women and that it reinvents and conducts work that has already been done by Sisters in Spirit.

Will the Conservative government address the real issue, call a public inquiry and recommit to Sisters in Spirit?

• (1455)

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation and a responsibility to protect vulnerable women, and that is exactly what we have done with our new program.

We have committed, now, to creating a new RCMP centre for missing persons and improving our law enforcement databases to investigate missing and murdered women, and we created a national website for public tips to help locate missing women. In fact, Elizabeth Bastien, from the Native Women's Association of Canada, was there the day of the announcement. She said that this is a significant investment, one that could go a long way to addressing the challenges experienced by women and families in our communities. We appreciate her support.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not what NWAC's president said.

It is beyond offensive to hear the current government congratulate itself when so little money is going to victims and their families. We are talking about 600 missing and murdered first nations, Inuit and Métis women.

Does the government want to be tough on crime? Then fund Sisters in Spirit.

Does the government want to be tough on crime? Then call an inquiry so we can know why so many have gone missing.

That would be real justice, the type of justice we would give to any other group in this country.

Why the double standard?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is definitely no double standard. In fact, this \$10 million program was created specifically to deal with the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women. When it comes to support for victims, on this particular program, let me tell the House what Sue O'Sullivan, the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crimes, said. She said:

[W]hat we need is more government action of this breadth and initiatives that address all aspects of the issue, from prevention and prosecution to victim support. These are the kinds of initiatives that have the most impact and that we can all support.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, budgets may be frozen but the government's budget for P3s is exploding. That means prison cells for unreported crimes, propaganda flacks for the PMO, and plenty of pork for the bloated hospitality budget of the President of the Treasury Board.

When the President of the Treasury Board froze the hospitality budget of all government departments, why did he freeze his own at double what it was in 2006? How can the President of the Treasury Board stand and be proud of the fact that he announces \$500,000 a year for complimentary beverages, golf courses and visits to spa resorts?

Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the member is reading from. He is obviously not reading from the simple facts.

As a matter of fact, Treasury Board expenses in this regard have been reduced significantly. Overall, when we compare what the Liberals spent on hospitality in the year 2002, it was about \$56 million. Because we have frozen hospitality expenses, this year's year-end spending by this government is \$38 million, compared to \$56 million by those people.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will show the minister the numbers.

The Conservatives have spent \$125 million on hospitality since 2006. That might seem like chump change to the most reckless spendthrifts since Brian Mulroney, but let me remind the Gucci shoes gang of 2010 what that money could have bought: 62 million hot breakfasts for schoolchildren, full tuition for 25,000 university students, or old age security for 21,000 seniors for a whole year.

The President of the Treasury Board has just announced he is going to freeze his budget for hospitality at half a million dollars a year and \$15 million—

The Speaker: The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only has the announcement been made that all government operational spending will be frozen for the next three years, with hospitality spending frozen for three years at 2009 levels, but because of what we have put in place, we have already saved, in one year, \$56 million.

I would encourage the member opposite to try to get his facts straight. If he would depart from his usual approach of using the most inflammatory adjectives he can find in every sentence he ever utters and just stick to the facts, he would find that we are making headway.

Oral Questions

● (1500)

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of families in Valcartier with loved ones in Afghanistan have been the victims of a disturbing incident. During the night, heartless pranksters told them that their loved ones had been killed in Afghanistan. Such calls are despicable and, understandably, have caused these families deep dismay and needless worry and anxiety.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell us what he will do about these heartless pranksters and how people who believe that tragic accidents are something to joke about will be dealt with?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these acts are deplorable and completely unacceptable. I am convinced that I speak on behalf of all members of the House when I condemn this despicable behaviour. The Canadian Forces are helping and supporting the families who have received these disturbing calls. It is our hope that the perpetrators of these despicable acts will be brought to justice as quickly as possible.

[English]

Military personnel should never be cruelly alarmed while their loved ones are serving overseas. They make an incredible sacrifice in our country's name. They should never be the targets of such insensitive, immoral, disgusting acts.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our cities need firm answers. They need to know when the new regulations on municipal waste water will take effect and whether the federal government is going to provide any funding to help them meet the new standards.

It will cost our cities between \$40 billion and \$80 billion to comply with the new regulations, depending on which version the government goes with. When will the government finally make up its mind and put an end to the uncertainty that is standing in the way of clean water in Canada?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite clearly, in 2010 it is unacceptable for anyone to be dumping raw sewage into our rivers, lakes, streams and oceans. It is completely unacceptable.

This government has been working with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to bring in a regulation, to be phased in over the next 20 years, to ensure that we do the right thing for the environment, to ensure there is clean water everywhere in this country. We will not back down on this. We believe it is important. We believe it is in the Canadian interest and it should have support from members on all sides of the House.

[Translation]

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Réseau Solidarité Itinérance du Québec is holding a huge demonstration in Gatineau tomorrow to press the Conservative government to take action to implement the homelessness partnering strategy, or the HPS. Fewer than 130 days before the current funding lapses, funding delays can be expected if Ottawa insists on imposing its way of doing things on Quebec's agencies and government.

Will the government implement the HPS as soon as possible and respect Quebec's model so that the homeless are not—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources.

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have renewed the homelessness partnering strategy with \$390 million per year, totalling \$1.9 billion over five years. We have consulted all levels of government and listened to local communities and organizations. We have identified priorities and needs for well beyond 2011. We are looking for long-term effective solutions to homelessness. Housing is an important part of that.

We have had significant contributions in investment housing. It is something the member's party has opposed. I ask those members to get behind us in these initiatives.

* * *

CENSUS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' politically motivated interference of the Statistics Canada census is now embarrassing Canada on the world stage. The European Statistical Agency points out that Statistics Canada was the benchmark for the world. It is shocked to see this level of political interference in the collection of important national data.

The government can easily rectify this by enshrining Statistics Canada's independence into law. Will the government finally come to its senses and guarantee the independence of the Chief Statistician by adopting my private member's bill?

● (1505)

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as MPs, we are elected to represent Canadians. The decision we are talking about is whether or not Canadians should be jailed or fined because they do not want to tell the government how many bedrooms they have in their house or what their religion is. We do not believe this should happen in a free and democratic society. Certainly in a free and democratic society, such decisions should be made by the Canadian people through their elected officials.

On this issue, we will make no apology for standing up for the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the justice committee coalition passed unnecessary amendments to our important legislation that would repeal the faint hope clause. The bill would ensure that murderers spent the serious time they deserve behind bars and would not be able to revictimize Canadians. Now the bill will be sent back to the Senate, once again delaying this important legislation from being passed.

Would the Minister of Justice comment on this recent development?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I made a prediction a couple of weeks ago. I said the Liberals would not abandon victims until after the byelections on Monday, but I guess a couple of members just could not wait. Yesterday they stalled our bill to get rid of the faint hope clause and said that they would like to reintroduce it if they get the chance. Their abandonment of victims is a disgrace.

The Liberals think this is good news for criminals, but I have some news for them and another prediction. Faint hope is the best description of their chances in the next election.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the winners of the 2010 Governor General's Literary Awards: Allan Casey, Robert Chafe, Linda Gaboriau, Danielle Fournier, Richard Greene, Jon Klassen, Michel Lavoie, David Paquet, Kim Thuy, Élise Turcotte, Sophie Voillot, Wendy Phillips, Daniel Sylvestre and Dianne Warren.

Félicitations.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to queries yesterday from the government House leader about my commitment to support the prostate cancer awareness campaign, I want to inform him that I have now made a contribution to the member for Beauséjour in his attempts to grow a moustache and also to support this important cause.

I want to let him know as well that long before he was elected, I was hosting events for prostate cancer awareness here on Parliament Hill. I continue to be very personally committed to this cause.

COMMENTS BY MEMBER FOR MISSISSAUGA SOUTH

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to the question of privilege that was raised yesterday after question period.

Points of Order

At that time the member for Mississauga South stood and spoke at length about his concern that members' privileges were breached in the release of a confidential report.

However, in the course of his comments on confidentiality in this place, he breached the very same privileges that he was complaining about. He did so by quoting from emails that were only released at an in camera meeting and therefore in confidence and by divulging the nature of discussions at that very meeting.

The member himself acknowledged that he may be breaching confidential information in his statement yesterday and I would submit that he was in fact doing so.

The member is very experienced in parliamentary procedure and therefore this was most likely an inadvertent mistake on his part. However, he himself should appreciate the seriousness of revealing in camera matters even while commenting on a possible breach of privilege.

I therefore invite the member for Mississauga South to apologize for this breach of the rules of this place.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my presentation on the question of privilege raised by a member of the NDP, I did quote from one or two emails.

I would indicate to the hon. member, who is a member of the finance committee as well, that those emails were given to the committee members yesterday at the public meeting on the consideration of Bill C-47 when the Minister of Finance appeared.

That is where they were distributed to me. They were handed to me by the clerk. They were available on the table. The member has his facts all wrong.

● (1510)

Mr. Russ Hiebert: Mr. Speaker, there are two aspects to the point of order that I have raised. One was in relation to the emails that the member has referenced, but he also referenced discussions that were held at an in camera meeting in his comments yesterday.

If he can explain how that information should be released to the public when it was divulged in an in camera meeting, perhaps he would have a leg to stand on, but at this point he does not.

The Speaker: It sounds like a matter that members might want to take up in the committee, since the Chair cannot tell what was in a private meeting of the committee. I am afraid I am unable to do that.

MISPRONUNCIATION OF CANDIDATE'S NAME

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday during question period the Minister of Public Safety persistently mispronounced the name of the candidate in Vaughan, Mr. Genco.

He was told by this side of the House repeatedly the correct pronunciation and that his name is Tony Genco. However, he persisted to mispronounce it despite that. To get the message across, one of our colleagues mispronounced the name of Mr. Fantino.

Routine Proceedings

The problem is the minister persisted throughout question period to mispronounce Mr. Genco's name intentionally. He may think he was poking fun at an Italian Canadian or the Italian Canadian community in general, but I do not find it funny at all and neither does my community.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure members that no one is more sensitive to the mispronunciation of names than myself.

In my case, I had the good fortune of having a captain of the Chicago Blackhawks with the same last name. What I was unable to accomplish through most of my life, he was able to correct the pronunciation of my name within a short period of time. It is a wonder what an Olympic victory and a Stanley Cup victory can do.

I can in fact indicate that if the pronunciation is not Genco, I stand corrected.

The Speaker: I do not think the mispronunciation of words is usually a matter of order. We will treat the matter as resolved at this point.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual reports on the Access to Information and the Privacy Acts of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for the year 2009-10.

[Translation]

These reports are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

* * *

[English]

CERTIFICATES OF NOMINATION

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 110(2) I have the honour to table in the House of Commons and refer to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, a certificate of nomination from the Prime Minister for the reappointment of Jennifer Stoddart as Privacy Commissioner for a term of three years.

* * *

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 three petitions.

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation respecting its participation in the ninth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held from September 13 to 15, 2010, in Brussels, Belgium.

• (1515)

Mr. Daniel Petit (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of Canadian delegations to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting their participation in the ninth winter meeting in Vienna, Austria, on February 18 and 19, 2010, and in the 19th annual session in Oslo, Norway, from July 6 to 10, 2010.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the international peer review of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration in relation to Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and the supplementary estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

FINANCE

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eight report of the Standing Committee on Finance concerning Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures.

The committee has reported it back to the House without amendment.

HEALTH

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to its study on stem cell donation in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

The committee adopted five motions on Tuesday, November 23.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources entitled, “The National Research Universal Reactor Shutdown and the Future of Medical Isotope Production and Research in Canada”.

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

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, 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 on the management of the Department of Public Works and Government Services in awarding of contracts for the renovation of parliamentary buildings.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[*English*]

In accordance with the order of reference of Wednesday, October 6, your committee has considered Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and another Act, and agreed on Tuesday, November 23, to report it with amendments.

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MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILIES WEEK ACT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-597, An Act respecting a Military and Veteran Families Week.

She said: Mr. Speaker, our World War II veterans, our Korean veterans, our Canadian Forces veterans and all our Canadian Forces and reserves deserve more than one week of the year of recognition because of the enormity of their sacrifices. Their loved ones also deserve recognition and support.

My private member's bill calls upon the government to designate a national week for military and veterans' families, to honour the families of our military and our veterans, and acknowledge their sacrifices and their important roles.

It is my hope that designating a national week will encourage all Canadians to have increased recognition of the contributions of military and veterans' families and celebrate their spirit with a week of appropriate activities and ceremonies that pay tribute, support and thank these families, and increase awareness of the sacrifices made by military and veterans' families, particularly among Veterans Affairs Canada and the government.

I hope all hon. members will support this.

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

● (1520)

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, pursuant to Standing Order 36, the attached petitions signed by hundreds, probably thousands, of constituents from the riding of Thornhill. They were marshalled, organized and acquired by the hard work of Renanah Goldhar and Mothers for MIAs.

The petition contains the names of seven Israeli MIAs: Yehuda Katz, Tzvi Feldman, Zachary Baumel, Ron Arad, Guy Hever, Majdy Halabi and Gilad Shalit.

They petition Parliament to use all reasonable means in order to bring about the return of these Israeli boys as a result of the 2006 war and the activities of Hezbollah, and further, for the return of the body of Eli Cohen.

As I said, there are hundreds of names on this particular petition from the riding of Thornhill.

While I am on my feet, I would like to present a further petition that is certified pursuant to Standing Order 36 and is similar in its intent.

In fact, Renanah Goldhar and the mothers who are concerned for the return of soldiers missing in action list all of the soldiers names again: Yehuda Katz, Tzvi Feldman, Zachary Baumel, Ron Arad, Guy Hever, Majdy Halabi.

They build on previous petitions that have been presented by me and others in this House calling for the return of these MIAs. It is part of an ongoing imploring of the Government of Canada to use whatever means available to encourage the return of these soldiers to their families.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition wherein the petitioners note that Canada is a country that respects human rights, including in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The petitioners note that everyone has the right to life.

Whereas 40 years ago, on May 14, 1969, Parliament changed the law to permit abortion, and since January 28, 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 the time of natural death.

BULLYING

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition wherein the petitioners note that bullying has become a more prevalent problem in Canada, especially with the onset of the Internet and other digital media.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to consider introducing legislation that would target the problem of bullying.

Routine Proceedings

VETERANS

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

The first petition is addressed to the Government of Canada by Canadians of all ages and from all walks of life who genuinely support and value the contributions of our veterans. They regard a veteran as a veteran, regardless of where or in which deployment that veteran may have served.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to extend the mandate of veteran hospitals to include veterans who have served in conflicts and peacekeeping operations since 1953.

On the claw-back of veterans' pensions, eliminate the reduction of veterans' pensions at age 65 and change the widow's benefit to a non-taxable benefit.

They also ask that a veterans advisory panel be created to provide input on the selection of future veteran ombudspersons and ensure that Veterans Affairs Canada remains as a stand-alone department.

• (1525)

PUBLIC TRANSIT SAFETY

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition has to do with those who drive the buses in our country.

Petitioners are extremely concerned with the increase in violent assaults against public transit, school bus, paratransit and inner city bus workers across Canada. Almost 40% of Canadian bus operators have indicated that they have been physically assaulted in their career. In 2008 alone, 2,064 assaults were reported, which is an increase of 438 cases from 2007. These assaults not only jeopardize the operator but they also jeopardize passengers because the operator must be able to provide safe passage for those entrusted to his or her care.

The petitioners request the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to recognize the growing incidents of violence against public transit, school bus, paratransit and inner city transit operators affecting their safety and that of the travelling public in Canada in the same fashion that peace officers are recognized in the Criminal Code.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today on behalf of a volunteer in my riding of Random—Burin—St. George's who has given of his time and money to operate a non-commercial 5 watt FM transmitter to broadcast to the residents of the Grand Bank area and, in many cases, to the shut-ins who are in the Blue Crest Senior Citizens Home. Mr. Larry Osmond of Grand Bank has been doing this but for some reason the CRTC has decided not to allow him to continue.

Hundreds of people have signed this petition asking that such a transmitter be offered because it is a desired service for everyone in the listening area. The petitioners are calling upon the Minister of Canadian Heritage to invoke the appropriate exemption from licensing clauses to allow Mr. Osmond to operate his non-commercial transmitter.

This is something that is a good service to everyone in the listening area. It is something that senior citizens have benefited from and they were really disappointed when Mr. Osmond was taken off the air.

The petitioners are asking the CRTC to reconsider and the Minister of Canadian Heritage to get involved to reinstate this particular service which is so badly needed and was so appreciated by so many in the listening area.

When we have a volunteer like Mr. Larry Osmond who gives of his own time and money to do this, we should show our appreciation.

HOUSING

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition from residents of Ottawa, Surrey, B.C., and Ladner, Langley, Abbotsford and Mission all throughout the lower mainland of British Columbia.

The petitioners are calling upon the House to support a national housing strategy and to ensure the passage of Bill C-304, which is my private member's bill for secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing.

The petitioners point out that we need an increased federal role in housing through investments in not for profit housing, housing for the homeless and access to housing for those with different needs, including seniors and persons with disabilities.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today on behalf of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal and the 132 other community organizations across Canada with a petition to reinstate support for the community-based projects addressing the legacy of residential schools.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to assist the Aboriginal Healing Foundation of Canada in supporting community-based projects nationwide, as per the foundation's mandate, and to make the \$199 million promised in the 2010 budget available to the already established community-based projects currently addressing the legacy of residential schools.

These initiatives are about aboriginal communities helping aboriginal communities. They are important for the government to support.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by dozens of Canadians to end Canada's involvement in Afghanistan.

In May 2008, Parliament passed a resolution to withdraw Canadian Forces by July 2011. The Prime Minister, with agreement from the Liberal Party, broke his often-repeated promise to honour the parliamentary motion.

Committing 1,000 soldiers to a training mission still presents danger to the troops and an unnecessary expense when our country is faced with a \$56 billion deficit. The military mission has cost Canadians more than \$18 billion so far, money that could have been used to improve health care and seniors' pensions in Canada.

Polls show that a clear majority of Canadians do not want Canada's military presence to continue after the scheduled removal date of July 2011.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Prime Minister to honour the will of Parliament and bring the troops home now.

• (1530)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of residents of the eastern greater Toronto area. With reference to Bill C-544, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to adopt legislation which would prohibit the import or the export or the slaughter of horses for human food consumption.

VISITOR VISAS

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the following petition from constituents of Bramalea—Gore—Malton.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism to institute a system of visa bonds for temporary resident visa applicants wishing to come to Canada as members of the visitor class, to give immigration counsellors discretion over the creation of visa bonds, to establish minimum and maximum visa bond amounts as a guideline for immigration officials and to allow the visa bond to apply to either the sponsor or the visitor

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

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 Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

[Translation]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to call Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-32.

Routine Proceedings

That the House issue an order to produce a copy of the aqueduct system analysis reports for Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, Quebec, from 1970 on.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1610)

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

(Division No. 130)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Arthur	Ashton
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brunelle
Byrne	Cardin
Carrier	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Desnoyers
Dewar	Dhalla
Dion	Donnelly
Dorion	Dryden
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faillie	Folco
Foote	Fry
Gagnon	Garneau
Gaudet	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Guay	Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-
Côte-Nord)	
Harris (St. John's East)	Holland
Hughes	Hyer
Ignatieff	Jennings
Kania	Karygiannis
Kennedy	Laframboise
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse

Privilege

Mathysen
McGuinty
McTeague
Mendes
Mourani
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Oliphant
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Pomerleau
Rafferty
Regan
Rota
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simson
Szabo
Thibeault
Trudeau
Vincent
Wilfert

McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard
Minna
Mulcair
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelaga)
Patry
Plamondon
Proulx
Ratansi
Rodriguez
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Simms
St-Cyr
Thi Lac
Tonks
Valeriote
Volpe
Zarac — 140

Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Tweed
Van Kesteren
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Woodworth
Young — 129

Strahl
Thompson
Toews
Uppal
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wong
Yelich

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

● (1615)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all other notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

SEVENTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after question period, the member for Outremont rose on a question of privilege concerning the leak of the finance committee's confidential draft report on its prebudget consultations. He also reported that the leak was by Mr. Russell Ulyatt the then employee of the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.

Also, yesterday at 6:23 p.m., after the presentations on the privilege issue were made, the clerk of the committee received another email from a Mr. Andy Gibbons, who has Conservative ties and is with the lobby firm of Hill & Knowlton. Today the clerk provided that copy of the email to the hon. members of the finance committee before our meeting started.

I bring this to the attention of the House and the Speaker for consideration of the question of privilege raised yesterday. It would appear the disclosure of now a fourth person is more than has been presented to the House with regard to how broad this has gone.

It appears this has gone much further than the House has been aware. As a consequence, I submit that information for the Speaker's consideration and I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table the email from Mr. Gibbons to the clerk of the committee, in both official languages.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table this?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Aglukkaq
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Anders
Armstrong
Baird
Bernier
Blaney
Boucher
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Calandra
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casson
Clarke
Day
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoeppner
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lobb
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mayes
McLeod
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Obhrai
Paradis
Petit
Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sorenson

Ablonczy
Albrecht
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooogé
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Davidson
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fast
Flaherty
Galipeau
Généreux
Goldring
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hoback
Jean
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menzies
Miller
Norlock
O'Neill-Gordon
Oda
Payne
Poilievre
Raitt
Rathgeber
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shipley
Smith
Stanton

Government Orders

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to add my small intervention to this matter. Yes, indeed there was a fourth lobbyist, apparently, who received an email from the now terminated, former employee of the office of the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.

I would submit for your consideration, Mr. Speaker, that whether there are three or four, I think the arguments presented both for and against a breach of privilege yesterday are still germane. This does not change things, but I would point out for your consideration, as one of my colleagues said earlier, that there was another breach of confidentiality yesterday, made by the member for Mississauga South, who in his intervention spoke to emails that were discussed in camera at the finance committee. One of my colleagues asked him respectfully to apologize to the House for the breach of confidence. He did not do so. I would ask that you take that under consideration when considering the original breach of privilege motions and interventions that were made yesterday.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank both hon. members for their contributions to the question that the Chair is considering.

Before moving on with debate, 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 Windsor West, G8 and G20 summits; the hon. member for Laval—Les Îles, G8 and G20 summits.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT

The House resumed from November 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice has 10 minutes remaining. He now has the floor.

Mr. Daniel Petit (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will continue my speech from yesterday. When I was interrupted, I was speaking about Cybertip.ca.

This company also compiles statistics on child pornography in Canada. Every month, Cybertip.ca receives approximately 800,000 hits on its website and triages over 700 reports. Approximately 45% of these reports are then forwarded to law enforcement.

As of June 2009, Cybertip.ca had triaged over 33,000 reports since becoming Canada's national tip line in 2002. Over this period, more than 90% of the reports received by Cybertip.ca were related to child pornography. At least 30 arrests have resulted from these reports, approximately 3,000 websites have been shut down and, most importantly, children have been removed from abusive environments.

When they appeared before committee, Cybertip.ca's representatives mentioned that, in the first year since becoming the designated agency for receiving reports of child pornography under Manitoba's mandatory reporting legislation, Cybertip.ca saw a 126% increase in reporting, and 17 of those reports led to the identification of children or perpetrators.

Before I conclude, I would like to talk about the penalties proposed in the bill. Pursuant to Bill C-22, which is before us today, individuals, or sole proprietors, would be liable to a fine of not more than \$1,000 for a first offence; a fine of not more than \$5,000 for a second offence; and a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months, or both, for each subsequent offence.

Corporations and other entities would also be liable to a fine of not more than \$10,000 for the first offence, a fine of not more than \$50,000 for the second offence and a fine of not more than \$100,000 for each subsequent offence. This two-level penalty system takes into account the diversity of the Internet service sector in Canada, where there are just as many sole proprietorships as there are multinational corporations.

Some might feel that these penalties are light, but we have to remember that this bill complements all of the existing measures to protect our children against sexual exploitation, including the harsh penalties provided for in the Criminal Code for child pornography offences.

This bill sends a message to those who provide Internet services to the public that they have a social and moral obligation, and now also a legal one, to report the existence of this heinous material when they become aware of it.

We believe that the penalties provided for in this bill would allow us to balance the objective of the bill with its effectiveness. In order to achieve the objective of this bill, to better protect children, the government wants to ensure that all Internet service providers in Canada abide by the law, not just the major Internet service providers who already voluntarily declare such cases and assist the police.

What those watching us now must understand is that there are individuals who provide Internet services and there are, of course, large corporations that provide the same services. So we created two types of offences and two types of progressive fines. We wanted to ensure that we identified all of the cases in which an individual or a corporation might host child pornography sites or might fail to report a child pornography site.

• (1625)

According to representatives of Cybertip.ca, mandatory reporting of child pornography helps prevent personal and professional dilemmas related to reporting this kind of material. It ensures compliance with the law and ensures that quick, appropriate action is taken. Taking a closer look at the current role of Cybertip.ca as a designated organization under the Manitoba legislation on mandatory reporting is helpful in understanding how to explain the provisions of Bill C-22. This is what I was saying earlier.

Government Orders

In closing, I would like to make a final point. I recently had the opportunity to go to Palermo, where the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe was meeting. I was representing Canada, along with other members of our delegation. We supported the same bill that we have here before us. We summarized it in a few lines and asked the entire European community to approve it. Some 54 countries were represented by their elected officials.

It was a victory for Canada: the resolution on that bill was the only one that passed unanimously. We are making progress in the fight against child pornography. Of course we had to explain our bill and urge the members of the other delegations, elected officials like me, to vote in favour of the bill. Many of the areas that produce pornographic sites were in certain Asian or Middle Eastern countries. We needed to send a clear message that we would no longer tolerate these sites, which come to Canada and the United States through major systems. We no longer want children, whether their children or our children, to be exploited on Internet sites that disseminate child pornography, nor do we want three- to five-year-old children doing such degrading things.

That was our argument and, at the risk of repeating myself, we won: our resolution was the only one that was unanimously adopted by that Parliamentary Assembly, which includes the European Community. We do not always win, but we won in that case. I want the public to know that Canada can be proud. We are at the forefront of the fight against child pornography.

[English]

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague and to what he was doing in Palermo on the 54 or 57 countries.

I wonder if he could shed some light on some of the ways that the Government of Canada is being proactive about blocking sites that can come from other countries, countries that are not signed on to this, so that when perpetrators want to go surfing to see child porn sites, we can make sure that these sites are not available in Canada.

Is there something that the Government of Canada is doing proactively to block those sites that are hosted in countries that are not signed on?

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Petit: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. Numerous countries have been wondering the same thing. What is happening here can make its way there and vice versa.

Both there and here in the House, Canada tabled what we refer to as 21st century evidence. In other words, we will give Internet service providers everything they need. Not only will the government alert providers to the presence of child pornography or anything degrading that is prohibited by law on their sites, but it will also order them to have the means to store the material as evidence for approximately 21 days. That way, complaints can be brought against a provider that has not said anything or, if it has, against the people using such sites.

There is also the issue of pornographic images coming from other countries. Countries are talking to each other, especially the people who enforce the law, such as police. The convention on cybercrime, which is about a decade old and which many countries have signed,

allows us to notify the countries in question when something is found. This has been in effect for some time now. They take our information and we take theirs. We then make arrests or simply shut down the server.

• (1630)

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary where he got his information stating that we are the first country to have a law like this. I believe that the information we received from the Library of Parliament refers to similar laws in other countries, including the United States, that are far more thorough. As far as I know, there are also laws like this in nearly every western country and as far off as India.

Is there really an indication that we are the first to have this kind of law? Are there not already laws like this in most civilized countries?

Mr. Daniel Petit: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has a Parliamentary Assembly of 54 countries. Many democratic countries have laws that are more or less similar to ours.

Nonetheless, we are the only country to have proposed joining all these laws together so that all the other democratic countries—some of which are more or less democratic—that are part of this organization as observers or such can see precisely what Canada has done.

If our proposal was nothing new, they would have told us this already exists in their country, but they did not. Our way of presenting the bill is in fact something they did not have. Everyone has laws against these servers, but we have developed something much broader, requiring ISPs to disclose what we are asking for so that we can make arrests and store evidence. We were able to justify all of these actions, and the 54 countries accepted.

[English]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the government is spending \$42 million to play cat and mouse with people who are running these sites, when we have the examples of Germany and Sweden simply blocking the sites and the problem is solved.

I want to ask the member whether the government has looked into best practices in other countries. There are other countries beyond those, which I could name, that actually do not have a problem with this issue simply, once again, because they block the sites. Is that not a reasonable solution to this problem?

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Petit: Mr. Speaker, in fact, it is a matter of knowing whether to totally block them or to use reporting, with tools like Cybertip.ca, to intervene. When it comes to completely blocking them, I could mention the country that blocks them the most: China. It completely blocks everything.

Government Orders

Other countries block certain areas of the server. However, techniques are so advanced that people can simply go on another server and start over. We need to find a way—and that is why CyberTip.ca was created—to allow the public and parents to report things if they see their children going on any strange websites.

Instead of having one or 10 television or Internet police officers, we could have one million people all over Canada reporting what they see. Accordingly, it will be very difficult to escape this huge network of eyes watching the Internet just for child pornography.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the time to speak here today.

My question is quite simple. My Conservative colleague does not seem to want to give a clear answer. He says that people can report sites. That is one thing. But there is a difference between reporting and doing something about it.

My Liberal colleague asked a very simple question earlier. If sites are reported, which is one thing, will the government ensure that these sites are blocked? It is not enough to simply block servers. As someone very clearly pointed out, there is always a way to move the content onto another server. However, if we are talking about a specific site, that is another matter. Will the government ensure that the offending website is blocked directly? The Conservatives must stop beating about the bush and say that the entire Canadian public, some 30 million people, will become informants.

What good does it do to report a problem with certain sites if nothing is done to block them? My question is quite simple. Will the government ensure that the offending websites are blocked in order to protect Canadians of all ages?

• (1635)

Mr. Daniel Petit: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had answered that question. I apologize to my colleagues.

In the technology world, there is the server and then there is the site. The site produces the child pornography. Once it is reported, once we know that the site is hosted on a particular server and the server operators have done everything possible to determine that there was a pornographic site on the hard drive—in general terms—the police will intervene. They have 21 days to look at the evidence. The site will be shut down. It will no longer exist. That is what that means. That is a site.

A site produces pornography and uses the server to distribute its filth to all of our computers. So we must first find out how it works. Recently, a child pornography site was investigated because a number of witnesses reported it. There were about 116 IP address changes in 24 hours. Imagine that. That is what they had to track down.

We have to have a way to catch them, to find them, to bring them to justice and to shut them down. That is the goal.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill C-22, which is really a child pornography reporting bill. The emphasis is on reporting.

I am a little disturbed that, from speeches inside and outside of this House, in press clippings and in hyperbole at committee, people might have been left with the impression that this is a tool that will eradicate child pornography and make great strides towards stopping child pornography. In fact, it does very little.

I know the Conservatives like to have short titles for bills, such as “saving the community from everything bad” and stuff like that. This bill should really have been called the “too little too late act” in attempting to try to curb child pornography. I will explain why.

In 2006, I remember well, the Liberals were defeated and the Conservatives were elected. That is almost five years ago now. There will be a fifth anniversary, January 23. The Conservatives should look at that fifth anniversary and suggest to themselves in the mirror, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, have we delivered the laws fairest to all?”

No, they have not delivered laws. Here we have a law that there is no substantial opposition to. There is no opposition to this bill, and we are sitting here five years later.

In the spring of 2010, because of prorogation and elections and not making these housekeeping-type bills priorities, the parliamentary secretary at that time said:

The government is committed to doing everything it can to put a stop to this growing problem. That is why we are reintroducing in the House this legislative measure to create a uniform mandatory reporting regime across Canada that would apply to all Internet service providers.

If the government is doing everything it can, it should have done it sooner. It should have followed provincial examples. It should have followed international examples. The government would not have had any opposition.

The reason the Conservative government did not do everything it could is that it was preoccupied with a political agenda. It was preoccupied with prorogation, and it let the ball drop on this matter.

This is a growing problem. The government had to reintroduce it. It is not because the government is concerned about this, but it had to reintroduce the bill because it had Parliament crash, to use computer talk. The Conservatives crashed the CPU of Parliament, which is the sitting of Parliament, by prorogation.

Why is this problem specifically for Canada's management of the issue of posting Internet sites?

It is because, as table 1 from the Library of Parliament brief suggests, we are in the top five child pornography website host countries in the whole world. Would the Conservative Party, as a custodian of government, want to be in the top five?

We would not, but we are. We are number three. The percentage of sites hosted by Canada, which in the realm of world populations is not the largest country, is 9% of child pornography websites.

It is a problem. It needed to be addressed on January 24, 2006. It was not. Following that, it needed to go through the collapses of prorogation and be put on the front burner. It was not.

What did the provinces do? What did the people of Canada do through their other elected representatives?

Government Orders

They filled the vacuum. In September 2008, now over two years ago, federal and provincial ministers of justice and attorneys general, responsible for justice in Canada, agreed that the federal legislation to establish mandatory reporting of online child pornography by ISPs was necessary.

This did not even come from the federal government. The federal government should have been aware that being number three in the world is not a good list to be on with respect to hosting child pornography websites. It is not a good thing. The federal government should have been more proactive. Instead, it let the provinces suggest that they needed the federal government to enact legislation.

Here we are in the fall of 2010 finally looking at this legislation, finally speaking to it, agreeing to it and getting it through. In the meantime, this legislation has been leapfrogged by others provincially and internationally. They were more successful, penetrating, effective, coercive and co-operative with respect to the public engagement of reporting child pornography sites than this bill.

● (1640)

We have not even passed the bill yet and it is antiquated. How do we feel about that as lawmakers?

We will talk about the bill but the message for the government is that there will be many occasions when it will find no opposition in this House to a bill that seeks to have more reporting of Internet child pornography sites.

Therefore, with some dispatch and a little more efficiency and concern for the actual laws of the country, will the government please, on other fronts, get to legislation that people care about it.

In June, I said:

I would like to express, though, how troubled I am that it has taken the government so long to do something about this important topic.

We are now in November. It has been almost four and a half years and the government has done nothing. The victims of these crimes cannot wait and the government's tactics have deprived many children the free and happy lives they deserve.

Many of us have children and many of us provide the best we can for them and think that we are providing for them a free and happy life.

Those statements and the rest of what I said in June apply now. Let us get on with it and pass this bill.

Earlier in the debate, the parliamentary secretary said that the government was committed to doing everything it could to put a stop to Internet child pornography. In a response to a question, he also said that Canada was a leader in this field by virtue of Bill C-22, which has not been passed in five years, faced with the fact that we are number three on a list of all countries hosting Internet sites and based on the fact that he appears to be either not aware of or at least not disclosing, with respect to very good questions from my friend from the Bloc and my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt, what is going on in the rest of the world.

What is going on in the rest of the world has already gone on because, in 2002, the sexual exploitation and other abuse of children statute 18 USC chapter 110 was passed. Unlike this bill, which

would only put an obligation on the ISP, the bill in the United States makes it also a duty to have anyone providing telecommunications services to have the same duty.

Let us think of that in a country like Canada where every body that provides telecommunications services, not just ISPs, has a duty to report the existence of child pornography, if it comes to his or her knowledge, and of doing something about it. That is a broader law than the Canadian government has introduced under Bill C-22.

The question that was put to the elected officials at our committee was why we had not broadened the federal legislation to put a more serious duty on other persons other than ISPs. Why should there not be a duty on the general public to report a child pornography Internet site?

There is an obligation under the Criminal Code to report crimes when witnessed. Why is there not an obligation on persons who see these sites? Why do we not do this in Canada? At least the United States, some eight years before, was heading in that direction. Australia, in 1995, amended its code and has had a law similar to the United States law for that a period of time.

We are playing catch-up. Even this bill would not get us halfway to the leaders in the field.

We want to support the bill but we want to blast the government, as we did at committee, for not using broader powers that exist under the Constitution to put duties on average citizens, duties at least on all telecommunications service providers to report. The only way we will be able to crack down on child pornography Internet sites is to know about them and be informed about them.

Great groups like cybertip.ca, and in fact the RCMP which has divisions devoted to this type of crime, are under-lawed and understaffed, but that is another issue. They do not have the legal basis to crack down on the sites that they know about and they are not being aided in the way they would be if we had legislation similar to the American and Australian legislation in this instance.

● (1645)

I want to move from the international scene to talk about what happened in Canada. As I mentioned, in the fall of 2008, attorneys general came to Ottawa, at which time the government would have been two years on the rack, and suggested that we should have federal legislation covering this very egregious problem. It is now two years and two months later and it is finally here.

What did the provinces do in the meantime? What would we do if we were a premier or a minister of justice in a province? We would probably look at what we could do as province to do something in the vacuum created by the inaction and the incessant political pandering of the federal government.

Government Orders

I will give a couple of examples of what the provinces did. Nova Scotia enacted the child pornography reporting act which came into effect in 2010 and was enacted in 2008. The province took some time in 2008 to act on the recommendations of the provincial and territorial governments when they came to Ottawa and acted fairly swiftly. That act now states that a reporting entity shall be responsible to further up the investigation of complaints it receives from people in general.

That is a very important section because, after reading this, the people in Nova Scotia will feel that their province has done more about the problem than their federal government. It says that there is a duty to report by every person, not just an ISP, not just a telco operator, not just someone involved in scanning the Internet to see what is involved for a police force, but "Every person who reasonably believes that a representation or material is child pornography shall promptly report to a reporting entity any information". It is irrespective of confidentiality or privilege because it is a crime.

The crime is committed because a child has been photographed or depicted and those depictions are victimizations in a crime in itself, let alone the transmission of that image across the bandwidth in this country. This is a brave and, so far, completely legal and constitutional act on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia.

We hear so much on this side about how fighting crime is the feather in the Conservatives' cap. It is what they are good at. They fight crime. If they were really fighting crime in this instance, they would have done a better job. They would have convinced Department of Justice officials that a federal act could at least go as far as the United States and Australia in touching telcos.

They might even say that when a crime is visited upon a child or person depicted on a pornography site, that is a crime that touches the national interest. It is not merely the interest of the child being protected and it is not merely the domain of the provincial government under the Child and Family Services Act and that power in a section of the Constitution. It is clearly a criminal justice issue.

Where were these titans of crime-fighting when they went to the Department of Justice and said that they had some issues with getting a stable government and were preoccupied with keeping power and getting the ads out on the nightly news?

What we is a powerful legislation like the one in Australia, in the U.S. or, even better, the one I mentioned in Nova Scotia. Manitoba's legislation is very similar. Those are two jurisdictions that said, "Elected persons in Manitoba and Nova Scotia, we can't wait for the federal government".

I am not sure, because there have been so many changes, but I think I am being completely non-partisan. There is not a Liberal government in those two provinces and there has not been for a while, so we are talking about NDP and Conservative governments. They took the bull by the horns and said that they would protect the children in their provinces because they could not wait for the federal government to invoke a federal criminal justice power in the legislation before them.

● (1650)

What we have now in Bill C-22 is something we can all agree on. However, we need to get the message out there that this is too little and it is too late because other jurisdictions have leap-frogged us. The bill is a step in the right direction. I do not want to leave my remarks by being 100% critical of the government. Making the reporting of child sexual abuse images mandatory for ISPs is a good step. It is a good tool to put in the hands of law enforcement. As I said before, groups that came forward during the parliamentary hearings process would be very able to administer the law.

We might have one criticism. The Conservatives had five years but they could not even put the governing aspects of the bill, which is who reports to whom and what gets done, which are the guts of the bill, into the bill. The bill says that subject to regulations we will sort this all out later. My goodness, they have had five years to get this together, would we not think that they could have picked an agency like Cybertip or a division of the RCMP? Instead of regulation, which to us is uncertain and will not be effected or enacted immediately, could they not have put in this fairly short bill the details of which agency gets reported to and what is expected of that reporting agency? It does not seem to be that difficult because Nova Scotia and Manitoba already have it in their acts.

I always say that when there is an issue like this, sometimes we need to look east to the Maritimes, and Nova Scotia has a regime that is working. Nova Scotia went through the constitutional argument of whether it had the power and it does. The federal Conservative government never went through the rigours of that but it presented a bill to us. I suppose we should all fall on our swords on this side of the House and say that it was our fault because we did not propose amendments. We did not propose amendments because it would take the bill beyond the scope.

We are not the government yet but if we were the government we would have had legislation like this done much quicker. We need to keep in mind that the growth of Internet porn sites is exponential. By 2008, every first law officer in this country, the attorney generals and ministers of justice, agreed that something needed to be done and, in some cases, they did. When they expected the federal government to do it, the federal government did not deliver. It is just delivering now in November.

Government Orders

The bill requires Internet service providers to report child pornography to a designated reporting entity. We heard evidence that the RCMP or Cybertip.ca might be those entities. It is true that federal legislation can only provide a mandatory duty where it finds a nexus. As suggested in my speech, I do not think the nexus is just with child and family services provincial power. It is with a criminal activity or a criminal law power. Although not everyone in the House is a lawyer, I think we all recognize that taping, making a video, photographing or the image taking of a young person in a pornographic situation in itself is victimization and a crime of the first order. The transmission of that is also a crime of the first order.

I think there is a positive duty on every Canadian, at least all those involved in the telecommunications services, the Internet service provider businesses and, by and large the Internet providers, to report those crimes. That is where the government has fallen down and that is why we are urging the Conservatives, on a completely non-partisan basis but a basis that says yes, to get this bill passed. We need to get on with it. We need to do something more effective and more in stream with the rest of the world and now the rest of the country.

As the Conservatives often say, but it rings so true in this case, “let us get the job done” with respect to the reporting and the cracking down on child Internet pornography sites.

• (1655)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was a very good one and I appreciate his support on this. I appreciate his comments about the time it took as seemingly an international laggard on many issues.

This is one where, yes, indeed we are the third largest host of these types of images, hosting these types of websites, and here we are with this legislation. The member points out quite rightly about some of the provincial legislatures going further ahead in what they are doing, such as the concept of Cybertip, which is a very good initiative that is taking place.

Some of the amendments that were made in committee have reflected this. I would like the member to comment on that with regard to putting these on line. But this hopefully will serve as the pre-eminent piece of legislation in this country when it comes to the reporting of child pornography.

This is so international in scope; it is so important for us to adhere to all international agreements that we have talked about. Many of us have attended international legislatures, especially in places such as Europe where the proliferation of the Internet has been equal to our own, if not surpassing it, in the sense of using it for all the nefarious reasons.

Just recently we talked about spam. We are here talking about child pornography and images, but it is a very intricate piece of legislation because one of the images may be from one country and another image from another country and they are all contained within one site. So it is quite a web.

I would like the member to add further comment on the provincial aspects and how they are plowing ahead, especially two provinces, and also the international scope.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, generally speaking, we could not do much with the bill except make more specific some of the reporting requirements.

As to the member's question about specific legislation, for instance in Nova Scotia, section 6 of its act, which I did not get to in my main comments because I had a mere 20 minutes, says, “Where, after reviewing a report made to it,” which is a reporting agency like Cybertip, “a reporting entity that is not a law enforcement agency”, because it could be reported to the local police force as well, “reasonably believes that the representation or material is child pornography, the reporting entity shall report the matter to a law enforcement agency”. It is very direct, very clear, and it is very powerful.

What is happening in the world, however, which is the broader part of the question by the member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, is that this has moved from a legal question of the protection of the domain where one lives to an international question involving questions of international intellectual property law and international powers variously displayed in the transmission of Internet or bandwidth.

I do not propose to have any answers to that except to say that in Canada, in November 2010, is it not funny or strange, or wrong really, to think and to know that the countries that do the best job in cutting down on the hosting of Internet child pornography are the totalitarian regimes, the communist regimes, the third-world regimes that, like China and other countries, completely cut it off?

I am not saying that is a solution at all, but we need a broader examination of intellectual property and bandwidth transmission for sure.

• (1700)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Madam Speaker, just with regard to Cybertip, I want to point out, not wanting to be partisan on this issue, that it was an NDP government in Manitoba that first brought it in, modelling it to some degree after a Labour government out of England.

I want to take some issue with the last comments that my friend from Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe made. Although he is accurate about totalitarian regimes shutting off the Internet, in effect, from this type of material, and also for all sorts of material and the exchange of information within those regimes, the reality is that the vast majority of the material that is being produced, where the children are being victimized, where they are being abused, in some cases to the point of being killed to produce this child pornography, in fact is coming out of some of those totalitarian regimes: Eastern Europe in particular, parts of Russia and other parts of Asia.

A significant proportion is coming out of the United States as well, but the majority is coming out of those jurisdictions. So I do not want any impression left that we should be looking to those totalitarian regimes as the model to be followed.

When Cybertip was in front of us at committee, they made it quite clear that they did not have sufficient resources. I would just ask my colleague whether he would be supportive of urging the government to provide greater financial resources to Cybertip so that for some of the programs that they want to initiate or expand, they would be able to do so.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Madam Speaker, we do not have time to argue which countries are the worst offenders, but in terms of posting sites, the United States is first with 49%, Russia is second with 20%, we are third at 9%, and Japan is fourth at 4%.

Those are all reasonably developed countries. I understand that crimes are perpetrated in third-world countries, in non-developed countries and in totalitarian countries. I think he and I might agree, however, that in Europe, great strides have been made in curbing the hosting of Internet porn sites, and that is where we have common ground.

Finally, his comments on Cybertip could not have been more well chosen. For instance, in their evidence they said that illegal sites regularly change location. In other words, it is incredibly hard to pin these sites down.

Their evidence was in observing it, because they observe this as part of their mandate in Manitoba and other places. In a period of 48 hours, Cybertip counted 212 Internet protocol addresses in 16 countries for one website. This is like the spreading of mercury on the floor. It is incredibly hard to detect and very resource driven. Money is needed, financial resources. That is where I join with my friend in agreement.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I previously put a question to the parliamentary secretary in the Conservative Party and I did not feel that I got the right answer. So I would like to ask for my Liberal colleague's response.

Websites are very simple. The website goes up. It is hosted in a particular country on a particular domain, and if we know that the website is spreading information or has pictures of young adults or child porn, the Government of Canada can simply legislate in order to shut it down.

My question for the parliamentary secretary was why it is not doing this. What I got was that there will be a reporting system, and so on and so on. A reporting system is fine, and certainly we could spend \$42 million for a reporting system. We are third in the world in the hosting of these pictures of kids and child porn.

It is very simple. The government moves and it orders the service providers to shut them down. The service providers have to oblige and shut them down, and these websites are gone, erased, so we are no longer third in the world.

It is a simple solution. The government can amend the legislation, can act on the legislation and send a directive out and shut these things down.

I would like to get my colleague's views on this.

• (1705)

Mr. Brian Murphy: Madam Speaker, it certainly seems simple, and I agree with the member for Scarborough—Agincourt totally.

Government Orders

This bill, of course, cannot be amended. It is way beyond the scope of this bill to shut down Internet sites, and so on. This bill is about reporting, about the Internet service provider reporting, if they get a tip. As I said, it is too little, too late.

The government could bring in a new piece of legislation. It could do part of what my friend suggests. One of the problems that Cybertip mentioned is that a website can change location in a few minutes by using a network of personal computers that are known as zombies. In other words, they keep moving around to computers that are vacant, or zombies.

However, what is clear is that the Internet service providers, the companies, know that these zombies exist. The solution would be by legislation with respect to these zombies that provide the content of the website but can never be caught. Cybertip recommended that when zombies are detected, the ISPs, the companies running the networks to which these computers are connected, should be able to suspend service to those computers until the infected computers are restored or removed.

That is a law that needs to be enacted. I think the government has to be firm. It has to tell these companies that provide Internet services that this is the way it is going to be. If we enforce it—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order. The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I recognize that this is a good bill. It is not outstanding, but it is useful despite its limitations. It was about time that it was introduced. It comes after a similar bill which, if I am not mistaken, was introduced by the Liberals in a previous Parliament. At any rate, consideration of that bill was stopped because of prorogation in 2009.

The government deserves much criticism for not having moved this good bill forward, considering that all members agreed with its provisions. However, before criticizing the government, I will outline what this bill does.

Bill C-22 is entitled “An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service.” Again, as in so many instances before, it is important to remind those who will read this piece of legislation that it does not require Internet service providers to ensure even minimal monitoring of the sites they host to determine whether they contain juvenile pornography.

Let us take a look at the duties under this bill. It allows ordinary citizens who stumble across a child pornography site immediately notify their Internet service provider. It is then incumbent upon the provider to relay all pertinent information to an agency, which remains to be determined although the government assures us it will be. Will this be done in 2020? We cannot tell. At the rate at which the government is moving on implementing its legislation, it could take a very long time.

Government Orders

That is basically what is required of the Internet service provider. If I happen upon a child pornography site, I notify my Internet service provider. It is not asking much of the provider to notify the police. It has the duty to do so, and to provide any pertinent information to the agency that will eventually be designated.

The service provider must then preserve the information on the site for 21 days. That time was discussed in committee. In fact, it is ample time for the police to do what they need to do. We understand that someone has to determine whether the site actually contains child pornography, where the site is, and where it migrated from. A member who spoke before me talked about this. It is apparently very easy for people who are familiar with computer technology to have these kinds of sites that wander from one provider to another, from a Canadian ISP to an American ISP, from an American ISP to a Japanese ISP, and come back via a European ISP. There is some complexity involved.

The first duty of a service provider that receives information from a member of the public is to preserve, report and notify. Once it has preserved the information for 21 days, it then has an obligation to destroy the data from that Internet service.

● (1710)

Second, obviously, the bill provides that the information must be retained confidentially. That goes without saying. The service provider will not be alerted that it is about to be eliminated, we don't know exactly when, and that it may get caught in the next few days. The information must therefore remain confidential.

This bill is very short. I have addressed about four clauses out of 12. To understand the next clauses, we have to know that it is currently illegal to view a pedophile or child pornography website. However, if you have viewed one and have said so, have reported it to your Internet service provider, you will have immunity; as well, no civil proceeding can be commenced against you. I imagine that it would be the service provider that would want to do that. So this bill is stating the obvious. I hope that no action would be brought against someone because they reported an Internet site, which they in fact have no obligation to report, contrary to what this bill implies at the outset. There can be no proceedings brought. Let us suppose that a mistake has been made and it was not genuinely child pornography—I do not know how such mistakes can be made, but let us suppose. We can rest easy; the provider cannot bring proceedings against us because we have immunity.

That is essentially all there is in this bill. It is not long, but it is important to have it to supplement various measures that have been taken elsewhere, in particular the creation of specialized police squads and the development of various techniques that use addresses to identify the people who design these sites, so that proceedings can be brought against them. As we often realize, we may discover that they are continuing to make sites like these, and that in doing so they are using children. Thus they are committing assault and may even be forcibly confining children who are victims. This bill is very useful, and it is another weapon in the police arsenal for combatting a crime that is unfortunately too easy to commit.

That being said, I cannot get over seeing the government boast about this bill. First, we heard the ineffable Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice with his ineffable knowledge of the issues.

He said it was a source of pride and glory for Canada, at the Palermo meeting, when everyone voted unanimously. Well, we came last in the class. Not only were we last in the class, but there were already at least four provinces ahead of the Canadian government: Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario. Those are the provinces that founded Cybertip.ca, the organization he was talking about. Maybe that will be the designated organization. That organization seems to be very valuable, but for the moment it has not yet been designated. Cybertip.ca seeks out child pornography sites. When it finds them, it reports them to the police. That organization was created by the provinces.

The member said again that we were the first in the world, that our ideas were received unanimously, and that we were applauded. Well, sometimes the last ones to get there are applauded. It was high time to get there, because we are already modelling it on similar legislation in the United States, Australia, South Africa, France, Belgium and most European countries.

So he demonstrated once again what this government worries about; it is always how well a bill can be used for demagoguery. This one, apparently, was not useful enough for the government to pay attention to it, so it left it hanging. It has been hanging for five years now. Yes, we are in a hurry to pass it. So instead of constantly accusing us of delaying its bills, the government should present us with the bills on which it knows all members are in agreement, and we will pass them quickly.

● (1715)

In its bills, however, it continues to try to force us onto the same path as the American Republicans to the south, when its party has the support of only a little more than a third of the population of Canada. I often hear the Minister of Justice boasting about his bills, saying that we will see how popular the Conservatives are, as compared to us, and things along that line, come the election. That is his only concern. With my age and experience and the evidence of what I have done in the past, I think I can venture to say, without the people in my riding lynching me, that the direction they want us to take has put the United States, our neighbours to the south, on the road to disaster. In a single generation, it has become the country that imprisons more people than anywhere else in the world: the American incarceration rate is the highest anywhere.

The policies that the Minister of Justice wants to adopt are always the same: he wants us to help him put as many people as possible in prison for as long as possible. That sums up virtually all of the bills he has presented us with. On top of that, he dresses most of his bills up with misleading titles.

There is one bill he still trying to get mileage out of today, namely the so-called anti-child trafficking bill. In fact, he did get some mileage, because all parties but the Bloc Québécois were spooked. Even the Senate was spooked. Yet, when we read this bill on child trafficking—which does not take long, a mere three minutes—nowhere are the words child trafficking to be found. Putting forward legislation on child trafficking that does not mention child trafficking—that takes some doing.

Government Orders

What is clear from reading the bill is that it actually deals with the exploitation of persons under the age of 18. Obviously, child trafficking is a form of exploitation of a category of children, namely minor children. But to punish any and all instances of exploitation of persons under the age of 18 with a five-year minimum sentence is a bit much. That is the kind of excess we are headed for.

Because we denounced that, he keeps saying that we are against protecting children and in favour of child trafficking. That is just not true. We are against child trafficking. At the same time, we are against painting all instances of exploitation of minors with the same brush.

In fact, the definition of exploitation of minors would apply specifically to the exploitation of seniors. In Quebec, there is a very smart and excellent ad campaign against the exploitation of seniors. The behaviour described and explained in the ad corresponds precisely to the definition found in this bill, which is not about child trafficking, but the exploitation of minors.

The Minister of Justice always has ulterior motives when he proposes something. He tries to see how many votes he can get for the Conservatives, how much he can annoy and scare the other parties by criticizing them, how he can show that he is tough on crime and how many more people he can put behind bars for even longer. That is what the Americans have done. We, however, are trying to provide the best ways to fight crime.

This is one way to fight crime, namely to allow people who end up inadvertently or deliberately finding child pornography—which they are not allowed to do because just looking at child pornography is an offence—to do something about it, report the material to their Internet service provider or to the police. If they report it to their Internet service provider, the latter is required to do something about it, follow procedures to notify the police, preserve evidence for a certain amount of time and shut down the website.

The federal government lagged behind the rest of the west in this area and it even lagged behind four provinces. It is high time we took action. I still have time left, but I have said enough. The sooner this bill is passed, the better.

• (1720)

[English]

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member sits on the justice committee and has had a detailed look at the legislation.

While many of us think the bill could have done more and could have been enacted sooner, it is kind of a snitch law, and we do not have many of those in our Criminal Code.

Does the member think the bill might raise some new challenges. I am not in any way undermining the apparent support for the passage of the bill. There are not very places in our Criminal Code where we say that failure to do a particular thing constitutes a criminal offence. A case where that does happen, for example, is the failure to provide necessities of life for a child.

In this case, given that it is a very brief bill, does the member think the prosecutors might have difficulties trying to prove a negative, or trying prove intent, knowledge and facts that prove a negative, which

prove that nothing happened, including no reporting? Based on the member's experience, is this a potential problem? Does he think, as legislators, we may have to spend some more time on this in the future?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Ménard: Madam Speaker, Internet service providers are required to report to the police sites reported to them by people who discover said sites when surfing the Internet. If the people who report these sites see that they are still up after a certain period of time, they could go to the police and inform them that they already reported the site to the ISP. The police can take them at their word and go after the Internet service provider. This legislation does not create many requirements. It does not require Internet service providers to do everything they can not to host child pornography sites.

Employees of Internet service providers who discover child pornography sites in course of their work are also required to report such sites to the police. Evidence would probably be produced by employees who report sites to their employer, the Internet service provider. The employees might later realize that the employer did nothing about it.

I thought my colleague was going to ask me whether this is consistent with the Charter or not. He did not mention it, but in my opinion, there is no problem in that respect. Requirements not to do something exist in a number of laws, provincial laws in any case. I know that in Quebec, there is a requirement to report a situation in which a child is in danger to the head of youth protection services. Exceptional measures are taken when children are involved.

• (1725)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague sits on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Clause 12 of the bill proposed by the government is as follows:

A prosecution for an offence under this Act cannot be commenced more than two years after the time when the act or omission giving rise to the prosecution occurred.

Of all the bills introduced by the government, this is the first time I have seen this approach of limiting the responsibility of someone breaking the law to two years.

I would like to know if my colleague also thinks that this is the first time we are seeing this type of approach and if he believes that it is tough enough to protect the children victimized by these sites.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Serge Ménard: Madam Speaker, I must once again remind my fellow member, who sits on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and whom I respect a great deal despite the fact that we do not belong to the same political party, that practically the only offence identified in the bill is when a service provider is informed that it is hosting a child pornography website and that service provider fails to report the site to the organization that will be created and also fails to preserve the data. We are talking about 21 days. It should be fairly quick to determine whether or not the ISP has preserved the data. The bill has to set out a few offences, but they are not serious ones. This makes it possible for private citizens to work with service providers who we hope are responsible enough to report this type of situation to the police. That is about it. As for the rest, there is still the obligation of confidentiality and immunity from prosecution.

The purpose of the bill is to set out the method by which action can be taken against websites. The bill is not designed to punish those who set up child pornography websites. If it were, the limitation period would certainly need to be much longer.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I must inform the hon. member that he will have three minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes consideration of this bill.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

SECURE, ADEQUATE, ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT

The House resumed from November 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-304, An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the third reading stage of Bill C-304 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1810)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 131)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Andrews
Ashton
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Beaudin
Bellavance
Bigras
Bonsant
Bourgeois
Brunelle
Cardin

André
Angus
Asselin
Bachand
Bains
Bélangier
Bennett
Blais
Bouchard
Brison
Byrne
Carrier

Charlton
Christopherson
Comartin
Crombie
Cullen
D'Amours
Davies (Vancouver East)
Demers
Desnoyers
Dhalla
Donnelly
Dryden
Dufour
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Garneau
Godin
Gravelle
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)
Harris (St. John's East)
Holland
Hyer
Kania
Kennedy
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lessard
MacAulay
Malo
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard
Minna
Mulcair
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Olliphant
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Pomerleau
Rae
Ratansi
Rodriguez
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Simms
St-Cyr
Thi Lac
Tonks
Valeriotte
Volpe
Zarac — 141

Chow
Coderre
Cotler
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dewar
Dion
Dorion
Duceppe
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Faillé
Foote
Gagnon
Gaudet
Goodale
Guay
Hughes
Jennings
Karygiannis
Laframboise
Layton
Lee
Leslie
Lévesque
Malhi
Maloway
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McGuinity
McTeague
Mendes
Mourani
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelaga)
Patry
Plamondon
Proulx
Rafferty
Regan
Rota
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simson
Szabo
Thibeault
Trudeau
Vincent
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Aglukkaq
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Anders
Armstrong
Ashfield
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Davidson
Dechert
Devolin

Ablonezy
Albrecht
Ambrose
Anderson
Arthur
Baird
Bernier
Blaney
Boucher
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Calandra
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casson
Clarke
Day
Del Mastro
Dreeshen

Private Members' Business

Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fast	Finley
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Généreux	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hiebert
Hoback	Hoepfner
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenny (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	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	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scheer	Schellenberger
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
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 — 132

PAIRED

Members

Allison	Blackburn
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Freeman
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Holder	
Laforest	Lalonde
Paillé (Louis-Hébert)	Trost — 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Bill referred to a committee)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being 6:13 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private member's business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

NATIONAL TREE DAY

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should proclaim September 22 as National Tree Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my friends at Tree Canada who have supported my efforts to sustain Canada's urban forests during the past several years. Their assistance and guidance have been much appreciated by the good people of Ottawa—Orléans and by their servant in this House.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

It is a fact that Canada is an immense and magnificent country: *a mari usque ad mare*. We are fortunate to have several wonders of nature, especially the tree, both grand and humble. The humble tree has played a very crucial role in the history of Canada. It has been a source of life and economic vitality. The tree also plays a key role in our ecosystem.

[*English*]

The trade through the forest products industry is a major generator of employment in both rural and urban Canada. The industry is responsible, both directly and indirectly, for over 600,000 jobs and it has annual revenues of over \$50 billion. This represents almost 2% of Canada's gross domestic product.

Canada is the largest and most successful forest products exporting nation in the world. The backbone of this industry is the tree.

[*Translation*]

Closer to where we are now, the softwood lumber industry has been an important presence in the Ottawa Valley, and its rivers, on both the Ontario and Quebec sides, have also contributed a great deal.

[*English*]

The special square timber found throughout the region was extremely valuable and served as the foundation of the forestry trade in the Ottawa Valley. The forestry boom lasted almost a century in this region and its effects can still be felt and seen.

It was a catalyst for significant immigration to the region, including my own family 180 years ago. The forest industry was responsible for significant growth and cultural expansion of what we now know as Ottawa.

Over a lifetime, the average Canadian produces enough greenhouse gases to sustain 15 trees. Comparatively, each of us as members of Parliament produces enough waste in one year to sustain 200 trees.

Each year I plant a tree during National Forest Week. I do it in honour of a local constituent whose contributions to the community deserve to be recognized through the presence and vitality of a tree. It is also an act to offset my own ecological footprint, albeit a small act. I do it often with the scouts and I have done it since the days when I was a scout.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

In all of Eastern Ontario, I can point to the forests that I have helped plant since childhood: 52,000 trees to date. My father, the late René Galipeau, was the one who gave me the taste for this. He used to always show me the pine forests that he had planted and that his father, Louis, had planted before him. He passed that on to me. My youngest son, Claude, has planted over 23,000 trees and he is only 26 years old.

[English]

It is important to note in the context of this discussion that while Canada is a forest nation where 10% of the earth's forests reside, 80% of its people now live in cities and towns. For these people, individual trees that make up the urban forest are now tremendously important from an environmental, economic and psychological point of view.

Strategically planted coniferous trees shield us from violent winter winds, and on hot summer days, deciduous trees give us shade that can reduce temperatures by up to 15 degrees.

Trees work hard to improve the lives of citizens and lower the costs for communities.

[Translation]

Trees make life worthwhile. As I have just illustrated, they reduce energy costs. They filter out gases and particles in the air we breathe. That is something I have experienced myself. At the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, at the top of the world, near the North Pole, is a Canadian settlement. It is the northernmost inhabited place in the world. It is in fact Canadian Forces Station Alert. I travelled there. The rugged beauty of the place is breathtaking. The air is so pure that a hill located at a distance of 10 kilometres appears to be a mere kilometre away. Why? Because the air is not polluted by vehicle emissions and human activity.

• (1820)

[English]

But wait, Environment Canada has a greenhouse gas monitoring station there. I have been there, too. I saw the results of the research. Alas, remnants of the pollution that we create in southern Canada floats as far as Alert, but much less so in the summer months when the foliage of our deciduous trees absorbs most of our carbon emissions.

[Translation]

Trees also prevent run-off, ensure the cleanliness of our streams, lessen noise, reduce the heat island effect caused by asphalt and concrete being heated by the sun, and provide habitats for birds and other wildlife.

[English]

Trees have been shown to increase property values by up to 20% and reduce air conditioning and heating costs by up to 15%. They have actually been shown to improve people's shopping experiences.

[Translation]

Trees add a psychological dimension to our communities by fostering a sense of belonging, and they even help reduce the incidence of graffiti, domestic violence and attention deficit.

[English]

This motion is about acknowledging what trees do for us and our communities, and about accepting our responsibility to ensure that the ways we use them are sustainable and respectful.

[Translation]

National Tree Day is a time for all Canadians to recognize the importance of trees in their lives by doing something like planting or preserving a tree or just enjoying its presence.

[English]

I am most grateful for the support of Tree Canada. It continues to work on behalf of Canadians, greening over 450 school yards, planting over 76 million trees, and helping over 350 communities' urban forest programs in every province and territory in Canada.

Tree Canada Chair Dorothy Dobbie, a former member of this House, her volunteer board and professional staff do this great work largely with the help of the private sector in partnership with community groups from coast to coast. I salute them, and in particular Cedric Bertrand and Melissa Nisbett.

[Translation]

The Canadian Forestry Association and the Canadian Institute of Forestry also support this initiative, and I want to salute the leadership of people like Barry Waito and Wayne Kelly and their respective boards of directors from across Canada.

[English]

Most of all, I pay tribute to my friend, Michael Rosen, the man who is both the executive director of Tree Canada and a source of inspiration for anyone who is passionate about a healthy environment for Canadian communities.

Mr. Rosen and his dedicated staff work tirelessly to produce and to provide a better quality of life for today and for future generations.

[Translation]

I hope that all the members of this House will support my motion and encourage their constituents to honour the presence of trees and their contributions to our past, present and future.

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I come from the town of Bishop's Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador. A book was written about my town in the last 10 to 15 years, the title of which is, *In the Centre of the Forest...I Remain*.

I uphold, support and agree with all the hon. member has said about the mystique and allure of our forests, and how important trees are to this country. I certainly believe in all the aspects he talked about. He talked about the increased value to everything we own. There is no doubt about it. Our majestic forests provide us with a peaceful environment. Forests are the basis of an important industry and trees represent us around the world. For example, where does the maple leaf come from?

I support the member's motion. I think it is a good one. Would the member agree that we should make a concerted effort to increase the amount of planting through a new national silviculture program?

• (1825)

[Translation]

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Madam Speaker, my colleague's suggestion is worth taking a look at.

I am speaking here in this chamber surrounded by wood. Without trees, we would not even have the desks we have here today, or they would be built out of a slightly less worthy material. I sincerely thank the member for her comments.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, first I want to correct the record. This is not a bill. This is a motion, and I would like to ask my colleague about the fact that the Prime Minister has refused to recognize a series of motions, everything from Mr. Broadbent's motion on child poverty to other motions that have been passed, such as one on which I worked with the member for Hamilton Mountain related to a seniors charter of rights. That is the first question I would like to ask.

I would like to ask a second question. How does he square the circle around his government's terrible record related to the ash borer beetle and the pine beetle, where we have lost thousands and thousands of trees, and most recently, that it killed the most important piece of climate change legislation in the Senate just last week?

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Madam Speaker, I find it most deplorable that a motion such as the one I have just presented, and I never intended it to be described as a bill, should cause him to bring about politicization in this manner. I really think there is another place to do that kind of debate.

If he wants to discuss the merits of the Senate, I will be very happy to do that, because we have presented in this House, on many occasions, bills to reform the Senate, and it is that side that refused to modernize and to reform the Senate.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, Manitoba has a broad expanse of boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The government is trying to protect that area and turn it into a UNESCO world heritage site, but his provincial cousins, the Manitoba Conservative leader and his party, are wishing to build a hydro corridor down the east side.

I just wondered whether he was aware of that issue and whether he would endeavour to follow the 10,000 people who have intervened in this issue and add his support to those who want to turn the area into a heritage site and stop the power line from coming down the east side in the boreal forest.

[Translation]

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Madam Speaker, statements made in the House often imply that the provinces interfere in the business of Parliament. I am a federal member of Parliament and I would not interfere in the business of a provincial legislature.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I am very pleased to speak to the motion of the member opposite, which states, "That, in the opinion of the House, the government should proclaim September 22 as National Tree Day." I congratulate him on this motion and his excellent work on this subject.

I would like to take a moment to explain the fundamental role that trees have played in Canada's history. I will start by taking us back to the very beginning of our country's history, even before the first Europeans set foot here. We know that the people who inhabited this land used wood every day to build tools, weapons, artifacts and obviously many other things. I must also point out that at the time, forests covered the vast majority of the land that is now known as Canada.

The tree also has symbolic meanings for the first nations peoples, and these meanings can vary from one nation to the next.

However, all we need to know and remember is that, in general, roots represent their attachment to mother earth. This is the case throughout the Americas. This same link exists in many different countries. I met with people from Latin America who felt this same tie to mother earth. The roots represent our attachment to mother earth and the rest of the tree represents the community. Without strong roots anchored in the earth—in other words, a constant regard for the nature around us—the tree, which represents the community, cannot stand firm.

We must respect the tree; we must respect the roots. When we do, we respect our community.

There is a lesson to be learned. It is about the importance of fostering a culture of respect for the environment if we want human beings to survive. That is fundamental. It is good to come back to these basic lessons and recognize that this balance on earth is fundamental for human beings. We need to remember that.

Let us turn back the clock. We will continue to look at the history of our relationship with trees. I am thinking about the first settlers who came here. I would like to talk about them for a moment. We know that during their first rough winters here in Canada, they survived scurvy by drinking a cedar-based beverage.

And so trees kept many of them alive. They also learned from the first nations that trees could improve their quality of life. Maple sap, once boiled, became maple syrup—the same famous maple syrup that many Canadians, young and old alike, still love to put on their pancakes today. Boy, do we love our maple syrup.

Then people began to use trees as a natural resource. They used wood to build boats, house frames and many other things.

Private Members' Business

Let us not forget—since we are talking about history and going back in time—about the drivers who worked to transport logs over river rapids. We know that wood played a fundamental role in building our country.

A little more recently, wood processing plants and pulp and paper plants became real leaders in the Canadian economy, all thanks to our countless trees. We are truly quite fortunate to have so many trees in our country.

Trees are still used today as a natural resource. The wood they produce is still commonly used as a building material and in pulp and paper plants.

If we look at the forestry industry, it is clear that across Canada, it is an important industry that employs huge numbers of people, thousands of people, and generates considerable profits.

• (1830)

For those people, the tree has additional symbolic meaning, additional importance: it is their bread and butter.

Just look around us: there is wood everywhere. My colleague mentioned this earlier. To this day, wood is one of the most common materials, whether in the House or elsewhere. I truly hope that this continues to be the case because, in many respects, wood is absolutely irreplaceable.

In the past, people have cut down trees recklessly, and that is still true today. The documentary by Richard Desjardins, *Forest Alert*, clearly demonstrated that some companies did not consider how important trees are to the environment. In fact, they did not care. Trees are important not only to the environment, but also to our well-being. On behalf of my party, I would like to thank Richard Desjardins for raising Canadians' awareness of the importance of the environment and the responsible use of trees as a natural resource.

Today, thousands of trees are planted every year to renew our forests. We are also a bit more aware—although perhaps not enough yet—that Canada's forests and all trees are our planet's lungs. Photosynthesis, which captures the CO₂ in the air and improves everyone's quality of life, is vital to our quality of life and the survival of the human race. A few years ago, we started recycling paper to reduce tree cutting and preserve our forests, but we still have a lot of work to do.

We can look at trees in different ways. They are part of the beauty of our country. Our trees and forests are an integral part of the beautiful scenery in Quebec and Canada. Some regions have developed a whole tourism industry around the beauty of the local trees. When we climb up a mountain in the fall, what could be better than seeing all the magnificent leaves of red, orange and all sorts of colours. Without trees, that scenery would not be the same. It certainly would not be as lovely. What is more, tourists would not be as interested in travelling here, and our tourist industry would never recover.

I could go even further and say that many works of art never would have been created without trees, which inspired them in the first place.

Trees have always been important to Canadians' lives, and they still are today. Trees are so much a part of our lives in Canada that we even have a maple leaf on our flag.

There are many different ways to look at trees. For those who work in the forest industry, trees and wood are their bread and butter. For others, a tree is just something to hang a swing from or lie underneath, out of the heat of the sun. People look at trees in different ways, but trees improve everyone's quality of life because of how they affect our environment and our air quality.

Even my colleague here will agree that we must preserve our trees and our forests. Having a day to commemorate the importance of trees is a good start. It is not nearly enough, but it is a step in the right direction. That is why my colleague and I and the entire caucus are happy to support this motion.

• (1835)

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion that would create a national tree day.

As the Bloc's natural resources critic, I am absolutely in favour of the substance of this motion. However, it is surprising that this was the initiative of a member of the Conservative government, which is running the country with little regard for environmental considerations. The resignation a few weeks ago of the member for Calgary Centre-North, who was the Minister of the Environment, says a lot about how important the environment is to this government. For them, it is just not worth the trouble.

Forests are a critical resource in Quebec. Quebeckers truly value our forestry industry. Our ancestors built this country from a lush forest that they had to conquer. Quebeckers are still proud of having parcels of land that no human has ever set foot on. That shared resource is priceless.

Forests covering more than 760,000 square kilometres—three times the area of France—are a renewable resource that we must develop responsibly.

As hon. members know, trees purify our air. Canadian forests capture almost 40 megatonnes of carbon dioxide a year, and the equivalent of 900 years of Canadian greenhouse gas emissions are stored there without it costing us a penny. The forest ecosystem is also one of the richest and is host to a multitude of endangered species.

Even though Canada ratified the Kyoto protocol, the government keeps changing the targets and the reference years to mislead the public. By doing so, it is demonstrating its utter indifference to this problem. It will let future generations suffer the consequences.

Nearly 80% of the clean energy fund will go to carbon capture and storage programs, a technology whose benefits have not yet been proven. Again, the government is denying the problem and investing massively for its friends, the oil companies in the west, instead of addressing the source of problem, carbon dioxide emissions.

Private Members' Business

The Conservative government has a bad habit of sticking to a dogmatic, narrow-minded, regressive ideology. In the name of the economy and the free market, the Conservatives too often tend to forget the virtues of a healthy environment, and forget that savings can be made in the medium and long terms by investing in emerging sectors.

Researchers in wind and solar energy are sounding the alarm. If this trend continues, Canada will fall so far behind in these technologies of the future that soon we will have to depend on outside expertise for implementing new green energies. Despite studies that show the profitability of the ecoEnergy programs, the government continues to stick to its ideology and its financial supporters in Alberta. The oil companies get significant tax breaks and they also get public relations services paid for out of the public purse. Climate Action Network Canada has denounced this and shown that Canada has lobbied to promote dirty energy on the world stage at our expense. What more can I say?

Beyond its environmental benefits, the forest is a resource that provides jobs to Quebeckers. I know what I am talking about because my riding was an international hub for pulp and paper. The workers are proud of their responsible approach to exploiting this resource.

Unfortunately, the forestry industry is going through one of the worst crises in its history. Since 2003, no less than 300 plants have closed their doors. Quebec has been hit the worst by this crisis. Since April 2005, more than 26,000 jobs have been lost in the forestry industry alone in Quebec, not to mention the related industries and services such as transportation or forestry equipment. This represents half the job losses in Canada in this sector.

These job losses have had disastrous consequences for Quebec communities. Nearly half of Canada's forestry communities are in Quebec. In fact, 230 cities and towns depend mainly on the forestry industry; 160 of them depend exclusively on forestry.

• (1840)

The future of these cities—entire regions, even—is uncertain.

Some regions in Quebec have been devastated. Since the summer of 2004, 44% of forestry jobs in my region of Mauricie have been lost, 58% in the Upper Laurentians, 42% in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 36% in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and 34% on the north shore.

Declining property values in these areas combined with chronic high unemployment and geographic isolation for the most part are pushing youth to leave. Some leave to study and others have no choice if they want to survive. Despite their strong desire to return to their region and settle down, the economic situation forces them to go to large centres.

These regions are emptying out. Young people are not coming back because there are no jobs. People are worried.

Nearly 5,000 people joined in the green march in Ville-Marie, Témiscamingue, on November 8. The participants hoped to spur governments to intervene and help the region, which is facing serious economic difficulty, notably in the forestry sector.

This was an unprecedented demonstration for a region of nearly 20,000 citizens and it demonstrates their anger and exasperation.

It is clear that the Conservatives are mainly to blame for the suffering in many parts of Quebec. The government's latest budget showed that the Conservatives are out of touch with Quebeckers.

It is unacceptable that the Conservative government injected 57 times more money into Ontario's auto industry than into the forest industry, which has had to make do with crumbs.

Clearly, the Conservatives are excited about potential election gains in southern Ontario and are literally obsessed with winning a majority in Parliament. This obsession with election glory leaves very little room for concern about the public interest.

I can appreciate that my Canadian colleagues do not agree with Quebeckers' collective desire for emancipation and sovereignty. But they should perhaps give some thought to what the Bloc Québécois is calling for.

Canada's forest industry urgently needs to be modernized, and the only way to modernize is by investing in technology and new equipment. To invest, the industry needs cash, which it does not have. It will need to borrow in order to modernize. In response to this need, the 2010 budget provides for an accelerated capital cost allowance, but what good is that if a company cannot borrow for new equipment in the first place because it has no loan guarantees? How can the company get access to credit? As usual, the Conservatives preferred to turn a deaf ear to Quebec's demands.

The budget also provides \$25 million a year for the next four years to modernize all lumber and pulp and paper mills. This ridiculous amount shows how incompetent the government is, because a single machine can cost \$25 million.

I repeat, the Bloc Québécois supports this motion. Forests are a sensitive issue for Quebeckers, and their survival is vital to the survival of the human race. Jurisdictions are another sensitive issue for Quebeckers. To us, our capital is Quebec City and the National Assembly is our parliament. It is important to remember that managing natural resources is a provincial jurisdiction.

Moreover, Quebec's forest industry is teeming with ideas and is clearly determined to recover from the crisis. But the industry needs cash to rebound. The federal biofuel programs may be worthwhile, but secondary industry takes healthy primary industry. A plant cannot become more energy efficient if it is no longer open.

To us, forests are an abundant renewable resource. It is sad that the government's priority is to abandon our leadership position in this industry.

• (1845)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to motion.

Private Members' Business

First, it was interesting that the mover of the motion said that this was not political. We are in the House of Commons. When one raises issues related to the tree, puts forward a loving, caring motion and then talks about the use of the tree in our forestry sector and its value to society, we have to look at the policies of the government related to it and whether there is true meaning behind a 17-word motion that needs to be amended. It is important that we talk about those things and not ignore them.

If this motion is to have meaning, we have to raise serious issues.

The first serious issue is it is a motion and not a bill. A bill is a different thing. A bill has considerably more weight than a motion. When in opposition, the Prime Minister used to say in the chamber that there was a moral responsibility to act when a motion in Parliament was passed. Since that time, all kinds of motions have been passed in the chamber and have never been acted upon.

One motion I worked on was the seniors' charter of rights, which eventually was in the name of the member for Hamilton Mountain. It dealt with seniors issues, such as housing, poverty and pensions. It was an important motion, yet it was not been acted upon.

Previous to that, Ed Broadbent, a respected Canadian from all party persuasions, had a motion passed to end child poverty. Sadly, nothing has been done on child poverty to get to the targets in the motion.

Recently, a motion by the member for Toronto—Danforth on the Investment Canada Act was passed. The Investment Canada Act is something we heard about recently during the potash deal and other types of unfortunate takeovers, including those in the forestry sector, in which Canadians have lost their jobs. The forestry sector is very important because we are losing our value added.

The government was part of the softwood lumber sellout. Despite winning under the dispute mechanisms of NAFTA and several lawsuits, as well as Canadians footing the bill for over \$100 million in lawyer fees, we lost the \$1 billion that was awarded to us out of the \$5 billion, which was illegally taken from Canadian companies.

I understand the member is trying to do something nice in recognizing the tree and I appreciate that. I am the former vice-chair of the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Industrialization caused devastating effects to the environment and our ecosystems in my area. I live in a Carolinian forest area in southern Ontario, one of the few places in North America that has this diversity, and we are trying to build it back.

It is important that we talk about this. If there is to meaning, the government policies have to be solid.

I talked about the ash borer beetle in southern Ontario that came up through Michigan. The Liberal government of the day was very slow to act and did not take it seriously. By the time the firewall was built, basically by knocking other trees down, the borer beetle was already past it.

The publicity and notification campaigns were late, despite the warnings for years and years, and the beetle got out. It is in northern Ontario and other parts of Canada now. We have seen the devastating effect of that beetle. It goes underneath the skin of the elm tree, burrows and destroys the tree. We have lost thousands upon

thousands of trees not only in the forests but in our cities. They have caused great economic damage, as well as critical environmental damage, not only in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

The member noted that, but he did not want to talk about the fact that his party killed a climate change bill. Bill C-311, put forward by the member for Toronto—Danforth, the first one the world had seen, was killed by the unelected Senate. Once again, it gives meaning to the words.

• (1850)

Mr. Royal Galipeau: We want an elected Senate.

Mr. Brian Masse: The member is shouting that he wants an elected Senate. The government has been slow to act on that for many years. The Prime Minister has appointed more people to the Senate than any other prime minister in history.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: That's with the rules we have now.

Mr. Brian Masse: This is the reality.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order, please. I will not tolerate shouting or heckling from across the room. I would ask hon. members to hold their comments, please.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, that is critical, because the climate change bill that we had was real hope and opportunity and set targets for Canadians. It was democratically passed and was killed by political hack appointments, and that is wrong.

However, I want to go back to the motion that we are talking about specifically, because I am talking about the value of it. The reality is that it does not have a lot of strength to it. It could have been beefed up.

I want to give a couple of examples. It does not call for certain types of action. There are other issues that have been passed in other Parliaments and other organizations related to the tree and its effect.

September 18 is Third World Tree Day. The goal is to plant trees on that day.

I mentioned my area and the deforestation. We can see, for example, a place such as Haiti that has recently gone through incredible devastation with the earthquakes, but also prior to that, the deforestation of Haiti created many of the problems that it faces today because it has no coverage anymore.

Ironically, the Dominican Republic, next to it, has been active in a reforestation program.

Private Members' Business

France eventually lost in the slave uprising, and when freedom came, the Haitians at that time had to actually pay billions of dollars back to the French. That is one of the things that is causing Haiti's great poverty, and the deforestation has affected Haiti quite significantly in terms of agriculture, the economy and a whole series of things. Those initiatives, such as the Third World Tree Day, call for action.

Many Canadians, especially in Ontario and Nova Scotia, are familiar with Arbor Day. Arbor Day was first started in the United States in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton. He was the founder of Arbor Day, and it is estimated that one million trees were planted that day. It called for specific action through the Arbor Day initiative.

I do not know whether we will see this. It is not in the motion. It was not discussed by the member. Perhaps we can work on that in the House and give meaning to this day with a collective goal set for planting.

In my community, we have planted more than one million trees over the last number of years, which has been very important for the economy, but more importantly, for the actual environment. We are seeing habitat restored that was long forgotten and lost, and we are releasing different types of animals back into the wild.

When we look at the motion and what it really means, there is not a lot of depth to it. It is a 17-word motion that needs an amendment, which apparently will be tabled by a Conservative member, to provide the specific week for it. But hopefully what we will hear are more specifics on what the government is planning to do to increase the planting of trees and there is going to be real action and perhaps resources. Is there going to be money behind this motion? Is there going to be a specific plan?

As I wrap up, it is important that if we are going to talk about it in an economic sense, then we have to look at our forestry sector and what the tree meant. In the past, the tree meant many more value-added jobs than today. With the pine beetle in British Columbia, for example, and the ash borer in southern Ontario now working its way through northern Ontario and other parts of Canada, these are all significant consequences.

Therefore, let us make policies as part of something as opposed to just a simple motion.

• (1855)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be making a friendly amendment at the end of my speech.

It is fun to be here today to speak to this motion. I may get teased a bit about forestry because of the name of my riding, which is Cypress Hills—Grasslands. People have told me they think that every tree in the riding has probably been planted and that is almost true.

The Bloc member opposite who just spoke to the motion is on the natural resources committee with me. She said she was surprised that a Conservative would move a motion such as this one. I would love to invite her to come to my farm in Saskatchewan and we can walk up and down the six miles of hedgerows that I have planted. I

certainly invite my colleagues from the NDP to come as well and see my contribution toward the environment, because it is very important to those of us on this side of the House.

I am rising on behalf of the government side in support of the motion to create a national tree day, put forward by my colleague, the member for Ottawa—Orléans. He has a tremendous commitment to establishing an annual national day of celebration to recognize and appreciate the role that trees play in our country. I urge all members to support the motion and the friendly amendment that I will make, which will have national tree day fall on the Wednesday of National Forest Week which is an annual event held every fall.

Canada's trees and forests are a big part of what defines the national identity of our country, whether one lives in urban or rural Canada. We are very fortunate to have almost 400 million hectares of forest. That is a number that is almost too big to imagine, but we can understand that amount of forest represents 10% of the world's forest cover and 30% of the world's boreal forests.

These forests include a tremendous variety of species, from the majestic red cedars that live up to 1,500 years in British Columbia to the subalpine fir, the smallest of the western firs that dot our northern landscapes, to the eastern pine which is the tallest tree in this part of Canada. Of course, there is the maple tree which paints the fall season particularly in this area with splendid colours and sustains our famous maple sugar industry.

Trees and forests in many ways are defining elements of our identity as Canadians. To give an example of Canadians' appreciation for trees and for nature, there were 11.9 million visitors to Canada's national parks in 2009. That number does not include the many people who visit provincial and municipal parks each year as well.

Trees provide us with many of the products we use every day, from the obvious items such as wood for home construction and paper products, to not so obvious things. Nail polish, eyeglass frames and photographic film are all made with products that come from trees.

In addition, our trees and forests provide obvious environmental benefits. They provide valuable protection against land degradation, ultraviolet rays, climate change and help to sustain biodiversity. For some of us on the flat prairie, they actually do stop the wind and give us a break from that as well. It is important to note that about 80% of our aboriginal communities are in forested areas.

The majority of the forest land in Canada is publicly owned. Less than 1% of Canada's forests is harvested annually. These working forests help to sustain tens of thousands of jobs in hundreds of communities across Canada.

Our government clearly recognizes the importance of the forest sector to the Canadian economy. The industry's contribution to our gross domestic product is a significant 1.7%. The Prime Minister has spoken about the importance of this industry to Canada. The federal government has made a number of key investments to support Canada's forest sector as the industry undergoes important restructuring due to competitive and market challenges.

Private Members' Business

We continue to directly support forestry programming in a variety of areas, including things as diverse as marketing, innovation, community development, environmental and green energy development as well.

Our support includes things such as the \$1 billion pulp and paper green transformation program, which is part of our economic action plan. This program is helping pulp and paper mills in all regions across the country to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while assisting them in becoming leaders in the production of renewable energy from biomass.

As well, as part of the economic action plan, a total of \$170 million is supporting market diversification and innovation initiatives for the forestry sector. This includes things like research and demonstration projects. In addition, the community adjustment fund injected funds into the forest-dependent communities affected by the global economic downturn. Financial support is also provided to the sector through the activities of Export Development Canada.

● (1900)

As is the case with many industries, changing conditions present new challenges for the forest sector. That is why we are seeing mills in the forest sector being transformed. They are no longer just producing pulp and paper. They are becoming biorefineries; they are using wood fibres to make a wide range of new products, from nanomaterials to biomaterials; and they are creating more clean energy.

Our most recent budget committed another \$100 million to assist the sector with the green transformation that is well under way. The forest industry transformation program will assist this green revolution by facilitating the development, commercialization and implementation of advanced clean energy technologies in the forest sector.

I want to assure members that the Government of Canada is well aware that the sustainable management of our forests is critical to the survival of forests and trees and to the prosperity of forest-dependent communities. Sustainable forestry management is not just an idea or an ideal in Canada, it is actually a reality.

Something I did not know is that almost 40% of the total forest land in Canada is subject already to varying degrees of protection, including 8% that is already protected by legislation. As well, by law, all forests harvested on Canada's public lands must be successfully regenerated.

By December 2009, more than 142 million hectares of Canada's forests were certified as being sustainably managed by one or more of the three globally recognized certification standards. Although the future of our forests is something that Canadians cherish in their local communities, the forest sector also plays an important role globally.

In fact, the United Nations General Assembly has actually declared 2011 the International Year of Forests. The goal of this declaration is to raise awareness and to promote global action to sustainably manage, conserve and develop all types of forests worldwide, including trees outside of forests.

Supporting today's motion is a great way to showcase our country's recognition, appreciation and commitment to trees and forests and to sustainable forest management. If the motion passes, our inaugural National Tree Day would coincide with the International Year of Forests.

As members here know, we currently celebrate Maple Leaf Day, but in order to raise awareness of our Canadian forests, the member for Ottawa—Orléans feels that replacing Maple Leaf Day with National Tree Day will only build on our exceptional reputation.

Tree Canada, the organizers of Maple Leaf Day, support this initiative, as do the Canadian Forestry Association and the Canadian Institute of Forestry. National Tree Day would reinforce the objectives of National Forest Week: to celebrate Canada's forests, our sustainability efforts, and our innovative industry. I think we can all agree with these objectives.

I see my time is winding down, so before we leave, I would like to make a friendly amendment.

Madam Speaker, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "September 22" and substituting the following: "the Wednesday in the last full week of September".

● (1905)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It is my duty to inform hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), no amendment may be proposed to a private member's motion or to the motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent.

[*Translation*]

I therefore ask the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans whether he consents to this amendment being moved.

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Madam Speaker, I agree.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The amendment is in order:

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

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Motion No. 575 sponsored by the member for Ottawa—Orléans. It is a very worthwhile effort on his part.

Over my lifetime, I have seen times when trees and forests were taken for granted. Up until the 1970s and probably beyond, we had clear-cutting practices and all sorts of forest harvesting methods that today we would not approve of. I do recall knowledgeable people in those days talking about how Europe was so far advanced. Sweden, for example, had a program where if a tree was harvested then another tree was planted.

It is good to hear that people, like the member for Ottawa—Orléans, have been concerned with this issue for a long time and have been promoting the conservation of our forests.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

We debated a bill that was before this House not along ago, which is still not through the final processes, but it would require governments to use wood in the construction of government buildings. The Province of British Columbia and, I think, the Province of Quebec have passed similar legislation.

While there is some push-back from the concrete industry on this whole issue, there are a lot of good reasons for us to use wood in some of our construction projects. I remember seeing some coverage of the earthquake in China where, in the aftermath of the earthquake, the Chinese were attempting to rebuild using Canadian lumber. They knew that structures constructed of wood survive in an earthquake a lot better than structures constructed of concrete or bricks.

I do not know what the government has or has not done with regard to the Haiti earthquake situation, but if the Chinese are excited to be committed to rebuilding their whole devastated area with Canadian wood, I would think the government should be looking into what can be done in the Haiti situation, rather than simply rebuilding buildings that would be susceptible to earthquake damage in a future earthquake, which will surely happen at some point. We should be looking into building these buildings out of wood so that they can withstand earthquakes and would also lead to less loss of life if and when another earthquake were to happen.

I asked the member a question during question period regarding the boreal forest, which, as the member knows, is a very important part of Manitoba. We have been attempting to have it designated a world heritage site under UNESCO. It is a huge forest that goes down the east side of Lake Winnipeg and into Ontario.

However, we are having a big debate right now in Manitoba over the Bipole III project on whether to run the bipole down the east side of Lake Winnipeg, which would cut through a corridor of the boreal forest, or whether to skirt around it, which would be a much longer process. The current government is supporting the longer and more expensive route but the Conservative opposition is raising quite an issue on this because it wants to take the cheaper route and cut down through the middle of the forest.

I do not know if Dorothy Dobbie, who was a member of Parliament and now has a gardening show in Winnipeg, has interceded on behalf of those who want to see the forest survive in its present state. I would ask the member, who I believe knows Dorothy very well, to talk to her about this whole issue. This is certainly something that—

• (1910)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I regret to interrupt the hon. member. He will have about five minutes left in his speech when this motion reappears on the order paper.

[*Translation*]

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

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

[*English*]

G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight on a question that I raised in the House of Commons relating to the G8 and G20 summits.

We have been raising issues relating to the costs of the summits, especially at a time when taxpayers are hurting so much. Some of the costs of the summits are still unaccountable. Some of the decision-making was questionable at best but deplorable most likely, especially when we consider things like the fake lake and the gazebos in the middle of nowhere. Costs were exceedingly high for policing.

What we have been asking for is accountability because Canadians saw the photo opportunity of the G8 and G20 being made into a circus for the government, especially since it was held in Toronto where those costs were significantly inflated.

What is important here is that the government borrowed money for this and we will be paying interest on it, which will be a significant cost.

When we look at ridings like mine, Windsor West, where there is high unemployment, we really need to question the government's decisions on this. The fact that Canadians will continue to foot the bill for that and pay the interest on it is unacceptable, especially when people do not have employment insurance improvements.

A lot of Canadians in my riding would have done better in their lives if they had actually had the two week waiting period for employment insurance waived as opposed to the billions of dollars lost on the summits.

What is important is what we get out of the summits at the end of the day, and the government really did not get anything of it. There are many media reports right now about whether or not these are even purposeful anymore.

One of the things that is important to point out is the cost of a whole series of things, but one of them is the costs for a series of vandalisms in Toronto that took place at 40 different stores in the downtown Yonge Street business improvement area, which the government will not help with. About \$750,000 worth of repairs need to be made.

I am familiar with some of this because in Windsor we had the OAS come in at one point. The city was reassured by the federal government that we would get all our expenses paid but that was not true. We were left with hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt and increased charges.

Years later, I remember touring our police station and seeing skids full of tear gas and other types of equipment that was no longer necessary. I believe at the end of the day we ended up actually selling that to another jurisdiction that was going to have one of these events in its riding.

Adjournment Proceedings

When we look at the example of South Korea and its projected \$25 million in security costs and our security costs of around \$676 million, we have to wonder where the accountability is.

We do know there are a number of different costs that have yet to have been accounted for. We still have no details on the \$100 million that the OPP had available to it. Where is the accountability? If the government says that it will be tough on crime, that it will be tough on ensuring there is accountability for taxpayer dollars and that it will be open and transparent, why can we not get all these figures? Why can we not have disclosure?

If public money is spent, surely there should be a great deal of accountability for that. We have seen improvements to the accountability of other types of departments, including the office budgets of members and so forth. We now have greater disclosure than ever before, which is an important improvement.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary where the value is out of this? Where is the accountability?

• (1915)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important issue this evening.

I would like to take the opportunity to review the actions taken by the government to ensure that the appropriate security was provided for the G8 and G20 summits in a responsible, transparent and accountable manner.

The government detailed the funding requirements related to security through the normal parliamentary procedures, which identified funding requirements by fiscal year. These requirements were based on cost estimates that were generated using the best information available at the time, which included preparing for several security contingencies. It was the responsible approach to take.

Further to this, the government invited the Parliamentary Budget Officer to review these cost estimates prior to the summits as well as the Auditor General of Canada to review security costs following the summits. These actions ensured that Canadian taxpayers were informed of the funding requirements in an open and transparent manner.

In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer noted in his report, "the PBO does not feel the total cost of security of the 2010 G8 in Huntsville is unreasonable".

I would also like to add that the Auditor General observed:

—I think we have to realize that security is expensive. There are a lot of people involved over a very long period of time...We may think that the meetings only last for a few days, but all the preparations involve extensive planning, extensive co-ordination for months before that.

Hosting two summits such as the G8 and G20 in such close proximity to each other was unprecedented and came with a tremendous responsibility to Canada as a host nation, not the least of which was security. The summits as well as the security operation that allowed them to take place were recognized as a unqualified success. Simply put, without security operations, the summits could not have been held.

The security operation in itself was the largest peacetime security operation in our history. To comply with Canada's international and domestic legal obligations, the provision of security was required for the summits. Summit security costs were higher than we would have liked, however, it was not a responsibility that could have been forsaken due to its cost.

Now that the summits have concluded, the Office of the Attorney General is in the midst of examining the security costs that were incurred for the summit. The Auditor General is receiving the full co-operation of the government and will continue to do so throughout the evaluation.

In addition to this, the government has provided full responses to all questions posed in the House and has recently ensured the availability of senior government officials for a technical briefing for the media.

The government is committed to being transparent and will report the full costs once they are known.

• (1920)

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, to move this debate along, some of the processes that the parliamentary secretary talked about are still ongoing. The reality is, at the end of the day, the city of Toronto and the businesses there were affected dramatically, with \$750,000 worth of damages. The government chose to have it in Toronto. It chose a very difficult logistical place. The government spent hundreds of millions of dollars on security, but still was unable to protect the citizens of Toronto and their property.

There is a responsibility for the government to now act to help those who were affected. The government failed on that. It was not successful as the damage was done and it was the government's choice.

To be reasonable and fair to people, the government needs to help with reciprocity. It should not be the ratepayers of Toronto or the small businesses of Toronto that suffer the consequences of the actions of the government.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Madam Speaker, I wish my colleague would recognize that it was thugs and anarchists who caused the trouble in Toronto. It was not the government.

I would like to remind the member of the opposition that not only did Canada have a moral obligation to protect visiting heads of state who were in attendance at the G8 and G20 summits, but Canada was also obligated under the United Nations convention that was adopted in 1973 to protect internationally persons, which includes participants of the summits.

Approximately 60 states, organizations and international groups had representation at the summits that were covered under this convention. This included heads of state, royalty, foreign ministers and leaders of world organizations. Their security was critical to the success of the summit, which will advance several significant global initiatives such as the Muskoka initiative that seeks to improve maternal, new born and under-five child health. These initiatives will ultimately have an impact on citizens of all nations.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety for taking the time to review the issue of the costs associated with the G8 and G20 summits.

The Conservative government likes to pat itself on the back for properly managing Canadians' money since the recession in 2008 and 2009. However, upon looking at the costs and expenditures associated with the two meetings in June 2010, we see that the government is very selective about which departments have to adjust their budgets.

First, however, let us consider a few examples of this government's extravagant and wasteful spending. For the G8 and G20 meetings, the government spent \$1.1 million on backdrops and cardboard displays. It spent \$12,000 on tablecloths, \$19,000 on a table setting for 24, and \$1,900 on etched glasses.

It spent \$1.9 million on building a theme pavilion for the foreign media. It paid \$400,000 to restore an old steamboat that will not be ready until months after the summits. Some \$275,000 in public money was spent on washrooms and a stage located 20 km from the meeting site. It spent \$2 million on a fake lake, even though Lake Ontario was right there. It paid \$1.1 million on a sidewalk that is 84 kilometres from the summit site.

It burned through millions of dollars to help the foreign media imagine the Muskoka landscape.

• (1925)

[English]

In the second place, we need to seriously ask ourselves if the Conservative government can be trusted with taxpayers' money when there appears to be blatant disregard for either political neutrality or fiscal responsibility in the spending. For instance, a \$20 million arena was built in the Minister of Industry's riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka for the journalists who were going to attend the summit. However, days before the event, the organizers stated that the arena would serve neither the G8 nor the G20.

A fund was also provided to the industry minister to provide gifts to the voters in his riding who would be “inconvenienced” by the summit. Meanwhile, Toronto business owners received nothing for enduring the inconvenience, the riots and the profit losses that surrounded the G20 in the city of Toronto itself. My colleague said this a few minutes ago.

While the RCMP and the city of Toronto police force have submitted their costs for review, the committee responsible for reviewing the costs of the summit has not received any similar costing from the government for the \$100 million allocated to the OPP. It has been suggested that these costs need to be hidden in order to protect compromising information regarding fund allocation for political motives.

These blatant miscalculations cost Canadians millions of dollars. The Minister of Public Safety approved a \$27.5 million RCMP command centre that could have been bought for \$3 million. Instead, it was rented for \$1.5 million, it incurred another \$24 million in

operational costs and then, after just 72 hours, cost another \$2 million to tear down. There goes \$27.5 million.

[Translation]

The Conservatives inherited a \$13 billion surplus, which they turned into a deficit before the recession even started. In March, the Conservative government promised Canadians that the two summits would cost \$179 million, yet it spent \$676 million on security alone.

[English]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Madam Speaker, I truly wish that the member opposite would use the accurate numbers. Many of the numbers that have been bandied about here tonight are not accurate.

The real numbers have been brought forward by officials from this government, agencies and provincial agencies to a number of committees. The numbers she has quoted are simply not accurate.

The initial estimate was included in estimates that the government supported and did provide.

I would hope my hon. colleague would recognize that, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer indicated early on, the numbers were very much in line for the budget that would be expected in the Muskokas.

A number of items that the member has rolled into all of these things have to do with infrastructure spending that the municipalities applied for under other programs. These issues that she has brought forward are not all about the summit.

I would say to the member that, when we put the security requirements and the associated cost estimates into context, we must remember that security planning began a year and half prior to the event. Some of these facilities were not just set up for a weekend. They were there for months and months in advance.

This was a huge deployment of personnel; 20,000 security personnel were involved in these two summits. It was unprecedented in any country.

We have an obligation as a nation when we take part in these summits that we must host them. This is exactly what Canada did, and I think Canadians would be proud of what occurred. It brought the world to this country. It focused on this country.

We would not doubt that there were some hoodlums, anarchists and thugs who in fact did try to sully the reputation of Canada, but they were minimized because of the great security.

I would say to the member opposite that initially the RCMP has indicated that, after reconciliation, its expenses are coming in significantly under budget. Its initial budget was \$507.5 million. Estimates to the end of this fall indicate that expenses will come in around \$329 million, which is about 35% under budget.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Industry's riding, that of Parry Sound—Muskoka, was very happy about that budget.

I would like the hon. member to explain to us how the money spent on tablecloths, glasses, dishes and a theme pavilion relates to security. I do not really see the connection.

Canada currently has \$56 billion in debt, which the Parliamentary Budget Officer determined could not be paid off until 2015-2016.

I am of the opinion that the parliamentary secretary should consider the much more conservative position that the Minister of Public Safety and his associates were taking before they came to power. They had announced a budget of \$28 million, including all operational aspects and security.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Madam Speaker, I would say to my colleague across the way that there were more than 20,000 security partners involved. They included members of the Ontario Provincial

Police, Toronto Police Service, Peel Regional Police, the Town of Huntsville, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Township of Lake of Bays.

The reimbursement of these expenses falls under the security cost framework policy, which covers incremental and justifiable security-related costs incurred by provincial and municipal security partners.

These security partners have until December 1, 2010, to submit their final claim to Public Safety Canada, which manages and administers the policy. Provincial and municipal security partners have advised that they are in the process of compiling all invoices of suppliers as well as all personnel costs involved, and an independent third party will audit those before they are paid.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:32 p.m.)

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