



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, December 15, 2010**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### PENSIONS

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I continue to hear from constituents about Bill C-428, the private member's bill from the Liberal member for Brampton—Springdale.

My constituents are outraged about a Liberal bill that would raise taxes to give a pension to someone who has only been a resident of Canada for three years. They want to know how the Liberals could justify raising taxes to give a pension to someone who has done little or nothing to earn it.

While the Liberals will have to answer for this in the next election, the Conservatives already have good news for Canadian pensioners. Our Conservative government's Bill C-9, which passed in July, reforms our pension system and has made the retirements of millions of Canadians more secure. Now employers can contribute more to workers' pensions and pensions are better protected in law.

While the Liberals are busy scheming to raise taxes, the Conservatives are working hard to improve the lives of Canadian seniors.

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### ARMENIAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the work of the Armenian Canadian community in its efforts to preserve and celebrate Armenian history and culture.

Today, unfortunately, marks the fifth anniversary of the destruction of thousands of intricately hand-carved khachkars, stone crosses, erected between the sixth and seventeenth century, a significant loss of history and culture felt by people of Armenian descent around the world.

Too often, religious, ethnic and geopolitical disagreements lead to actions that are hurtful to others. We cannot change history but we can and must use its lessons to move forward.

Canada has been built on immigration from all over the world and we are now the most successfully pluralistic society on earth. We should be a beacon for how tolerance and respect for others and for all of our differences are fundamental to living in harmony.

In that spirit, I encourage my friends in the Armenian Canadian community as they continue their hard work in preserving and promoting Armenian history and culture.

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[*Translation*]

### GERMAIN BEAUREGARD

**Mrs. Ève-Mary Thāi Thi Lac (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during the closing ceremonies of the 175th anniversary celebrations for the municipality of Saint-Damase, Germain Beauregard was honoured for his commitment to the municipality by council members and the mayor, Germain Chabot.

In addition to being a great advocate for Quebec and a staunch sovereigntist, Mr. Beauregard is an outstanding writer and historian and has penned exceptional memoirs. A committed member of Saint-Damase's heritage committee, he publishes his writings and stories in the municipal newspaper for all to enjoy.

The municipal council has also been able to count on his support in numerous projects including research for naming streets; naming the Place de la fabrique park; creation of historical plaques for a number of municipal buildings; and, more recently, naming the new André-Jarret-De-Beauregard bridge.

I, too, would like to acknowledge his significant contribution to the community, and I want to sincerely thank him for his commitment to promoting the region's history.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as a new member of Parliament, I introduced bills to protect Pacific wild salmon, ban dangerous oil tanker traffic off B.C.'s north coast, improve child safety by strengthening the Criminal Code and help workers who suffer from cancer by increasing medical EI. I brought national attention to the funding gap that continues to plague the long-delayed Evergreen Line.

However, while there may be talk of an economic recovery, people in my riding are still struggling. Personal credit card rates continue to soar. Seniors tell me that they must choose between groceries and prescriptions. Students are saddled with record high debt loads, with fewer well-paying jobs on the horizon. Families are now burdened with increased costs, thanks to the newly implemented harmonized sales tax.

As we deliberate on the upcoming budget, I ask that all parliamentarians make life more affordable for all Canadians.

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[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, eight bills introduced by the Conservative government are becoming law.

One of those bills is the Sustaining Canada's Economic Recovery Act, which implements key budget measures to promote job creation and economic growth.

We salute the passage of bills designed to protect Canadian consumers, make our streets and our communities safer and improve living conditions for Canadians and their families.

We want the opposition coalition to support our bills to eliminate pardons for sex offenders, to repeal the faint hope clause for offenders convicted of murder and to prevent human smugglers from abusing our immigration system and the generosity of Canadians.

Despite obstruction by the opposition coalition this fall, we have achieved remarkable results for Canadians throughout this session, and I congratulate my colleagues in the Conservative Party of Canada.

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● (1410)

**CENSUS**

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I recently learned about another negative consequence of the Conservative government's decision to scrap the long form census used by Statistics Canada.

The Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal uses the information compiled by Statistics Canada every five years from the long form, five-year census to produce its poverty map.

This poverty index is used to take a contextual approach rather than an individual approach, and therefore helps avoid the

stigmatization and branding of children from underprivileged areas. Furthermore, this poverty index helps determine the annual allocation of funds to the various school boards for remedial measures in underprivileged areas.

The Conservative government does not always seem to realize just how much its decision to scrap the census will affect all levels of Quebec and Canadian society.

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[English]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry in Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has a long and proud history of providing jobs in the working forest.

This industry is in transition. County sawmill and logging operations are in need of new solutions to replace lost markets. Using Ontario wood to produce power fosters local jobs in the forest and reduces our dependency on fossil fuels. More important, the money stays in our local communities.

By providing a market for underutilized, lower value wood, we are able to grow a better forest for future generations. A healthy investment environment is key to reviving Ontario's forestry sector.

Ontario needs to increase the feed-in tariff rates for bioenergy power projects to attract investors. Ontario is far behind when it comes to combined heat and power operations compared to the U.S. and Europe.

I am pleased to work with the Minister of Finance to ensure that Canada continues to provide the proper investment climate, including competitive corporate tax rates.

The opposition coalition's plan to increase business tax rates would kill the industry before it gets back on its feet. The time has come to support an industry, forestry, that has been a mainstay for rural families for generations.

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[Translation]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on December 4, 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared December 18 to be International Migrants Day. The UN also invited "[m]ember States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations...to observe International Migrants Day through the dissemination of information on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants".

*Statements by Members*

Let us hope that this day will be one of reflection for the Conservative government, which always demonstrates a hostile and discriminatory attitude toward those who come to Canada seeking refuge and protection. Bill C-49, which has been tabled in the House, is a striking example. The government is creating two categories of refugees by treating them in a discriminatory manner and presuming that they are acting in bad faith.

The Bloc Québécois will continue to push for a fair and equitable approach that will make it possible to control migration flow without renegeing on our international commitment to offer protection to those fleeing persecution.

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[English]

**RENEWABLE FUELS**

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is committed to homegrown renewable fuels production for many reasons.

I was recently told of a constituent of mine who embraced his boss to thank him for giving him a permanent, well-paying job in the middle of a recession after being laid off as an auto worker. His new job is at the IGPC Ethanol plant in Aylmer, Ontario.

I tell members this because biofuels not only offer new markets for farmers and a new source of clean renewable energy, but also new jobs for our cities and towns. This is especially the case in my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, which is home to the IGPC farmer owned co-operative plant that creates local jobs, produces clean burning ethanol from local corn and provides much needed economic activity for this rural area.

That is why I am pleased to stand in the House today as the federal renewable fuels standard officially comes into force. This will result in two billion litres of biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel. This standard is good for the environment, good for agriculture, good for the economy and good for Canada.

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**DAVID DIBBON**

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I inform the House of the tragic passing of Dr. David Dibbon, the Dean of Education at Memorial University. He was taken from us by cancer at the early age of 52.

Prior to joining Memorial University, Dr. Dibbon had a long career in the public school system. As principal of Bishop's College, one of the provinces largest high schools, he was recognized on many occasions for his innovative leadership.

Dr. Dibbon received the Distinguished Principal of the Year Award from both the Canadian Association of Principals and the Newfoundland School Administrators Association. In 2009, he was honoured with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association's Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the teaching profession.

As well as being fondly remembered as a teacher, he was also known internationally as a researcher in the areas of innovation and

change in education, organizational learning and educational leadership.

I ask all members of the House to join me in recognizing and paying tribute to the work and life of Dr. David Dibbon. He left a lasting legacy.

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● (1415)

**GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION**

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today eight bills introduced by our Conservative government will be passed into law. This fall our Conservative government's first priority was the economy. That is why today we are pleased to see the sustaining Canada's economic recovery act become law. The legislation implements key measures from the jobs and economic growth budget.

Our government is also delighted that other key legislation will become law to protect Canadian consumers, make our streets and communities safer and improve the lives of Canadians and their families.

While we have made some progress, much more remains to be done before the current parliamentary session ends in the next few days. We call upon the opposition coalition to support our legislation to eliminate pardons for sexual offenders, repeal the faint hope clause for convicted murderers and combat the abuse of Canada's immigration system by human smugglers.

We need to work together to continue to pass legislation that will benefit and protect all Canadians.

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**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 2010, like all years, has had its ups and downs, but when it comes to women's equality, 2010 has shown to be disastrous.

A budget promised to address violence faced by aboriginal women in Canada waited for more than six months before the announcement that 40% of the funding would not even help aboriginal women, nor the Sisters in Spirit that first identified the tragedy.

A G8-G20 focus on maternal and child health saw the government turn back the clock on women's rights, denying them choice and reproductive freedom. We saw a general lack of concern for women's safety, as was witnessed when the government played political games with gun control and the long gun registry. We witnessed countless arbitrary funding cuts to women's organizations across the country. Furthermore, Canada's capacity to understand the realities of vulnerable women has been further reduced by eliminating the mandatory long form census and the questions on unpaid work.

*Routine Proceedings*

I urge all members of the House to challenge the government and restore women's equality, especially for those who have been silenced.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics released the report, "Police Resources in Canada, 2010". The study found that police officer strength was at its highest point since 1981, the steady increase of female officers continued and 2009 saw the largest annual increase in constant dollar expenditures on record.

Our Conservative government has always stood up for police officers and is giving them the tools they need. Take it from me, if we want to be truly tough on crime, we need more than police dollars. We need strong laws and strong voices, like our new member of Parliament, the member for Vaughan. We need strong laws, like the ones that the Liberal coalition has opposed and continues to stall, such as bills to eliminate pardons for dangerous offenders, repeal the faint hope clause and end house arrest for serious criminals.

The fact that only three of our crime bills have passed over the last year is a disservice to justice and to victims. When will the Liberal-led coalition support our efforts to get tough on crime and make our streets and communities safe?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ELECTROLUX PLANT CLOSURE**

**Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, more than 1,200 people in the Lanaudière region got some sad news just before Christmas. Electrolux unexpectedly announced it would be closing its factory in L'Assomption by 2013. The economy of the entire region will be affected.

The Bloc Québécois is already in solution mode. The hon. member for Repentigny is on site and working hard with all the political and economic players in the area to explore possible avenues for saving the plant and the jobs.

The stakeholders will meet again in January for an update on the situation. At that time, if we need to call in the federal government, we will, but only in its own areas of jurisdiction.

We stand in solidarity with the workers in L'Assomption.

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[English]

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to all my colleagues in the House of Commons, the people living in the riding of Charlottetown and Canadians from coast to coast, I would like to extend my best wishes to each and every one for a very special season.

Christmas is a few days away and this joyous season helps us all to rekindle happy memories with family and friends. We should

remember to take time to enjoy those very special people in our lives during this busy and sometimes hectic time of year.

At times like this we should always take time to pause and reflect on the true meaning and significance of Christmas. I am very much looking forward to spending my holiday with family and friends in Charlottetown. Returning to Charlottetown helps me rediscover how truly fortunate I am to serve the residents of Charlottetown and work with and for them on a daily basis.

My message for all Canadians is that their Christmas season and new year be filled with peace, health, happiness, serenity and joy.

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● (1420)

**CHRISTMAS**

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Christmas is fast approaching and tales of political correctness fill the air as many seek to remove all that is Christian from Christmas.

Nativity scenes are banned, holiday trees replace Christmas trees and references to God, Christ and the Lord are cast aside, leaving us with just another meaningless, consumer-oriented holiday. The spirit of Christmas should not be taken out of Christmas. Non-Christian, new Canadians or immigrants are not offended and do not want to be protected.

Every year thousands of all faith gather to celebrate the Chinese New Year, Vaisakhi, Diwali and more. We accept and respect each other's beliefs and traditions. Therefore, let us not strip Christians of their identity and faith and let us not abandon the traditions of religion.

I wish my Christian friends a happy Vaisakhi and they wish me a merry Christmas and we all celebrate together. Let us celebrate Christmas as it is and as it should be.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**NEW MEMBERS**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Robert Sopuck, member for the electoral district of Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Julian Fantino, member for the electoral district of Vaughan.

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**NEW MEMBERS INTRODUCED**

Robert Sopuck, member for the electoral district of Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, introduced by the right hon. Stephen Harper and the hon. Vic Toews.

Julian Fantino, member for the electoral district of Vaughan, introduced by the right hon. Stephen Harper and the hon. Jim Flaherty.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[Translation]

### HEALTH

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians wait for hours in hospital emergency rooms and patients languish in the hallways. The Canadian health system needs help, but the government has ignored the issue for four or five years.

The Prime Minister has said that he would like to scrap the Canada Health Act. He has rejected all our suggestions for helping families to care for their loved ones at home.

How can he expect Canadians to trust his government to protect our public health care system?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government works with the provinces to maintain and improve our health system. The former Liberal government reduced provincial health care transfers by 25%. Those are the facts. As for this government, it has increased provincial health transfers to record levels because we believe in the Canadian public health system.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everything the government is spending had already been approved in 2004 by the Liberal government.

[English]

The federal-provincial accords run out in 2014. The government has no record on public health. There has been no federal leadership on this issue for five years.

The Prime Minister is heard to muse about how he would like to get rid of the Canada Health Act and he says that any plan to bring help to families to look after their loved ones at home is reckless.

How can Canadians trust the government to defend public health?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when that party was entrusted with the health care of Canada it dramatically slashed transfers for the health care system, which did enormous damage.

It is this government that increased those transfers and has worked with the provinces to make sure that our health system is fully funded.

Since the Leader of the Opposition made this personal, let me be clear. I and my family depend on and have always used the public health care system of Canada. I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition can say the same thing.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** I can make that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Let me correct some facts. The government has not put a dime of new money into public health care, not a red cent of new money.

### Oral Questions

Every cent that the government has committed to public health care since 2006 was booked in 2004 by the Liberal government.

The government likes spending money on prisons, planes, photo ops, and waste on the G8 and G20 summits but not a red cent of new money—

**The Speaker:** Order. The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not have to make a commitment to use the Canadian public health care system. That is what I have always used.

Funds were booked for public health care back in the 1990s and the Liberal government slashed those out of the budget. The fact of the matter is, this is the government that funded public health care, increased the transfers 30%, and we are the ones who are going to protect and defend the system against these health care cutters.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

• (1430)

**The Speaker:** Order, order. I know it is Wednesday, but hon. members could calm down so we can hear the questions and responses.

The hon. member for Beauséjour.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is scared to tell the truth. He says that the purchase of the F-35s has been in the works for a long time, but his own colleagues are saying the complete opposite. He says that only the F-35 meets our needs, but we now know that is not true. He said that there would be a Canadian competition, but there was not. He said that there had been an internal review, but they did not even have the information they needed to conduct one. He claims that there is a set price, but, once again, his senior officials are saying the opposite.

When will the minister tell the truth to Canadians?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beauséjour and welcome him back from his celebrity tour.

Here is the truth. The truth is that the cancellation of the F-35 purchase could cost this country up to \$1 billion. The truth is the member opposite is a member of a party that knows well about the cancellation of contracts. The cancellation of the EH-101 helicopter contract cost the country \$1 billion. As a result, the Canadian Forces are still flying up to 45-year-old helicopters. That is older than he or I.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everything the minister has said about the F-35 has turned out to be false. The F-35 is not the only aircraft that can meet Canada's needs. There was no Canadian competition under any government. There was no exhaustive internal study. In fact, he did not even bother to ask for the information to compare. Most shockingly, he now complains that the price is fixed, when the colonel in charge of the program says the price will go up.

Why does the minister not dig himself out of his foxhole and for once come clean with Canadians on this transaction?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know that Canada has already invested \$168 million in the F-35 program. How would he know that? He was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence when it happened under his government.

But let us take it out of the realm of parliamentary rhetoric. Let us listen to Gilles Labbé, president and chief executive officer of Héroux-Devtek, a company in Montreal. This program will give Canadian companies access to opportunities on partner fees valued at around \$12 billion. He says this is an outstanding opportunity for the Canadian aerospace industry.

Why does the hon. member not come back to his original position and support this purchase?

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[Translation]

**WATERFRONT PROTECTION**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with heavy rain pounding eastern Quebec and causing flooding that is accelerating shoreline erosion, many municipalities on the Gaspé peninsula have declared a state of emergency. In 1997, the federal government abolished the shoreline protection program, which helped people living along the shore who suffered major losses due to shoreline erosion.

Given the emergency situation in eastern Quebec, will the Prime Minister restore the shoreline protection program to help people in the areas affected by the flooding?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we express our sympathy to the families and the businesses affected by the flooding. I applaud the first responders for their efforts. The government stands with Canadians when disaster strikes, and all requests for assistance will be handled under the agreements currently in effect.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Prime Minister that in addition to these agreements, there was a program that was abolished; I am asking him to restore that program. As well, in August 2007, when Rivière-au-Renard in the Gaspé was flooded, the Conservative government introduced an extraordinary measure, over and above the agreement with Quebec, whereby businesses and companies could receive financial assistance through the CED program.

Will the Prime Minister allow businesses, companies and not-for-profit organizations to receive this financial assistance without having to meet the usual criteria for CED funding, as in 2007?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what is happening to the people in the Gaspé is terrible. Our department is always very aware of what is happening in all the regions of Quebec. As the Prime Minister said, there are public safety programs. The Province of Quebec has primary responsibility. We congratulate the first responders and we are monitoring the situation very closely.

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• (1435)

**MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Claude Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this fall, eastern Quebec was rocked by high tides, resulting in major damage. Unfortunately, this is happening more frequently, yet the federal government is refusing to invest in reinforcing marine infrastructure. For example, people who use the Rimouski wharf are asking that breakwaters be built in order to make the area safer.

When will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans understand that her government's lack of action is putting both boats and the people using these docks in danger?

[English]

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2006, we inherited a massive backlog of needed work at our small craft harbours. Wharves were rotting and fishers were not getting the facilities they needed to work safely.

That is why, under our economic action plan, we invested and work has now been completed or is under way at 270 harbours across the country. We are getting the job done for fishers.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the pounding rain, violent wind and high tides that are slamming eastern Quebec are causing floods and significant property damage. Rivers are overflowing, Gaspé has declared a state of emergency, and highway 132 is closed in multiple places. I myself have seen the numerous wharves that have been seriously damaged, notably in Carleton-sur-Mer in the Baie-des-Chaleurs.

Can the Minister of Fisheries at least commit to quickly repairing any wharves under her jurisdiction that were damaged by the extreme weather we have been experiencing?

[English]

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, we have invested heavily in small craft harbours across the country. There has been some damage done in the recent storms, and my department is currently assessing the damage and will respond accordingly.

If the Bloc wants us to invest money in small craft harbours, it should support the budget that does that.



*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is more evidence today of the government's failure to create quality jobs in Canada. Stats Canada says that productivity is stagnating and the Conservatives' short-sighted economic policy has created mostly precarious part-time work.

Billions that should have been targeted towards creating well-paid jobs was wasted on across-the-board giveaways to banks and oil companies.

[Translation]

Just today we found out that more than 1,000 jobs will be lost at Electrolux. What a mess.

[English]

With the loss of 1,000 jobs at Electrolux, when are we going to see a manufacturing job strategy for this country?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the economy and jobs remain our number one priority. We realize there are still significant challenges out there, but that should not blind anyone in the House to the performance of the Canadian economy. Since the height of the recession, this economy has created 450,000 new jobs, more jobs than were actually lost during the recession. We are the only advanced country in the world to do that.

I would encourage the NDP and others to cease voting against the job creation measures that this government has been bringing forward.

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**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives keep claiming that corporate tax cuts make us more competitive, but these numbers prove that they are wrong.

[Translation]

They hand out gifts to their friends in the oil industry and on Bay Street, while small and medium-sized businesses are struggling. They are at the mercy of the credit card companies.

The Competition Bureau confirms that the government's voluntary code has not protected Canadian businesses.

Will the government finally impose mandatory rules to truly protect Canadian SMEs from credit card companies?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, based on the first part of the NDP leader's question, I presume he thinks that tax hikes for employers and job creators will create jobs. That is ridiculous. One of the reasons for Canada's exceptional job creation record is that we lowered taxes not only for companies, but also for families and individuals.

• (1440)

[English]

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is the government that added the HST to the cost of small business.

The Conservatives' voluntary credit card code simply is not working. The Competition Bureau tells us today that merchants pay \$5 billion a year in hidden credit card charges. I have been talking with some of these businesses and they are fed up.

The finance minister goes cap in hand to the big banks and asks for help; they tell him no and he just accepts it.

Under the Conservatives, credit card companies continue to gouge small businesses.

When will the Conservatives have the political courage to impose tough, mandatory rules to actually protect Canadian small businesses?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, working with the small business communities and others, this government has created rules for credit card companies that, of course, the NDP voted against.

I would like to return to the NDP leader's comment on the sales tax. This is the government that lowered the federal sales tax by two percentage points, from 7% to 6% to 5%, against the opposition of the NDP and its coalition partners.

What did we see in Nova Scotia? As soon as an NDP government took office, up went the sales tax by two percentage points, and it would be exactly the same thing here if those members ever got their chance.

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**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Cooperation has had serious allegations raised against her on a question of privilege alleging that she knowingly misled the House in her responses to questions concerning the cuts to KAIROS' funding. After the admission by her former parliamentary secretary and submissions by other members, a reasonable person might well conclude that a prima facie case of contempt has been made.

Will she stand following question period today and respond to those allegations?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. The response that Canadians deserve is what we are doing with international assistance.

The government is choosing to make its international assistance more effective and more focused. We want to ensure that we have value for our aid dollars, which means keeping children and mothers alive, more food, more education and better health for those in developing countries. This is what Canadians want and this is what we are delivering.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Cooperation is facing very serious allegations that she did not tell the truth to the House, mistruths which were repeated by the minister both in the House and in response to order paper questions that she is also now evading. However, the evidence paints a more disturbing picture. Clearly there were others at the cabinet level who contributed to the decision to de-fund KAIROS.

How are Canadians to trust a government and a Prime Minister who knowingly hide the truth from them? What does that say about their moral character?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Canadians can trust this government because under this Prime Minister we led the world to improve the health of mothers and children. We are going to save the lives of infants who never had a chance in developing countries. We are making sure that those who are now facing floods in Pakistan and earthquakes in various countries are getting the food, water and medical help they need. In fact, we are leaders when it comes to making sure that development and aid are effective.

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**FINANCE**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1994, the previous Liberal government mandated the finance committee to spend each fall meeting with everyday Canadians and to report what they heard back to the House. This year, for the very first time since the process began, the Conservatives derailed the process when an employee in the office of the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar leaked a draft copy of the report to Conservative-friendly lobbyists.

What is the finance minister going to do, besides his online budget chat room, to ensure that the valuable input by stakeholders and individuals is not ignored?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I expect what the finance minister will do is pull out the *Hansard* where every single person who appeared before the committee has a verbatim transcript. I am sure the Minister of Finance will then visit the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, who will fully brief him on the excellent input that was received for next year's budget.

I am sure that we will also listen to all members of Parliament who are fanning out right across the country to tell us what else we can do to create more jobs, more hope and more opportunity in this country.

•(1445)

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the committee heard from 157 witnesses and received well over 400 briefs from individuals, charities, small businesses and others. All of that is now headed for the shredder because of a Conservative employee, all of this goodwill betrayed, millions of dollars wasted, and for what?

Is it not convenient that the finance minister now has the excuse he wanted in order to ignore the people of Canada as he drafts his fourth consecutive deficit budget?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance committee, which I can say is very ably chaired by the member for Edmonton—Leduc, as she said, held public hearings. All verbatim transcripts are available to the minister. It got 400 briefs and I know the Minister of Finance is going to spend the entire Christmas holiday reading each one of those 400 briefs, listening as he always does.

There is a pattern here. Whenever the Minister of Finance presents a budget, more jobs are created. Whenever the Minister of Finance talks economy, in fact he is named the best finance minister in the world.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is negotiating a “security perimeter” behind closed doors, and an agreement with the U.S. government seems imminent. And yet, the people's representatives in the House of Commons are being kept in the dark.

Since security perimeter negotiations are comparable in scope to treaty negotiations, will the Prime Minister promise to hold a debate and a vote on this matter before signing anything?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since this government came to power, our priority has always been job creation and the economy. In that regard, we have always worked with the United States in order to keep our borders open all the while protecting our countries from terrorist threats. We take advantage of every opportunity to strengthen our economy in order to create jobs for all Canadians.

**Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, fighting terrorism, boosting trade and integrating immigration policies are matters that are too important to Quebec to give the Conservatives carte blanche. Parliamentarians must be consulted before commitments are made on behalf of the people.

Will the government promise to have a debate and a vote on this matter before making a formal commitment to the Americans?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, there is no agreement. I would remind my friend of the importance of trade with the U.S. We are an exporting country; Quebec exports to the U.S. are very significant. Daily trade with the U.S. totals \$1.6 billion. Our priority is to protect Canadian jobs and to make progress in that regard.

## OIL SANDS

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Royal Society of Canada has just released a report on oil sands development, which criticizes the federal government's lack of action. The report states that the federal government is failing to demonstrate leadership and does not recognize the considerable risk this industry poses to the environment.

Does the government not think that a good place to start would be to stop subsidizing oil companies and their dirty oil and, instead, invest these billions of dollars in the development of green energy?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the good work done by the Royal Society of Canada. We have read its report, which is approximately 500 pages long, and we completely agree that, with the expansion of the oil sands, we must protect the environment. It is our government that eliminated the subsidies that the Liberal Party had been granting for a number of years. Our Minister of Finance has done a great job once again.

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, per capita, the American government has invested 14 times more in renewable energy than Canada.

Rather than providing billions of dollars in subsidies to the oil companies, which are turning profits hand over fist, why does the Conservative government not invest more in the development of renewable energies that would eventually free us from our dependence on oil?

• (1450)

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, electricity generation in Canada is very green and this energy is one of the most renewable in the world. In Quebec, most of the energy is green energy.

Last week, I attended a United Nations meeting where I strongly supported the efforts of Quebec and other provinces, since energy falls under provincial jurisdiction. Our party respects that provincial jurisdiction. I hope that the Bloc member will follow our example.

\* \* \*

[English]

## HOUSING

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is an urgent need in communities across this country for quality seniors' housing, yet Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is an obstacle to this necessary real estate market adjustment because it refuses mortgage guarantees to seniors' housing that has fewer than 50 units.

Why 50? What is so magical about that number? Why this arbitrary threshold on the part of this inflexible and short-sighted Conservative government?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CMHC is world renowned for the stability it has provided to our economy throughout the global recession. In fact, it is the envy of the world when it comes to that.

## Oral Questions

Part of that process is making sure that we have policies in place that prevent speculation, that will prevent a housing bubble, whether it is in the residential area or in the commercial market.

That is what CMHC is doing. It is protecting Canadians and the Canadian economy.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** You are right, Mr. Speaker. This is not answer period.

[Translation]

These residences are perfectly acceptable to the Government of Quebec.

Quebec is prepared to sign sub-contracting agreements with these smaller residences to offer intermediate health care to residents and free up hospital waiting rooms.

Why do these smaller residences not deserve the support of this Conservative government? Does it think that only large residences, sometimes belonging to anonymous corporations, are better able to provide good care?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously we are concerned about the infrastructure needs and the important contribution that seniors have made to our community. We believe that more can be done. That is why we have taken a good number of efforts and measures.

No other government has done more to support seniors than this government, particularly the efforts of the Minister of Finance and particularly the efforts of the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

\* \* \*

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, fraud costs Canadians \$30 billion annually, hitting seniors the hardest. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police recognizes the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre as critical of the fight on fraud.

On November 10, the Minister of Public Safety commended the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, stating, "Fraud has a devastating impact on individuals, families, businesses and damages Canada's economic integrity". Days later, the Minister of Industry cut the funding.

Why is the Prime Minister allowing his ministers' egos to get in the way of protecting seniors?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is of course working very closely with law enforcement officials across the country and with the provinces.

Under our government, we have increased resources available to the police and we intend to ensure that they also have the appropriate tools in respect of legislation to ensure that individuals who are in fact breaking the law are punished.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, cases of identity theft and mass marketing fraud are increasing in number and complexity, but funding for the Canadian anti-fraud call centre has been cut by the Minister of Industry. This means that more and more Canadians cannot get the help they need.

Why did the Minister of Industry choose to ignore the recommendations of the Minister of Public Safety?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite amazing that the party opposite continually stands in the House to object to legislation that in fact holds criminals accountable. For example, we have bills before committee in respect to the pardon legislation, and who is filibustering and stopping it? The Liberal Party and the coalition partners.

If they were truly serious about fighting crime, they would support the legislation that we have before the House and hold criminals accountable.

• (1455)

**Mr. Julian Fantino (Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Senate passed our bill to eliminate pension entitlements for prisoners.

Our Conservative government stands beside victims and law-abiding Canadians in supporting this important reform, but we know much more needs to be done. We have introduced legislation to get tough on crime, but thanks to the Liberal-led coalition, victims continue to wait.

Can the Minister of Public Safety update the House on the proposed pardon reforms that would put the rights of victims over the rights of criminals?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the member, and I am happy that the people of Vaughan will be represented by a member who, unlike the Liberal-led coalition, knows what it really means to get tough on crime.

We introduced a bill that would deny child sex offenders the right to ever receive a pardon. The member for Ajax—Pickering says he supports the bill. Yet so far all he has done is stall its progress and advocate on behalf of who? Criminals.

Again I call on the opposition to stop playing politics with victims and support our pardons reforms.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the Oliphant commission of inquiry published its report, Canadians learned that former Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney did have a relationship with lobbyist Karlheinz Schreiber, contrary to what Mr. Mulroney had claimed.

The Minister of Justice asked us to be patient, saying that he needed to be able to read the report before he could tell us whether he would ask Mr. Mulroney to reimburse the \$2 million that the government had paid him.

He has had time to read the report. Will the government ask Brian Mulroney to reimburse the millions of dollars he was paid under false pretences, or will it not?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP, we read all the reports that are presented to Parliament. I have to tell the House that many of those reports are in support of the legislation that we have before Parliament.

I want to tell the member how disappointed I was yesterday when we brought in the bill on faint hope that would reduce victimization in Canada, and the NDP members were the first ones on their feet applauding opposing that. They should be ashamed of themselves.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, like everything else, the Conservatives are all talk and no action when it comes to victims. Canadians are the victims here. They lost their two million bucks.

The Conservatives are following in Liberal footsteps and they have thrown open the doors of the government to lobbyists: “Are you from big tobacco here to shut down tough new labelling laws? Come on in, the health minister will see you right now”; “Are you from big oil and don't want to pay your environmental costs? No problem. We've got an environment minister that's all yours”; “Are you from a credit card company that wants another billion dollar handout while fleecing Canadians? The Minister of Finance is in your pocket”.

Canadians are saying enough is enough. When will Conservatives finally close the lobbyists' revolving door access to our government?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was this government that brought in the Federal Accountability Act, in fact to deal with a Liberal scandal. It was this government that brought in the Lobbying Act. It was this government that brought in the provisions to require lobbyists to report. It is this government that has taken this initiative. We will continue to do that.

We remind people that it was done in the light of the Liberal leadership scandal. I echo the question from my friend from Medicine Hat. Where is that \$40 million that disappeared?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CONTAMINATED WATER IN SHANNON**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on November 25, after a motion was adopted by the majority of the House ordering that reports on the analysis of the Valcartier base water supply system dating back to 1970 be produced, the Minister of Defence promised me that he would make these documents public.

*Oral Questions*

Notwithstanding the documents received last week, which have nothing to do with those mentioned in the motion, can the minister commit to making public the documents requested by the House before the trial begins in January 2011, as is being called for by the lawyers in the class action suit by the victims of contaminated water in Shannon?

• (1500)

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member has partly answered her own question. Because the matter is before the courts, this complicates the issue significantly. However, as per the parliamentary motion, these documents will be properly examined and released in due course.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### PORT OF QUEBEC CITY

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Transport told us that the Quebec City port authority is an arm's-length body, implying that he has no intention of shouldering his responsibilities in terms of the controversial appointment of the Quebec City port authority's CEO.

Will the minister do more than just write a letter to the board of directors, and will he personally ensure that the Canada Marine Act and the Quebec City port authority's code of conduct are followed?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the government respects the role the courts play in Canada. We respect their independence and we respect the right of them to take decisions as they deem appropriate.

Obviously once a year the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities will table reports in this place and will continue to ensure that the Canadian economy and the port of Quebec are well served.

\* \* \*

#### CENSUS

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the total cost of the 2011 census could reach \$660 million. We know that the 2006 census cost almost \$100 million less than that. What does that mean? Millions of dollars more for less reliable information.

The government is paying Cadillac prices for a used Chevy Pinto without an engine.

When will the government do the right thing and restore the mandatory long form census?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can join me at the next auto show, and maybe that will help her learn about the auto sector.

In serious response to her question, I believe that Statistics Canada and the Government of Canada more importantly will be spending \$660 million on the 2011 census. That is a good deal of money. It is taxpayers' money. We want to make sure it is spent wisely and it in

fact leads to a successful census and a national household survey, as well.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, experts have expressed serious concern that the government's incessant fearmongering on the long form census will have disastrous effects on Canadians being willing to fill out the short form census. Now we learn that the government has slashed and reallocated that very budget to persuade Canadians to participate in the census.

Will the government stop misleading Canadians about the privacy of the census data, start telling the truth and restore the mandatory long form census?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me assure the House that I have had discussions with StatsCan. There is a \$15 million fund that will help Canadians learn why it is important to fill out the mandatory census.

The Chief Statistician and I agree that that is an adequate amount to get the message out on how important it is to fill out the mandatory short form census. In fact, we have a whole outreach strategy for the national household survey as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the pilot project for qualification after 840 hours ended on December 5. When I asked the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development about it, she replied that the pilot project was too expensive and that it was not a good program. It was expensive because workers were using it. Instead of this program, the minister and the Conservative government would rather give tax cuts to the banks and big oil companies.

My question is for the minister. Would her government rather give money to the banks and big oil companies, or help workers who have lost their jobs?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the pilot project the member is referring to was meant to test some ideas. It did not really work out. It did not achieve its objectives and was very costly. It is our responsibility to spend taxpayers' money wisely, and this program was not doing that. The member should have supported us in helping unemployed workers get the training they need to get the jobs of the future.

*Oral Questions*

● (1505)

[English]

**CANADA POST CORPORATION**

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we see where the priorities of the government are.

Canada Post continues to wreak havoc in our rural B.C. communities. Sixty part-time workers will have their hours cut. The notice went out as a Christmas present.

A woman in my riding who is barely making ends meet will have her hours cut back from seven hours per week to three hours. Her \$560 monthly salary is now cut back to \$220 per month. What a slap in the face to our rural communities.

At the same time Canada Post is making huge profits and is mandated to turn over part of these profits to the federal government. Will the minister finally put an end to this ruthless and ridiculous policy—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister of State for Transport.

**Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me help my hon. colleague with some information.

With regard to Canada Post, there is a very solid collective agreement. There are no Canada Post employees who can actually be terminated under their contract.

When it comes to revitalization of Canada Post for the future, we are very proud of our government that has invested in and allowed Canada Post to be able to borrow, to be able to revitalize and sustain the best postal system in the world as it moves forward.

\* \* \*

**PENSIONS**

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is putting an end to the wrong and unfair practice of prisoners receiving tax-funded old age security benefits through Bill C-31, Eliminating Entitlements for Prisoners Act.

Prisoners already have their basic needs met at the expense of taxpayers. Canadians should not be paying for these criminals twice.

Could the Minister of HRSDC please update this House as to the status of our bill to take these benefits away from prisoners?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that Bill C-31, Eliminating Entitlements for Prisoners Act is scheduled to receive royal assent today.

This means that as of January 1, criminals like Clifford Olson who are serving time in a federal prison will no longer receive taxpayer-funded old age security and GIS benefits. This is just another example of how our Conservative government is putting victims first, not criminals.

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for two years this government has done nothing while Canadian resident, Saeed Malekpour, has languished in Iran's notorious Evin prison. It did nothing when he was kidnapped and thrown into jail, nothing when he was forced to confess under torture, and nothing when he was sentenced to death.

The Prime Minister's Office and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have voiced concerns about other detainees who have done nothing in terms of connections to this country, while Mr. Malekpour has received barely a passing mention by the parliamentary secretary.

Is this government actually prepared to do anything to save the life of Mr. Malekpour?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government remains deeply concerned by the continued flagrant disregard by the Iranian authorities for the rights of Iranians. This appears to be another case in which someone in Iran is facing a death sentence after a highly questionable process.

Canada, with the international community, is striving to hold Iran accountable for such human rights violations. This includes Canada's leadership on the resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran that was recently adopted in the third committee of the UN General Assembly for the eighth consecutive year.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a recent Statistics Canada study confirms that young workers were the hardest hit by the economic crisis, especially students, whose summer employment rate dropped 7% during the most recent recession. This is the biggest drop since 1982.

In light of these findings, how can the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development slash \$10 million from the budget for the 2011 Canada summer jobs program?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, although our youth unemployment rate is much lower than in other countries, we take it very seriously. That is why we introduced and expanded a number of programs in our economic action plan to help young people. For example, we added \$10 million a year to help young people and create 3,500 jobs each summer. It is too bad the Bloc Québécois did not support our efforts.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1510)

[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today the Grand Chief of the MKO representing northern Manitoba first nations brought a message to Ottawa that it is high time we tackled the underlying causes behind the third world diseases that aboriginal people face in Canada, such as the high rates of diabetes, another fatal flu outbreak, and the shocking rates of tuberculosis which in Nunavut are 62 times the national average.

When is the federal government going to act decisively to put an end to the third world living conditions facing Canada's aboriginal people?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as former health minister of the north, I understand the impact of the geographic location as well as the unique culture of aboriginals in our communities that require specific health care considerations. That is why our government has committed \$285 million to federal aboriginal health programs. This funding will assist over 150 community-based projects such as: the TB elimination strategy, \$9.6 million; the aboriginal diabetes initiative, \$110 million; the aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy, \$95 million; and child and maternal health.

We are getting the job done.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN FORCES**

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every day our Canadian Forces work to make the world a safer place. In the face of danger and away from their families, friends and loved ones, these brave men and women are examples of all the good things Canadians are capable of.

Our largest overseas deployment is serving in Afghanistan and this winter they will be celebrating the holidays without the comforts of home.

Would the Minister of State for Transport please tell the House about the program in place to help the families and friends of these soldiers stay connected with our troops during the holiday season?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I welcome my hon. colleague to the House with his first great question.

It is truly amazing what our troops do overseas every day of the year for us, especially at the holiday season. They have chosen to leave the comforts of home and country to do the outstanding work that we are very proud of every day.

It is a great pleasure for me to inform the House that Canada Post is allowing, for the fifth consecutive year, free parcel delivery for the friends, family and Canadians from coast to coast to our troops overseas. We welcome everybody to exercise this right.

**ROYAL ASSENT**

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall  
Ottawa

December 15, 2010

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2010 at 4:15 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills of law.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila-Marie Cook  
Secretary to the Governor General

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed from December 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-510, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercion), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:15 p.m. pursuant to order made on Tuesday, December 14, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-510 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1520)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 151)***YEAS**

## Members

Abbott	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Anders	Anderson
Ashfield	Benoit
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Carrie
Casson	Clarke
Cummins	Davidson
Day	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dhalla
Fast	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goldring	Grewal
Guarnieri	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hoback
Hoepfner	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	Malhi

*Private Members' Business*

Mayes	McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
O'Neill-Gordon	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Richards	Ritz
Scheer	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sorenson
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Tweed
Uppal	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young — 97	

**NAYS**

## Members

Ablonczy	Allen (Welland)
André	Andrews
Angus	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashton
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Beaudin	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Bernier	Bevington
Bigras	Blackburn
Blais	Blaney
Bonsant	Bouchard
Boucher	Bourgeois
Braid	Brisson
Brunelle	Byrne
Cadman	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrier	Chong
Chow	Christopherson
Clement	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
DeBellefeuille	Dechert
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dion
Donnelly	Dorion
Dosanjh	Dreeschen
Dryden	Duceppe
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Faillie
Fantino	Finley
Flaherty	Fletcher
Footé	Fry
Gagnon	Garneau
Gaudet	Généreux
Godin	Goodale
Goodyear	Gourde
Gravelle	Guay
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	Harper
Harris (St. John's East)	Hawn
Holder	Holland
Hughes	Julian
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy
Kent	Kerr
Laforest	Laframboise
Lavallée	Layton
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Leslie	Lessard

Lévesque	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Malo
Maloway	Marston
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Mathysen
McCallum	McGuinity
McLeod	Ménard
Mendes	Menzies
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Mourani	
Mulcair	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Nicholson	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Oliphant	Ouellet
Pacetti	Paillé (Hochelaga)
Paquette	Paradis
Patry	Pearson
Petit	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Ratansi	Rathgeber
Regan	Richardson
Rickford	Rodriguez
Rota	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simson
Sopuck	St-Cyr
Stanton	Stoffer
Thi Lac	Thibeault
Tilson	Trudeau
Valeriote	Verner
Wallace	Zarac — 178

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

\* \* \*

*[English]***DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT**

The House resumed from December 14 consideration of Bill C-429, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, December 14, 2010, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-429 under private members' business.

● (1530)

*[Translation]*

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

*(Division No. 152)***YEAS**

## Members

André	Arthur
Ashton	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bains	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Bigras	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brunelle
Byrne	Carrier
Coderre	Cotler



*Private Members' Business*

Crowder	Cullen	Gourde	Gravelle
Cuzner	D'Amours	Grewal	Hall Findlay
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille	Harper	Harris (St. John's East)
Demers	Deschamps	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Desnoyers	Dhalla	Hiebert	Hoback
Dion	Dorion	Hoepfner	Holder
Dosanjh	Dryden	Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Duceppe	Easter	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Eyking	Faille	Kent	Kerr
Footé	Fry	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Gagnon	Garneau	Lake	Lauzion
Gaudet	Guarnieri	Layton	Lebel
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les	Lee	Lemieux
Basques)		Leslie	Lobb
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)		Lukiwski	Lunney
Holland		MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Julian	Karygiannis	Marston	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Kennedy	Laforest	Mathysen	Mayes
Laframboise	Lamoureux	McColeman	McGuinty
Lavallée	LeBlanc	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Lemay	Lessard	Menzies	Merrifield
Lévesque	MacAulay	Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Malhi	Malo	Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Maloway	McCallum	Norlock	O'Connor
McTeague	Ménard	O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Mendes	Mourani	Oda	Oliphant
Mulcair	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Paradis	Payne
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray	Petit	Poilievre
Nadeau	Neville	Preston	Rajotte
Ouellet	Pacetti	Ratansi	Rathgeber
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Paquette	Regan	Reid
Patry	Pearson	Richards	Richardson
Plamondon	Pomerleau	Rickford	Ritz
Proulx	Rae	Russell	Savage
Rafferty	Rodriguez	Scheer	Schellenberger
Rota	Savoie	Shea	Shiple
Scarpaleggia	Sgro	Shory	Silva
Siksay	Simms	Smith	Sopuck
Simson	St-Cyr	Sorenson	Stanton
Szabo	Thi Lac	Stoffer	Storseth
Tonks	Trudeau	Strahl	Sweet
Valerioté	Wrzesnewskyj	Thibeault	Tilson
Zarac — 101		Toews	Trost
		Tweed	Uppal
		Van Kesteren	Van Loan
		Vellacott	Verner
		Wallace	Warawa
		Warkentin	Watson
		Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
		Weston (Saint John)	
		Wong	Woodworth
		Yelich	Young — 174

**NAYS****Members**

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Andrews	Angus
Armstrong	Ashfield
Bagnell	Baird
Bélangier	Bennett
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannon (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Chow
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Coady
Comartin	Crombie
Cummins	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dechert	Devolin
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dreeshen	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gagnéux
Glover	Godin
Goldring	Goodyear

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, I was a bit deterred by how the vote was actually occurring. I would like my vote, which was not recorded during the previous recording of the votes, to show that I was in favour of it, please.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that the member's name be added to the list?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

PAIRED

*Routine Proceedings***POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORDER PAPER QUESTION NO. 614—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on December 8, 2010, by the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader concerning the length of Order Paper Question No. 614, standing in the name of the member for Honoré-Mercier.

● (1535)

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the hon. Parliamentary Secretary for bringing this matter to the attention of the House, as well as the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and the members for Honoré—Mercier, Windsor—Tecumseh, and Kitchener—Conestoga for their contributions.

[*English*]

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader argued that Question No. 614 was too lengthy to meet the definition of “concise”, as required by our rules, and emphasized the difficulty the government would have in responding to so lengthy a question in its current form within the prescribed 45 days.

[*Translation*]

As all hon. members know, written questions are one of the key tools that members have at their disposal to help them seek detailed information from the government. At the same time, the practice of submitting lengthy written questions has become commonplace, particularly since the implementation of the recommendation of the 1985 report of the Special Committee on the Reform of the House, the McGrath committee, to limit members to a maximum of four written questions on the order paper at any given time.

[*English*]

It is in this context that the parliamentary secretary has raised the issue of what constitutes a “concise” question for the purposes of Standing Order 39(2). The Standing Order confers upon the Clerk of the House, acting for the Speaker:

...full authority to ensure that coherent and concise questions are placed on the *Notice Paper* in accordance with the practices of the House, and may, on behalf of the Speaker, order certain questions to be posed separately.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, at page 520, specifies that:

Since questions must be coherent and concise, the Clerk may split a question into two or more questions if it is too broad or if it contains unrelated subquestions.

[*Translation*]

Speaker Parent added further clarification to what defines coherent and concise when, in relation to the procedural acceptability of a written question, he pointed out, on February 8, 1999, at page 11532 of *Debates*, that:

The issue was not the length of the question but rather the fact that it contained unrelated sub questions.

[*English*]

Indeed, when ruling on a similar matter on October 18, 2006, at page 3934 of the *Debates*, I found that very interpretation to still be valid and in keeping with our practice, noting that:

...the term concise in Standing Order 39(2) has evolved since this rule was first adopted. It is no longer interpreted to mean short or brief but rather comprehensible. Undoubtedly, this practice has evolved as a means of getting around the limit of four questions per member.

I also emphasized that in order for a question with multiple subquestions to be found admissible, there must be a common element connecting the various parts. Thus, we see that conciseness is not a matter of length, but rather of breadth and the absence of unrelated subquestions.

[*Translation*]

When written questions are submitted to the Journals Branch for inclusion in the notice paper, they are examined with a view to ensuring that all of their parts are interrelated, that they are not too broad, and that they meet various other criteria for written questions.

[*English*]

Because of the concerns raised with respect to Question No. 614, I took it upon myself to review it with care in light of how our practice has evolved in this regard. I am satisfied that its subquestions are indeed interrelated and that therefore there were no procedural impediments as to form and content in placing the question on the notice paper.

In short, the scope of this question is sufficiently narrow to satisfy established procedural requirements. Accordingly, the question will be allowed to stand in its present form on the order paper.

[*Translation*]

I thank hon. members for their attention to this matter.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed certain bills.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[*English*]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 16 petitions.

\* \* \*

● (1540)

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two reports.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the visit of the Defence and Security Committee held in Denmark, Greenland and Iceland, August 30 to September 4, 2010.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the visit of the Science and Technology Committee held in Paris, Aix-en-Provence and Toulon, France, from September 27-30, 2010.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation to the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association on its participation in the association's 37th annual meeting held in Edmonton and Calgary from August 29 to September 4, 2010.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, concerning its participation in several events: first, the 63rd convention of the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, from September 30 to October 2, 2010; second, the seminar on the role of women parliamentarians in including a gender perspective in the preparation of national budgets, and on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was held in Lomé, Togo, on October 6 and 7, 2010; and third, the seminar on including a gender perspective in the preparation of national budgets: putting it into practice, which was held in Bitola, Macedonia, on November 4 and 5, 2010.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, in relation to the training mission in Afghanistan and its compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

[English]

The committee recommends that the government ensure that the benchmarks currently being developed for any future training mission in Afghanistan are compliant with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled, "The Referendum on Sudan: Where to after 2011?"

## Routine Proceedings

This report is a result of the study conducted by the committee with respect to the implications and ramifications of the referendum vote that will take place in Sudan in January 2011.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-608, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (failure to inform).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill on behalf of all of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois. This bill would amend the Criminal Code to make it an offence not to report physical or sexual abuse against a child to the proper authorities. It refers to minors under the age of 18. We hope to target cases in which someone witnesses such abuse in his or her immediate surroundings or someone in a position of authority within an organization, who, in order to protect that organization, refuses to report either physical or sexual abuse.

It is my hope that this bill will easily reach consensus in the House and that it will pass in order to protect children and the victims of physical and sexual abuse.

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

\* \* \*

● (1545)

[English]

## PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA ACT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-609, An Act to amend the Public Health Agency of Canada Act (National Alzheimer Office).

She said: Mr. Speaker, my bill, an act to establish a national Alzheimer office within the Public Health Agency of Canada, aims to reduce the rising tide of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in Canada.

The bill calls for the office to: develop a national plan to address dementia, in conjunction with the provincial and territorial health departments, with specific goals and an annual report to Parliament; take necessary measures to accelerate the discovery and development of treatments that would prevent, halt or reverse the course of dementia; encourage greater investment in all areas of dementia research; coordinate with international bodies to contribute to the fight against dementia globally and to build on Canada's existing contributions in this field; assess and disseminate best practices, improving the quality of life of people with dementia and their caregivers; and make recommendations to support and strengthen Canada's dementia care workforce.

I hope all hon. members will support the bill.

*Routine Proceedings*

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

\* \* \*

**PROTECTION OF BENEFICIARIES OF LONG TERM  
DISABILITY BENEFITS PLANS ACT**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-610, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (protection of beneficiaries of long term disability benefits plans).

She said: Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, Senator Art Eggleton presented Bill S-216 in the Senate. In simple terms, that bill would have made certain that hundreds of sick, disabled and dying Canadians had their medical benefits protected in the wake of the collapse of Nortel.

Despite expert testimony of the Senate Banking Committee, which stated that Bill S-216 was both financially sound and legally prudent, partisan considerations in the Senate defeated it last week. Today I am presenting a legislative package that is identical to S-216.

Every now and again, we as legislators are given the opportunity to do something truly good for the people we are here to represent, something that is far bigger than partisan politics. In my mind, this is one of those opportunities.

Together, all of us can prevent these people from being evicted from their homes when their benefits are revoked this Christmas. I ask my colleagues in all parties to do the right thing. Together we can help these desperate and disabled people.

As time is of the essence and this is an urgent situation, I would ask the House for unanimous consent to pass the bill at all legislative stages and to refer it to the Senate for concurrence today.

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

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I again ask for unanimous consent. This affects 400 Nortel people, at minimum, who are on long-term disability. Their benefits are finished on December 31. The bill has gone through the Senate. It has had hearings there. Unfortunately, it was rejected at the Senate, but the House could pass it today and refer it to the Senate for concurrence and help those 400 people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the hon. member seeking unanimous consent to read the bill a second time now?

• (1550)

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the House give its consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

\* \* \*

**Haida Gwaii Income Tax Zoning Act**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-611, An Act regarding the inclusion of Haida Gwaii as a prescribed northern zone under the Income Tax Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is tax fairness for the residents of Haida Gwaii who have been waiting too long for governments, one after another, that have successfully punished people living in remote and rural communities.

The bill would change the Income Tax Act to allow the remote communities in Haida Gwaii to be included in the northern living allowance.

Haida Gwaii has become famous for its powerful scenery, its incredible cultures and strong people, but it is also known to be a very expensive place to live due to its remoteness. BC Ferries and other crown corporations have been hurting the residents of Haida Gwaii, increasing the prices of everything. The government can act on this by including it, as it did for the community of Mackenzie some years ago, in the northern living allowance and allowing people in Haida Gwaii to finally have some sort of recovery ability for their economy and their communities by having tax fairness for Haida Gwaii.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-612, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, a bill on human trafficking. The purpose of this bill, prepared in concert with police officers in the field, is to give consecutive sentences to human traffickers and pimps. We are seeking reverse onus in cases of exploitation of persons and also seeking confiscation of the proceeds of crime.

We want to give a much clearer definition to the words “human trafficking” and “exploitation” in order to give police the tools they need to make appropriate arrests. We also want the burden of proof not to fall on the victims.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**FEDERAL LAW-CIVIL LAW HARMONIZATION ACT, NO. 3**

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (for the Minister of Justice)** moved that Bill S-12, A third Act to harmonize federal law with the civil law of Quebec and to amend certain Acts in order to ensure that each language version takes into account the common law and the civil law, be read the first time.

*Routine Proceedings*

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 16 to concur in the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, scheduled for later today, be deemed to have taken place, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe you would find agreement that the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics be the committee for the purposes of section 14.1 (1) of the Lobbying Act.

• (1555)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am delighted to present a petition signed by 43 Yukoners.

The petitioners point out that given horses are normally not raised for food, that they are commonly given drugs that are illegal in animals that are raised for human consumption and that Canadian horse meat sold to Canadians and internationally is likely to contain prohibited substances, they ask the House of Commons to prohibit the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption as well as horse meat products for human consumption.

## PREVENTION OF COERCED ABORTION

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House today to present a petition.

Canadians who have signed this petition have asked me to formally express their support for Bill C-510, otherwise known as

Roxanne's law. The bill was tabled by my good friend and colleague from Winnipeg South.

[Translation]

## GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition signed by 592 people calling for improvements in the federal guaranteed income supplement program, the spouse's allowance and the surviving spouse's allowance.

Like the tens of thousands of other petitioners who support the demands of the FADOQ network, these petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to implement automatic registration for the guaranteed income supplement, the spouse's allowance and the surviving spouse's allowance, to increase the GIS by \$110 a month for people who live alone, to increase the surviving spouse's allowance by \$199 a month, to provide full retroactivity with no strings attached and, finally, to extend the GIS and the spouse's allowance by six months when one beneficiary in a couple dies.

I am calling on all hon. members to support these requests made by the petitioners.

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by many Canadians who believe that multiple sclerosis is a medical issue of national importance and has major social, financial and medical repercussions.

They are calling on the government to act now to ensure that Canadians with MS have equal access to CCSVI treatment. Above all, they want the government to take immediate steps to expedite access to such treatment and open it to more people with MS.

[English]

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition that I am pleased to present on behalf of my constituents.

The petitioners want to prohibit the import and export of horses for slaughter for human consumption as well as horse meat products for human consumption. My colleague, the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior, introduced Bill C-544, which would do just that.

Because horses are not generally raised as food producing animals, they likely contain prohibited drugs that ought to be kept far from our food supply. The petitioners also believe it runs counter to our culture to use companion animals such as horses in that way.

## FIREARMS REGISTRY

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to present petitions that I have received from Canadians from across the country.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners ask that the long gun registry be abolished. Their primary concern remains the cost of the long gun registry as well as its complete ineffectiveness. Many Canadians thought they had a member of Parliament who would represent their views on this issue. They were unfortunately mistaken the last time we had a vote.

I am pleased to stand today and present these petitions for these Canadians who want to end the long gun registry.

[*Translation*]

## GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of more than 500 people from across Quebec and mainly from my riding, I want to remind the federal government that the guaranteed income supplement, the spouse's allowance and the survivor's allowance are no longer serving their main purpose, which is to provide low-income seniors with an adequate income.

People are calling on the government to introduce automatic registration for the guaranteed income supplement, the spouse's allowance and the survivor's allowance; add \$110 a month to the guaranteed income supplement for people who live alone; increase the monthly survivor's allowance by \$199; introduce full, unconditional retroactivity; and extend the guaranteed income supplement and the spouse's allowance by six months on the death of one of the beneficiaries in the couple.

I hope that all hon. members will listen to what these people are calling for.

• (1600)

[*English*]

## PENSION PROTECTION

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions signed by literally thousands of Canadians, calling on the government to affirm that pension benefits are in fact deferred wages, to elevate defined benefit plans to secured status in the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, and to pass into law any legislation before it, such as Bill C-501, that would achieve these objectives.

## ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, residents of Canada request that the Government of Canada undertake an independent study to determine the negative effects of electromagnetic fields on human health. There is evidence to suggest that electromagnetic fields emanating from all types of transformers, substations and power lines located near residents can pose a significant health risk to individuals and their families.

I personally would like to thank Mr. Gerry Higgins of Norris Arm, who has been working on this for over 10 years. Gerry's wife passed away December 21, 2005. In 2000, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Mr. Higgins truly believes that as a result of the exposure to EMF she succumbed to her cancer.

As Gerry said in a recent article:

I'm ready to keep on doing what I'm doing. I consider myself a very strong person and I won't back down.

The fight goes on ... I found my reason for being on earth, to fight for this.

I thank him for this.

## OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present this petition on behalf of the good people of Forestburg, Sedgewick, Heisler and area. The petitioners note that the old age security pension has required a contribution on behalf of Canadians for at least 10 years and that there is a Liberal private member's bill before the House, Bill C-428, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, which would in fact change the requirement to just three years. The petitioners call on the House to defeat that bill.

## INCOME TAX ACT (HEARING IMPAIRMENT)

**Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today signed by 75 people who are very concerned that there is discrimination in the Income Tax Act with regard to people with hearing impairment. They are asking that the Government of Canada and the House move expeditiously with Bill C-577, a bill introduced by my colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

I support it and encourage the government to take the advice of these 75 people and others across the country who think this discrimination should be ended.

## PREVENTION OF COERCED ABORTION

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to proudly present this petition calling for the reintroduction of Roxanne's law to empower pregnant women to press charges should they be forced into an unwanted abortion.

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first one is signed by 100 people from the Boundary region, Grand Forks, Greenwood and Christina Lake in support of my bill, Bill C-474, which basically asks the government to make sure that an analysis is done of the potential economic impact on farmers before introducing any more genetically modified organisms into the environment.

They call upon Parliament to enshrine in legislation Bill C-474, an act respecting the seeds regulations, to amend the seed regulations to require that an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted.

*Routine Proceedings*

●(1605)

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my second set of petitions has a total of 617 signatures dealing with my private member's bill, Bill C-544. The petitioners are saying that horses are ordinarily kept and treated as sport and companion animals, not raised primarily as food processing animals, and are administered drugs that are commonly prohibited in the food chain.

The petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons to bring forward and adopt into legislation Bill C-544, an act to amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act, thus prohibiting the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption, as well as horse meat products for human consumption.

## JUSTICE

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed emotions that I present two related petitions.

The petitioners act in the name of Genoa Jean May, Gennie, who 25 years ago, at age 3, was kidnapped, raped and murdered. The petitioners believe that the parole system should be changed and they present 151 signatures in support of Bill C-39, and 156 signatures in support of Bill C-48, asking that the system be changed to give more fairness to victims of crime.

## VETERANS

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present this petition on behalf of Canadians who wish to support veterans, post 1953. They petition the government and Parliament to extend the mandate of veterans hospitals to include veterans who have served in conflicts and peacekeeping operations since 1953; end the clawback of veterans' pensions; eliminate the reduction of veterans' pensions at age 65; change the widows benefit to a non-taxable benefit; create a veterans advisory panel to provide input on the selection of future veterans ombudspersons; and ensure that Veterans Affairs Canada remains a stand-alone department.

## ROUGE RIVER WATERSHED

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions here of some thousand Canadian signatures that call on the federal government to recognize that the Rouge River watershed is nationally significant, containing many rare flora and fauna, aboriginal sites and historic features; and to recognize that the federal government, in 1988, gave \$10 million to protect the Rouge River watershed.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to work with the province of Ontario to establish a national park in the Rouge River watershed so that the Oak Ridges moraine can be connected to Lake Ontario through this very important and nationally significant area.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to bring forward the voices of the people of Thompson, Manitoba.

Today I present petitions on their behalf calling for the federal government to stand up for Canadians and Canadian jobs.

On November 17, Vale announced devastating news that they are planning to shut down the smelter and refinery in Thompson. The people of Thompson are saying that the federal government must stand up for them. Not only did the government allow the foreign takeover by Vale, the government also gave it a loan of \$1 billion just two months ago; this just weeks before such devastating news.

The people of Thompson and Manitoba are asking when the government will stand up for the Canadian people rather than foreign companies, and will the government work with all stakeholders to save the 600 jobs in the Thompson Vale smelter and refinery?

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three sets of petitions to table.

The first set is certainly very timely for today, given that yesterday the public safety committee had a special meeting, called by the government members, to try to see Bill C-23 dealt with. Obviously that was filibustered and stymied by the opposition parties.

However, I have a number of petitioners who keep coming in, almost on a daily basis, calling on the House of Commons to change the Criminal Records Act, to prohibit the granting of pardons to convicted sex offenders.

●(1610)

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for the prohibition of importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption, as well as horse meat products for human consumption.

## CATTLE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls upon the Government of Canada to appoint the Hon. Mr. Justice Frank Iacobucci as mediator to facilitate settlement between the Government of Canada and cattle farmers.

## VISA REQUIREMENTS

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Serbian community in British Columbia was one of the founding peoples. In fact, at the very time of settlement in British Columbia, Serbian Canadians were there.

There are 100,000 Serbians across the country who have made a substantial contribution to our country and culture. That is why I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of dozens of residents of Serbian origin, from the Atlantic coast right through to British Columbia.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners are asking that the Government of Canada waive visa requirements for visitors to Canada from Serbia. As we know, 25 European states have done the same.

Thank you. *Hvala ti.*

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions with all the parties and I believe you will find unanimous support for the following motion:

THAT, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics be the committee for the purposes of section 14.1 of the Lobbying Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 535, 538 and 540.

[Text]

Question No. 535—**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:**

With regard to all e-mail correspondence between Ministers' exempt staff and staff at the Department of Industry which occurred between January 1, 2010 and October 31, 2010, excluding all matters which are in their nature secret, for each e-mail: (a) what are its contents; (b) what are the names of the (i) sender, (ii) recipients; and (c) on what date was it sent?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government draws to the attention of the member, pages 468 to 475 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition.

Question No. 538—**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:**

With regard to all e-mail correspondence between ministers' exempt staff and staff at the Department of Public Works and Government Services which occurred between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2009, excluding all matters which are in their nature secret, for each e-mail: (a) what are its contents; (b) what are the names of the (i) sender, (ii) recipients; and (c) on what date was it sent?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government draws to the attention of the member, pages 468 to 475 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition.

Question No. 540—**Mr. Francis Valeriote:**

With regard to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) and its partner agencies and all e-mail and any other written correspondence which occurred between January 1, 2008 and October 31, 2010, excluding all matters which are in their nature secret: (a) for each correspondence, including e-mails, between ministers' exempt staff and departmental staff at FedDev Ontario, (i) what are its contents, (ii) what are the names of the sender and recipients, (iii) on what date was it sent; (b) for each correspondence, including e-mails, between ministers' exempt staff working at FedDev Ontario and departmental staff at FedDev Ontario, (i) what are its contents, (ii) what are the names of the sender and recipients, (iii) on what date was it sent; and (c) for each correspondence, including e-mails, between ministers' exempt staff working at FedDev Ontario and ministers' exempt staff working at the National Research Council, the Business Development Bank of Canada, and Industry Canada, (i) what are its contents, (ii) what are the names of the sender and recipients, (iii) on what date was it sent?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government draws to the attention of the member, pages 468 to 475 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition.

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[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 531, 532, 533 and 539 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 531—**Ms. Siobhan Coady:**

With respect to the government's Economic Action Plan: (a) for each project or program that received funding, (i) what was its name, (ii) what was its location, specifying the city, riding, and province, (iii) what was its total cost, (iv) what was the federal contribution, (v) what amount of the federal contribution has been delivered to date, (vi) how many full-time jobs did it create, (vii) how many part-time jobs did it create, (viii) what company or companies were contracted in association with the program or project, specifying the amount of funding each received for its services, (ix) were the contracts awarded in association with the project or program sole-sourced or open to competition, (x) will it meet the government's completion deadline and, if not, why; (b) was the government's approval of any project or program subsequently withdrawn and, if so, why; and (c) were any of the projects which the government had approved for funding subsequently cancelled and, if so, why?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 532—**Ms. Siobhan Coady:**

With respect to the government's use of consultants and employment agencies: (a) what was the total amount spent on consultants and employment agencies during fiscal year 2009-2010; (b) what is the projected total amount that will be spent on consultants and employment agencies during fiscal year 2010-2011; (c) how much did each department or agency spend on consultants and employment agencies during fiscal year 2009-2010; (d) which consulting firms and employment agencies received contracts from each department or agency during fiscal year 2009-2010; and (e) for each contract in (d), (i) was it sole-sourced or awarded following an open competition, (ii) what was its value or amount, (iii) for what services was it granted, (iv) what was its duration?

(Return tabled)



*Privilege***Question No. 533—Ms. Siobhan Coady:**

With respect to the renovations being undertaken on Parliament Hill: (a) in what year did the current round of renovations begin; (b) what is the total amount spent on the current round of renovations to date; (c) what is the projected completion date of all renovations; (d) what is the projected final cost of all renovations; and (e) since the current round of renovations began, what firms have received contracts to perform work on Parliament Hill, identifying (i) the amount of the contract, (ii) the services to be provided under the contract, (iii) the start and end dates of the contract, (iv) whether the contract was awarded through open competition or sole-sourced

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 539—Ms. Megan Leslie:**

With regard to Health Canada funding and the allocation of full-time equivalents (FTEs): (a) what is the number of FTEs allocated by the Department in each province and territory, including the Department's headquarters in the National Capital Region, each fiscal year since 2006-2007, up to and including the current fiscal year; (b) how much funding was spent to support operations in each province and territory, including the Department's headquarters in the National Capital Region, each fiscal year since 2006-2007, up to and including the current fiscal year; (c) what is the number of FTEs allocated in each province and territory with respect to the delivery of First Nations and Inuit health programs and services, each fiscal year since 2006-2007, up to and including the current fiscal year; (d) what are the names of the projects and how much money was committed to each of those projects by Health Canada as part of the Economic Action Plan; and (e) why, as stated in the 2010-11 business plan, is the Department projecting a decrease in FTEs for 2011-2012 and a further decrease in 2012-2013?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Deputy 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 motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 23 minutes.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park is rising on a question of privilege.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege in the House to ask the Speaker's consideration of an appropriate response to a new form of attack on the essential privileges of members in this chamber.

As O'Brien and Bosc make clear on page 59 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, parliamentary

privilege is simply "the independence Parliament and its Members need to function unimpeded".

There are certain powers that need to be exercised by this House to protect us from undue interference so we carry out our functions.

I raise two related points. One is that information conveyed on December 10 and December 14 by members of the government was fundamentally inaccurate and undermining of my function as a member of Parliament. I will show that in brief.

The other is that the government is abusing the freedoms and rights of members by abusing its function as the executive to validate manifestly false allegations with the sole purpose of bringing discredit to certain members who are attempting to bring it to account.

Our freedom of speech is fundamental. Freedom of speech is defined as the fundamental right without which we would be hampered in any performance of our duties, permitting us to speak in the House without inhibition to refer to any matter and express opinion as we see fit, to say what we feel needs to be said in furtherance of the national interest and aspirations of our constituents.

On several occasions there have now been repeated and coordinated attacks by ministers and other members, of an unsubstantiated personal nature, and I cite the attacks from the Minister of Public Safety towards the member for Ajax—Pickering and the attacks on the member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

As well, this new form of undermining of our privileges comes when the government purports to use the special knowledge that accrues to it in its role in the executive branch to disparage the performance of MPs and create a new form of threat designed to intimidate members in the conduct of their duties.

If this is allowed unimpeded, this form of official obstruction and interference will greatly diminish the function of this House. It is designed to prevent members from bringing the government to account, one of our fundamental functions.

If the House does not adjudicate this, then our abilities will be greatly diminished. I submit that this is in the same vein but of a different order from the ruling made by the Speaker yesterday, and based on his previous statement where he spoke to:

...if a Member who feels that his or her reputation has been maligned by the comments of another Member raises a question of privilege, the Speaker must determine if such remarks "constitute such a grave attack as to impede the hon. member...in the performance of his duties" (Debates, May 28, 2008, p. 6171).

I certainly allege that these are put forward as remarks of that nature, as I will briefly explain, but in addition the government has made reference in my particular case, on several occasions, to my comportment at two international conferences where I represented the House as part of a pairing system to enable Canada to have representatives abroad during the minority Parliament, as official opposition critic and as a member of the Canadian delegation.

*Royal Assent*

I submit that the government is in effect reporting back to this House in its executive function when it characterizes the conduct and outcomes of such delegations. Both the minister and parliamentary secretary indicated in several statements that are not supportable but are, importantly, designed to help them avoid scrutiny, which they would otherwise have to submit to in this House.

I also refer again to the Speaker to say that on page 77 of O'Brien and Bosc:

We have parliamentary privilege to ensure that the other branches of government, the executive and judicial, respect the independence of the legislative branch of government, which is this House and the other place. This independence cannot be sustained if either of the other branches is able to define or reduce these privileges.

Mr. Speaker, I think you can find that there is a deliberate pattern of behaviour. Specifically, on Friday, December 10 and again on Thursday, December 14, several statements were made. They involved private members from Ottawa—Orléans and Kitchener—Conestoga, as well as the minister and the parliamentary secretary.

In those statements, information was put forward that the government itself knew manifestly not to be the case. For example, they spoke of my attendance at the climate change talks in Cancun. They referred to my leaving early. They said that halfway through the conference the Liberal Party representative went home. They also talked about wasting taxpayers' dollars.

•(1615)

In point of fact, it was the government that gave so little notice of attendance for that conference. Also a second allegation was raised by the parliamentary secretary that in Nagoya, which is a conference approximately two months ago, I was not actively participating. The government knew differently, as I will demonstrate, and yet the members deliberately brought this forward in question period, in statements and also in committee.

The government knew specifically, for example, when it gave notice of one week for me to attend Nagoya in order to facilitate the attendance of the then minister, that I hold a monthly public meeting in my riding and it was too late on that short notice to cancel that meeting. In fact it had already been widely advertised including drops to 5,000 households, which is the practice in our riding. Not only did I attend, but I managed to get credentials that were denied by the government to me as a member of the delegation to attend high level sessions. I was not invited to meetings or briefings of the delegation, contrary to the information provided opposite.

The main point is that I attended 22 meetings. I spoke directly to the minister, who I met at some of those meetings. I was only able to attend because of my own initiative working with international parliamentary delegations. I met for an hour and a half with the president of the World Bank, with other parliamentarians. We secured an undertaking at the World Bank to modify its process on natural capital, an announcement that was made at the conference, which created a legislative track as a direct result of that meeting.

I also met with and spoke to the prime minister of Japan and the environment minister of Japan, and the minister was present for some of those discussions, although not party to them. It is, I believe, a deliberate effort on the part of the government to interfere with my abilities as a member to hold it to account in this House, in its

misrepresentation of these facts otherwise. So, I attended 22 meetings and events in Nagoya, Japan.

I would note that for two successive days I attended the Government of Canada seats in the high level discussions, which were vacant. There was no one there from the 30-plus delegation, which the Minister of the Environment brought there, listening to the other countries' statements. I believe it is important to understand that the government underperformed and was criticized. It won an international booby prize called the Dodo for interfering with those talks and that is directly related to why the government is now in an organized fashion undermining my privileges as a member by bringing up allegations that are absolutely and patently not true.

With respect to Cancun and the climate change talks in Mexico, the minister was personally aware because I made a request directly through him to attend earlier. The minister was fully, directly informed and when he said opposite facts here, he knew that I was there for six days while he was there for only four. He knows that I attended a conference with 50 representatives from 16 countries and that I went to 37 different meetings in performance of my duties.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to you very simply that the freedom of speech in the House cannot withstand the intimidation of organized efforts by the government as the executive. This is not the freedom of speech of members opposite but, rather, of the executive. It can be shown, and I will make submissions, that it is coordinated through committees and question period in the House. If it is permitted, that question period and committees and the functions of S.O. 31s and so on are able to be manipulated in a systematic way to attack individual members of the House, that is tantamount to relieving them of their privileges of freedom of speech without obstruction and without interference.

I would submit that the nature of that cannot be allowed to go forward and that the members are defenceless on their own. In a spate of systematic attacks, which have taken place not just in my case but on other members, and again I will put in submissions to the Speaker, we cannot individually respond to each one of those attacks. Again, the point I make is that this is the executive expressing itself, not respecting the rights and privileges of members.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for your ruling on that and to understand that in both cases of what was alleged related to my behaviour or comportment, it was the government itself that was on the defensive. It won six fossil awards and in fact was seen to be the colossal fossil, the worst performing nation, and it was those things it tried to prevent coming up in the House. If you do find a prima facie case of privilege, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

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## ROYAL ASSENT

•(1635)

[English]

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

*And being returned:*

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill S-3, An Act to implement conventions and protocols concluded between Canada and Colombia, Greece and Turkey for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income—Chapter No. 15

Bill S-210, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament)—Chapter No. 16

Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts—Chapter 17

Bill C-3, An Act to promote gender equity in Indian registration by responding to the Court of Appeal for British Columbia decision in *McIvor v. Canada* (Registrar of Indian and Northern Affairs)—Chapter 18

Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (suicide bombings)—Chapter 19

Bill C-464, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (justification for detention in custody)—Chapter 20

Bill C-36, An Act respecting the safety of consumer products—Chapter 21

Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act—Chapter 22

Bill C-28, An Act to promote the efficiency and adaptability of the Canadian economy by regulating certain activities that discourage reliance on electronic means of carrying out commercial activities, and to amend the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act, the Competition Act, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and the Telecommunications Act—Chapter 23

Bill C-58, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2011—Chapter 24

Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures—Chapter 25

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 Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Canadian Council on Learning; the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, Public Safety.

\* \* \*

## PRIVILEGE

### STATEMENT BY MEMBERS

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are resuming the question of privilege. I understand the hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on the same question of privilege.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a brief response to the question of privilege raised by the member for Parkdale—High Park. I have two very quick points for the hon. member opposite.

First, when the member speaks of rights of members being infringed because of actions and comments in S. O. 31s of members on the government side, I would point out that free speech applies to all members in this place.

With particular reference to the member's comments regarding his own attendance at the summit in Cancun on the environment where

## Privilege

he criticized the government for making statements in this place stating that the member himself left the summit halfway through, Thursday to be exact. He stated that was an unfair use of the government's executive powers. He also stated that it was unfair and basically untrue since he informed the Minister of the Environment that he would be leaving early.

I have before me a letter of invitation from the Minister of the Environment to the member for Parkdale—High Park stating quite clearly that the conference runs from Tuesday, December 7 until Saturday, December 11, 2010 and that his travel and accommodations would be picked up to attend the said conference.

While the member himself may feel somewhat aggrieved and perhaps even be sensitive to the fact that he left early, that is exactly what happened. Statements made in this place were factually correct. In other words, the member left before the conference had concluded when he had been invited to attend the entire conference.

While he may be sensitive to the comments made in this place, he should not be rising on a question of privilege saying that his own privileges had been infringed because, in fact, they were not. The statements were factually correct.

I would comment further but I know the time is running short and we have other business to conclude. In my opinion and in the government's opinion, this could be a matter of debate as opposed to a privilege, and I would ask that you, Mr. Speaker, rule accordingly.

• (1640)

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to cite from the ruling you made yesterday in which you stated:

I would like to draw the attention of the House to page 618 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, where we are clearly reminded that:

The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members. Thus, the use of offensive, provocative or threatening language is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks, insults and obscenities are not in order.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, at page 614, goes even further in stating that:

Remarks directed specifically at another Member which question that Member's integrity, honesty or character are not in order. A Member will be requested to withdraw offensive remarks, allegations, or accusations of impropriety directed towards another Member.

Speaker Milliken went on to say:

This is why my ruling of November 14, 2010, at page 3779 of the *Debates*, I stressed that:

When speaking in the House, Members must remain ever cognizant of these fundamental rules. They exist to safeguard the reputation and dignity not only of the House itself but also that of all Members.

Furthermore, he noted on page 3778, I noted, as have other Speakers:

...that the privilege of freedom of speech that members enjoy confers responsibilities on those who are protected by it, and members must use great care in exercising their right to speak freely in the House.

My point is that the government is engaging in an exercise of coordinated attacks, not by individuals using their freedom of speech but by the executive branch.

*Privilege*

This goes directly to the point by the member opposite. I attended the proceedings in Mexico for six days, as invited by the government, but circumstances required me to go back one day sooner on a 14 day conference, not halfway, as the minister fully knew. This was explained ahead of time to the government because I had a pre-scheduled meeting. The government did not see fit to give us notice that we would actually be attending in Cancun.

The government causes the problem and then seeks to exploit it in a pattern that speaks exactly to the rulings of Speaker Milliken. I have already referenced this on page 77 but I want to emphasize that the executive branch cannot interfere with the rights and privileges of members.

I will make submissions so that the member opposite is either not confused or does not try to confuse the facts. I did attend for two days longer than the minister in question and was there at approximately 37 different meetings. Members of the House stood and talked about the waste of taxpayer dollars and impugned my integrity in a deliberate pattern involving members without responsibility, but assigned to do so by the government.

The minister knew this was a 14-day conference and he knew that I had only left at noon on the second last day. In fact, I attended and saw him at the conference that morning. That is the part of the issue that we need the Speaker, on behalf of the House, to adjudicate today. If the House cannot protect us from an organized campaign on the part of the government that comes directly to our integrity to be able to speak in this place, then my freedom of speech and that of each hon. member is compromised.

Mr. Speaker, I will provide submissions showing how, on both the December 10 and 14, a variety of government members of the House did exactly that. They used information that I can demonstrate they knew full well was not an accurate representation, and they did it, using the voice of the executive branch. They organized the conference, they say that they attended the conference and they purported to give this House information that was official. That is the executive branch interfering with the understanding of the House and the interpretation of people elsewhere around my integrity in this case, but for any member of the House.

Similar attacks have been orchestrated on other members of the House. I want to ensure that the point is not lost. This is not an argument about what happened or what got done in terms of the climate change talks. I appreciate the proceedings may not include us when we are part of a Canadian delegation. However, back in this House, how can any member be intimidated and then not contradict the government or talk about its performance, when in fact the government shows repeatedly that it is prepared to indulge in these campaigns of undermining our ability to speak here?

Using the references I have cited, I believe this is fundamental.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that for both those comments on the Nagoya Conference and on Mexico, I look for your action and, if you do find a prima facie case of privilege, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

• (1645)

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make two brief contributions to this intervention,

but before I do that I want to say that, at least from my perspective and I think the perspective of my friend from Parkdale—High Park, this intervention is being made not as government versus opposition versus government. It is actually referenced and focused on Parliament as an institution.

Some day, the men and women on that side of the House may be on this side of the House, and there is a distinction. The men and women on that side of the House are in government. My two remarks are focused on this.

Just as an individual member does not have, cannot have and should not be permitted to have a licence to malign another member under our rules, and everyone here understands that, should that occur in proceedings, which sometimes happens intentionally or inadvertently, the member who is purportedly maligned is able to get up and set the record straight and, hopefully, if a mistake was made, an apology occurs, et cetera.

However, in this case, I want you, Mr. Speaker, to take note that the question of privilege raised here is with reference to the government, not to a member, using its position in question period as a forum to allegedly malign or misinform.

Question period is intended to be an opportunity for the opposition parties or individual members to ask questions of the government. It is not to debate but to ask questions, to actually impose a procedural accountability. Recently, however, there have been many instances, and I will refer to one that happened two or three weeks ago, where, in question period, one of the ministers rose and responded to a question and referred directly to an individual member of the Bloc Québécois. I am not sure I even recall all of the elements of it but it was intended specifically to malign, in some way, a member of that political party in a way that had either zero relevance to the question raised or only marginal or indirect relevance. I thought that was grossly unfair and it happened on more than one occasion.

The one big point I am making is that, just as an individual member cannot be allowed to use freedom of speech in this House to malign, so cannot the government be allowed to use its position in question period to do the same types of things. If it can do that, if it is a free-for-all at question period, if the answers to questions can be totally irrelevant and, at the same time, malign another member, that is the same thing as saying that it is okay for the Crown to undermine a function of Parliament. It is a free-for-all for the government to go right ahead and undermine every member of the opposition it possibly can because that will fulfill its political objective. We cannot let the government do that.

*Privilege*

Mr. Speaker, you and the other speakers will say, “If the House does not have confidence in the government, defeat it. We will have an election”. That might be possible today in this Parliament, but what if a government has a majority? Most of the time in this country, our government has had a majority in the House and the opposition members cannot defeat the government. Therefore, if this problem that we are trying to outline here continues to exist and maybe even grow, we will have a situation where the government, the Crown, in majority, has built itself the right in this House to undermine, to malign and actually disrupt and obstruct members of the opposition in doing their job of scrutinizing the government.

• (1650)

Sometimes men and women on this side of the House ask some very tough questions that are worded in some very sharp and pointed ways that offend the government. It is not personal, it is essentially opposition parties doing their job. However, to allow the government to do the same thing and undermine individuals can only end in undermining the functions of the House.

The complaint is on a member who says, “I have been maligned and I think I am being institutionally maligned by a government that has taken on as part of its function the business of gathering information, which, if stated in a certain way in question period or whenever the heck government members get the floor, can only result in the maligning and intimidation of a member of the opposition”. There is the implied threat that if the member gets up, the member will be attacked by one of the government’s attack dogs and the entire federal government is working on this as part of its agenda. That is something that Parliament cannot allow. If it goes macro and becomes institutionalized in this place, our effectiveness as a Parliament on behalf of Canadians will be undermined.

I do not know exactly how you, Mr. Speaker, are going to be able to deal with this because it is perhaps a novel point. The question of members maligning other members intentionally or inadvertently arises from time to time and we can all collectively apologize and go to confession for that. However, when the government starts to do it, it is a new ball game and a different type of issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am not sure I need to hear anything more on this.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the opportunity to make a brief intervention having heard from several of my colleagues across the floor.

Let me point out once again that the question before us is one of purported privilege. I would suggest quite strongly that there is nothing of the sort occurring. What we are hearing about is a member, quite frankly, whose feelings were hurt because members from the government side pointed out the fact that on a number of occasions he factually left Cancun and the latest environment summit. That seemed to hurt his feelings and he is raising a question of privilege to try to make comments that the government is somehow infringing upon his abilities to do his duty.

I would point out, particularly in response to the last intervention on the opposition side, that attacks from opposition members on

government ministers happen regularly, not infrequently but regularly. When the member opposite says these are not personal in nature, I would point out one of many examples that happened recently.

For the record, when the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine called the Minister of National Defence a “slime” in her questions, she was forced to apologize by the Speaker and in her apology she used the term “slime” on several other occasions. This is a matter of decorum, not a matter of privilege.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would urge members to stick with the specific question that has been raised.

Does the hon. member for Mississauga South have something new to add?

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically reference Standing Order 18. As we well know, it has to do with speaking disrespectfully against any member of the House.

Also, Standing Order 31 states, “The Speaker may order a Member to resume his or her seat if, in the opinion of the Speaker, improper use is made of this Standing Order”. I raise it because I believe it was October 27, 2009, when the issue of maligning members of Parliament had infiltrated statements by members and on a number of occasions the Speaker cautioned members, to the point where he issued a letter to the House leaders of all parties warning them. Since that time, he has in fact asked members to sit down.

Finally, with regard to the importance of the issue, if we look at the December 14 *Hansard*, page 7248, the response of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the way it was presented was to set it up to make it look like it was very different. There may have been formal conference dates of 4 days, but in fact there were 14 days of meetings going on. It was selective information that the minister used to make that allegation.

• (1655)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank all hon. members for their interventions on this. It does sound to the Chair that what we have here is a dispute on the facts. The Chair does not rule on the accuracy of the statements passed.

I think both sides have had an opportunity to let the House know what their interpretation of the facts were and have made their views known. While members may have grievances and not agree with statements that members of any party may make about how things have occurred or what members have done, especially with this case on the participation at the conference at Cancun, I do not think the question meets the very high threshold for a question of privilege. I find it does not meet the test.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
REGARDING KAIROS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Scarborough—Guildwood on December 13, 2010.

### *Privilege*

The member for Scarborough—Guildwood argued that the Minister of International Cooperation and the parliamentary secretary to the minister deliberately attempted to mislead the House with respect to statements related to a funding proposal for KAIROS.

Page 13 of the 2nd edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* provides a practical definition of a breach of privilege. It states:

If someone improperly interferes with the parliamentary work of a Member of Parliament—i.e. any of the Member's activities that have a connection with a proceeding in Parliament—in such a case that is a matter involving parliamentary privilege. An offence against the authority of the House constitutes contempt.

I believe the matter that the member for Scarborough—Guildwood has brought to the House is not an issue of privilege but rather a debate as to the facts, which should be seen as a matter of debate.

As the member for Kootenay—Columbia, who was the former parliamentary secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, stated on December 13, 2010, in responding to the matter of privilege raised by the member for Scarborough—Guildwood:

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to your attention that at no time in the member's presentation did he make any assertion that the minister made any misleading statements.

The member for Kootenay—Columbia then corrected the record with respect to comments he made in the House and he apologized to the House. In his intervention the member for Scarborough—Guildwood stated that the Minister of International Cooperation and the parliamentary secretary said that KAIROS did not meet CIDA's recommended funding priorities. In support of that statement he referred to a response by the minister to an oral question of October 28, 2010, that: "After due diligence, it was determined that KAIROS' proposal did not meet government standards".

The standards referred to in the minister's response are the government's standards, that is, cabinet standards, not CIDA's standards. The memorandum referred to reflects CIDA's advice to the government and the government is free to accept or reject the advice of the public service. This is a fundamental principle of a cabinet system of government. The public service recommends and ministers decide.

Decisions taken by the government are subject to debate in the House, which I believe is the thrust of the matter before the House. The member for Scarborough—Guildwood then turned to testimony made on December 9, 2010, before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

The proceedings of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development are matters for the committee to consider. This matter has not been reported to the House and as a result the House may not consider issues that have not been presented to it by a committee. This is supported by a December 7, 2006, Speaker's ruling, which states:

I have carefully reviewed the exchanges on this matter. In his answers during oral questions and in his responses when the present question of privilege was raised, the minister has consistently denied interfering with the potential witnesses in any way. As Speaker, I accept that. In the present case, it is clear that the member for Malpeque and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food disagree about the significance of the answers provided by the minister during oral questions. In the circumstances, in the view of the Chair, that is a topic properly dealt with as a matter of debate or during exchanges during oral questions. With regard to concerns about the actual appearance of the witnesses before the agriculture and agri-food committee, it will be up to the committee to examine such concerns in due course and take the action it judges

appropriate. At the present time, based on the arguments presented, the Chair hesitates to intervene in the matter.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Speaker's ruling of December 7, 2006, applies to the case currently before the House. The minister has stated in a response to the oral questions in the House that the proposal for KAIROS did not meet government priorities. Consequently, the issue around funding decisions for organizations by the government are matters for debate in the House.

At no time did the Minister of International Cooperation mislead the House. In fact, the minister was stating the government's position on the matter. Opposition parties are free to disagree with the government's decisions. Disagreements do not constitute matters of contempt.

Madam Speaker, I therefore submit that you find that this matter does not constitute a *prima facie* case of privilege.

• (1700)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I thank the parliamentary secretary for his advice on this matter.

On the same question of privilege, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the matter of the alleged breach of privilege, I want to focus on one important but fortunately narrow point.

In her statements and remarks to Parliament about this particular issue, the Minister of International Cooperation led parliamentarians to believe that the KAIROS application was turned down on a particular basis. Whether it was her remarks in the House or her remarks at committee, which are part of the parliamentary record, her remarks led parliamentarians to believe that the KAIROS application did not fit with the criteria used by the government. When I say "government", I refer to CIDA. I am not talking about the cabinet table. I am talking about the rest of government.

That had the effect of making the applicant, KAIROS, and it should have had the same effect on everyone else in this House and at the committee, believe that the KAIROS application was somehow deficient, that the denial of the application was administratively proper.

As things turn out, the parliamentary record now appears to show that there was not anything out of order in relation to the application at CIDA, that there was full compliance, and CIDA recommended approval. This has been confirmed, at least in part if not in totality, by the member who was the parliamentary secretary at the time this issue first arose

Members on the fact scenario here have been misled, and whether it was intentional or not, I do not know. However, this has misled members and undermined Parliament. It has actually caused Parliament to spend a whole lot of extra time on this because the question has come up time and time again. It is an issue for many people across the country.

*Government Orders*

We were allegedly so misled on this that we did not really understand that it was not anything about KAIROS, or about the process, it was simply the minister or ministers at the cabinet table who made a decision. And the decision may be politically arbitrary. I do not know, they are entitled to make those decisions in government, but an undocumented, arbitrary decision was the reason KAIROS did not get funding.

We could not have known that here because the minister, either here and/or at committee, told us all that the application just did not meet the criteria that existed at CIDA. That scenario of misinforming us, of misleading us, has caused us to spend a whole lot of time.

I want to make sure that you, Madam Speaker, and the speaker corps had a really good focus on this because I think the House has been misled. I think we have a smoking gun. It may or may not be a hanging offence, and we are not alleging that it is, but we are saying that it is a matter of privilege because the process and the words that caused us to be misled have not been properly addressed.

I am very hopeful that the minister will speak to the House about this and I am waiting to hear what she has to say.

• (1705)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the two days in which this has been debated, Monday and Tuesday, at the end of each session of debate, the parliamentary secretary has asked that the matter be reserved for the minister to respond in a full fashion. Today, the parliamentary secretary rather than the minister actually responded.

Unfortunately, we did not know the parliamentary secretary or anybody for that matter from the government side, whether it was Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, or the parliamentary secretary for CIDA or the minister, was going to respond today.

It would be useful for a full and fair discussion about this question of privilege that we ask you, Madam Speaker, to defer this matter for another day so we can read what the parliamentary secretary has said about this matter. What I heard in the latter part was his argument that this was debate. My friend from Scarborough—Rouge River has said that this is not a matter of debate. This is a question of whether the minister misled the House directly or whether it was the parliamentary secretary directly.

I suggest this be stood down for another day and that we be given another opportunity to read what the parliamentary secretary has said so we can respond in a more fulsome fashion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I thank all hon. members for their comments and suggestions. The Chair will take this under advisement and come back, as necessary, in due course.

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to clarify that this is without prejudice to the ability of members on this side to return to this issue. I assume that was what your ruling meant, Madam Speaker, rather than taking it under advisement. Generally when Speakers take something under advisement, they have heard all of the debate that they will here.

I want to clarify the point that we may return to this, possibly as soon as tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Yes, absolutely. I apologize if that was not sufficiently clear.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### STANDING UP FOR VICTIMS OF WHITE COLLAR CRIME ACT

The House resumed from December 14 consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for fraud), be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-21. While it has been a bit of time since we talked about the bill, perhaps I will give an overview.

Bill C-21 has been put together to address the issues of white-collar crime. It behooves us to reflect a little on how white-collar crime has changed since generations of our constituents and, in fact, generations in Parliament.

The nature of white-collar crimes then were equated with the proverbial jokes associated with the door-to-door vacuum salesman or whatever. I say that in a manner of juxtaposing, not in levity. The nature of Ponzi schemes are quite different. They involve the manipulation of shares and pyramid type sales. They victimize citizens of all ages, in particular those citizens who are not familiar with up-to-date technologies.

I am reminded of this. In my constituency, even as late as yesterday, calls were coming into my office with respect to seniors being met at the door by people who wanted to look at their water heaters. Then they tried to get them to enter into agreements to replace the heaters. Some people signed on the dotted line only to find the scheme dramatically raised their charges. There are legal implications involved and very serious things happen.

We need to look at our constituencies and ensure we have a legislated regime in place that is understandable. They need to know the kinds of technology and the victimization used. Only a few months ago the government brought forward legislation aimed at looking at the kind of technology used and the type and extent of victimization, where seniors, in particular, were robbed of the ownership to their homes. They had been tracked for months through the interception of their mail. Their accounts were skewed and the banks were unfortunately transferring ownership of their properties. They were duped and victimized in a manner that we could never really understand perhaps 20 or 30 years ago. However, with the kind of technology and the criminal insights used, victims of all age categories are subjected to these kinds of things.

With that background, I am pleased to respond to Bill C-21. I will give an overview of the bill and then I will look at perhaps some of the shortcomings where the bill could have been firmed up even a little more. Perhaps in the future it will be.

*Government Orders*

● (1710)

The bill includes a mandatory minimum sentence of imprisonment for two years for fraud valued at more than \$1 million. It provides additional aggravating factors for sentencing. It requires consideration of restitution for victims, allows sentencing courts to consider community impact statements, to issue prohibition orders, preventing convicted persons from transacting property and money of others.

We are in favour of the bill, but it does not go far enough and I will try to elaborate a little on that.

We believe the amendments put forward by our party, which were not accepted by the combined opposition, the government and the other two parties, would have strengthened the legislation. As illustrations of that, the Liberals proposed that mandatory minimum sentences of two years should apply to practices such as market manipulation of shares and Ponzi schemes.

The bill does not do enough to eliminate accelerated parole review for white-collar criminals. Canadian investors, especially seniors, do not deserve to be victimized by white-collar criminals. They deserve better than what the government has presented through this bill.

The principles behind the stricter sentencing rules are important, but they are not enough to prevent frauds from happening. Sentencing is important, but prevention, as has been said many times with respect to the criminal justice system, is equally as important in white-collar crime. We would like the government to consider why it has not used this opportunity, as it has in the past, to do more with respect to prevention.

Finally, although we are glad to see the legislation, we also call on the government to act on white-collar crime, as it has been overdue for years.

I will go through a few of the shortcomings of the bill.

While we support the bill on stricter sentencing guidelines, we are concerned it is too narrow in scope to truly be effective in the full spectrum of fraud with which it attempts to deal. The bill does not limit early parole for those crimes and it does not address the lack of police resources currently allocated for white-collar fraud. As I said before, we put forward amendments that were aimed at strengthening the bill by extending the two-year minimum sentence provisions to practices such as market manipulation of shares and Ponzi schemes. The amendments were rejected by the other parties.

The legislation was introduced in response to high profile white-collar crimes, including Norbourg Financial Group and the Earl Jones issue in Quebec. In the wake of the Madoff Ponzi scheme's revelations in the United States, many Canadian investors have grown increasingly concerned about this type of white-collar fraud.

Other than the title, the bill is the same as Bill C-52, which was introduced during the previous session, but died at prorogation.

What are the major components of the bill?

The bill introduces mandatory minimum sentences of two years for fraud involving over \$1 million, regardless of the number of

victims. It specifies aggravating factors to be considered at sentencing, including the psychological and financial impacts of victims, the age and health of victims, as well as the magnitude and duration of the fraud. It requires the court to indicate what mitigating and aggravating factors were considered relating to the sentence.

● (1715)

It allows the court to prohibit an offender from assuming any other position, volunteer or paid, that involves handling other people's money. It goes without saying that is highly desirable. It requires the judge to consider the whole manner of restitution, which is the repayment to victims where possible, and it requires judges to consider community impact statements.

Generally speaking, it is interesting to juxtapose a cross-section of stakeholder reaction with respect to this bill. It has been mixed. Victim groups have been lobbying the government to strengthen white collar criminal provisions. Some have expressed the view that the bill falls short because it fails to address the accelerated parole review rule.

The Canadian Bar Association has expressed its opposition to the bill, citing that it would increase pressures on an already taxed criminal justice system and does not improve on what is already available in the Criminal Code. It also opposes the mandatory minimum sentences in favour of judicial discretion at sentencing.

From a policing perspective, however, the RCMP has expressed its support for the bill, indicating a mandatory sentence for such crimes has the potential to be used as a deterrent. In spite of what I said earlier, the RCMP takes that position.

In terms of amendments, as I mentioned rather obliquely before, the Liberal justice critic introduced an amendment in committee that would add market manipulation of stock prices, shares, merchandise, or anything that is offered for sale to the public to the definition of what could be punishable by a two-year minimum sentence. The amendment failed in committee as the government, Bloc and NDP voted against it.

The Liberal justice critic also recommended that an amendment be introduced to modify the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in order to eliminate the one-sixth accelerated parole review rule for white collar criminals. This amendment was ruled out of order by the committee chair and was subsequently upheld on a challenge with the support of the Bloc.



*Government Orders*

A technical amendment, however, was adopted with support by all the parties. The amendment would require the court to issue an explanation of a restitution order only when a victim seeks restitution and the court decides not to make such an order. The amendment addresses concerns by the Canadian Bar Association to relieve some pressures on an already taxed system.

In my overview of the legislation, I indicated the type of victimization that occurs. I also talked about enforcement and what the government has in place in response to the issue that was raised. In terms of integrated market enforcement teams, these IMETs under the program have been put in place, funded through the RCMP. They are operational in four of Canada's major financial centres and their mandate is to investigate and lay charges for serious Criminal Code offences involving capital markets.

While the legislation does not, in the Liberal Party's view, go far enough with respect to that kind of victimization that takes place under the Criminal Code with respect to shares and Ponzi schemes, there actually is an enforcement regime in place called the IMET program. According to the 2007-08 IMET annual report, the program's total budget increased from \$13 million in fiscal 2005 to \$18 million in fiscal 2008 and is approximately \$30 million today.

● (1720)

The investigations indicate how important it is that we deal with this particular issue.

In 2008-09, 17 individuals were charged with almost 1,000 counts and 5 individuals were convicted. Their sentences ranged from 39 months to 13 years.

According to the RCMP's 2009-10 Report on Plans and Priorities, it is anticipated that annual funding of \$30 million will be allocated in the fiscal year to support the investigation and prosecution of fraud offences.

I posit that the investigative processes and the teams are in place.

According to the statistics, a compelling case could be made for focusing additional attention, which the bill does not, on this kind of crime involving shares and Ponzi schemes and so on.

An adult criminal court survey, which collects information on appearances, charges laid and so on with respect to this kind of fraud, found that a prison sentence was imposed in almost 4,000 cases in 2008. In the same year a conditional sentence was imposed in nearly 1,000 cases. Probation was given in 6,000 cases. Fines were levied in 1,200 cases. Restitution was granted in nearly 2,000 cases. Other sentences were imposed.

These statistics do not provide details on the monetary value of the fraud or the type of fraud, which can include securities-related fraud, such as Ponzi schemes, insider trading, accounting frauds that overstate the value of securities, as well as mass marketing fraud, mortgage and real estate fraud and many other deceptive practices.

I only include these statistics to indicate that as the bill was going through committee, the statistics were available and the issue with respect to share manipulation was not addressed and is not addressed in the bill. The bill could have been improved had the opposition's amendments been accepted.

● (1725)

Despite the lack of statistics, in the bill, sentences are imposed on fraud over \$1 million. Before and after Parliament's introduction of conditional sentences, a case of large scale fraud by persons in a position of trust have typically resulted in substantial jail sentences. The range has been estimated at between 4 to 15 years for large scale fraud although a sentence of less than two years and conditional sentences have been imposed where there have been important mitigating factors.

Clause 3 of the bill adds four aggravating circumstances which we believe improve the situation that I have referred to. Those circumstances are: the magnitude, complexity, duration and degree of the fraud; the offence had a significant impact on the victims; the offender did not comply with licensing requirements or professional standards; and, the offender concealed or destroyed records related to the fraud or the disbursement of the proceeds of the fraud. That will substantially improve the legislation that presently exists.

For that reason we are in favour of the legislation. We do however rest our case on the fact that an expansion of the bill could have dealt better with share and stock manipulation and the kind of Ponzi schemes that have victimized thousands of people.

● (1730)

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member's explanation of how the IMETs were supposed to be working. The fact of the matter is that since they were set up in 2003, and there are six IMETs in place, their record is not all that good. They have only had five convictions in all that time.

When we look at the United States, in that same period of time the U.S. has had 1,200 convictions, including Conrad Black. He committed all of his white collar crimes in Canada, yet it was the Americans who caught him and put him in jail. He is one of the 1,200 in the United States.

Clearly, we have to look at the whole regulatory scheme. The regulation in this country seems to be very lax.

A recent interview in *Canadian Business Online* magazine quoted certain people on Bay Street as to whom they are afraid of. They said that it was not the Canadian cops they were afraid of, nor was it the Ontario Securities Commission, which they should be afraid of, but it was the United States Securities and Exchange Commission because it has real teeth. Obviously the Americans have a better system and it has shown results by virtue of the fact that 1,200 convictions have occurred in the United States and we have had 5.

What is wrong with the system in this country?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** Madam Speaker, as I indicated, I know that the allocation of the resources is not always linked to the results that we would like. There are too many times that they are not related. However, when we look at the IMET budget in 2007-08, which was around \$13 million, and relate that to the statistics the member has quite rightly pointed out in terms of the full spectrum of fraud that exists and the number of charges that are laid, the RCMP itself has found that the resources are not enough. The RCMP has asked for over \$30 million in the budget.

The other thing that is a factor with respect to the effectiveness of the application of laws is not only the enforcement, but it is the legislative regime itself. I would think that the member's question begs an answer not only with respect to monitoring the implementation of the bill and the additional allocation of resources, but the number of charges that are in fact going to be laid and acted upon. That will be the litmus test of both the enforcement and the changes in the legislation that provide for the Criminal Code and the justice system to deal with the nature of fraud that the member has pointed out.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to sit in on the debates when the member for York South—Weston gives his presentation. I know all in the chamber certainly have a great deal of respect for his interventions, yourself included, Madam Speaker.

The issue of mandatory minimums has been discussed and debated in this House a great number of times. I think we all have reservation, and the impact they have on reducing crime has proven to be minimal. Certainly if time in jail were any indication of a reduction in crime, there would not be any crime in the United States because the United States' answer to pretty much any social problems and to crime is to lock up people. I know that both Texas and California are rethinking their approach to mandatory minimums. California for the most part is bankrupt because of what it has done with its penal system.

That being said, I know there are some concerns about this bill. Some of the victims groups liked where the Liberal Party amendments were going. As well, the Canadian Bar Association is not totally enamoured with this bill. However, the RCMP has come out in support of the bill and believes it should be a deterrent to these types of crime. I am inclined, and some of my colleagues whom I have talked to about this are as well. It is not a crime of passion or revenge; it is not an emotional crime. This is a very pre-determined crime. It is an organized crime.

I would like my colleague's comments on that. Does this stand apart from other crimes with regard to whether or not mandatory minimums might have an impact on this type of crime?

• (1735)

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question and his comments with respect to the House listening to the overview that I have given. That is greatly appreciated.

I think the House really appreciates the nature, culture and difference of the scheming that goes on with respect to this type of fraud. It is hard to compare mandatory minimums in other issue areas to this particular type of crime. I would reference that the minimum sentence proposal in this bill will apply when the value of

subject matter of a number of fraud offences totals over \$1 million, but let us look at the manner in which it would be applied.

For example, if a person is convicted of 10 fraud offences of \$125,000, the judge must impose a sentence of at least two years. On the other hand, the minimum sentence applies solely to a person convicted of the general offence of fraud under the subsection.

The bottom line is that, in this case, the mandatory minimum is an attempt through the criminal justice system to give a signal that it does not matter the huge magnitude of the scheming, and so on, but it is the nature with respect to restitution that may be sought and ordered by the judge to pay back the victim, as well as to dispel the idea that one can get away with this. Even if it is a \$125,000 fraud, the mandatory minimum will kick in.

So in its attempt to dissuade, to prevent, to put the emphasis on prevention to some extent, I would not suggest that it goes the whole way, but to answer the member's question, with this type of crime, this is the type of amendment to the criminal justice system in terms of the application of mandatory minimums that hopefully will be more effective in prevention.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, even with their 1,200 convictions in the last five years for crimes, versus our five, the Americans are still not satisfied with their system, because under the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, which is the regulatory body, they still have had to deal with these issues, such as the Southern Baptist Convention Ponzi scheme, Bernie Madoff and others.

All the evidence seems to point to the fact that there is a coziness that develops between the regulators and the people they are supposed to regulate. They keep hiring people from the companies that they are regulating. They attend the same Christmas parties and go to the same golf tournaments, and that seems to be part of the problem.

If they could appoint or hire people who have a law enforcement type of approach, I think we would all be better off. We would be able to catch these schemes earlier on.

**Mr. Alan Tonks:** Madam Speaker, I certainly do not put myself forward as an expert with respect to the kind of situation that exists in the United States. However, I do identify with the victims and the nature of victimization to which the member has made reference.

On the proposition that we have a single regulator, the role of the single regulator and the issues with respect to the Bank Act and the responsibility of accessory after the kind of crime that occurs, we can recall that when we had seniors victimized, where they actually lost their property, there was not even any concern with respect to the banks asking the appropriate questions for detail or law firms being brought into the equation with respect to accountability.

To answer the question, I think the review of the regulatory regime should encompass the kind of questions that had been asked, the kind of—

*Government Orders*

● (1740)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Order. I must interrupt the hon. member. His time has lapsed.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Richmond Hill, who is my good friend and always has very positive contributions to the House. I would also like to thank the member for York South—Weston, who spoke earlier with passion. This legislation is very important to me.

In British Columbia, we go out to the neighbourhoods and crime is one of the key issues we are facing in our communities. I would like to brief Canadians today on Bill C-21. This legislation includes a mandatory minimum sentence of imprisonment for two years for fraud valued at more than \$1 million, it provides additional aggravating factors for sentencing that requires the consideration of restitution for victims, it allows sentencing courts to consider community impact statements, and it allows courts to issue prohibition orders preventing convicted persons from contacting the property and money of others.

This past week in Vancouver, there was a terrible incident of gang violence in the heart of a residential neighbourhood. There were 10 people shot and residents were left fearful for their safety. With this type of terrible violence, much like the case of Ephraim Brown, an 11-year-old gunfire victim in Toronto who was caught in the crossfire of gang violence, it is easy to place all of the emphasis on this kind of crime. But we cannot forget about the impact of white collar crime, where families, seniors and the most vulnerable of society can be completely destroyed as a result of criminal acts of fraud.

Just last year we learned about Earl Jones, who took over \$50 million from dozens of victims in a 20-year-long Ponzi scheme run out of Montreal. Some of those victims included his own family members. These crimes are often overlooked in terms of the way our justice system responds. These criminals face a slap on the wrist, and more often than not, receive minimal jail time.

Fraud across Canada is reaching epidemic proportions. The latest figures available for 2007 show that there were 88,286 reported incidents of fraud in Canada. What was the conviction rate of these crimes? It was very low, a pathetic 11%. Of that 11%, only 35% received jail sentences, with over 60% receiving probation or a lesser penalty.

This is why it is so frustrating that both the NDP and the Conservatives have voted against a Liberal amendment to Bill C-21 that would have ensured a two-year mandatory minimum prison sentence for criminals who defraud the public through things such as Ponzi schemes.

The amendment would have done two things. Not only would these criminals have faced stiffer mandatory sentencing, but it would have also increased the time served before a white collar criminal could receive parole. There is absolutely no justification for the positions of both the NDP and the Conservatives that were taken in the committee meetings.

● (1745)

Victim groups and those who have had their life savings taken from them testified in front of the justice committee last year to ask for the very measures that this Liberal amendment would have provided. The changes suggested by the Liberal Party came directly as a result of listening to the people.

It is very important for us to go into the communities and listen to the people who have sent us to Ottawa to represent them, instead of listening to the leader of the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister, and take the message back to the communities. That is why my constituents, other Canadians and I would like to know from the members of these two parties, the NDP and the Conservatives, how they can possibly justify their vote to squash such measures.

The government talks a lot about being tough on crime and making criminals take responsibility for their actions. Yet when it comes to white collar crime, as usual, they play politics and vote down amendments that were in the best interest of all Canadians. Similarly, the NDP often plays a champion of victims' rights and protecting average Canadian families and seniors against schemes that take advantage of others. Yet in both cases, their rhetoric does not match up to their actions.

We are talking about people having their entire life savings, their long-term plans for retirement, and their hopes and dreams for the rest of their lives taken away from them. These white collar criminals have no regard for their victims, and just because they are not using a weapon such as a knife or a gun does not mean that they deserve a free ride on the backs of innocent victims of white collar crime.

Lives have been ruined as a result of these individuals. Seniors who have saved their entire lives to enjoy retirement have been forced back to work because they were robbed of their nest egg. Families trying to build a future for their children have been forced to take out loans to fund their children's education. Young couples looking to make an investment to build their future have been destroyed, and many marriages have broken up as a result.

The societal costs of these kinds of crimes are unimaginable. We as members of Parliament, regardless of what party we belong to, have an obligation to protect our constituents. Fraud and Ponzi schemes know no boundaries when it comes to region, race or financial background. Within society, the rate of these crimes has been increasing rapidly because our justice system has done little or nothing to deter those types of crimes. The reward far outweighs the risk at the moment.

The will of the House was to send Bill C-21 to the committee stage to listen to interest groups representing victims and to craft the best piece of legislation possible to really crack down on white collar crime. Yet after hearing from these victims groups, the NDP and the Conservative government chose not to listen to their requests. The scope of this bill in its current form is far too narrow when it comes to defining fraud, and it does little to provide a foundation to fight it.

*Private Members' Business*

There is no mention of increasing resources to police departments across the country to properly tackle these criminals. As I mentioned, there are no provisions for longer periods before parole eligibility; and it attaches a dollar figure to mandatory minimum sentencing when the act of Ponzi schemes such as the one in Montreal should not be punishable simply by the threshold of a single figure.

• (1750)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** It being 5:53 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

[English]

The hon. member will have his period of questions and comments when this comes back on the orders of the day.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there have been consultations and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-21, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for fraud) be deemed read a 3rd time and passed; Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, be deemed concurred in at report stage without amendment; a Member from each recognized party may speak for not more than 10 minutes on the third reading motion of S-5, that following each speech, there be a period of 5 minutes for questions and comments, after which Bill S-5 shall be deemed read a third time and passed; at the conclusion of Question Period on Thursday, December 16, 2010, if not already disposed of, Bill S-5 shall be deemed read a third time and passed; and the House shall stand adjourned until Monday, January 31, 2011, provided that, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, it shall be deemed to have sat on Friday December 17, 2010.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Does the Chief Government Whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the will of the House to give this motion unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**STANDING UP FOR VICTIMS OF WHITE COLLAR CRIME ACT**

(Bill C-21. On the Order: Government Orders:)

December 14, 2010—Third reading of Bill C-21, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for fraud)—Minister of Justice.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

**ENSURING SAFE VEHICLES IMPORTED FROM MEXICO FOR CANADIANS ACT**

(Bill S-5. On the Order: Government Orders:)

December 10, 2010—Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities—Consideration at report stage of Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999.

(Bill concurred in at report stage)

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY ACT**

The House resumed from October 29 consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act respecting World Autism Awareness Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona has one minute left for his comments.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to finish my speech on Bill S-211.

Approximately 200,000 Canadians are living with autism spectrum disorder. It is estimated that 1 in every 165 Canadian children born today has ASD, and worldwide the number of diagnoses of autism spectrum disorders is growing as well.

Clearly, early diagnosis is a big help in order to get treatment for people with autism. There is no known cause or cure for autism spectrum disorders. In fact, 192 United Nations representatives agree that World Autism Awareness Day could draw the attention of people across the globe to this neurological disorder that is affecting an increasing number of people.

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly designated April 2, from 2008 on, as Autism Awareness Day. Canada is a signatory, as members know, to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which maintains that children with disabilities should enjoy a full and decent—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. member. His time has elapsed.

Resuming debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry.

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to have the opportunity to stand up today to speak to the bill regarding autism awareness. It is an excuse for me to spend 10 minutes talking about my son, Jaden, who is 15 years old and has autism.

*Private Members' Business*

Before I do that, though, I want to express my thanks. I could spend 10 minutes thanking people, but I will limit it to a few specific people. I will start with the Minister of Health, who declared a couple of years ago that April 2 would be recognized as World Autism Awareness Day. I also want to thank Senator Jim Munson, who has taken a non-partisan approach to this issue, looking to find agreement, and that is very rare in this place sometimes. I want to thank the minister's chief of staff, Scott Tessier, who has done a phenomenal amount of work helping me to coordinate some meetings with stakeholders and with officials so that we can come to a better understanding of autism and a better awareness on all sides.

I want to thank some of the specific people who were part of those meetings. I want to thank Suzanne Lanthier from Autism Speaks Canada. She is the executive director, and it was Autism Speaks that, with the UN, started World Autism Awareness Day three years ago.

I want to thank Laurie Mawlam from Autism Canada, Kathleen Provost from the Autism Society Canada and Marg Whelan from the Geneva Centre, who have been taking part in these meetings and all of whom work tirelessly to build awareness of autism and advocate for families across this country who are affected by this disorder.

I also want to thank some specific officials who were part of those meetings and have really expressed not only a desire to learn more but a real expertise in the area: Kim Elmslie from the Public Health Agency of Canada, Nathalie Gendron from CIHR and Karen Dodds and Gavin Brown from Health Canada.

These meetings have been fantastic. One of the things they sought to do is learn more about autism, but another thing they have been able to do is articulate some of the great things that are going on in terms of autism research right here in Canada and another priority for these communities in terms of surveillance. There are some really exciting things happening in Canada.

Others have spoken to these things, and I will spend my time from here on in, if I could, just talking about my son and using the example of our family and of Jaden to try to educate members of the House and maybe raise some more awareness of some of the challenges that families deal with.

I have one final thanks in regard to that. I want to thank my own family. My wife Debi has given up so much of her time and energy to help create a better life for our son. She gave up 12 years of a teaching career to run Jaden's program at our home and have workers coming through the house six hours a day, six days a week, over the early years of Jaden's life to help create a better circumstance for him.

I want to thank Jenae, who is now 11, his sister. When she was five years old she said something that I thought was very insightful and that a lot of kids who are siblings of people with autism can relate to. She said of her then-nine-year-old brother, "I'm his little sister, but I'm like his big sister". She is now 11. She is just starting to babysit, and one of her first jobs consistently right now is to babysit her 15-year-old brother, which is a unique circumstance for any 11-year-old, I am sure. She has just been fantastic with him and a real blessing in our lives.

Every Sunday night I tuck the kids into bed and we have a routine with Jaden. He does not talk, but he looks at my face, he grabs my cheeks very firmly and he expresses with his eyes this absolute need to know what is happening with the week. He is obsessed with schedules. He is obsessed with travel. He has to know every day, so I go through a routine where I look him in the eyes and I say, "Today is Sunday, Jaden, and tomorrow morning I am going to hop on a plane and I'm going to fly to Ottawa, and then I'm going to be in Ottawa on Monday", and I have to go through each day, "on Monday, on Tuesday night, on Wednesday night, on Thursday night, and then on Friday, Daddy's coming home". At that point a smile comes across his face. He is satisfied because he knows what my schedule is. He can now go to sleep and get some rest.

Then on Friday when I get home, my family is there to pick me up and Jaden, a 15-year-old teenage boy, just has the biggest smile on his face when I get home, when I open the door. The first thing he wants to do is give me a big kiss. How many 15-year-old boys cannot wait until their dad gets home so they can give him a kiss?

● (1755)

That is what Jaden is like. He expresses his emotions honestly. We know exactly how he is feeling. If he is sad, he cries. If he is happy, he laughs. He cannot talk but if we ask him how he is doing, he will answer with a high five or a thumbs up to tell us that everything is good, and always with a smile on his face if they are good.

I will just tell members a bit about Jaden's past. As a young boy, he loved to play hockey. He went out on the ice and I had the chance to go out and play with him. He loved ice cream and there is a story that a lot of parents can relate to. One time we were at an Oilers game. I worked for the Edmonton Oilers. I was sitting in the seats with him and he decided he wanted some ice cream, but rather than ask me for some ice cream, he did the easiest thing. He reached over the shoulder of the little girl who was sitting in front of him and just simply grabbed the ball of ice cream off the top of her cone and stuck it in his mouth, with a big smile on his face. He was seven years old and looked like any other kid, but he saw ice cream, he wanted it, and that is how he got it, with a big smile on his face.

It gave me an opportunity to educate another parent, her father, who was quite startled by the situation but quickly understood when I explained that my son had autism, and that is what I find, time and time again with Canadians, a real understanding when I take the time to explain the situation to them.

I am already running short on time. I knew, when I was looking at what I wanted to say, that this was going to happen. I want to jump now to his teenage years and explain a bit about Jaden's teenage years. Now is he 15, but when he was 13, he went through a time of real anxiety. Can we imagine being 13 years old and not being able to talk, not being able to express ourselves? Kids with autism do not deal with abstract things very well, so with any emotions that he had and changes that he was going through, he could not articulate in any way what it was like to go through those things, so he started to experience some anxiety.

*Private Members' Business*

It is heartbreaking for parents. It is important, obviously, for teachers and those dealing with these kids to understand that that can be a real challenge. Now that he is 15, he has gone through that and now we are dealing with some new challenges. How do we give Jaden independence? How do we allow him to succeed? How do we find things that he can be successful at? This is another challenge that families go through.

In Jaden's case, what he is successful at is that he loves to work in the library at school. He will take all the books that come in. He loves to put things in order and he cannot wait to get to the library, to leave class. I guess that is a typical 15-year-old thing. He cannot wait to get out of class so that he can go to the library and put away books for an hour at a time. He does it probably better than any other kid would do it, because he is excited to put things in order. He loves order. He loves things that are concrete.

As we look to the future, we deal with questions that every parent of a child with autism deals with. Kids with autism do not have a shorter life span than the rest of us. They are going to live just as long as the rest of us, notwithstanding the fact that they are more prone to dangerous things that they do not understand. Every parent has to deal with the question of what will happen when we are not there for our children anymore. What happens when we move on and maybe some kids do not have the support networks that we have? They do not have siblings who can take care of them. Maybe siblings are there but cannot take care of them because they cannot cope with it. Those are questions that need to be understood as well.

When we are talking about autism awareness, it is so important. That is why this bill is so important. It is so important to us, as families, that people begin to understand, and of course for politicians to understand so that we can make the best decisions possible for the families. It is important for the larger community to understand what we go through so that when our child throws himself down in a grocery store at seven years old, looking like any other child but having a tantrum in the middle of a grocery store, it does not just look like bad parenting, that people kind of understand and recognize what is going on.

Looking at an initial diagnosis, we had some problems when Jaden was originally going through some challenges at a young age, problems with recognizing it as autism. More and more doctors today, because of the efforts of people like Laurie, Kathleen, Marg and Suzanne, are recognizing autism when they are looking at kids and some of the challenges they face.

I would conclude just by thanking all of my colleagues in this House and my constituents for taking the time to understand, my friends in the media, the House of Commons staff and security who have been so fantastic with Jaden over the years, and people who take time across this country to understand what families dealing with autism are going through.

● (1800)

**Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put a few thoughts on the record on the important subject of autism and the establishment of a day when we might recognize this challenge that affects so many families across the country.

We know so little about autism and need to do so much more work on it. Most important, we must provide some meaningful concrete support to some of these families that, in many instances, spend their life savings, mortgage their homes and give everything they absolutely have out of love for their children in the hope that one day those children will be able to participate in society in the way we all want our children to participate.

The New Democrats support the Senate bill to designate April 2 of each year as World Autism Awareness Day. However, every day we should be thinking about what we can do to lift the burden of so many people in our ridings and across the country. Every day they wake up to the reality that they have very special children who have some very special needs and they hope they will get the help they require.

I do not think anyone here has not one day or another, while back in our ridings, had a meeting with some family that has shared the challenges of having such a special child in the family, the pain, the suffering and the grief that goes along with that because the family cannot find the services and support in the community.

Government does not seem to be able to find a way. As a provincial member of the Ontario legislature, I met with groups of families in my riding office. We tried to case manage and work our way through how we might take advantage of some of the very scarce resources that were available through the provincial government.

I guess the provincial government has tried to the best it can with the limited resources it has available to it, but it is not even close to enough. It hardly scratches the surface. That is why we will support this minimal effort to bring some focus and attention to this reality by supporting the other parties in the House in recognizing autism on April 2 of each year.

Bill S-211, An Act respecting World Autism Awareness Day, supports the acknowledgement of the families affected by autism spectrum disorders and the declaration that April 2 be recognized as world autism awareness day.

Many of my colleagues, the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore, the member for Vancouver Kingsway and the member for Sudbury, at one time or another have brought forward bills to the House that if passed and honoured by the government, would have provided, in a very serious and meaningful way, the kind of support that families need, which would go a long way to resolving some of the financial difficulties that come with trying to provide the services and support. I know this from having met with families and having listened to them. I heard their pleas.

I know these three members have brought bills before the House. In fact, the member for Vancouver Kingsway brought a similar bill to the one we are discussing. Hopefully Bill C-327, a Canadian autism day, will pass in the House.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1805)

The member for Sudbury wanted to amend the Canada Health Act so autism could be brought under that umbrella. By amending the act, resources would not be limited in the way they are now. Families could tap into those resources and get the help they needed and get on with their lives.

The member for Sudbury headed up the United Way at one time in Sudbury. He oversaw a number of programs and initiatives that helped the people of that community in meaningful ways. He called for a national strategy on autism, which would have allowed us to respond to this challenge in a more concrete way.

My colleagues and I have no hesitation whatsoever in supporting the Senate bill before us today. However, we call on the government to become more involved and to do something more concrete other than simply naming a day for people to focus on autism and learn more about it.

We could be providing services to families 365 days of the year. One of our most fundamental responsibilities is to look after those in our communities who are most at risk and in need of services so they can be socially included in their communities, in their schools and in their recreational programs. We could do this if only there were the political will.

The initial bill, Bill C-211 put forward by the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore, called on the federal government to work with the provinces and territories to ensure that the cost of autism therapy, more commonly known as ABA or IBI, would be covered by their health care insurance plans of every province and territory. That would mean the federal government would have to sit down with the provinces and territories. It could do that now, as they renegotiate the agreement, and ensure it includes in the transfer of funds to the provinces and territories the kinds of money and resources needed to bring autism therapy under the Canada Health Act.

The provinces want to do this. Between 1990 and 2003, I spoke with officials in the Ontario ministry of health. They would love to do this, but they do not have the resources. Let us sit down and talk with them and work out a way to ensure the provinces get the money they need to make this happen.

When the bill was first introduced as Bill C-211 there was a need for the government to engage itself in discussions with the provinces so autism therapy, ABA, IBI, and other therapies, would be covered by the health care insurance plan in every province and territory. This way families, which found themselves mortgaging their homes, in some cases bankrupting themselves so they could look after their children to give them a good start in life and some opportunity in life to participate, would have the resources they needed.

We believe amendments need to be made to section 2 of the Canada Health Act. We believe ABA and IBI should be listed in the act as medically necessary services or required services for people with autism spectrum disorder.

• (1810)

I remember my colleague, Shelley Martel, the critic for health in Ontario, the member for Nickel Belt, also called for this. I would join

with her today to say let us get on with this and get it done but, at the very least, let us support this day of autism awareness.

• (1815)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I stand to speak today about an issue that is near and dear to my heart and to the hearts of so many Canadians in Oshawa and around the country, autism spectrum disorders, or ASD.

ASD affects many Canadians, including my son, of all ages and walks of life, from coast to coast to coast. This is why the government is committed to building knowledge of and awareness about this serious condition. Indeed, this government is pleased to have the opportunity to voice its endorsement of Bill S-211. By supporting the bill, we underscore our standing commitment to recognize April 2 as annual World Autism Awareness Day.

Many have heard of the government's significant investments in autism related research, and I am very proud of that. This important work is being spearheaded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, otherwise referred to as CIHR. In the spirit of promoting autism awareness and knowledge, I would like to take this opportunity to outline this work and some important findings that it has engendered.

One of CIHR's main priorities is to promote health and reduce the burden of chronic diseases and mental illness. In this context, CIHR's Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction is working with partners in the autism community to set research priorities, coordinate action and accelerate the speed at which knowledge is translated into improved well-being for Canadians with autism.

I am pleased to report that over recent years, CIHR has invested approximately \$29 million in ASD-related research projects. Of this amount, roughly \$16 million has been devoted to better understanding the causes of ASD. Moreover, CIHR has committed another \$10.5 million in this area, with plans to focus on the characterization and treatment of ASD.

In 25 years of children's mental health practice and research, there have been many challenges in thinking about the causes and treatment of autism and there is much work under way to understand the genetic causes of autism and whether there are also environmental triggers. For example, Dr. Peter Szatmari, head of Child Psychiatry, McMaster University, is co-leader of the CIHR-funded Canadian arm of an international study seeking to track down the complex mix of genes involved in ASD.

*Private Members' Business*

The international autism genome project, or AGP, is the world's first international collaboration on genetic factors in children's mental health, involving more than 170 leading genetics researchers from over 50 centres in the U.S.A., Europe and Canada.

Since the launch of the autism genome project, at least two dozen genes have been identified and associated with ASD, including four new genes in the latest phase of the study. Based on genetic studies of twins in families, which have shown that ASD propensity can be genetic, researchers estimate that 5% to 15% of autism cases can be linked to specific known genes. In addition, researchers have begun to quantify the influence of genetic patterns and have found that those with ASD were 20% more likely to have abnormalities in the number of copies of specific genes.

Another CIHR-funded initiative is the pathways in ASD project, a one of a kind collaborative research study being led by researchers from McMaster University. The pathways project is focused on understanding how children with ASD develop and change and how family stress evolves over time. It also seeks to identify child, family, school and community factors that might act as predictors, mediators or moderators of key outcomes, information that will ideally be used to develop new intervention programs.

To date, approximately 440 children from 5 different locations across Canada have been enrolled in the study, making it the largest prospective study of ASD ever developed. The project will examine a number of factors that influence areas of development related to the child, the family and the community as a whole, such as social confidence, communication skills, behaviour and the ability to function independently.

The results of this study will be a valuable resource in ensuring the best outcomes for children with ASD, both through the development of new programs and interventions and by furthering our understanding of their needs and strengths.

CIHR is also supporting a \$1.4 million strategic training grant in autism research, led by Dr. Eric Fombonne from McGill University, which will contribute to training the upcoming generation of autism researchers and will aim to uncover the mysteries of autism.

• (1820)

Building on the strategic training program in autism research that trained over 40 Ph.D. and post-doctoral students, this latest project will expand the program. This project will address the pressing needs of Canadians affected by autism as well as their families by building research capacity in this very important area.

In addition, CIHR is investing in autism research at the University of Alberta where researchers are examining the early development of autism by following infants at increased risk of the disorder because they are siblings of children who already have autism. The ultimate goal is earlier identification and treatment. Research, such as this, is building our understanding of ASD and our capacity to treat ASD.

Finally, in another CIHR funded project, Dr. Richard Tremblay of Université de Montréal is conducting a series of longitudinal studies that trace the early childhood development trajectories of disruptive behaviour problems and their association with the developmental trajectories of other health problems such as inattention, emotional problems, sleep problems and obesity.

There is a plethora of research projects under way that seek to better understand autism and to bolster the ASD evidence base. Indeed, the studies I have described today present only a sample of this very important work. It is my hope that as we recognize and celebrate World Autism Awareness Day in years to come, Canada will be able to share the ongoing results of such research and succeed in boosting our collective knowledge and awareness of this serious condition leading ultimately to successful treatment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues who have played an important role in this very important day: the Minister of Health, the member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, other colleagues in both the Senate and the House of Commons, the researchers across Canada and around the world, the volunteers in local and national autism awareness organizations and, of course, the families of such wonderful kids.

On April 2, World Autism Awareness Day, we will all remember this very important condition and I think the House will fully endorse this wonderful bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga for a five minute reply.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to have the opportunity to provide a few concluding remarks to this critical public health issue of autism. As I indicated in my earlier remarks, so much has been accomplished over the last 35 years, but much more needs to be done.

I recall very distinctly serving with the Waterloo County School Board in 1978 when autism had recently been identified and to see how the school officials struggled without a grapple with the best way to serve those children. Here we are 32 years later having learned a lot but still having a long way to go.

Our government recognizes that autism spectrum disorders, referred to as autism or ASD, represent a serious health and social issue affecting many Canadian families and individuals from all walks of life.

Many times over the last five years since I have served here in Parliament, and again today, my friend and colleague from Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont has shared his very personal journey with this House. He demonstrated how a family deals effectively with the enormous challenges faced by those dealing with autism. It has been a real honour for me and my colleagues on this side of the House especially, but all members, to have met Jaden, to see the fantastic enjoyment that he gets from life and to experience the joy that he gives to us as members.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

I am amazed at the perseverance and tenacity that is needed by every family and community that deals with autism on a daily basis. It is clear that we need to do all that we can to raise awareness and work toward effective support and solutions. That is why the Minister of Health last year declared April 2 would be known as World Autism Awareness Day across Canada.

Today it is an honour to have the opportunity to reiterate our government's commitment by expressing our support for Bill S-211, An Act respecting World Autism Awareness Day.

Over the last several years, our government has invested over \$35 million for autism-related research projects through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. In addition, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Department of Health have contributed to improving autism evidence and awareness.

As my colleague from Oshawa noted, CIHR is also supporting a \$1.4 million strategic training grant in autism research led by Dr. Eric Fombonne from McGill University, which will contribute to training the upcoming generation of researchers and aim to uncover the mysteries of autism.

As previous speakers have noted as well, there are multiple partners working to address the challenges that come with autism. All stakeholders in ASD want the same thing: better treatments and early diagnosis for those affected by ASD so that ultimately they can enjoy better outcomes.

To this end, our government is working with partners and stakeholders to promote autism awareness. Research and awareness are essential to moving the markers forward. In declaring April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day and supporting Bill S-211, we have further contributed to this important objective.

I want to thank Senator Munson for this important initiative and I urge all members of this House to give their enthusiastic support for this bill. This will give one more glimmer of hope to those families who are dealing with the challenges of autism.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The time provided for debate has expired. Accordingly, the question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON LEARNING

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow up on a question I asked some time ago concerning the Canadian Council on Learning and, in the broader sense, information that the government does not have as we enter the new information age.

The Canadian Council on Learning was set up to assist in providing a road map for education for Canada. It had the support of just about every educational institute in the country and every province. It even had the respect of organizations around the world. For no apparent reason, the government not only refused to renew the Canadian Council on Learning but in fact took back some money that was left after the end of its run.

The reason we need the Canadian Council on Learning is simple. We do not have any surveillance on education in Canada. In fact, in one of the last reports that it put out, which was called "Taking Stock of Lifelong Learning in Canada 2005-2010:", it contains a chart that shows how different countries are doing in evaluating education within their own borders. The report compared Australia, the European Union, Germany, the U.S., Switzerland, the U.K., New Zealand and Canada in a number of categories.

For example, how many of these countries have had a major review in the last five years of post-secondary education processes? Australia, yes; the EU, yes; Germany, yes; the U.S., yes; Switzerland, yes; the U.K., yes; New Zealand, yes; Canada, no. Who has system-wide goals and objectives? All of them have those but Canada does not.

In how many countries is funding aligned with national priorities? Australia, yes; the EU, not applicable; Germany, yes; the U.S., yes; the U.K., yes; New Zealand, yes; Canada, no. Do we have quality assurance agencies in place? Australia, yes; in the EU it is under development; in Germany it is under development; the United States has it; Switzerland has it; the U.K. has it; New Zealand has it; Canada does not. We do not have quality assurance in place.

We need to know where we are going. As we have gone through this recession over the last few years, one thing has become very clear. The economy that we will be entering as we come out of the recession will be fundamentally different from the one when we went into the recession. Manufacturing has taken a big hit as have many other areas.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We need to find places for Canada to excel. Canada is a very well educated country. Traditionally, it has been. We have been slipping in the last five or six years as we have taken our foot off the accelerator of education and innovation. We need to know what we need to be doing to educate Canadians, from early learning and child care through pre-kindergarten to grade 12, post-secondary, literacy, adult learning, all those things. We need to know where we are. The Canadian Council of Learning, which was the only group that was actually putting together that road map, we do not have it.

As I said, there are people across the country, such as Don Drummond, a very smart man, smart enough to hire Howie Millard at the TD, said, “It is disturbing. Even the scant information we have is not adequately funded”. He estimated that gathering useful information would cost \$15 million a year.

Arati Sharma, who was the national director of CASA, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, stated:

Without the research of groups such as the Canadian Council on Learning, Canada will continue to lack the knowledge needed to improve access, persistence and quality in our post-secondary institutions.

An editorial in the Toronto *Star* read:

—the learning council's work was of value to Canadians, particularly at a time when our economic future depends more than ever on our ability to compete with other knowledge-based economies around the world.

Canada has done very well. We have very strong educational institutions. I come from Nova Scotia. We have universities like Dalhousie, St. Francis Xavier, Acadia, Saint Mary's and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. We have a whole host of great institutions, such as the Nova Scotia Community College revitalized. We have great institutions but we are not putting that stuff together. We are not seeing what it all adds up to as a whole.

How do we compete in the world? How does Canada compete? How are we going to compete with those countries that traditionally did not spend as much but now are spending all kinds of money? The Canadian Council on Learning was telling us that. It was building the road map to a more prosperous Canada and it is gone, which is a shame.

• (1830)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have certainly responded to the question on the Canadian Council on Learning.

We provided one-time funding of \$85 million in 2004, a significant amount of money. It was always clear that this funding would expire after five years. In fact it turned out that we extended the funding for one more year to ensure maximum impact and usefulness of the money spent.

Our government is committed to value for taxpayers' dollars. We understand fully the need for stronger learning and labour market information systems, and that is where our government is proceeding. We are focused on working with the provinces and a variety of stakeholders on the creation of an improved learning information system that will make a positive difference in the lives of Canadians.

We have taken those steps and we are committed to having the most educated and the most skilled workforce in the world. We are committed to getting there in a fiscally responsible way and we have made significant investments, but we will not do what the Liberal Party did, the member's party. In the nineties, it cut social transfers to the provinces by \$25 billion. When it did that, of course education suffered in a significant way.

When we took over government, we increased transfers by 6%, restored the cutbacks by the Liberal government and added \$800 million to education through the Canada social transfer. We put in place a new grants system that allowed students to have \$250 per month, or \$150 per month depending upon certain circumstances, that they would not have to pay back. It allowed for more students to go into post-secondary education, in fact 140,000 more students than under the previous Liberal government.

What we have done is not that complicated. We have invested significantly in education, in skills training and updating.

With respect to Mr. Drummond, to whom the member referred, here is what he had to say:

PSE has been sideswiped by the expenditure cutbacks of the federal [Liberal government]...in the mid-1990s.

He said that the current federal government, our government, has corrected a lot of the difficulties that got created by the severe budget cutbacks to post-secondary education in the 1990s. “The era of fiscal restraint of the 1990s hit post-secondary education funding hard”.

That was a time when the member's government, the Liberal government, attempted to balance its books on the backs of those who were most vulnerable, on the backs of students.

It is not that complicated. When the funding gets taken away, we cannot have more students go into post-secondary education. We cannot have early child learning and care as we have now with investments we have made. We have made significant investments over the years. It has taken that kind of investment.

The objectives and the directions are not that complicated and we are doing what needs to be done, in conjunction with partners, stakeholders and the provinces. That is why we have taken such unprecedented action, particularly in the sphere of post-secondary education, through Canada's economic action plan.

Our government, over the past four years, in fact has made significant investments toward universities, post-secondary infrastructure and education. We know that is important. That is why we have invested, but more importantly, we have provided provinces with predictable and growing funding through the Canada social transfer for the first time in history. It is increasing every year because we know it is important for government to direct those funds to ensure that there is early child learning, child care and students who can go to university and not owe the great sums of money they did under the previous Liberal government.

• (1835)

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Madam Speaker, my colleague talks about working with provinces and stakeholders. Of all those stakeholders, not one person has come out and said that the Canadian Council on Learning should have been cut, not one.

Not one province has said that. About the only thing the provinces were aligned with completely was that the CCL was working and that the millennium scholarship fund, something else they cancelled, was working.

However, we should think about what we do not have. Think about the economics of not having any quality assurance agency in place. Think about all the economies in the world that we are competing with. Now some of the emerging economies that used to send their students here are keeping them at home. All of the countries are saying, "Not only are we going to invest in education, but we are going to study where we are. We are going to see how we are doing and we are going to find a way to make it better".

Canada is the only one that refuses to have a plan. This was the plan. This was the road map to a more educated Canada, at a better price, more economic.

If the government does not believe in supporting students, ideologically, that is one thing; but at the very least, it should say, "We need to know how we are doing; we need to know what we are spending". We cannot even determine how much is being spent on education in Canada because the provinces do not all talk to each other about these sorts of things. We need to find this stuff out. The Canadian Council on Learning was doing it.

I want to pay tribute to Paul Cappon, who was continuing to do some work, even though the funding has gone.

It is a shame that we are entering a new information age and we are doing it without any information at all. Canadian students, who are the future of this country, are the ones who are going to suffer.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that this particular member has not addressed the fact that his government cut \$25 billion from the Canada social transfer, which has caused severe damage to post-secondary education, has caused severe damage to those things that he now is advocating for. We are only now taking the steps to repair that damage to go forward and do the kind of things that need to be done.

Here are some quotes. They are not from me, but from the Canadian Federation of Students, for instance, which said:

The government has taken a positive step towards improving access to post-secondary education....

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

By implementing a national system of grants, the government has responded to a long standing call by students and their families.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations said it is pleased to see the Canada student grants program and the repayment assistance plan are aimed at, respectively, giving students access to post-secondary education and alleviating debt repayment upon graduation. It is something that the previous government did not do; in fact, it took steps and made it even worse and more difficult for students than what they are facing at this time.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in October, I asked the Minister of Public Safety to be accountable and take responsibility for the hurtful and unsubstantiated comments made by CSIS director Richard Fadden. He refused to do so.

I rise tonight to once again call on the Conservative government to apologize for the offence and damage that has been caused.

In June, the CBC aired Mr. Fadden's allegation that two Canadian provincial cabinet ministers and municipal politicians in British Columbia were under the influence of a foreign government.

It is now crystal clear that these accusations are baseless.

Due to New Democrat motions, we were able to secure Mr. Fadden and former national security adviser Marie-Lucie Morin to testify at committee. Here is what we now know as a result of those actions.

Although the national security adviser was given a "heads-up", in her words, in January about Mr. Fadden's comments, Madame Morin did not even care to know the specifics of these concerns until August.

No one thought enough of these suspicions to even contact the premiers or mayors involved to inform them of the concerns.

The RCMP was never alerted or asked to investigate.

Mr. Fadden's long-awaited report to the minister, of which we have seen a redacted copy, is nothing more than a few pages of rhetoric and generalities.

After repeated opportunities, the government has not provided a single fact to back up these allegations.

After hours of testimony, neither Mr. Fadden nor Ms. Morin could provide us with a single shred of evidence to substantiate these serious and hurtful claims.

Instead of taking responsibility for the actions of his senior official, the minister has repeatedly ducked it. He refused to come to committee to explain his government's position. He refused to answer questions in this House.

This is not responsible government. In fact, this might be comical if it were not so serious. However, the reality is that people have been hurt.

Mr. Fadden cast a stain on provincial cabinet ministers across the country and municipal politicians in British Columbia. The Chinese Canadian community was particularly singled out. His McCarthy-like accusation tarred them all.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We note that China was the only country that Mr. Fadden mentioned in his comments, and he mentioned it repeatedly. Chinese Canadians feel as though their loyalty to this country has been called into question. In my riding, I have heard this repeatedly.

It took more than 80 years for the Chinese community to get an apology for the racist head tax policy. Japanese Canadians waited 40 years for an apology for the World War II internment. First nations waited decades for an apology for the residential schools.

If we have learned anything, it should be that communities should not be forced to wait generations for an apology when their reputations have been smeared and their lives affected.

Tonight I ask the Conservative government: Will it reject Mr. Fadden's hurtful and baseless accusations that have smeared provincial and municipal politicians in British Columbia and every Chinese Canadian? Will it hold Mr. Fadden accountable for his improper behaviour and dismiss him from his post immediately? Will it do the right thing and apologize to the Chinese Canadian communities across this country for the harm, offence and insult that has been done?

• (1840)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to address the questions regarding the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. As the member is undoubtedly aware, CSIS is tasked with collecting, analyzing and reporting information and intelligence to the Government of Canada on threats to the security of Canada.

According to the CSIS Act, CSIS operates primarily to address four distinct security threats against Canada. The first threat is espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada.

The second threat is foreign-influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person.

The third threat is activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective within Canada or a foreign state, essentially terrorism. We are all well aware of the threat that terrorism poses to Canada and our allies in this post-9/11 world.

Finally, the fourth threat is activities directed toward undermining or overthrowing the Government of Canada.

The member seems to be most concerned with the second threat, that of foreign interference in Canada, and that is what I will address here today.

Parliament recognized foreign interference as being a concern when CSIS was created in 1984 and therefore explicitly included foreign interference as a distinct threat to the security of Canada in the CSIS Act. The reason is clearly because Canadians are often the victims of foreign interference. In this respect, the focus of CSIS is on investigating the offending foreign state and its agents.

It is clear that CSIS has a mandate to investigate these activities and it has informed successive governments of such threats, including through its annual public reports.

Canada is a particularly inviting target for foreign interference because of the values that make it great. We are a free, open and tolerant society that is open to the world, a country that welcomes people from all corners of the earth.

Similarly, Canada's record of technological innovation, whether it be telecommunications or the mining sector, remains attractive to foreign governments who do not have Canada's or Canadians' best interests at heart. They would seek to steal the hard-earned technological innovations of Canadian companies that make this country's economy the envy of the world.

Organizations like CSIS stand on the front lines of the Canadian intelligence community to protect Canada, the Canadian economy and Canadians from hostile foreign interference.

I am sure I can speak for all members when I say that we thank CSIS and our law enforcement community for their service to their country and keeping Canadians safe.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Madam Speaker, the Conservative government does not understand the hurt and damage that Mr. Fadden's comments have caused. The Chinese-Canadian community has been smeared, they have been offended and they deserve an apology.

The head of Canada's spy service made accusations on national television that suggested cabinet ministers and municipal politicians in British Columbia are doing the bidding of a foreign government. He said these politicians were making decisions not in the best interests of Canada, but in the best interests of their homeland. There is no doubt which country he intended by these comments because the only country he singled out was China.

Let us take note of the timing of these comments; the eve of the Chinese president's visit to Canada. There is no doubt, Mr. Fadden has publicly questioned the loyalty of every Chinese Canadian.

We now know these allegations are entirely without merit. After giving the government every chance to justify Mr. Fadden's allegations, it has failed to do so. The Minister of Public Safety refuses to even answer questions. Mr. Fadden cannot give any details. No premier or mayor has been alerted and the RCMP has never even investigated.

I ask again, will the Conservatives do the right thing and dismiss Mr. Fadden for his bad judgment and baseless comments? Will the Prime Minister apologize to the Chinese-Canadian community?

• (1845)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Madam Speaker, once again, I would like to restate for the hon. member that it is this Parliament and the Government of Canada that has asked CSIS to protect Canadians from threats posed by foreign governments and terrorism.

Canada is an open, peaceful and tolerant country and we continue to enjoy this way of life because of organizations like CSIS, which stand on guard for all Canadians.

I certainly do want to imagine a country without them.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Madam Speaker, as we end this year in the next few hours of Parliament, I would like to wish you, the table officers, the pages and all of my colleagues a wonderful Christmas and a happy new year.

[*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 6:46 p.m.)

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