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Friday, March 8, 2013

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 8, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*English*]

TECHNICAL TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 2012

The House resumed from February 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, the First Nations Goods and Services Tax Act and related legislation, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this important discussion. I want to speak to the matter of taxes, generally, as opposed to specific elements of the bill, as my other colleagues will do so.

Creating jobs and growth in our economy is the government's top priority. Rest assured, we are working on a number of fronts to create optimal conditions for sustainable growth. We are making it easier for Canadian businesses to successfully compete in the global economy and are making it more attractive for others to invest in this country, with the end goals, obviously, being more jobs for Canadians and a healthy and thriving economy.

Key among the strategies we are employing is our government's low-tax plan for jobs and growth that has made Canada the best place in the world to invest. It began in 2007, when Parliament passed a bold tax reduction plan that started us down the road to branding Canada as the lowest-tax jurisdiction for business investment.

At the same time, our government also encouraged the provinces and territories to collaborate in supporting investment, job creation and growth in all sectors of the Canadian economy by establishing the goal of a 25% combined federal-provincial-business tax rate. Today we have made substantial progress toward that agenda.

The final stage of Canada's incremental reduction in federal business tax rates came into force on January 1, 2012. These substantial tax reductions have lowered the federal general corporate income tax rate from 22.12% in 2007 to 15% in 2012. Also in 2012, the last of the provincial general capital taxes will be eliminated.

This follows the implementation, in 2006, of the federal capital tax and the introduction, in 2007, of a temporary financial incentive to encourage provinces to eliminate their general capital taxes.

I do not want to use my time rhyming off a list of measures we have taken since 2006 to fuel job creation and spur economic growth. However, I do want to cite several that are key. They include the provision of a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring by this vital sector; reducing the federal income tax rate that applies to qualifying small business income to 11% in 2008 and increasing the amount of income eligible for this rate to \$500,000 in 2009; supporting manufacturing and processing activities by introducing a temporary accelerated capital cost allowance rate for investment in manufacturing or processing machinery and equipment and extending it to eligible assets acquired before the year 2014; eliminating tariffs on imported machinery and equipment and manufacturing inputs to make Canada a tariff-free zone for industrial manufacturers by 2015; and improving the availability of Canadian businesses to attract foreign venture capital by narrowing the definition of taxable Canadian property, thereby eliminating the need for tax reporting under section 116 of the Income Tax Act for many investments.

The fact is that our government's low-tax plan is working, and the world is increasingly noticing.

As a result of these and other tax changes, Canada now has an overall tax rate on new business investment that is substantially lower than any other G7 country and below the average of member countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This is a significant advantage for Canada in the global economy and will be a key contributor to Canada's long-term economic prosperity. Little wonder that Statistics Canada announced that employment increased in February by 50,700 jobs. With February's strong growth, over 950,000 net new jobs have been created since the depth of the global recession in July 2009. It is important to note that 95% of these are full-time, and nearly 80% are in the private sector.

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These are positive signs that we are on the right track for Canada's economic growth. Indeed, Canada has the best job growth record among the G7 countries in recent years, and we do not intend to stop there.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan continues our efforts to preserve this country's advantage in the global economy, to strengthen the financial security of Canadian workers, seniors and families, and to provide the stability necessary to secure our recovery in an uncertain world.

As members know, Canada weathered the global economic and financial crisis well, particularly when compared to most other developed nations. At the same time, Canada is not immune to the challenges that emanate from beyond our borders. That is why I was extremely pleased to note that as he prepares budget 2013, the Minister of Finance has stated clearly that this is not the time for dangerous new spending that would increase deficits and raise taxes. In uncertain times such as these, the most important contribution the government can make to bolster confidence and growth in Canada is to maintain our sound fiscal position. That means maintaining our focus on fostering prosperity for Canadians and their families by growing the economy and helping to create high-quality jobs. In other words, we have to do everything we can to keep taxes low for Canadian families and businesses.

Since there is only one level of taxpayer, all governments must work together to ensure that Canada's fiscal house is in order, return to balanced budgets and prepare for future economic turmoil. It is important to add that balanced budgets are not important for their own sake. They are important for what they make possible and for what they avoid. Reducing debt frees up tax dollars that would otherwise be absorbed by interest costs. These dollars can then be reinvested in the things that matter most to Canadians: health care, public services, and of course, lower taxes.

Reducing debt keeps interest rates low, encourages business to create jobs and invests in our future. It preserves the gains made in Canada's low-tax plan, fostering long-term growth. It will create more and better-paying jobs for Canadians. Canadian tax reductions that play an important role in supporting economic growth are those that enable businesses to invest more of their revenues in their own operations. Such investments boost efficiency and productivity. It is this productivity growth that allows businesses to hire additional workers or to offer higher wages in order to expand production and earn more profits.

Our government is committed to lower taxes for all Canadians, and that is why we intend to introduce broad-based tax relief with more than 140 tax reductions, such as lowering the GST from 7% to 6% and introducing the tax-free savings account. Our strong record of tax reliefs is saving the typical Canadian family of four over \$3,100 each and every year. What is more, our government has been aggressive in closing tax loopholes used by a small group of taxpayers to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Ensuring tax fairness helps to keep taxes low for all Canadians and their families. I encourage all members to support this legislation before us today and to help create a better tax system and greater fairness for all Canadians.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss what to many people are some very technical tax changes. In the end, the simple way of explaining the changes to average people like me is to state that we are making the system better. We are making the system fairer. We want to make sure that when people utilize tax loopholes unnecessarily, which causes the rest of us to pay more taxes, we are going to close those loopholes so that we can continue to create lower taxes and make Canada a better place in which to live and raise a family.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Northumberland—Quinte West for his praise of the government's economic record, which is quite far removed from the reality of Bill C-48. That is something we can agree on.

However, he mentioned something in his speech that particularly caught my interest. According to him, corporate tax cuts encourage investment. One very worrisome symptom we have been noticing for years is the dramatic increase in private corporations' cash reserves. In fact, these reserves almost equal the amount of Canada's federal public debt.

What explanation can my colleague give for this lack of investment by private corporations? How does he explain this? How does he think this is dangerous?

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is right that there is a lot of money, liquid assets, we want to see invested in Canada. If we make Canada a fertile place in which to grow businesses, which we have already done with our low-tax scheme for the average Canadian, the people who work for these companies, we will encourage these companies to invest. Quite frankly, it is the global economic uncertainty that is prohibiting these companies from investing the funds. In a recent statement, the president of Cisco Systems said that Canada is one of the best places to do business. What we are doing is setting up a system so that people will invest in Canada.

• (1015)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague for his obvious enthusiasm for these measures and for explaining them in a manner that people watching across the country can easily understand.

In the last number of years, on occasion, I have had to look some of my constituents in the eye and explain what the government is doing to get their jobs back. I often think that my opposition colleagues across the way have never had that opportunity, because all they seem to want to do is pile taxes on corporations and make them less competitive and drive them out of the country.

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I would ask my colleague how he would compare and contrast the tax policies of our Conservative government with those that are likely to occur if the opposition ever manages to be in a position to govern.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, there is a distinct difference between this side and that side of the House. We look at lowering taxes. We look to incent businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to create jobs. Indeed, small and medium-sized enterprises are the engine driving our economy right now.

The difference, quite frankly, is that the other side would bring in schemes to raise taxes for the average Canadian to provide programs that in the end would mirror countries in eastern Europe, and in particular, in western Europe. I think of countries like Greece, where people live beyond their means. We know what has happened there.

If something like a carbon tax is brought in, yes, it will raise lots of revenue, and governments will have lots of money to spend on programs, but it is a disincentive for investment. That is the difference between this side and that side of the House. We want to make sure that there are fewer obstacles for businesses so that they can grow, employ Canadians and grow the economy, whereas the other side wants to create those obstacles. That is basically, in the simplest terms, what my fellow caucus mate was referring to.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tarik Brahma (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour today to take part in the debate on Bill C-48, the short title of which is the Technical Tax Amendments Act, 2012. Its full title is An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, the First Nations Goods and Services Tax Act and related legislation.

This is obviously an enormous bill, comprising nearly 1,000 pages. More particularly, it is a very technical bill for the majority of members and myself, who are not tax specialists.

The purpose of Bill C-48 is to make amendments to the Canadian tax system that have been developed over more than a decade. Although we may wonder why the bill is long and voluminous, we can downplay that aspect because this bill nevertheless deals with a single subject, which was not the case with the mammoth bills the government previously introduced, Bills C-38 and C-45. Those bills concerned matters that were unrelated but that had nevertheless been grouped together based on an utterly debatable and debated logic.

Let us talk a little about the importance of taxation to Canadians, especially in this month of March when all our constituents are completing their tax returns. I do not believe our constituents are opposed to the idea of paying taxes, but they are appalled at times to see how their taxes are used at every level of government.

We are currently thinking of Quebec, in particular. In my riding, I hear a lot of talk about the Charbonneau commission and about the investigations that UPAC is conducting in Quebec on how taxes have been diverted from their primary purpose, the creation of infrastructure, at the provincial and municipal levels. Faced with misappropriation and corruption, Canadians—and I believe this is particularly true here in Quebec—are appalled at times by the wrongful manner in which their taxes are used; they are not being used properly.

When taxes are used properly, to expand infrastructure, for example, Canadians are quite happy to take part in this national effort. They are even asking us to do more, particularly with regard to infrastructure.

Although we can only be pleased that good measures are finally being included in Canada's tax legislation, we have reason to be concerned about the size of a bill that is nearly 1,000 pages long. Although it is true for all governments, this nevertheless shows that this government in particular should manage the tax code more effectively and work harder to ensure that statutory measures designed to enact tax proposals are regularly introduced.

With respect to the matter before us, the last technical tax bill was passed in 2001. In the update that she tabled in the fall of 2009, Sheila Fraser, then Auditor General of Canada, said she was concerned that at least 400 technical amendments had not yet been adopted. Although 200 of the amendments she referred to now appear in Bill C-48, hundreds of others have not yet been passed.

Bill C-48 includes some promising measures. Part 4, for example, provides for technical changes to the Excise Tax Act, repealing a measure that has not been used since 1999. Part 7 clarifies the minister's authority to amend tax administration agreement schedules, provided that does not make any substantial change to the terms and conditions of those agreements. Part 7 also enables the First Nations goods and services tax, imposed under a tax administration agreement between the federal government and an aboriginal government, whatever it might be, to be administered through a provincial administration system that also administers the federal goods and services tax.

● (1020)

This change will simplify administration of the First Nations Goods and Services Tax Act. These are quite promising measures.

This bill also addresses an aspect that is very important for Canadians and, more generally, for people around the world, and that is the problem of tax evasion. My colleague who spoke earlier mentioned Greece. One of Greece's major problems was not necessarily mismanagement or living beyond its means, but rather its level of tax evasion, which was incompatible with the revenue inflows to be expected in a country that aims to be worthy of that name, a country that should have quite a high level of taxation to pay for the goods and services that every government should provide. Where tax evasion levels are too high, they have a direct impact on essential public services. We have seen this in Greece, for example, and it is indeed a serious problem. A number of social problems result directly from those taxation problems.

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Any reasonable person would agree that any amendments that increase tax revenue, discourage tax evasion and, as a result, ensure the integrity of our tax system are positive. We therefore need to adopt them as quickly as possible. What is more, most of these measures have already been in place for several years since, tax measures often take effect as soon as they are proposed.

The NDP is of the opinion that cracking down on tax evasion and avoidance should be a priority for any honest and responsible government. That is what we will do when we take office in 2015. We will do even more to make combatting tax evasion a priority.

I must also say a few words about my NDP colleagues who are members of the Standing Committee on Finance and who, since the beginning of this new Parliament, have been continually pushing the committee to complete its study of tax evasion.

One of the questions we have been considering is this: how can we successfully combat tax evasion? We must use measures targeting certain rental properties and Canadian multinational corporations with foreign affiliates. We must impose limits on them with regard to the use of foreign tax credit generators.

I would like to add that the committee heard from a number of witnesses. I would particularly like to quote Denis St-Pierre, who testified during the pre-budget consultations held on October 15, 2012. Mr. St-Pierre, chair of the tax and fiscal policy advisory group of the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada, said:

First, the government must introduce a technical tax amendments bill. The last time a technical tax bill was passed by Parliament was over 11 years ago. Literally hundreds of unlegislated tax amendments to the Income Tax Act—which I showed this committee last year by bringing the Income Tax Act, if you recall—have been proposed, but not yet enacted, which brings uncertainty and unpredictability to the process.

This reminds us of just how much tax professionals, including chartered accountants, want to see a provision that would make their everyday work clearer.

So, for the reasons I have just mentioned, I will support Bill C-48 at second reading. The main reason is that the tax measures it contains are a step in the right direction, and it has already taken too long to incorporate them into our tax legislation.

• (1025)

[English]

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my friend across the way, a person I have a great deal of respect for. He mentioned that he will support the bill.

He also mentioned that the previous Auditor General said these are measures the government should enact, and I suspect she might have used the word “must”. As well, he mentioned the certified general accountant's deposition before the finance committee, who also said that these things should be done in an expeditious manner and that he would support the bill.

I have noticed that the bill has been before the House and debated here for some 100 days. If the member supports the bill, and he has mentioned people who have stated we need to get on with this and get these tax measures completed, passed and enacted as quickly as possible, then why are we here in the House? We are now going on to over 100 days. What is the explanation for that, if it is so

important, if we should do it, and if it is in the right direction, as the member stated?

[Translation]

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. I certainly share his concerns. I would like to congratulate him for the work he does with us on the Standing Committee on National Defence.

I am sure the member noticed that the bill is 1,000 pages long. It contains a large number of provisions that address various aspects of the tax code.

It is important that our parliamentary and political systems provide every member with the time to debate a particular aspect or provision contained in these 960 pages if they wish to do so. As the member noted, this bill is extremely complicated and technical.

• (1030)

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech.

We may not be tax experts, but it seems obvious to me that it would make sense to make this information available more often, instead of waiting and introducing a 1,000-page brick. What does my colleague think?

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely correct. A number of members have mentioned the fact that there have not been any technical amendments to Canada's tax provisions for 11 years.

Every government should be more diligent when it comes to updating tax provisions. The reality is that tax professionals—which we are not—who, every day, help businesses and individuals make the right tax choices need certainty and clarity.

The fact that it has taken a decade to implement these amendments has only added to their lack of clarity and certainty in giving advice to their clients.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was quite funny to see the government play the victim yesterday in committee.

My colleague from York Centre, with whom I have the pleasure of serving on the committee, also complained that we were taking time to study this. The witnesses themselves said it is absurd to study a bill that is almost 1,000 pages long because we were going to miss certain problems.

Could my colleague from Saint-Jean tell us more about the fact that the bill is very large and very difficult to study in so short a time?

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for the exceptional and always very focused work he does on the Standing Committee on Finance.

I have to agree with him. These bills are extremely complex, from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, and it is important that the committees take the time to study these points properly.

Government Orders

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-48, the technical tax amendments act, 2012. It is a very important piece of legislation. While the legislation may be technical, it is nonetheless important legislation that would benefit all Canadians, providing the clarity and certainty to Canada's tax system.

Our government has conducted extensive consultations on the provisions of the bill, some provisions having been announced over a decade ago. As previous parliamentarians' efforts to pass these amendments were unsuccessful, the backlog has increased over the years, and it is more important than ever to pass these technical amendments. In fact, among those calling for Parliament to quickly pass the amendments includes the Auditor General of Canada, who in a 2009 report stated:

Taxpayers' ability to comply with tax legislation depends on their understanding of how the rules apply to their own circumstances. [...] Uncertainty about how the law should be applied can also add to the time taken and costs incurred by tax audits and tax administration.

I could not agree with the Auditor General more. However, it is not just the Auditor General who is saying this; it is all the other parties in the House, as the bill has all party support. In fact, earlier this week, during the finance committee study of Bill C-48, the NDP member for Parkdale—High Park, and finance critic for her party, said, "Obviously we support the goal of closing tax loopholes and making the tax system in Canada clearer and easier to understand for Canadians". The NDP finance critic went even further, on Bill C-48's first day of debate, saying, "the official opposition [New Democrats] will be supporting the bill".

One would think that after making such an unequivocal statement of support for the legislation that she and all NDP members would be eager to vote on this important piece of legislation and ensure its timely passage through the House of Commons.

Alas, the actions of the NDP seem to be at odds with the NDP finance critic's statement. I have to ask: What is the reason for the NDP delay? Even more puzzling, it is not simply the NDP finance critic who is displaying these bizarre tendencies; it is every member of the NDP. My hon. colleagues have all declared their support for the bill while at the same time trying to filibuster second reading, for over 100 days. This attempt to disrupt what is only the first stage in a long legislative process continues to delay the finance committee's opportunity to formally study the bill.

I have taken the liberty of reviewing the debate on the bill and, time after time, the NDP MPs are vocal in their support for this piece of legislation. For example, the NDP member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques said, "We will support this bill because it eliminates some tax loopholes and other measures that lead to fiscal inequity". The NDP member for Beauport—Limoilou said, "It will be a great pleasure for me to support this bill".

The NDP member for Manicouagan said, "We support the changes this bill makes, and particularly those aimed at reducing tax avoidance". This sentiment was echoed by the NDP member for Surrey North, who said: "We support the changes being made in the bill, especially those aimed at reducing tax avoidance".

The NDP member for London—Fanshawe said, "The bill makes important and long-overdue changes to the tax laws", and then went on to say, "New Democrats support the bill...". The NDP member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking said, "As the House is aware, the New Democrats are supporting the bill...".

● (1035)

The NDP member for Scarborough—Rouge River even highlights that her reason for supporting the legislation is that many of the provisions have already been announced, declaring, "Once they've been announced, people accept them as adopted. It's for these reasons that we are supporting the bill".

These kinds of comments from the NDP continue and continue. NDP member after NDP member have all voiced their support for this piece of legislation, which has been in Parliament for more than 100 days. Furthermore, all of these statements of support came on the very first day of debate; yet more than 100 days later, we are still debating the bill at second reading.

This is simply unbelievable. Why would members of the NDP support the legislation, but not ensure its passage at second reading to the finance committee for closer examination by their own NDP colleagues? One wonders what the NDP hopes to gain by prolonging the debate. Again, perhaps the members are unaware that many of the measures have already undergone extensive debate in this House.

In fact, Bill C-48 has been before Parliament for five months now, as it was introduced in November of last year. Do members know what this means? Clearly, the NDP members do not, and so I will spell it out for them.

Let me state again that the House of Commons has had more than 100 days to examine and debate this bill at second reading stage already. We have already had days and days of debate and heard hours and hours of speeches, but what has all this debate yielded from the NDP benches? As I have highlighted, it is repetition upon repetition of support and praise for this legislation.

Well, if NDP members truly do support it, I plead with the NDP to not stall second reading in debate. Let us work together and pass this important legislation that would help Canadians. Let us make Parliament work. That would be an important change for the NDP, as its members have repeatedly shown that they have a track record of delaying and opposing legislation that would be beneficial to Canadians. For an example of this, we need look no further than our Conservative government's economic action plan legislation in these recent years.

What is more, NDP members have shown time after time that they would prefer to vote against tax relief measures that help Canadians and our economy, such as the hiring tax credit for small business and the introduction of a tax-free savings account. They even voted against a reduction of the GST to 5%.

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However, we all know what the NDP does support: a carbon tax. I find this very puzzling. On the one hand, the NDP would gladly support a reckless \$21 billion carbon tax that would raise the price on essential goods and services for Canadians, but it would stall well-reasoned and thoroughly examined legislation like Bill C-48.

While the NDP finds these partisan procedural games amusing, Canadian taxpayers and businesses, who are waiting for these technical amendments to be passed, certainly do not.

Despite the NDP's bizarre position on this bill, Canadians can rest assured that their Conservative government will work to ensure the passage of Bill C-48 through Parliament so that taxpayers' confidence is not lost in Canada's tax system.

• (1040)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was very hard to sit here and listen to a comment that parliamentary democracy in the form of debating legislation, which is the duty of parliamentarians, is somehow considered as standing in the way of legislation passing.

This comes from a member of a government that has moved time allocation to cut off debate on critical issues, preventing fair discussion by parliamentarians and preventing parliamentarians from doing their due diligence when they look at the budget and other pieces of legislation.

My question is to the hon. member across the way.

This is a critical piece of legislation. The Auditor General wrote about the urgency of these amendments in 2009. He suggested 400 outstanding technical amendments; we see only 200 of these addressed here. It took four years for the government to address 200 of those, 50% of them. How much longer is it going to take the government to address the rest of the Auditor General's recommendations?

• (1045)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, these are bizarre arguments. On the one hand, opposition members are complaining about how long this bill is, at over 1,000 pages, and now we are hearing somebody complaining that not enough amendments are being addressed.

As far as debate goes, it is repetition after repetition. Is it any wonder people are calling them the new Bloc party?

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we can talk about bizarre. There is something that is bizarre right there. The member should stand up and apologize to every member in this House and to every Canadian for misleading them.

She said that we have been debating this bill for 100 days. I just checked with the table officers, and we have been debating this bill for nine hours. That is a long way from 100 days. In my community of Nickel Belt, miners work longer than nine hours a day. We have not even been debating this bill for a day, let alone 100 days. What a ridiculous statement.

Then the member went on to talk about the NDP cap and trade. I have in my hand a copy of the Conservative platform. Lo and behold, on page 32 of the platform, we see "Developing a cap and trade system".

What a shame. What a bizarre thing to say on the member's part. She should stand up and apologize.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, even before this bill was introduced, it was consulted on for literally years in advance. There were repeated public consultations.

On top of that, this bill has before Parliament for five months now, as it was introduced in November of last year. That means that the House of Commons has had over 100 days to examine and debate this bill already.

We are only at the initial preliminary stage of a very long parliamentary process. We have had literally days and days of debate. We have heard hours and hours of speeches, all saying the same thing. All sides support this bill. All sides recognize it is technical bill, yet for some bizarre reason the NDP insists on filibustering it with 100-day delay.

While the NDP might find these games amusing, Canadian taxpayers and businesses—

The Speaker: If I stop the member there, we can accommodate one more question or comment. The hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I just thought I would point out the behaviour of the NDP members, who usually like to be the champions of decorum.

My colleague talked about the bizarre arguments that were being made. Then the NDP member pointed at my colleague and said that was what was bizarre. The member was pointing to my colleague and saying that she was bizarre.

It is right to criticize debate here, but to take it personally goes beyond the pale and is certainly not in the spirit of decorum that we want to see.

I would like to ask my colleague now, in a very civil way on International Women's Day, what the consequences will be if this bill is not passed.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, the consequences would be tax avoidance. When individuals as well as companies do not pay their fair share of taxes, the rest of Canadians have to take up the slack and pay it in their place.

I thank my hon. colleague for recognizing International Women's Day. It is great to be in the House of Commons on such a day.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in this important discussion on Bill C-48, technical tax amendments act, 2012.

This legislation, as clearly stated in its title, is technical. It is nevertheless important, especially to the many taxpayers who want certainty after over a decade without the technical tax bill being passed by Parliament.

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The technical tax act, 2012, moves to clear the backlog, with the inclusion of outstanding income tax and sales tax amendments, the majority of which have already been released for public consultation. Specifically, from 2009 to 2011, in advance of the technical tax amendments act, 2012, the government engaged in open and public consultations on the vast majority of the proposed amendments included in the legislation. I should also note that the Auditor General of Canada has identified the backlog of technical amendments as an issue requiring attention.

While outlining the delays and addressing the current backlog of outstanding income tax amendments, the Auditor General made some key observations about the impact of failing to deal with this issue in a timely manner and, of course, it has very far-reaching implications.

With regard to one of the many negative effects on taxpayers from the uncertainty caused by the backlog of these outstanding income tax amendments, the Auditor General noted the following: higher costs of obtaining professional advice to comply with tax law; less efficiency in doing business transactions; inability of publicly traded corporations to use proposed tax changes in their financial reporting because they have not been substantially enacted; and increased willingness to engage in aggressive tax planning. As such, I think we need to applaud the Conservative government for taking action in this over decade-long backlog, and the Auditor General for the report that helped to crystallize this issue for Canadians.

As parliamentarians, it is important that we now move forward to address this problem. That means we all need to work together to put an end to this backlog of technical tax amendments.

We have seen that, to some extent, all parties have publicly declared support for Bill C-48. Indeed, the NDP has spent literally days of debate, with very similar sounding speeches, to make that point. To be quite frank, their behaviour looks suspiciously like political procedure games, as we have been at second reading for over 100 days at this point. We need to move past such games and focus on what would actually help taxpayers.

I want to applaud the work of my fellow colleagues on the finance committee, from all sides. We realized the need to move forward in a timely way with this legislation and we actually started to pre-study the bill a number of weeks ago. We have already heard from witnesses. Every single one of them is supporting moving ahead with this important piece of legislation.

We have heard from groups like the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, who have said the technical tax amendments associated with Bill C-48 will help to improve clarity and certainty. We greet the technical tax amendments act, 2012, with a sense of relief.

We also heard from an expert tax lawyer, who stated:

The adoption of this bill will be welcomed, as it will formally enact provisions, many of which were originally proposed in 1999, and will have effect from 2007 or 2010 and in certain instances even earlier.

He also stated that many of the amendments found in this act have been brought before the House of Commons and the Senate on a number of occasions in the past.

In my remaining time today, I would like to spotlight some of the measures that may have been overlooked in today's legislation, or certainly overlooked in the debate, because there are many technical pieces. I want to highlight a few of them.

One such group of Canadians who will be assisted will be the self-employed, as the technical tax amendment act, 2012, will make some helpful, albeit minor, changes to fully implement a very popular recent initiative of our government, and that is to assist the self-employed. I am referring to the Fairness for the Self-Employed Act.

• (1050)

As parliamentarians may recall, that legislation extended employment insurance special benefits, including maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits, on a voluntary basis to the self-employed. Thanks to that new initiative, self-employed Canadians will no longer have to choose between their family and their business responsibilities. I think we can all agree that this initiative was good family policy. It represents a very significant positive measure for the self-employed.

As I also noted earlier, the technical tax amendments act, 2012, would make some helpful changes to fully implement that legislation. Specifically, the measure in question would amend the Income Tax Act as a consequential enactment to the Fairness for Self-Employed Act. It would provide for a personal income tax credit in respect of premiums paid consistent with the existing credit in respect of employees' EI premiums.

Another helpful measure, and this is important, specifically in terms of some of the work we are doing currently around tax avoidance and the use of tax havens, is the multi-lateral convention on mutually administrative assistance in tax matters, which is normally known as the convention. The convention was concluded in 1988 to create a multinational network to facilitate, improve and extend the exchange of information between national tax administrators. The objective was to combat international tax evasion. In April 2009, the G20 called for action to make it easier for developing countries to secure the benefits of the new co-operative tax environment, including the multilateral approach for the exchange of information.

Statements by Members

In response, the OECD and the Council of Europe developed a protocol to amend the convention to bring it in line with the international standard on exchange of information for tax purposes and to open it up to all countries. We call this the amended convention. This amended convention is a useful instrument to fight against offshore international tax evasion and is consistent with the government's policy on exchange of information. Previously, it was open to members of the OECD and the Council of Europe. Now, more than 40 countries, including Brazil, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S., have signed the amended convention, and many more have stated their intention to do so.

The amended convention supports Canada's G20 commitment to implement the latest OECD standard on the exchange of tax information, which is to provide that bank secrecy should not prevent a country from exchanging information for tax purposes. However, the amended convention has not yet been ratified, since section 241 of the Income Tax Act must be amended first. With the passage of Bill C-48, it would be in a position to do so. This is very technical legislation but critically important.

As members may recall, another example is the First Nations Goods and Services Tax Act, or the FNGST. This is a tax applied by participating aboriginal governments on goods and services within their reserves or lands. On reserve, it effectively replaces the GST. The longstanding FNGST arrangements promote self-reliance and political accountability of aboriginal governments to their members, as well as the effectiveness of a national tax system. The FNGST is available to both self-governing aboriginal groups and to interested Indian bands that continue to operate primarily under the Indian Act.

Under the terms of the tax administration agreement, the FNGST is collected and administered free of charge by the Canada Revenue Agency, which acts as the agent of the taxing aboriginal government. That is where the amendments in part 7 of the technical tax amendments bill come into play. These are very big improvements in terms of how we will move forward on this important issue for our aboriginal communities.

As I mentioned earlier, it has been over a decade since Parliament last passed a comprehensive package of technical income tax amendments, so we must move forward. My colleagues and I on the finance committee heard from KPMG, which asked Parliament to act decisively and pass Bill C-48 to essentially clean up the slate of this old legislation and finally bring the Income Tax Act up to date. Taxpayers could then move on and focus on running their businesses and the CRA could carry on administering—

• (1055)

The Speaker: The hon. member will have five minutes for questions and comments after question period.

We will now move on to statements by members. The hon. member for Palliser.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

BRIERCREST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am pleased to congratulate Dr. Michael Pawelke on being named the next president of Briercrest College and Seminary. His 19 years as a senior pastor in Ontario foretells that he will continue an excellent tradition of leadership.

Second, I would like to offer thanks to the outgoing president, Dr. Dwayne Uglem, for his nine years of guidance to students in Caronport. Under Dr. Uglem's leadership, students ranked the college as one of the best in Canada in which to study in a national survey recently published by *Maclean's* magazine. This national ranking recognizes that the college offers an outstanding undergraduate education within a supportive and caring learning environment.

Congratulations to the faculty and staff at the college on receiving this superb national student ranking.

* * *

• (1100)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my heart is filled with emotion as I rise here today to recognize International Women's Day.

Today, March 8, I would especially like to commend the women who have laid the groundwork for equality throughout history.

I am thinking of all those courageous women who fought to change the status quo, often putting their own lives in danger.

Without them, we would not be where we are today. However, we must not abandon our efforts now, when true gender equality is still a long way off.

In some parts of the world, women and girls are more likely to be raped than to learn to read.

In Canada, women earn on average only 73% of what men earn, and nearly 1 million women are victims of violence simply because they are women.

Each and every one of us has a moral obligation to ensure that women's efforts towards equality are expedited. We in the NDP are ready to lead the charge.

* * *

[English]

POET MIKE PUHALLO

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow evening it is with great pleasure that I will be attending the Kamloops Cowboy Festival at the Calvary Community Church. This will be the 17th anniversary of the Cowboy Festival, and it has gained the reputation of being the biggest and best of its kind in North America.

Statements by Members

One of the highlights of the Cowboy Festival is the poetry, and one of the best poets was Mike Puhallo. Tonight he will be posthumously inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame for artistic achievements. In honour of Mike, this year's festival and our cowboy heritage, I would like to share a short poem entitled "Back in the Saddle".

I've been ten days in the saddle,
Trying to make up for lost time.
Hunting strays, cold trailing cows,
Starting out six weeks behind.

From spring range to the alpine,
They scattered far and wide.
It's a cowboy's kind of therapy,
Just saddle up and ride!

With a knee brace and hockey tape.
I am fine once I'm astride.
I'm still pretty gimpy on the ground,
But I don't limp when I ride.

We miss Mike, and his words and legacy will live on.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the clarion call of the Vienna conference on human rights in 1993 was that "women's rights are human rights" and that there are no human rights without the rights of women. Sadly, on this International Women's Day 20 years later, violence against women remains an overriding global problem.

Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar industry, condemning millions of women and girls to exploitation and servitude. Gendercide, the systematic abandonment and killing of baby girls, is responsible for 200 million missing women and girls, and 140 million women and girls live with the consequences of female genital mutilation. Women suffer extreme violence and sexual abuse in armed conflict. Forty thousand women in Canada were subjected to domestic violence in 2009 alone, and over 600 aboriginal women have gone missing or have been murdered in Canada in recent decades.

Countries will only succeed when women's voices are heard, when their fundamental rights are affirmed, when their dignity is respected and when their lives are secure.

* * *

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Tuesday, I presented four Canadians with Queen's Diamond Jubilee medals: journalist Barbara Kay, Professor Edward Kruk, Glenn Cheriton and George Piskor. A fifth recipient, Kristin Titus, could not be in Ottawa for the event.

All these people are much deserving recipients for their work to advance the best interests of children through family law and Divorce Act reforms built on the premise of equal, shared parenting. Equal parenting was the focus of a private member's bill I introduced in the last Parliament based on the joint House/Senate report, "For the Sake of the Children". That bill will be reintroduced in this Parliament. Conservative Party policy supports such changes.

Professor Kruk's academic research confirms other studies that show that, aside from cases of abuse or neglect, in the event of marriage breakdown, access to both mom and dad through equal, shared parenting is in the best interests of children. The time is long overdue for Canadian law and public policy to fall in line with this evidence, for the sake of the children.

* * *

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 1663, Canada welcomed the first 36 "Filles du Roy".

Three hundred and fifty years later, I must point out the important role they played in building the city of Montreal, and also the import role of women in Canada's history.

On this International Women's Day, I would like to pay tribute to all the women working in my riding: Madeleine Juneau, who promotes Maison Saint-Gabriel; Anne-Marie and Johanne of Auberge communautaire du Sud-Ouest who have been supporting homeless youth for 25 years; and all those working at Madame prend congé, which I will be visiting this evening.

The first "Filles du Roy" arrived 350 years ago. It was just the beginning of a long, great and moving story for all Quebeckers and Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

RETIRING SENATOR

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful, dedicated senator who is now retiring after two decades of service to Canadians and Manitobans. Senator Stratton has been a personal friend and an invaluable mentor to me. We share many of the same interests and passions.

[*Translation*]

This includes the French language.

[*English*]

Senator Stratton spent the early years of his career as an architect, and after working many years in that field, he became an instructor at Red River College. His commitment to our community evolved and he served on many boards, including the University of Winnipeg and the United Way of Winnipeg, and in March 1993, he was appointed to the Senate of Canada.

Statements by Members

For the last 20 years, Senator Stratton has worked tirelessly toward the betterment of Canada, often sacrificing personal and family time in his service to this country. He has done us all very proud, and I am sure I speak for all of my colleagues in this House when I say that he will be greatly missed. I ask the House to join me in thanking Senator Terry Stratton for his years of service and in wishing him all the best in retirement.

* * *

STOMPIN' TOM CONNORS

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, Canada lost a legend and at the same time lost a part of its soul. Stompin' Tom Connors, a Canadian icon, died too soon. I wish to pay tribute to a man who loved our country, as only he could, and made us better Canadians for knowing him, because he was:

Bud the Spud, from the bright red mud, a trucker and a miner
A tobacco picker from Tillsonburg, a hockey fan no finer
From Sudbury in the nickel mines to Hockey Night tonight
to Big Joe Mufferaw from Ottawa, and he sure enjoyed the fight.

He was everyman, he was you and me, he always dressed in black
So you'd focus on his words, and not his stetson hat
And what he said, we understood, because he was so clear
That Canada is number one, and for that we'll always cheer

From east to west, from coast to coast, we know you loved the game
To us, you've won the Stanley Cup, you'll be in the hall of fame
So Stompin' Tom or Bud the Spud by any other name
You're rolling down the highway smiling to the good old hockey game.

Thanks Stompin' Tom. We will see him around.

* * *

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): In a country where just 25% of city councillors are women, I am proud to represent Newton—North Delta, where 50%, seven out of fourteen, of our councillors are women. In a country where just 16% of all mayors are women, I am proud that in my riding, we beat those odds. Both of our two mayors are female.

I am proud to sit in a Parliament that, since the last election, has more chairs occupied by women than in all of its history. Currently 77 members in this House are female. I am proud to stand with a party to which most of those seats belong; 39% of the NDP caucus is represented by women.

On International Women's Day, I want to take a moment to celebrate Canada's female politicians at every level of government and the contributions they make each day toward more inclusive discussions, more representative decisions and ultimately, a fairer and better Canada.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking action to eliminate gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is not just a women's issue; it is an issue that affects all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

That is why Canada's International Women's Day theme this year is, "Working Together: Engaging Men to End Violence against Women".

● (1110)

[*English*]

That is why we are supporting the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia and the BC Lions Football Club in their efforts to reduce violence against women and girls by encouraging men and boys to be more than bystanders.

This project engages football teams and coaches to help provide youth with the practical tools required to break the silence on violence against women and girls. It is through projects like this that our government will continue to make women and girls safer.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MARIE-DUPUIS WOMEN'S CENTRE

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, I had the privilege of participating in an International Women's Day celebration at the Centre de femmes Marie-Dupuis in Notre-Dame-des-Prairies.

For 21 years now, this organization has offered a place where all women in my region can go for training, legal assistance, support and information. Its focus is on collective action, and it goes without saying that people at the centre are very upset about the Conservative government's attacks on employment insurance.

On this International Women's Day, I want to pay tribute to all of the women working together to create the world of tomorrow, the fair and egalitarian world that all Canadians want.

* * *

[*English*]

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in honour of International Women's Day, I would like to show just how far Canada has come in terms of women in politics. Not only do we have talented women in leading portfolios in our cabinet, but Canada has 77 female MPs, which is over 25%. This is a historic high for our country.

In my riding of Calgary Centre, I am proud to say that in 1917, Hannah Gale was elected to city council, the first woman elected to any political office in Canada. We now have women making up 30% of our Senate, and 89% of Canadians are served by female premiers in six of 13 provinces and territories. From coast to coast to coast, women are working with our Conservative government to help make our country better.

Women are standing strong for all Canadians, in our Parliament, legislatures, councils and school boards. Let us thank women who step up to make our communities, provinces and country a better place for every one of us.

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day begins like any other. The sun rises on all those places where women have no voice. Morning after morning, some are victims of anger, others are victims of violence. They are sometimes locked up, beaten or even killed.

We see those women as we go about our daily tasks, morning, noon and night. Our time is our own; we have freedom and we have our lives. What is missing most this Women's Day are the voices of those who have no voice.

Today, tomorrow and the day after, I hope we can be that voice. I hope that every woman can experience days filled with freedom and peace. Above all, I hope they are loved and respected.

* * *

UNIONS

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to this morning's *Journal de Montréal*:

Éric Duhaime's book *Libérez-nous des syndicats* was launched under police escort Wednesday night in Montreal after threats were made against the author and the owner of the restaurant hosting the event. Peter Sergakis, owner of Rebel, a restaurant on Sainte-Catherine, told the *Journal* that he had received three threatening phone calls the week prior to the launch of the controversial columnist's book.

Libérez-nous des syndicats, the book in question, attempts to protect the right of workers and taxpayers. No matter what people think of the book, everyone should agree that threats of violence are unacceptable and that freedom of expression should be protected in Canada.

[English]

The book coming out coincides with other revelations of union-related extremism. It is time that we take a stand against this intimidation and defend liberty and speech.

* * *

• (1115)

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, may we finally be free of the Conservatives in 2015.

We already knew that the Conservatives were completely out to lunch on the F-35 issue. Now they want to replace our CF-18s with a fighter jet that cannot fly through clouds or in temperatures below -15°C. That takes the cake. This proves just how incompetent the Conservatives are when it comes to military procurement.

One can only conclude that the F-35 is like the Senate, but with wings. Both are examples of mismanagement of public funds; both are cumbersome for the government and cost way too much money; and both seem to be the subject of embarrassing new revelations almost daily. The Conservatives, who adore the F-35, decided to give it a second chance by establishing a bogus secretariat.

Oral Questions

Much like their Senate reform, their reform of the F-35 procurement process is going nowhere. The only real solution in both cases is to abolish them completely.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government continues to focus on creating jobs and economic growth across the country. Today, StatsCan numbers revealed that another 50,000 net new jobs were created in February. That is more than 950,000 net new jobs created since the depths of the recession. This is a positive sign that our government's economic action plan is working and that Canada's economy is on the right track. In fact, Canada has the best job growth record of all G7 countries. We will continue to focus on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

Unlike the opposition, we have a low-tax plan for Canadians. The NDP continues to push risky spending schemes and a \$20 billion job-killing carbon tax. This new tax would kill Canadian jobs and stall the Canadian economy. Canadians can see through the NDP leader's plans and will reject his risky schemes.

Our government will stand up against the NDP leader's job-killing carbon tax and for Canadian jobs and economic growth.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the NDP called on the government to extend Mr. Page's term until a new Parliamentary Budget Officer was chosen, the President of the Treasury Board's office attacked the NDP and said it would be against the law to make an interim appointment. Imagine our surprise when late yesterday Conservatives appointed an interim PBO.

Did Conservatives break the law with this appointment, or did the President of the Treasury Board mislead Canadians?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we want a Parliamentary Budget Officer who is non-partisan and a credible source of opinion for us on fiscal matters. We are very pleased that the office of the Library of Parliament and Ms. L'Heureux have agreed to take on that responsibility on an interim basis. They are, of course, carrying out a search for a new officer.

When it comes to fiscal matters, Canadians know there is really no reason to listen to the NDP. Our government has been delivering. While it talks about higher spending and higher taxes, we have been delivering on a plan to get the fiscal house in order. That is why the deficit has been cut in half and we are on our way to a balanced budget.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not the problem. The President of the Treasury Board's comments were clear. Appointing a Parliamentary Budget Officer on an interim basis is against the law.

There are only two possibilities: either the Conservatives broke the law or the President of the Treasury Board has once again been spouting nonsense and misleading the House. So, did they break the law or fail to tell the truth?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, we want a Parliamentary Budget Officer that is non-partisan and a credible source of opinion for us on fiscal matters.

The Library of Parliament is carrying out a search for a new PBO. I am pleased, and we thank Ms. L'Heureux for accepting this interim appointment.

When it comes to fiscal responsibilities, our leadership is clear. We have reduced the deficit and we are on our way to a balanced budget, unlike the NDP, which wants higher taxes and a huge deficit.

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Ms. L'Heureux is well respected, but her role involves supervising the management of the Library of Parliament, which, frankly, is quite different from the role of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. What is more, in her current role, she cannot fulfill the duties of the Parliamentary Budget Officer on a full-time basis. In fact, she does not meet the criteria that she herself set for this position. Does anyone meet these criteria? Yes: Kevin Page.

Rather than appointing someone to the position on an interim basis, why did the Conservatives not extend the mandate of the most qualified employee?

* * *

● (1120)

[English]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. Actually, the parliamentary budget office is part of the Library of Parliament. That is how it is structured. We are pleased that Ms. L'Heureux is actually quite qualified to carry out this responsibility on an interim basis. I am surprised that New Democrats lack confidence in her. She is a very capable individual.

However, I will say this. Today, we have some more news, proving that this government is on the right track when it comes to economic matters, and that is the breaking news of today's job numbers: 50,000 net new jobs and 950,000 jobs since the economic downturn. When it comes to following the right path of job creation and economic growth, it is this government that is doing it.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the great moments in Canadian history was when

the Prime Minister said that the F-35 was the only fighter jet to meet the needs of the air force.

Can the Conservatives confirm that they believe the best plane for our troops does not have to fly through clouds or when the temperature is -15°?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the government has not made a decision on any purchase of a replacement for the aging CF-18s. At this point, our expert panel and the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat are going through a full options analysis to see what options are out there to replace the aging CF-18s.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of mismanagement Conservatives are having a tough time explaining. They are still pushing the F-35, a plane U.S. test pilots said cannot fly through clouds and cannot operate below 15°. Pilots reported, "Aft visibility will get the pilot gunned every time". This plane just does not work.

Will that be taken into account before the government rolls ahead with another sole-source contract?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, the expert panel that has been put together to work with the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat is examining all options to replace the aging CF-18s. All information will obviously be taken into account.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, will the next budget correct part of the damage that the Conservatives have done to the women of this country: like when the Conservatives eliminated the funding agreements that had been negotiated with provinces and territories to provide \$5 billion for child care and early learning programs; like when the Conservatives took the pay equity regime for federal public servants off the human rights table?

Why would the budget not reverse the closing of 12 of the 16 Status of Women offices?

I have other suggestions as well.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to wish everyone a happy International Women's Day.

Of course, Canada has been named the best country in the world to be a woman, but we all believe there is much work to be done, especially in the area of ending violence against women and girls.

Oral Questions

We have taken a concerted effort on this level. Just recently we launched another call for proposals for innovative projects to ask men and boys to take a stand to end violence against women and girls. We have increased the funding to these programs to the highest level ever in Canadian history. However, we also want men to take a stand on International Women's Day to end violence against women and girls.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue with my suggestions. The Conservatives decided to increase the eligibility age for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement to 67 without providing any financial justification.

Do the Conservatives not see that this will hurt a very large number of women who struggle to get by below the poverty line? Old age security represents almost 30% of the income of women between 65 and 67 years of age. Why not eliminate this unjustified and heartless Conservative measure in the next budget?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled by the member's question because we know in our government that seniors have done so much to contribute to our country and build our country, which is exactly why we have done more for seniors than any other government, including the one he led.

We have created the position of Minister of State for Seniors, an independent ministerial position to look after our seniors and their issues. Our government has made sure we have one of the lowest poverty rates among seniors in the world, lower than it ever was under the Liberals.

I have to say, he is completely wrong—

• (1125)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about women as victims within aboriginal societies, but what about aboriginal women in the criminal justice system?

Will the government have to build more prisons to house the ever-increasing number of aboriginal women? The reconciliation meetings made it clear that there is a lack of services and support for aboriginal women who are incarcerated. Does the government have plans for rehabilitation programs for aboriginal women in prison?

[English]

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Now the Liberals are calling for us to build new prisons, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if they know what they want.

The fact is that our prison systems are working to help aboriginal women. We are a leader. Correctional Service of Canada is a leader

in terms of the services we are providing for aboriginal women who are serving sentences.

We need to look at the whole issue of why women are getting involved and becoming criminals. I think they are in a vulnerable stage. When the opposition is not supporting Bill S-2, which empowers women on reserve, it is not helping aboriginal women.

* * *

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has become increasingly clear that Conservatives prefer to keep Canadians in the dark on how public money is being spent.

The PBO analyzed the estimates and the cost of the war in Afghanistan and the F-35s. Instead of strengthening the PBO, Conservatives are making it weaker. Instead of welcoming oversight, Conservatives are hiding the numbers.

Instead of being more transparent, why are Conservatives breaking their promises?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have some very firm rules in this House about the delivery of estimates, public accounts and reports on plans and priorities, which are the accountability reports by the various departments of the Government of Canada. We adhere to those standards. We are pleased to share those. I tabled the estimates myself just over a week ago and we will continue to do so. Of course, the Parliamentary Budget Officer will be a credible non-partisan choice in the future as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in response to this nonsense, I want to quote a document from 2006. "Governments cannot be held to account if Parliament does not know the accurate state of public finances."

Who said that? The Conservatives did in their election platform. Was that just meaningless rhetoric? Instead of strengthening the Parliamentary Budget Officer's powers, they have attacked him and undermined him at every opportunity. Instead of being transparent, they forced him to go to court to obtain documents.

Why have they abandoned their promises of transparency?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, we want a non-partisan Parliamentary Budget Officer who provides credible opinions on tax matters. The Library of Parliament is currently searching for a new Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Oral Questions

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again Conservatives are making things up and running full speed away from accountability.

Yesterday I asked the immigration minister about the disappointing numbers around refugee resettlement. Instead of taking responsibility, he just made excuses. Instead of living up to their commitments to increase refugee settlement, Conservatives settled 25% fewer refugees than the year before. They failed to meet even their own target.

When will the minister stop the spin and fix this problem?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member opposite is not aware that our by far largest refugee resettlement program was for Iraqis who were in Syria. There is a civil war in Syria. As a consequence, we had to shut down our embassy and immigration office in Damascus last spring, thereby effectively suspending the resettlement of our largest refugee program.

We are trying very hard to get that back on track by processing out of Amman, Beirut and Ankara. However, even our government is unable to overcome the problem of the civil war in Syria when it interrupts the processing of those applications.

That said, we continue to resettle one out of every 10 resettled refugees worldwide and lead the world in per capita terms.

● (1130)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they failed to make their own settlement targets, but all we get are more excuses and much more spin.

For some reason, the minister still refuses to meet with leading Syrian-Canadian organizations. He will not meet with the Syrian National Council, the Syrian Canadian Council, the Syrian Expatriates Organization, Canadian Relief for Syria, the Syrian Student Association or Watan.

The Syrian refugee crisis is worsening. Why will the minister not meet with these groups?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone can criticize me for having met with an inadequate number of Canadian cultural communities and organizations.

It is true that I have not met with every single one, but I can say that I have met with many groups of Syrian Canadians and dozens of Syrian Canadians on this issue in the recent past.

This week, I was the first minister in 37 years to go to Iraq, in part to meet with Syrians dealing with the refugee crisis and to work with them, our embassy and our local officials on how we can help in that local situation.

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite the Conservatives' lovely promises, true pay equity is still a long way off. Women's economic standing will not improve under a Conservative government.

The minister responsible for butchering employment insurance is even looking for new ways to further restrict women's access to benefits. Believe it or not, pregnancy is now considered to be refusal of employment. Just as many women work part-time as men. That means the minister is targeting them with her quotas.

Will the Conservatives stop punishing women just because they are women?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the accusations made by the member are completely ludicrous. The reality is that our government is focused on jobs, on economic growth and on long-term prosperity, which I believe is incredibly important to me as a woman.

We have created 950,000 net new jobs. Our unemployment is 7%. These are all positive factors that help us all, including my gender. However, more specifically, I am very proud of the work we have been doing with employment insurance to ensure that the product is there for people when they need it most, when they lose their jobs through circumstances no fault of their own.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for butchering employment insurance wants to fix something that is not broken.

The provinces get \$2 billion for training programs to help unemployed workers develop the skills they need to find work.

Even though nobody objects to that, the Conservatives are once again eliminating a program that works.

Why not just renew the training transfer?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that this government has done a lot to help people acquire the skills they need to find jobs.

Here are some of the programs we created: the apprenticeship completion grant, which the NDP voted against; the apprenticeship incentive grant, which the NDP voted against; and the apprenticeship job creation tax credit, which the NDP voted against.

In addition, this government has just created 50,000 more jobs, for a total of 950,000 net new jobs in Canada since the recession.

Oral Questions

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we always get the same answers.

The minister responsible for butchering employment insurance has never set foot in Joliette.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Joliette.

Ms. Francine Raynault: Mr. Speaker, she is sending inspectors to spy on the unemployed, close Service Canada offices in the regions and axe training programs for the unemployed.

She claims her reform will improve our regional economies. If she knew how our seasonal industries operate, she would know that they are functioning quite well.

Why is she so bent on punishing people who lose their jobs? Just how far will she go with the Conservative policy of abandoning the regions?

• (1135)

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of International Women's Day, I would like to remind my counterpart on the other side that calling ministers names that do not correspond with their positions does not help decorum in this House whatsoever. Quite frankly, those members should know better.

What we are doing with respect to employment insurance is just making some common sense changes. The context of the program is not changing whatsoever. We want to connect Canadians with available jobs, available jobs that we have created since 2009, 950,000 net new jobs. We want to provide them with information to get them back to work.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I encourage the minister to go look at the rates in my region, which went up.

According to a report just days before—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Oh, Mr. Speaker, we will get to that conversation later.

According to a report just days before the \$1.8 billion McGill contract was awarded, Arthur Porter was already involving SNC-Lavalin in discussions about future McGill projects in Kuwait.

It is clear Conservatives made a mistake in trusting Mr. Porter and promoting to a national security role. It is the government's responsibility to make sure its appointments do not put our national security at risk.

When will the government admit Mr. Porter's appointment was its own mistake, and when will it remove him from Privy Council?

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, security clearances have not been relaxed under our Conservative government. In fact, we have introduced more rigorous checks for these types of appointments.

Arthur Porter submitted his resignation some time ago. The responsibilities that he held have nothing to do with the allegations he is facing now.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will take this as a factual admission, not necessarily a verbal admission.

[*Translation*]

The member's defence of this man is rather pathetic.

The Conservatives appointed Mr. Porter to head the Security Intelligence Review Committee in 2008, and he resigned in 2011.

During that time, he contributed generously to the Conservative Party's election fund and did business with SNC-Lavalin and its former executives, Pierre Duhaime and Riadh Ben Aissa.

What do all those people have in common? They have all been charged with fraud, corruption and misappropriation of funds in multiple scandals.

Despite all of those revelations, Mr. Porter is still a member of the Privy Council. Why?

[*English*]

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Porter has resigned, and the responsibilities that he held have nothing to do with the allegations that he is being charged with.

If we are going to talk about individuals who sat on the SIRC committee and who made donations, why do we not talk about donations that were made to the New Democratic Party by the current leader of the Liberal Party who, before he sat on SIRC, made several donations to the NDP?

* * *

[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to cellphone and Internet service is improving, but is still not optimal. In my riding, a number of people who live north of the Saint-Maurice River have no service.

How will the government support the 600,000 Canadians living in outlying areas who still do not have cellphone service?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I would like to remind members that we made a very important announcement for the future of Canada's wireless sector yesterday. There will be a 700 MHz spectrum auction, which will be very effective. Rules about roaming and tower sharing will be tightened. We will also ensure that there is a fourth player in all parts of the country to foster competition and, we hope, to provide better rates for consumers.

Oral Questions

I would like to remind members that, in 2009, the House adopted the broadband Canada program, which connected more than 220,000 Canadian households to high-speed Internet. My colleague definitely belongs to the wrong party because his party voted against this program, which has been very successful in Canada.

* * *

[English]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with just three weeks left before Kevin Page retires, the government finally released a job description for the next Parliamentary Budget Officer. Shockingly, the new budget officer will be required to achieve consensus among parliamentarians before releasing reports. Fat chance of that happening. Government MPs like to pretend things will cost less than they really do. The budget officer protects against that, but cannot if forced to achieve consensus among the same people doing the pretending.

Why are the Conservatives manipulating the job description to suit their partisan agenda?

• (1140)

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may have heard me say this before: we intend to see a non-partisan, credible source of opinion on fiscal matters in the next Parliamentary Budget Officer. It is the Library of Parliament that is leading the search for a new PBO.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, telling the truth is no longer in the job description.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer does not need to achieve consensus—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Guelph now has the floor.

Mr. Frank Valeriote: Mr. Speaker, the budget officer does not need to achieve consensus. The budget officer needs to do rigorous independent analysis of the numbers presented to parliamentarians, not co-operate with the PMO spin machine. The Auditor General job description did not require consensus. The Ethics Commissioner job did not require consensus. It required them to act with integrity and speak the truth.

Why are the Conservatives looking to hire a lapdog to do their bidding, rather than working hard to protect Canadian tax dollars?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is in a grumpy mood ever since he was tagged with the robocalls in his riding, but we on this side of the House are in a happy mood: there are 50,000 net new jobs throughout the country. We are taking Canada in the right direction and we will continue to do so.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after voting against an NDP bill, the Conservatives pompously announced the creation of a committee to examine the issue of French in private businesses under federal jurisdiction, yet for a year and a half, the minister has been unable to answer simple questions. Who will chair the committee? What will the committee's mandate be? Who will sit on the committee?

Then, today, the Conservatives suddenly came to the conclusion that regulating this matter was unnecessary. The finding of the Minister of Industry's so-called report was prepared in advance.

Why is the minister taking such an amateur approach to such a serious matter?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP pompously announced a very irresponsible bill, Bill C-315. Rather than introducing bills that have been written on the back of a napkin, we want to check the facts. That is what we did. We set up a committee of independent experts and deputy ministers supported by experts in their departments.

The situation of French in Quebec companies under federal jurisdiction is practically the same as in those under provincial jurisdiction. We are not going to create more red tape—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I can take the Minister of Industry's contempt. I am used to it. However, I cannot take it when the government attacks the rights of workers.

The minister needs to deal with the issues under his jurisdiction in a more rigorous and transparent manner. His report indicates that 12 out of 1,760 companies were consulted. One does not need a university degree to figure out that the sample is not representative and that the minister just does not get it. A report that refers to the fact that employees have access to their collective agreement in French as a best practice when that should be a right is not worth much.

Will the minister go back to the drawing board and recognize that his inaction is creating two categories of workers?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is trying really hard to hide the fact that he did not conduct any analyses. He is trying to start political squabbles in the House. The Orange Bloc is spouting the same old rhetoric as the Bloc Québécois. What is more, the Orange Bloc wants to increase red tape and impose a carbon tax while it is at it, increasing taxes by \$50 billion. Do hon. members know what that does? It brings productivity to a halt, prevents companies from doing business and kills jobs.

Our policies on this side of the House have generated 50,000 new jobs in the month of February. That is what Canadians want.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives do not seem to understand that part of the job of government is to actually serve Canadians.

Tax time is just around the corner. So far, the Conservatives have already stopped letting Canadians file by phone, and with very little warning, they have stopped mailing tax forms out. Now the estimates show another \$100 million in cuts coming to the CRA.

While the Prime Minister's appointed senators fudge their paperwork, honest, hard-working Canadians are trying to play by the rules. Why are the Conservatives making it so hard for Canadians to even file their taxes?

• (1145)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the way Canadians file their taxes is changing, and we are changing to meet those needs. We certainly encourage Canadians to file online, and more and more are taking advantage of that opportunity in a safe and secure way, but they can still use paper. They simply need to go to the post office or pick up the phone. We are accepting paper filing.

It is important to acknowledge that last year, 1.3 million packages were mailed out that were not used.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are creating a lot of confusion by changing the rules about filing taxes. Forms are no longer being mailed out, it is no longer possible to file by phone, and the Conservatives have even changed the rules about filing online.

Where will taxpayers go for help? Will they go to their local CRA office? No, those were shut down in March. Will they go to their post office? No, because the Conservatives shut many of them down with their massive cuts. Even the ones that are still open do not have enough French forms. What is worse, the volunteer program that helps community groups has been axed.

Why are the Conservatives making it so difficult for Canadians who simply want to play by the rules?

[English]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really important that CRA adapt to the changes in terms of how Canadians are filing their taxes. There still is a very robust volunteer program that is supported by CRA in terms of helping seniors.

I do think it is important to recognize again that 1.3 million packages were mailed out that were never used. I think that is a waste. Certainly, the post office is still available. If they simply pick up the phone, packages will be mailed out. Again, CRA is there to meet the needs of Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents work in the auto sector. It is a major contributor to our

region's economy and employment. Could this fine Minister of Industry update the House on employment and the economy?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, finally, a relevant question in the House this morning. I thank the member for Oxford for asking such a good question.

Today, General Motors announced a \$250-million investment in the CAMI assembly plant in Ingersoll, Ontario. Moreover, as I said earlier, 50,000 new jobs were created in February. This good news once more highlights that our government's record speaks for itself. We stand by our plan for creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' complete failure on EI benefits has been a total mess.

Anna Silverman, of Gatineau, has been told that she is not eligible for maternity benefits. She would have had more than enough hours to qualify, but because of an outbreak of measles at the school she was working at, she was forced to stay home. As a result, she is nine hours short, and Service Canada is rejecting her claim. The government has amended the EI act for members of the armed forces to avoid this kind of situation. Why will it not do the same for young mothers like Anna Silverman?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that we, on our side, do empathize with the plight of this individual, but that being said, there are eligibility requirements for all people who take part in the EI program. An individual simply must have the required number of hours in order to establish a claim.

As always, employment insurance will continue to be there for people who have accumulated enough hours to qualify for the benefits.

[Translation]

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for butchering employment insurance keeps saying that she is making changes to help the economy, for the greater good of the unemployed and to help families find work.

That is very strange. She seems to be the only one to see the good in her reform. Workers, mayors, unions and even businesspeople are saying the exact opposite.

Could the minister mean to say, "I want what is good for you and I want your goods as well"?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a ludicrous comment coming from the NDP.

Oral Questions

Our government is making common-sense changes. The reality is employment insurance will be there for those who need it, when they need it most, which is when they lose their jobs as a result of something that is unforeseen and not in their control.

However, turning to the other side of it too, the unemployment rate in this country is 7%, which is the best it has been in many, many years. We are very proud of the number of net new jobs we have created: 950,000. We are getting the job done.

• (1150)

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us see if we have this straight, because people are still shaking their heads.

On one hand, Conservatives are sending EI inspectors to people's homes to spy on them to check up on how many résumés they are sending out each week. On the other hand, Conservatives are taking away a \$2-billion transfer to the provinces, a transfer that helps people get back to work, to retrain, and to re-enter the workforce.

Why can Conservatives not see that unemployed Canadians need new skills to find a job more than they need Big Brother spying on them?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will not speculate on what is to come, but I must say that I am very proud of this government's record on skills training. In fact, I have to point out some things the NDP has voted against that have led to some fantastic numbers in February: 50,000 net new jobs created, in fact.

The NDP voted against every job creation measure put forward by this government. It voted against apprenticeship completion grants. It voted against students who need those apprenticeship grants. In fact, in the spirit of International Women's Day, I hope that those women who took those apprenticeship grants remember that the NDP voted against them.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, employment insurance is not the Conservatives' only failure. Far from it.

They also fail when it comes to consulting the public. We recently learned that consultations on the environment and the Old Harry project were quietly abandoned.

For two years, the Minister of the Environment has refused to take responsibility and get the federal government involved in the issue, in response to unprecedented demands from coastal communities in five provinces.

Why does the minister refuse to take responsibility for this?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord, which covers Old Harry, is a historic agreement.

Our Conservative government signed this agreement with the Government of Quebec. The NDP should be pleased with it.

Both the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada are prepared to move forward because this will create jobs and economic growth, a concept that is totally foreign to the NDP.

* * *

[English]

ARMS TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, negotiations for the global arms treaty resume on March 18. To date, the Conservative government's support for this treaty has been erratic and has taken some extremely regressive positions going into the final rounds of negotiations.

Why does the government think that bullets do not need the same risk assessments as the weapons that shoot them?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada already has some of the highest global standards in the export control of munitions. We believe that any treaty regarding the sale of munitions helps move the international community closer to our world-leading standards.

That said, the legitimate civilian use of firearms for sporting, hunting and collecting purposes should not be the target of the arms trade treaty.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, documents reveal that under the Conservatives, Canada has been reduced by the PMO to playing a low-key, minimal role at the arms trade treaty negotiations. This is a far cry from the leadership Canada took in the international effort to ban the use of landmines.

If the Conservatives claim to stand up for victims, why are they working to undermine international efforts to crack down on the illicit arms trade in places like Syria and Mali? Why will they not stand up for victims of armed conflict?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, this government has an excellent record of working hard to ensure that the arms treaty is moving forward and that we work to ensure that there is legitimate civilian use of firearms for sporting, hunting and collecting purposes and not for civilian unrest. We will continue to work with others to determine how to move forward. On the ATT, Canada continues to support the arms treaty.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a funny way of actually supporting the negotiations when first the Conservatives instruct our diplomats to drag their feet on the treaty. Then they appoint Steve Torino to be the only civil society representative on Canada's delegation. This is the president of the Shooting Sports Association. This is the same person who recommended removing restrictions on hand guns and assault rifles in Canada.

Oral Questions

Why is the Conservative government ignoring Canadian values and sabotaging vital arms treaty negotiations?

• (1155)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has always been the case for international meetings, the composition of Canadian delegations for this type of international gathering is the minister's prerogative and responsibility. Our position on this treaty has not changed. Canada supports efforts to establish international standards for arms transfers in order to help prevent illicit transfers that fuel conflict and encourage terrorism or organized crime.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, clearly they do not understand that this treaty is about saving lives in places like Syria and Africa. Now, on the eve of this treaty and the negotiations, we learn that the government is actually trying to illegally export arms to Latin America, if one can believe it. We should be working with our international partners to cut the flow of small arms.

Why are the Conservatives allowing gun lobbyists to represent Canada in global arms negotiations? Remember, these are the lobbyists that even the Prime Minister finds too extreme.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, Canada continues to support the arms treaty, but let me tell my hon. colleague this: support provided to partner countries through the anti-crime capacity-building program directly improves security in our hemisphere, especially by combatting transnational crime and its work to bring guns to Canada. We will continue working with the parties responsible and ensure that our government is committed to reducing crime and improving security around the world.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's theme for International Women's Week is "Working Together: Engaging Men to End Violence against Women".

Our Conservative government is taking concrete action to eliminate violence against women and girls. We have been working with communities to improve safety and security and have supported a number of important projects that work to end violence across the country.

Could the Minister for Status of Women please inform the House on Canada's international leadership and our efforts to combat violence against women?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would specifically like to thank the member for the work that she has done to end violence against women and girls and her groundbreaking and worldly efforts on human trafficking. Canada, of course, is committed to ending violence against women and girls at home and abroad. Just this week, at the United Nations, we have taken a leadership role to take our message from Canada to the world that engaging men and boys is an important part in ending violence against women.

While men are the perpetrators of violence against women and girls, the majority of men are good and want to help, so we ask them to take a stand and not be bystanders and work with us and women across this country to end violence against women and girls.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the UN reported that one million people have fled the unrelenting horror in Syria, a figure increasing at the alarming rate of 6,000 refugees daily, half of them children, a humanitarian disaster compounded by three million internally displaced and the appalling number of over 70,000 dead.

Given that the Assad regime remains willing to slaughter its own, will the government increase its humanitarian assistance, facilitate family reunification and resettlement in Canada, and join the international effort to bring Assad and Syrian war criminals before the International Criminal Court?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is very much concerned about the situation that is going on in Syria. We have made our position very clear that Mr. Assad must go. As far as the International Criminal Court is concerned, we will let the people of Syria decide what Mr. Assad's future is, but let us be very clear: Mr. Assad must go, to bring peace back to Syria.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are feeling the effects of employment insurance reform at home.

[English]

For over 30 years, Robert Devaney, from my riding, has been a teacher, for at least 12 of those years, a supply teacher. Between placements he sometimes has to rely on EI, a program he has paid into for decades.

The Conservatives' new rules mean he is no longer eligible. He may even have to turn to social assistance. Is this the kind of common sense they are talking about?

Why are Conservatives making life harder for our teachers?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, employment insurance will be available for those who need it in the circumstances they find themselves when they lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

With respect to the program, we are making some common sense changes that will help people find jobs and connect with jobs in their communities.

Oral Questions

It is very important to be reminded that EI will be there for people when they do need it.

* * *

• (1200)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for over 25 years, aboriginal women living on reserves have been without the legal protections that are available to all other Canadians. In cases of family violence, they are kicked out of their homes with no place to go. First nations women, international organizations and even the Manitoba NDP agree that this must change.

As today is International Women's Day, would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development please update the House on what our government is doing to protect aboriginal women living on reserves?

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has introduced matrimonial property rights legislation to protect thousands of aboriginal women living on reserves across Canada. In situations of family violence, the bill would allow judges to enforce emergency protection orders and remove a violent partner. Tragically, the NDP and Liberals continue to oppose this legislation.

The bill is long overdue. We continue to stand up for aboriginal women so they can have the same rights and protections as all Canadian women across the country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for butchering employment insurance should start by listening to the workers, the employers and the elected officials who are telling her—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Saint-Jean has the floor.

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, it is the minister who is responsible for butchering employment insurance. She is responsible—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Saint-Jean has the floor.

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for butchering employment insurance should start by listening to the workers, the employers and the elected officials who are telling her that her reform makes no sense. If she would come out of her bubble a little, and really went to meet with the workers on the ground, perhaps she would understand the disastrous consequences of her reform.

Does the minister understand that there is often an enormous difference between theory and practice?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I wish the member opposite would understand is that a gentleman does not call a female cabinet minister names in the House of Commons.

For all of their discussions, it has become apparent that the acronym NDP really does stand for no decorum party.

Our government is very much committed to making sure that employment insurance is in place for people when they need it. They need it when they lose their jobs as a result of unforeseen circumstances or circumstances beyond their control.

The bigger picture is that the economy is doing better as a result of the changes we have been making, and we will continue to make sure we look out for the long-term prospect.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is refusing to recognize one of the Quebec nation's fundamental rights: the right to protect its language, French.

The Minister of Industry released a report whose outcome was preordained, a report that ignores workers' problems. The whole thing was just a front for the federal government's complacency when it comes to French language issues.

Rather than hide behind a report that comes out of nowhere, the minister should do as the Bloc Québécois suggests and apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. Nothing could be simpler, clearer or easier.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, it would be irresponsible to do as my colleague suggests and apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses in Quebec. That is because the study shows that the place of French in federally regulated businesses is already very similar to the place of French in provincially regulated businesses.

Doing as he suggests would result in a major administrative burden. His method ignores the fact that our businesses are operating in a global market. There are external factors, such as headquarters located outside Quebec and clients who require service in their language. Our focus is on productivity, and that is how we will continue to address this issue. We have 50,000—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

* * *

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport's position on the Champlain Bridge issue simply does not cut it.

Routine Proceedings

From the beginning, Ottawa has refused to co-operate with the Government of Quebec regarding what form of public transit will be included. The Minister of Transport is shifting the blame onto Quebec, accusing it of not saying what mode of transportation it prefers. How can Quebec settle on a transportation mode when Ottawa refuses to say whether the bridge will be adapted to it? Quebec is not about to lay down tracks, only to stop at the bridge and wait for the federal government to decide what it wants to do with the bridge.

Will the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities stop working in a vacuum and confirm that the new bridge will include whatever sort of public transit infrastructure the Government of Quebec wants?

• (1205)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are going to build a bridge. At the same time, we are open to some form of public transit.

The Government of Quebec must indicate the kind of public transit it wants so that we can work to that end. The federal government is providing Quebec with a generous envelope for infrastructure. The Government of Quebec can give priority to whatever projects it wants.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the hon. Dan D'Autremont, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: On the occasion of International Women's Day, I would like to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Professor Stéphanie Bélanger, who has been recognized for her academic work on the advancement of women in the Canadian Forces. She is accompanied by cadets from the Royal Military College of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my point of order is on the subject of decorum, which we have had so much dialogue about in this House. To see true changes in decorum, people have to take personal accountability for their language in this House. Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to not once, not twice, but three times in this House today, that rather than trying to make a policy point through an intelligent question, members of the opposition used name-calling of our ministers, ministers of the Crown, to try to make a point. This is not decorum.

Especially on International Women's Day, when we have female members of cabinet standing up for this country, talking about policy, why can we not elevate debate to the point of intelligence rather than name-calling? Apologize.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment is saying. However, since when is the word “butchering” an insult? We are talking about—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, saying “the minister responsible for butchering employment insurance” can hardly be considered hurtful here in the House.

The government is butchering the employment insurance program to the point where women working in the fishing industry will not have enough money to stay in their homes.

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite common that ministers responsible for certain areas have the word “responsible” in their titles. To use that word today as a veiled insult to a minister shows a lack of respect. It shows a lack of respect for the minister, the House and the Speaker.

[English]

The Speaker: I have heard enough on this point. I will look at the blues and come back to the House with a decision on this particular turn of phrase.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 19 petitions.

* * *

• (1210)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 5th report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. In accordance with its order of reference on Monday, February 25, 2013, the committee has considered votes 1(c) and 10(c) under Environment, and the supplementary estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, and reports the same.

Routine Proceedings

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 6th report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. In accordance with its order of reference on Monday, February 25, 2013, the committee has considered votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 under Environment, and the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, and reports the same.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the order of reference on Friday, February 15, 2013, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 9th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture in relation to the motion adopted on Tuesday, March 5, 2013, regarding the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's user fee proposal for importer licensing for non-federally registered sector products to Parliament.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 8th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, the supplementary estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, and the 9th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs on the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

* * *

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-483, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (escorted temporary absence).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce my private member's bill, seconded by the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West, also a former police officer.

My private member's bill is an enactment that would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in order to limit the authority of the institutional head to authorize the escorted temporary absence of an offender convicted of first or second degree murder.

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

* * *

PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-13, An Act to amend the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following: that the House reaffirm Canada's commitment to the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and unequivocally condemn North Korea's recent nuclear test in violation of its international obligations; that the House express its grave concern regarding the widespread violations of basic rights in North Korea, including torture and other cruel inhumane punishment, arbitrary detentions, absence of due process and the rule of law, collective punishments extending up to three generations and the existence of political prison camps; that the

House express its grave concern regarding the government of North Korea's continued pursuit of its nuclear weapons program despite the humanitarian crisis in the country, including mass starvation and prolonged food deprivation, reject North Korea's increasing aggressive actions, including ballistic missile launches and attacks against South Korea, which represents a threat to regional and international peace and security; and urge the regime in Pyongyang to abandon its reckless weapons program and instead focus its resources on meeting its citizens' basic humanitarian needs, respecting its citizens' fundamental freedoms and abiding by the United Nations Security Council resolution.

● (1215)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition signed by thousands of people from British Columbia. The petition highlights the death last year of 22-year-old Cassandra Kaulius who was killed by a drunk driver.

The people who have lost loved ones to impaired drivers, a group called Families For Justice, point out that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient. They are calling for new mandatory minimum sentencing for people who have been convicted of impaired driving causing death. The petitioners also want the Criminal Code of Canada changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death to vehicular manslaughter.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to remind the House that, normally, the Speaker must ensure that a member is in his or her seat before he recognizes the member.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine is correct. The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River was standing beside his seat, but you are correct that prior to that he was not seated in it.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

Routine Proceedings

CLIMATE CHANGE

[Translation]

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table in the House a petition signed by a large number of constituents in Beauport—Limoilou. This petition is in support of Bill C-452, which is designed to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

[English]

LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been asked by residents of Burnaby—New Westminster to table a petition that their member of Parliament refused to table.

The petitioners are concerned about the inclusion of subjective terms like gender identity and gender expression in the laws, and they are concerned that these terms are poorly defined.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons and Parliament to vote against Bill C-279 and to base all future policy decisions and legislative language on objective, measurable criteria.

[Translation]

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a petition signed by 551 supporters and members of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

They are concerned about cuts to international aid, a frozen budget and the government's marked withdrawal of help for Africa. They feel that it is an insult to Canadians' sense of generosity.

[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to present two petitions on behalf of my constituents.

In the first, petitioners are expressing opposition to the amalgamation of Service Canada and HRSDC work sites, due to resulting environmental stress, expense and disruption to work-life balance for employees.

POVERTY

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, petitioners are expressing their support for Bill C-233, an act to eliminate poverty in Canada.

It continues to be a pleasure to represent the voices of the people of Newton—North Delta in this Parliament.

SEX SELECTION

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on International Women's Day, I rise to present a petition from constituents in my riding who request that the House condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is an honour for me to present a petition from people from Onaping, Levack, Chelmsford, Dowling and Azilda.

The petitioners wish to bring to the attention of the Government of Canada that climate is our most pressing environmental issue, perhaps the defining issue of our generation. They feel it will profoundly affect our economy, health, lifestyle and social well-being.

I wish to add my name to this petition.

● (1220)

YOUTH CRIME

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of residents of Winnipeg North who want to be able to send a message to the Prime Minister and the government.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to work with other governments on the issue of youth crime and to come up with ideas and activities to steer youth away from gangs.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1115, 1120, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1128, 1136, 1138, 1146, 1148, 1151 and 1156.

[Text]

Question No. 1115—**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:**

With regard to Employment Insurance, since January 1, 2008: (a) has any department conducted (i) any job market study to determine the impact on the availability of skilled workers for seasonally-dependent industries as a result of the changes to the Employment Insurance Act, (ii) any feasibility study on the workload that will be required by each member of the new Tribunal; and (b) if so, what are the titles and file numbers of any such studies?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), as with any policy change, analysis is prepared as part of the cabinet decision-making process. These records are considered cabinet confidences. This is in addition to consultations conducted by the minister and parliamentary secretary. The overall effectiveness of employment insurance income benefits and active employment measures are assessed in the Canada Employment Insurance Commission's employment insurance monitoring and assessment report, which is tabled annually in Parliament. As with any other EI measures, HRSDC will evaluate the connecting Canadians with available jobs initiative, introduced as part of Canada's economic action plan 2012, and results will be reported in the monitoring and assessment report.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (a)(ii), it is projected that the social security tribunal, general division, employment insurance section, will be required to hear approximately 22,000 appeals each year and that the appeals division will be required to hear approximately 1,800 employment insurance-related appeals.

An approved HRSDC approach for human resources determination was used to arrive at the number of members required. This methodology takes into consideration the projected annual volume, as noted above; current caseloads and outputs by part-time member panels; working days in a year for a full-time member; and a productivity factor that allows for non-productive time for professional development, leave and other activities.

With regard to (b), as per the responses to (a)(i) and (a)(ii), this is not applicable.

Question No. 1120—**Ms. Manon Perreault**:

With regard to funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for disability organizations: (a) which programs have had criteria changes for applications over the past few years; (b) how many applications were received; and (c) how many accepted?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the disability component of the social development partnerships program, SDPP-D, supports projects intended to improve the participation and integration of people with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. More specifically, the program supports not-for-profit organizations across Canada in tackling barriers faced by people with disabilities with respect to social inclusion.

When the terms and conditions of the program were updated in 2010, a change was made to the category of eligible organizations to include registered charities and social enterprises as not-for-profit organizations.

The SDPP-D is currently being transformed by moving towards a more competitive model with leveraging requirements. The current recipients of directed grants and community inclusion initiative funding, which is \$8 million of the total \$11 million in SDPP-D funding, will see the funding move to a competitive funding model over the next three years. The government will continue to invest in Canadians with disabilities to support their full participation in Canadian society. These changes are being made to ensure that every taxpayer dollar has the greatest positive effect for Canadians with disabilities. The amount of funding available through SDPP-D remains the same at \$11 million annually, but the funds currently awarded on a non-competitive basis will be awarded mainly on a competitive basis. To assist current recipients of directed grants and community inclusion funding, the government has launched a competitive and merit-based call for proposals targeting these organizations to help them implement transitional measures to enable them to adapt to a competitive funding environment. The call for proposals, CFP, will provide funding over two years.

With regard to (b) and the SDPP-D program, since 2011 there have been two open calls for proposals. In the first call in 2011, 47 applications were received; in the second call in 2012, 391 applications were received. The department does not have detailed information on the number of applications that were received prior to 2010. In targeted calls for proposals for transition measures, the

applicants have until March 21, 2013, to submit their proposals; 3,810 applications were received.

With regard to (c), exclusive of the 14 community inclusion initiative recipients and the 18 national disability organizations that received directed annual funding since 2006–2007 prior to the change announced in 2011, 125 projects received funding between 2006–2007 and 2011–2012.

With regard to the 2012 call for proposals, the assessment of the applications for the 2012 competitive CFP is in process; therefore, the number accepted for approval is not available at this time. With regard to the targeted call for proposals for transition measures, the applicants have until March 21, 2013, to submit their proposals; 2,395 applications were accepted.

Question No. 1124—**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay**:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Policy for Preserving the Independence of the Inshore Fleet in Canada's Atlantic Fisheries (PIIFCAF): (a) does the government agree with this policy's statement that the strength of the independence of the inshore fleet is achieved through the termination of controlling agreements; (b) does the government have plans to amend or terminate the PIIFCAF and when will the amendments or termination take place; (c) is the government committed to the independence of the inshore fleet; and (d) does the government plan to maintain the controlling agreements beyond their March 2014 deadline?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the policy on the preservation of the independence of the inshore fleet in Canada's Atlantic fisheries, or PIIFCAF, was introduced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, on April 12, 2007, after extensive consultations with stakeholders. This policy aims to strengthen the owner-operator and fleet separation policies by addressing issues concerning controlling agreements and ensuring that those who are licence holders are the ones making important decisions regarding their fishing licence and any quotas attached to it. The implementation of the PIIFCAF is a step taken by DFO to ensure that inshore fishermen remain accountable to any decision with regard to the licence.

With regard to (b), the policy on the preservation of the independence of the inshore fleet in Canada's Atlantic fisheries, PIIFCAF, was put in place to eliminate controlling agreements by April 12, 2014. This deadline was established to allow sufficient time for those in controlling agreements to make alternative arrangements for accessing capital and to terminate or replace their existing controlling agreements. In order to facilitate this, DFO has developed tools that focus on helping fishers to improve access to capital, i.e., notice and acknowledgement system, DFO's response to the Saulnier decision. These tools provide fish harvesters with options that support their independence. The PIIFCAF policy and deadlines are still in place.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (c), the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has announced on September 21, 2012, that the fleet separation and owner-operator policies will remain intact in the Atlantic Canada inshore fisheries.

With regard to (d), as per the PIIFCAF policy, where an inshore licence holder declared that on April 12, 2007, he or she was a party to a controlling agreement, the licence holder has until April 12, 2014, to either terminate the controlling agreement or amend the agreement to bring it into compliance with the PIIFCAF Policy in order to be eligible to continue to hold the licence beyond this date.

Question No. 1125—**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to Bill C-463, Discover Your Canada Act, has the Department of Finance or any other department conducted a costing analysis of the bill and, if so, what are the results of this costing analysis?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance has conducted a costing analysis of Bill C-463. Based on Statistics Canada data on existing travel patterns in Canada, it is estimated that the cost of the measure proposed in Bill C-463 would be about \$215 million in 2017, the year in which the proposed travel deduction would come into effect. It is unclear to what degree the proposal would induce individuals to travel more or change their travel plans, but any increase in eligible travel would increase this cost.

We are not aware of any costing done by other government departments.

Question No. 1126—**Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band and the contracted engagement of Mr. Fred Caron by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada: (a) what does this contract say; (b) what are the terms of reference associated with this contract; (c) what are the objectives and the intended consequences arising from work conducted through this contract; (d) what is contained within the approved workplan for the conduct of this contract; (e) on what date did Fred Caron sign this contract; (f) on what date did the contracting authority of the government sign this contract; (g) how long is the engagement anticipated to last; (h) what is the contractor's rate of pay; (i) how much money has been budgeted for his remuneration; (j) how much money has been budgeted for expenses including support services and has any specific mandate been given to this contractor to consult on potential chances to the 2007 Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band Agreement-in-Principle which was ratified and brought into effect on September 26, 2011?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the contract contains standard general and supplementary conditions; provisions regarding the terms of payment; a statement of work; appendices regarding intellectual property and travel expense information; and an annex regarding security requirements.

With regard to (b), the contractor is to perform the following core roles to the satisfaction of the departmental representative: lead specific interventions and federal consultations with third parties when issues arise; provide strategic advice; attend engagement activity meetings; resolve deal-breaker issues within mandate; and act as the federal spokesperson for enquiries from the media, when so mandated.

With regard to (c), the contract's stated objective is to engage with the Chief and Council of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation to amend the agreement for the recognition or, if necessary, negotiate a new agreement; to tighten the current enrolment process; and to

adopt a new process and criteria in light of the surge in the number of applications for membership and the concerns regarding how the criteria have been applied.

With regard to (d), the outputs and deliverables of the contract include the following: barring circumstances beyond the control of the parties to the agreement, delivery of amendments to the Agreement for the Recognition of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq Band, or the conclusion of a new agreement, addressing Canada's concerns with respect to the enrolment process; submission of short written reports on activities, meetings, briefings, media interviews and inquiries from key stakeholders, upon request; provision of proposed key accomplishments and plans for the next month in the written monthly activity report, upon request; provision of monthly invoices; and completion and submission of a Federal Negotiator or Representative Performance Report—Part 1, Contractor's Self-Evaluation on Results to Date, as part of the Annual review of negotiation tables process, upon request.

With regard to (e), Mr. Fred Caron signed the contract on December 3, 2012.

With regard to (f), Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada signed the contract on December 3, 2012.

With regard to (g), the contract is in effect to March 31, 2013. With regard to (h), (i) and (j), all contracts are subject to the application of the Treasury Board contracting policy.

For information on the mandate, members may refer to (c) above.

Question No. 1128—**Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band and the enrollment process of individual applicants into the Band that were received by the Enrollment Committee of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band prior to the November 30, 2012, deadline for such submissions: (a) what provisions have been made for the consideration of any such applications after the Enrollment Committee's mandate expires as per the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band Agreement; and (b) does Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada intend that all such applications will be assessed by federal representatives on the Enrollment Committee in the same manner and using the same precedents for decision-making as those applications for enrollment that were received by the Enrollment Committee prior to December 31, 2009?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the agreement provided for the enrolment committee to cease reviewing applications at the end of December 2012. Owing to the initial objectives of the agreement, the Government of Canada and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians have agreed to work together to discuss next steps regarding the consideration of applications and the appropriate implementation of the Agreement for the Recognition of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq Band. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has asked Mr. Fred Caron to work with the leadership of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation on an approach to address the situation.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (b), the assessment of applications after the end of December 2012 will be guided by the outcome of the ongoing discussions between the Government of Canada and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians.

Question No. 1136—Mr. Yvon Godin:

With regard to the decision to make all members of the Canadian fishing industry responsible for obtaining and paying for any gear tags or tabs used in commercial fisheries, which will begin after March 31, 2013: (a) prior to this decision, what was the cost per tag or tab (i) for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), (ii) for a harvester; (b) after this decision, what will be the cost per tag or tab (i) for DFO, (ii) for a harvester; (c) how much will DFO save as a result of this decision; (d) what are the advantages and disadvantages of this decision; (e) how many studies did DFO conduct in this regard, (i) what are their titles, (ii) where are they available; and (f) how many consultations took place prior to this decision and with whom?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), prior to the decision to make industry responsible for paying for gear tags in commercial fisheries, with the exception of tuna tags, the cost to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO, per tag in the Atlantic lobster and crab fisheries ranged from 12¢ to 15 ¢, for a total of \$518,000 per year for purchase and shipping. This is the cost DFO paid for each tag, shipped to a harvester where that applied, and does not include salary or administrative costs incurred by the department to manage the program. DFO also supplied vessel validation and gillnet tabs in the Pacific region, at an average per unit cost of \$3.19.

With regard to (b), after March 31, 2013, there will be no cost to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for tags or validation tabs. There will be no cost to Pacific harvesters, as validation tabs are being eliminated. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has not been provided prices for tag suppliers, as pricing arrangements are negotiated between tag manufacturers, tag suppliers and harvesters and constitute business arrangements to which the department is not privy.

With regard to (c), as a result of the decision, DFO projects savings of approximately \$518,000 per year for the purchase and shipping of tags.

With regard to (d), the advantages of this decision are that it saves taxpayers approximately \$500,000 in fisheries management costs and it will also ensure that all harvesters are treated equally in accordance with DFO's position that industry should pay for the fishing gear conservation requirements for the fishery from which it benefits and that business participants should be responsible for supplying the equipment needed to carry out their business. The decision also reduces the administrative burden on Pacific fish harvesters by removing the requirement to obtain and display validation tabs. The department has not identified any disadvantages of this decision.

With regard to (e), the Department of Fisheries and Oceans undertook two studies on tagging that were incorporated in the regulatory impact analysis that was published on November 10, 2012, in the Canada Gazette, part I. These unpublished studies were titled "The Way Forward for Fishing Tags and Logbooks" and "Cost-Benefit Analysis: Regulations amending the Atlantic Fisheries Regulations, 1985 and the Pacific Fishery Regulations, 1993 to remove requirements for the departmental issuance of fishing tags

and validation tabs". These studies are available on request from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

With regard to (f), there were no consultations with industry prior to this decision; however, meetings did take place with industry representatives following the decision to discuss whether tags were needed for various fisheries and what kind of system industry could put in place to supply tags that meet specific management requirements.

Question No. 1138—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and officials who worked in the Minister's office between May 8, 2010, and December 1, 2012, for all meetings concerning any aspect of the Muskrat Falls project, (i) what are the names and titles or positions of all officials who held or attended each meeting, (ii) who were the other attendees at each meeting, (iii) what were the dates of each meeting, (iv) what were the locations of each meeting, (v) what were the topics discussed at each meeting?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office has no records related to this request.

Question No. 1146—Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:

With regard to implementation of Division 54 of Part IV of An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures (formerly Bill C-38), which amends the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act: (a) of the 280,000 permanent residency applications made before February 27, 2008, and whose processing will be cancelled, how many were made by applicants (i) for whom French is the language spoken at home, (ii) who speak French at home, (iii) who speak French fluently; and (b) in which receiving province or region were these residency applications placed?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CIC, is concerned, with regard to (a), CIC systems do not capture the categories (i) "for whom French is the language spoken at home", (ii) "who speak French at home" or (iii) "who speak French fluently".

With regard to (b), the vast majority of federal skilled worker, or FSW, applications are not placed in a province but rather the appropriate visa office overseas. Only 15 applications representing 50 individuals placed their applications in Canada, at CPP in Ottawa. Please note that the FSW category does not include applicants who intend on residing in Quebec. These applications are submitted into the Quebec skilled worker category, which was not affected by measures contained in Bill C-38.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1148—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the response provided by the Minister of International Cooperation to written question Q-972 on the Order Paper in which the Minister states that: “The Financial Risk Assessment Unit uses a risk-based approach to monitor the financial viability of entities in receipt of CIDA funding prior to entering into an agreement and during the life-cycle of the CIDA project. Mitigation actions are immediately put in place if a recipient is under legal protection from creditors.”: (a) what are all the “mitigation actions” referred to in the response; and (b) were the “mitigation actions” put in place when the entity referred to Minister’s response to Q-972 was under legal protection and, if so, what were all the “mitigation actions” taken by the Canadian International Development Agency in specific cases involving the entity referred to in the Minister’s response to Q-972?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), mitigation actions and measures taken to protect the interests of the Crown when an organization in receipt of the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, funding is under legal protection from creditors include conducting an internal, or contracting an external, review and assessment of potential program, legal, fiduciary and political/reputational risks that may arise; alerting the recipient country ministry or partner institution of potential project impacts; reviewing the contractual and performance terms and conditions of the agreement or agreements signed; based on the assessment and severity of the financial situation, developing a risk mitigation and monitoring plan, usually in consultation with the organization or service provider and their lenders, as well as the recipient country ministry or partner institution, if required; obtaining financial statements, forecasts and operational plans from the organization or service provider to closely monitor and track progress in addressing the situation and returning to normal business operations; ensuring that all advance payments are secured by means of irrevocable bank guarantees issued by acceptable financial institutions and that any financial performance guarantees are enforceable, in case of need; and not entering into any new agreements until such time as the organization or service provider has demonstrated their financial capacity, returned to normal business operations and is no longer under the protection of the courts.

With regard to (b), yes, these types of mitigation actions were put in place when the entity was under legal protection from creditors. This entity continues to meet its contractual obligations and is delivering results through its programming. Because the entity referred to in the response to Q-972 was involved in active projects in several countries, CIDA took the following specific measures to protect the interests of the Crown: CIDA established a multi-disciplinary task force to oversee a common, integrated and corporate approach to managing the situation and mitigating potential risks; discussions and meetings were held with senior representatives of the organization, who provided detailed information on the extent and severity of the financial situation, and the likely operational impacts; based on the initial information received, as well as a review of the current status of project implementation, management arrangements and contractual terms and conditions, CIDA completed an internal review and assessment of the fiduciary and other risks across each program; a proactive monitoring and integrated risk management approach was developed and agreed with the organization, which featured open and direct channels of communication at a senior level to provide regular updates on the financial situation and recovery as well as to facilitate the dissemination of information on operational progress across the

agency and decision-making on individual projects; in projects where the organization was part of a consortium, the agency agreed, on a non-objection basis, to the transfer or assignment of the lead implementation role to other well-established members or partners, who were jointly and severally liable; for projects where the organization was solely responsible for delivery or implementation, the agency took steps to ensure that all financial and performance guarantees were enforceable, in case of need; as part of its efforts to continue operations and remain a going concern, the organization presented a comprehensive business plan and financial projections that were developed with legal and financial third party advisors, a plan was subsequently validated by independent auditors as part of the due diligence process to attract additional capital; In order to manage fiduciary risks and support the organization’s proposed recovery plan, CIDA was called upon and co-operated with established provincial, institutional and private investors, financial advisors, auditors and commercial lenders at various stages through a financial and capital restructuring; as a necessary part of this exercise, the organization sought and obtained lawful protection from the courts, including a proposal to existing creditors, the vast majority of which voted in favour of the terms and conditions of the settlement offered; and the organization subsequently restructured its capital and, with the support of new investors and shareholders, resumed commercial operations. CIDA continues to monitor progress closely and manage fiduciary risks carefully.

Question No. 1151—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to the change in mandate and the administrative changes at the Montreal Biosphere: (a) will the memorandum of understanding signed in 1991 by the City of Montreal and the government be amended or replaced by 2016, (i) was a new memorandum of understanding signed by the government, (ii) what are the agreement clauses of the new memorandum, (iii) what impact will these changes have on current research programs; (b) how many positions at the Biosphere will be abolished or transferred to other units in 2013 or over the new few years; (c) was the Biosphere’s total budget increased or decreased; (d) was the Biosphere’s budget or a part thereof allocated to another program; (e) what changes will be made to the Biosphere’s interactive activities and exhibits; (f) what changes will be made to the Biosphere’s physical layout; (g) which part of the building will be used for educational and interactive activities; (h) will the Biosphere house services and staff from the Canadian Meteorological Centre (CMC) or another Environment Canada unit or agency, and if so, which ones; and (i) how many CMC employees will be working at the Biosphere?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there is currently no plan to amend or replace the memorandum of understanding that was signed in 1991. With regard to (a)(i), the government has not signed any new memorandum of understanding. With regard to (a)(ii) and (a)(iii), these questions are not applicable because the government has not signed any new memorandum of understanding.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (b), last June, eight employees at the Biosphere were told that their current positions are being discontinued and that they are eligible for support under existing workforce adjustment provisions. At the same time, the remaining employees at the Biosphere, 18 at the time, now 15, were notified that their current positions may be affected.

With regard to (c), the operational budget for the Biosphere varies from year to year, depending on exhibits and activities planned. Over the past decade, the annual budget of the Biosphere has varied between \$3 million and \$5 million.

With regard to (d), the Biosphere's budget has not been allocated to another program.

With regard to (e), the Biosphere has been offering environmental education and outreach activities since 1995. As Environment Canada has done over the years, we are changing the nature of the interpretive activities at the Biosphere within its current lease. Environment Canada will continue to promote and provide educational activities to students and the general public on the environment through a new product for public viewing.

With regard to (f), Environment Canada will not propose any changes to the building that will affect its architectural heritage. The details of the renewal of our interpretation activities inside the Biosphere are still being finalized.

With regard to (g), the details of the renewal of our interpretation activities inside the Biosphere are still being finalized. With regard to (h), the details of the renewal of our interpretation activities inside the Biosphere are still being finalized. With regard to (i), the details of the renewal of our interpretation activities inside the Biosphere are still being finalized.

Question No. 1156—Mr. Nathan Cullen:

With regard to permits and entries for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) in the riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley: (a) what is the total number of permits for each quarter since 2001 inclusive; and (b) what is the total number of entries for each quarter since 2001 inclusive?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CIC, is concerned, with regard to (a), CIC does not compile statistics by constituency and therefore cannot identify the total number of permits issued in the Skeena—Bulkley Valley riding.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 1086, originally tabled on January 28, 2013, as well as Questions Nos. 1109, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1114, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1121, 1123, 1127, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1145 and 1147 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1086—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to government advertising: since 2006, how much has been spent on billboards, advertising and other information campaigns, broken down by (i) date released, (ii) cost, (iii) topic, (iv) medium, including publication or media outlet and type of media used, (v) purpose, (vi) duration of the campaign, (vii) targeted audience, (viii) estimated audience, (ix) any analysis of the effectiveness of the advertisement or campaign?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1109—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to national parks, what are the details of all costs related to the establishment of the Mealy Mountain National Park or National Park Reserve, in each fiscal year since 2002-2003 inclusive, providing details of the nature, scope and duration of all work undertaken, and, if applicable, the names of the recipients of any funding related to the national park establishment process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1110—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to government expenditures on media monitoring, what are the details of all spending, by each department and agency, including the nature, scope, duration of, and contract for media monitoring, the names of the contracted services provided, and the file numbers of all such contracts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1111—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to government expenditures, since January 1, 2006: has any department or agency contracted the services of any firm to provide automated telephone voice messages, also known as robocalls, and, if so, (i) which departments or agencies, (ii) when were these services purchased, (iii) what was the purpose of the automated telephone voice messages, (iv) what were the costs, (v) which firms were contracted to provide the services, (vi) what was the nature, scope and duration of the contracted work, including the total number of calls, (vii) what is the file number of any contract for the provision of such services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1112—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to transportation, since January 1, 2006, has the government engaged in any study or consultation concerning the extension or reconstruction of Highways 389 and 138 in the province of Quebec, and if so, what are the titles and file numbers of any reports, studies, dossiers or other documentation related to this matter?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1114—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to Health Canada, how many drug identification number submissions has the Health Products and Food Branch received since January 1, 2006, and of those, how many were approved and how many were denied, subdivided by reason for denial?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 1116—**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With regard to Employment Insurance: (a) how many individuals have utilized the Extended Employment Insurance Benefits Pilot Project in each fiscal year, by province, from the year of the project's inception; (b) what is the estimated number of EI recipients who were working while on claim between August 7 2011, and August 4, 2012, who will opt to revert to the rules that existed under the previous pilot project; (c) has the government undertaken any analysis or studies to compare the impact on income for individuals in each province between the previous and the new pilot project; (d) has the government undertaken any analysis or studies concerning the impact of changes to the Working While on Claim Pilot Project on the (i) economy of particular provinces or regions, (ii) cost of providing provincial social services in any particular provinces; and (e) if any of the answers to (c) or (d) are affirmative, what are the titles, file numbers, and results of any such analyses or studies?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1117—**Mr. Craig Scott:**

With regard to the policies and practices concerning treatment of persons under the control of Canadian forces in Afghanistan in any part of the period from September 12, 2001, to present: (a) were each of Canada's Defence Intelligence, Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, and the Canadian Security Establishment amongst the intelligence agencies based at Kandahar Air Field (KAF) base; (b) what other intelligence agencies, Canadian or non-Canadian, were based at KAF or operated out of KAF without being based there; (c) is the government aware of a military facility in Kandahar commonly known as Graceland and, if so, what sort of facility was, or is, it, and what institutional actors operated, or operate, from this facility; (d) is the government aware of a military facility in Kandahar commonly known as Gecko and, if so, what sort of facility was, or is, it, and what institutional actors operated, or operate, from this facility; (e) how do, or did, the facilities and the institutional actors operating from Gecko and Graceland (i) relate to each other, (ii) interact; (f) on what date did Canadian special forces, including JTF2, first arrive in Afghanistan and, if they have left, on what date did they leave Afghanistan; (g) if Canadian special forces, including JTF2, are currently in Afghanistan, whether as units or as individual personnel, in what capacity are they in Afghanistan; (h) has Canada ever transferred persons under its control to Afghan authorities with the knowledge that some of those persons would or could end up being held in the facilities of National Directorate of Security (NDS) Kabul; (i) does the government know of cases of persons under initial Canadian control who ended up being held in the facilities of NDS Kabul, whether under the control of NDS or whether under the control of one or more other Afghan or non-Afghan intelligence agencies and, if so, (i) how many, (ii) which other intelligence agency or agencies; (j) did Canada ever seek to trace persons who had been either detained by or otherwise under the control of Canadian special forces, including JTF2, and who Canada knew or suspected had ended up at NDS Kabul facilities and, if so, (i) for what reasons was tracing undertaken, (ii) how many persons did Canada seek to trace, (iii) what were the results of the efforts in terms of the number of persons who were located versus determining that persons were not traceable; (k) is the government familiar with the term, whether formal or informal, of "amplifying orders" being used in the Canadian military context, and, if so, what does this mean; (l) in the period in question (2001 to present), did General Rick Hillier ever issue "amplifying orders" that related, directly or indirectly, to the policy or practice of handing over persons under Canada's control in Afghanistan to agents of another state, whether Afghan or non-Afghan and, if so, for each set of amplifying orders, (i) what were the dates of the orders, (ii) what previous orders, rules of engagement or other documents were being amplified, (iii) what was the content of the amplifying orders; (m) in relation to the May 25, 2006, capture of "11 suspected Taliban fighters" referenced at page 96 of *Ian Hope, Dancing with the Dushman: Command Imperatives for the Counter-Insurgency Fight in Afghanistan* (Canadian Defence Agency Press, 2008), could the government set out the manner in which each of these 11 persons controlled by Canadian forces were processed, including what is known about each's subsequent trajectory after passing from the control of Canada until the point at which the government may have lost track of their whereabouts; (n) at any period and, if so, which periods, did the Canadian government consider that there were one or more categories of persons who Canada passed on to either Afghan or American authorities but who were not categorized as detainees, and did such categories have a designation, whether formal or informal; (o) were there persons under the control of Canadian forces who were transferred to Afghanistan, but who were not treated by Canada as covered by the provisions of the 2005 and 2007 Canada-Afghanistan Memorandums of Understanding on detainee transfer and, if so, on what basis were transfers of such persons not deemed covered by the agreements; (p) were there persons under the control of Canadian forces who were transferred to Afghanistan but whose existence and

transfer was not made known to the International Committee of the Red Cross and, if so, on what basis was the Red Cross not informed; (q) during the 2011 Parliamentary process in which a Panel of Arbiters decided what information could be released to Parliament, were documents withheld from this process by the government if they concerned the transfer of persons that were not treated by Canada as covered by the provisions of the 2005 and 2007 Canada-Afghanistan Memorandums of Understanding on detainee transfer; (r) between September 12, 2001, and the entry into effect of the 2005 detainee-transfer Memorandum of Understanding, (i) how many detainees were transferred to US authorities, (ii) to which US authorities, (iii) how many detainees were transferred to Afghan authorities, (iv) to which Afghan authorities, (v) how many persons under the control of Canada, but not considered as detainees by Canada, were transferred to US authorities, (vi) to which US authorities, (vii) how many persons under the control of Canada, but not considered as detainees by Canada, were transferred to Afghan authorities, (viii) to which Afghan authorities; (s) between the entry into effect of the 2005 detainee-transfer Memorandum of Understanding and the entry into effect of the 2007 detainee-transfer Memorandum of Understanding, (i) how many detainees were transferred to US authorities, (ii) to which US authorities, (iii) how many detainees were transferred to Afghan authorities, (iv) to which Afghan authorities, (v) how many persons under the control of Canada, but not considered as detainees by Canada, were transferred to US authorities, (vi) to which US authorities, (vii) how many persons under the control of Canada, but not considered as detainees by Canada, were transferred to Afghan authorities, (viii) to which Afghan authorities; (t) between the entry into effect of the 2007 detainee-transfer Memorandum of Understanding and the present date, (i) how many detainees were transferred to US authorities, (ii) to which US authorities, (iii) how many detainees were transferred to Afghan authorities, (iv) to which Afghan authorities, (v) how many persons under the control of Canada, but not considered as detainees by Canada, were transferred to US authorities, (vi) to which US authorities, (vii) how many persons under the control of Canada, but not considered as detainees by Canada, were transferred to Afghan authorities, (viii) to which Afghan authorities; (u) before General Rick Hillier signed the 2005 detainee-transfer Memorandum of Understanding with Afghan Defence Minister Wardak, did General Hillier call or attempt to call the Canadian Defence Minister Graham from Afghanistan, in order to seek Graham's authorization for Hillier to sign; (v) at the time of the signing of the 2005 detainee-transfer Memorandum of Understanding between Afghan Defence Minister Wardak and Canadian General Hillier, was the Ambassador of Canada to Afghanistan in the room when the document was signed and thus an eyewitness to each man signing the document; (w) have Canadian special forces, whether JTF2 or other, ever participated in operations designed to obtain control over or custody of persons in Afghanistan as a result of information, instructions or orders originating from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or another US intelligence agency and, if so, in what periods and resulting in how many captures; (x) if not, have Canadian special forces participated alongside or in coordination with United States special forces for such capture operations in Afghanistan where it is known or reasonably assumed by Canada that the US special forces are acting on information, instructions or orders originating from the CIA or another US intelligence agency; (y) have there ever been and are there now Canadian military special forces in Pakistan; (z) have Canadian special forces, whether JTF2 or other, ever participated in operations designed to obtain control over or custody of persons in Pakistan as a result of information, instructions or orders originating from the CIA or another US intelligence agency and, if so, in what periods and resulting in how many captures; (aa) if not, have Canadian special forces participated alongside or in coordination with US special forces for such capture operations in Pakistan where it is known or reasonably assumed by Canada that the US special forces are acting on information, instructions or orders originating from the CIA or another US intelligence agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1118—**Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to salmon conservation on Vancouver Island: (a) given that a salmon conservation stamp costs an individual \$6.30 with one dollar of that going to the Pacific Salmon Institute, where does the rest of the revenue from the salmon conservation stamp go; (b) how much money does the government provide for salmon enhancement on Vancouver Island on an annual basis; (c) how has this funding been allocated; and (d) who has this funding gone to over the past five fiscal years?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1119—Ms. Manon Perreault:

With regard to funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for education regarding changes to Registered Disability Savings Plans and the Disability Tax Credit: (a) which organizations received funding and how much did each receive; (b) what were the criteria for receiving funding; (c) how many organizations applied to receive funding; and (d) what kind of evaluation process exists for this funding and what kind of criteria is the evaluation based on?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1121—Mr. David McGuinty:

With respect to advertising paid for by the government, broken down by fiscal year for each fiscal year from fiscal year beginning April 1, 2006 up to and including the first half of fiscal year 2012: (a) how much did the government spend on advertising; (b) what was the subject of each advertisement, (i) how much was spent on each subject; (c) which departments purchased advertising, (i) what are the details of the spending by each department in this regard; (d) for each subject and department in (b) and (c), how much was spent for each type of advertising, including, but not limited to (i) television, specifying the stations, (ii) radio, specifying the stations, (iii) print, i.e. newspapers and magazines, specifying the names of the publications, (iv) the internet, specifying the names of the websites, (v) billboards, specifying the locations of the billboards, (vi) bus shelters, specifying the locations, (vii) advertising in all other publically accessible places; (e) for each type of advertisement in (d), was it in Canada or off shore; (f) for each, subject in (b), department in (c) and type of advertising in (d), what is the time period where the advertising ran; (g) for each individual purchase of advertising, who signed the contracts; (h) for every ad, who was involved in producing it; (i) for every ad, was a third party involved in running it or was a third party co-ordinating other ads based on those of the government; and (j) for every ad, were the purchase and running of the ad timed for any specific event, such as sporting event?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1123—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to the government's position on chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI): (a) does the government track clinical trials on CCSVI currently being undertaken by other countries and, if yes, what are all clinical trials, identified by phase, currently being undertaken worldwide, (i) which countries are undertaking Phase III trials; (b) does the government question whether CCSVI exists and, if yes, (i) why does the government not question whether treating CCSVI actually improves quality of life for Canadians with multiple sclerosis (MS); (c) how many cases of "major complications associated with venous angioplasty" have occurred in Canada and, if it is not possible to give this number, why, (i) what are identified complications to CCSVI and, for each complication, how many cases versus the number of procedures undertaken have occurred; (d) what are all procedures that have been performed on veins in Canada, including, procedures for Budd-Chiari syndrome and May-Thurner syndrome; (e) what is the government's position on ballooning veins and why does it consider that ballooning veins even once could be unsafe on fragile veins, even though participants involved in the proposed clinical trial will experience two procedures—one real, one simulated—in a one-year period; (f) is the government consulting with Canadians with MS, if so, (i) provide a list of all CCSVI groups the Minister of Health has met with along with the dates of the meetings, (ii) provide a list of all MS groups the Minister of Health has met with along with the dates of the meetings, (iii) provide the number of Canadians with MS the Minister of Health has met and the dates of all meetings, and if the government is not consulting, (iv) why not; (g) how does inviting the investigators of the seven MS-funded CCSVI studies to participate in the consensus workshop on ultrasound imaging meet CIHR's conflict of interest guidelines; (h) what were the results of the consensus workshop on ultrasound imaging, and specifically, (i) what exact imaging procedure will be used in the clinical trials, (ii) will the investigators use Dr Zamboni's procedure and, if so, will they be trained by Dr Zamboni, (iii) will the investigators use multi-modal imaging and, if so, what techniques, (iv) what training will investigators undergo, by whom, what is the number of procedures they will have to perform, and how will "sufficiently practiced" be ensured; (i) approximately how many Canadians with MS have died since November 2009, and by what EDSS score will Canadians with MS have worsened, on average by, since the same time period, and specifically, (i) how many are diagnosed each month, (ii) how many die each month; (j) when will patient accrual actually begin for clinical trials which were to begin on November 1st; and (k) what, if any, research or investment has been undertaken to consider whether to investigate the handling of

the CCSVI file, particularly in relation to the "fast-tracking" of a new procedure in Canada, and the down-loading of services to provinces, (i) what are the dates, results and recommendations of any research, (ii) the dollar amount of any investment, (iii) if results and recommendations are available, will Health Canada be acting upon them and when?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1127—Ms. Chris Charlton:

With regard to Labour Market Opinions issued by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: (a) for the Labour Market Opinions applied for since January 1, 2011, broken down by month, what is (i) the total number of applications, (ii) the number of applications approved, (iii) the number of applications denied, (iv) the average length of time between the receipt of an application and the issuance of the decision; (b) for the Accelerated Labour Market Opinions applied for since the program began, broken down by month, what is (i) the total number of applications, (ii) the number of applications approved, (iii) the number of applications denied, (iv) the average length of time between the receipt of an application and the issuance of the decision, (v) the number of decisions issued later than ten days after receipt of the application; (c) since April 2011, broken down by month, region and industry, how many companies have been found in non-compliance with their Labour Market Opinion, which companies were they, what were the violations and what restitutions did they make for their non-compliance; and (d) since April 2011, broken down by month, region and industry, how many companies have been found in non-compliance with their Accelerated Labour Market Opinion, which companies were they, what were the violations and what restitutions did they make for their non-compliance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1132—Ms. Jean Crowder:

With regard to the role of Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC) as a lead agency in protecting the government's information systems: (a) how many requests did CSEC receive from other government departments to provide expertise or information regarding protection of information systems; (b) how many staff were assigned to each request; (c) how many of the requests received was CSEC able to satisfy and how many requests were not provided a response that satisfied the request; (d) if CSEC was unable to satisfy a request for assistance, what was the reason; (e) are there any significant staffing issues that CSEC is facing that would not allow CSEC to satisfy these requests; (f) for each year from 2008 to 2012, what products, including publications, and services did CSEC/Information Technology Security provide and to whom; (g) what plans, research and development activities have been undertaken from 2008 to 2012 and what is the current status; (h) what summative evaluations have been done of the services offered to other departments; (i) for each year from 2008 to 2012 how many staff were off on (i) sick leave, (ii) administrative leave, (iii) long-term disability; (j) for years 2008 to 2012 how many audits or performance reviews were completed; (k) what were overall staff numbers in fiscal year 2011-2012; (l) what will be the overall staff numbers after Budget 2012 implementation; (m) how many of those positions include senior staff with the ability to protect Canada's information system from attack; and (n) for each year from 2008 to 2012, how much of the government's bandwidth was taken up with spam or other malicious attacks, broken down by (i) incoming bandwidth, (ii) outgoing bandwidth?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1133—Mr. Hoang Mai:

With regard to the Export Development Corporation, Business Development Bank of Canada, Farm Credit Canada, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Agency, since January 7, 2007, how much has been spent on: (a) radio advertising; (b) television advertising; (c) cinema advertising; (d) internet advertising; (e) advertising in print daily newspaper; (f) advertising in print magazines; (g) advertising in print weeklies or community papers; (h) public opinion research; (i) advertising design and production?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*Question No. 1134—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:**

With respect to the Partnership with Canadians program at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), for each year from 2006 to 2012: (a) how many calls for proposals were issued, broken down by year and type of call for proposal; (b) how many proposals were received, broken down by year and type of call for proposal; and (c) how many proposals were approved, broken down by (i) year, (ii) partner, (iii) type of call for proposal, (iv) total dollar amount contributed by CIDA, (v) total dollar amount contributed by partner, (vi) description of project, (vii) recipient country, (viii) CIDA priority theme or cross cutting theme, (ix) length of days of approval, (x) length of project, (xi) grant or contribution?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1145—**Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to FedNor: (a) when did hospices become ineligible for FedNor funding under the Community Economic Development priority of the Northern Ontario Development Program; (b) when was the decision made to do this; (c) what were the last five hospices funded through FedNor; and (d) which ridings are these last five hospices located in?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1147—**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the response provided by the Minister of International Cooperation to written question Q-972 on the Order Paper, in which the Minister states: "Since 2006, there has been (1) entity in receipt of CIDA funding while being under legal protection from creditors; however, this entity continues to meet its contractual obligations and is delivering results through its programming": (a) what is the name of the entity referred to in this response; (b) what are all the projects for which this entity is receiving or has received funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) while under legal protection from creditors; (c) what is the amount of funding that this entity is receiving or has received from CIDA while under legal protection from creditors; (d) what are the beginning and end dates for any projects this entity has undertaken with the assistance of CIDA funding while under legal protection from creditors; (e) what is the specific date on which this entity obtained legal protection from creditors; (f) what were the recommendations by CIDA to the Minister of International Cooperation with regard to any projects that this entity sought to undertake with funding from CIDA since 2006; and (g) what are all the decisions rendered by the Minister of International Cooperation with regard to any projects that this entity sought to undertake with funding from CIDA since 2006?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TECHNICAL TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 2012

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, the First Nations Goods and Services Tax Act and related legislation, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): When this was last before the House, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue had completed her remarks, but there are five minutes for questions and comments.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou has the floor.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for her speech. I also salute her as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance. The only thing I deplore, obviously, is that she is not commenting on the criticism by witnesses at the Standing Committee on Finance regarding the government's negligence and lax attitude.

Let me remind this House that the Conservative Party has been in power for seven years now and could have taken much quicker action to resolve the issue of the mountain of comfort letters. This brings about an enormous amount of uncertainty.

I will not hide the fact that I spoke with a number of witnesses as part of the committee's work and in private after each meeting. Many of them confided in me that they could no longer stand hearing the government claim that the fact that it was a minority and there was a crisis created obstacles to incorporating these comfort letters into the Income Tax Act.

What does my colleague have to say about those comments from our witnesses?

[English]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that every single witness who has come forward has said witnesses have been broadly consulted. They are very supportive of moving the legislation forward. They perhaps did not understand why there were so many speakers from the opposition rising and saying essentially very similar things. They encourage all members of the House to move forward.

Certainly, our minister has felt that, as we deal with this very important issue, we need to have regular and effective updates to our important tax amendment legislation.

•(1225)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party indicated a while back that we are supportive of the bill ultimately passing. We feel there has been a fairly significant amount of time since we have had a law passed to deal with the tax changes that are required.

There is a very thick component when we look at tax guides. They have an asterisk or a grey faded colour to indicate that these are measures for which they are hoping to see legislation take place. That is what Bill C-48 would do. It would invoke a series of changes that are long overdue in their passage, and we do anticipate the bill will pass in a timely fashion.

My question to the member is: How often does she feel legislation of this nature should be brought forward on a go-forward basis?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the support and thank the hon. member for indicating that he recognizes the importance of this piece of legislation and the importance of moving it forward.

Government Orders

We all recognize that, due to some very extraordinary circumstances, it is absolutely time to move forward. Certainly, all the witnesses who came before committee said they were supportive of the legislation, that they have been broadly consulted and that it is time.

We look forward to the quick passage of Bill C-48.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a tax lawyer, I am very pleased to speak to a bill that should have been introduced a very long time ago.

It has been 11 years and the Conservatives have not introduced a technical bill. Unfortunately, they are not the only ones to blame. The Liberal government shares that blame. We now have 200 amendments to the Income Tax Act in a 1,000-page document. We have only nine hours to debate a 1,000-page document.

I would like to know how many parliamentarians here in this House understand how important this bill is. I am sure that in nine hours of debate, no one here has been able to make it through 1,000 pages. Supporting this bill is an act of faith. We are putting our trust in the professionalism of the people who drafted this bill and the officials at the Canada Revenue Agency, because it is clear that parliamentarians are not sure about what they are voting for. That is serious.

The Income Tax Act is probably the most important statute in Parliament. Without this legislation, we are not able to pay police officers, public servants or nurses. It serves as a financial and economic foundation for the government, but the Conservatives decided that this act was not important enough to be addressed every year.

The purpose of this bill is to do nothing more than catch up on the backlog of comfort letters. This bill includes 200 of 400. We will still have to catch up on 200 letters, and we will also have to assume that every budget bill will lead to an amendment of the comfort letters. This should be done every year. Clearly, that has not been the case.

That is why we are blindly working our way through an obstacle course. No one can tell me that parliamentarians sat down and read 1,000 pages. In our legal system, ignorance of the law is no excuse. Unfortunately, the Income Tax Act is obviously an exception to that. Tax experts, who appeared in our committees, told us that they did not know what was in force and what was not.

How can we enforce a law that is not written or that will only be enforced at a given time? Can we say that we will enforce the law when we have the time? How wonderful. One of the main reasons Italy and Greece had financial problems was because these governments were not able to claim the taxes they were owed.

The European crisis is a financial and tax crisis. Those people were expecting their government to have money coming in. The money never materialized because their government did not implement measures to ensure that the ministry of revenue was able to collect the taxes owed to the government.

Here in Canada, there are tax avoidance problems. Tax avoidance is the use of means within the law to avoid or delay payment of taxes. It is legal. For example, RRSPs generally lend themselves to

tax avoidance. By contributing to RRSPs, we avoid paying taxes. That is legal.

● (1230)

Unfortunately, the law is now so riddled with holes, confusion and contradictions that a good tax expert can find a legal way for a client to avoid paying taxes. It is legal. It was not planned or foreseen by the government, but the law is so poorly drafted that it allows a good tax expert to find loopholes, and that is legal.

We try to prevent tax avoidance by prohibiting aggressive tax planning. The abuse cannot be censured if the law is poorly drafted. The responsibility lies with the government.

There is tax evasion and tax avoidance. What is the difference? Tax evasion involves breaking the law, circumventing it by fraudulent means, and involves white collar criminals. We have to prohibit tax evasion and implement means to fight it. When a law is poorly written or when officials do not know what to do, it is difficult to put an end to these fraudulent practices. Tax avoidance entails finding legal means to avoid paying taxes that are owing. Tax evasion is a criminal offence. In both cases, and despite commendable efforts, the government is losing control of the enforcement of its legislation. That is a serious threat.

For many years, any tax experts who appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and all committees that are economic in nature indicated that the text of the Income Tax Act had areas that were underlined and shaded in grey. This indicates that a comfort letter was issued, but the change has not yet been incorporated into legislation. There are 400 examples of this. Understandably, people want this to be corrected, and quickly.

Imagine a tax expert who presents a tax plan. That person is told that these comfort letters might be adopted one day, or maybe not. Uncertainty reigns. When there is a change in government, the new government can decide not to approve a comfort letter and never to enforce it; it can reject it. For 11 years, a tax expert might not know if his or her carefully prepared plan is legal or not.

When a comfort letter is drafted, the corrections that it makes should be applied immediately in the months that follow. That is the main message. We are in favour of adopting all 400 comfort letters. The government has presented only 200, but another 200 are still to come. They must be incorporated into the Income Tax Act.

Our hope now is that, in the future, this government will have the decency to amend the Income Tax Act relatively quickly and incorporate these comfort letters any time it brings down a budget that includes comfort letters. This is an absolute necessity if we do not want to find ourselves in the same situation as Greece, Italy and Spain, countries that lost control of their taxes and can no longer collect them and pay their debts.

● (1235)

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to congratulate my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, my seatmate, on his excellent speech. He enlightened us and imparted his great wisdom. I have probably said enough.

Government Orders

My colleague's expertise allowed him to point out several very important elements. I will focus on one particular aspect that was frequently raised by the experts we met with at the finance department, and that is planning.

Millions of Canadians are facing the threat of tax planning that is in no way fraudulent, but that is unclear because the government has been so lax. Sometimes people are faced with claims or find themselves in unfair situations.

I would like my colleague to talk about this very serious issue, which affects all Canadians.

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, that is the tragedy of this situation.

Take, for example, a comfort letter from 11 years ago concerning airlines. These companies' tax situations have evolved and that comfort letter is now worthless. It does not apply. It no longer makes sense from a legislative point of view because airlines have legally restructured under international agreements with other airlines.

That is serious. A comfort letter is drawn up and when it is time to implement it, the situation it addressed no longer exists.

The government has clearly lost control of taxation in a situation like that.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not have the tax expertise my colleague does, so I would like to benefit from his wisdom.

The Conservative government is always talking about cuts, particularly cuts to employment insurance. We could make a whole list.

Could my colleague tell me just how much the government loses to tax evasion?

How much revenue would the government be looking at if the problem was tackled head-on?

• (1240)

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a serious case.

We have talked a lot about tax havens. Unfortunately, Canadian practices have been assessed at \$9 billion by Mr. Lauzon, director of the socio-economic studies lab at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

We are talking about duly incorporated companies being used as tax havens. We are not talking about organized crime. This \$9 billion involves duly incorporated companies and individuals who are using illegal methods, namely, tax evasion.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Earlier, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke stood up and said that this bill has been debated for 100 days. I checked, and it has actually been only nine hours. There is a big difference between nine hours and 100 days of debate.

I think the Conservatives are frustrated. Could my colleague please give me his opinion on the Conservatives' frustration?

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, my answer will be brief.

We have had nine hours of debate on a 1,000-page text that includes 200 comfort letters. We are forced to abandon our legislative authority and trust the drafters.

No one can tell me that a single Conservative MP has read these 1,000 pages. It is obviously shoddy, haphazard work, makeshift work. This is nonsense. We are ramming through 200 comfort letters. No one better tell me that this is our responsibility.

We had nine hours to talk about 1,000 pages of text. I challenge any Conservative member to tell me that they read and understood them.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in this House today to Bill C-48, the technical tax amendments act, 2012.

Before I continue, I must say that I do find it remarkable that the opposition has delayed timely consideration of this highly technical bill for weeks on end, for no other reason than to stand in this House and tell us that they agree with its passage. It is truly bizarre.

Despite much of the bill's content having been made public already, despite extensive consultation and endorsement from key stakeholders, and despite pre-study by parliamentarians and the House of Commons finance committee, the NDP stands in this place once again delaying the passage of this legislation for absolutely no apparent reason.

It is not as if it does not know or will not support the bill. These are the words of the NDP finance critic speaking to our government's technical tax amendments at the committee earlier this week:

Obviously we support the goal of closing tax loopholes and making the tax system in Canada clearer and easier to understand for Canadians. [...] it is important that these technical changes be adopted so that there is clarity and certainty in our tax legislation.

However, it is not just the NDP. At the same meeting of the finance committee, the Liberal MP for Markham—Unionville made it clear that these delay tactics are nothing more than partisan games when he admitted, and I quote, "all parties are supporting this bill". Parliamentary procedure tricks aside, delaying this legislation has very real implications for the Canadian taxpayer. Parliament has not passed a technical income tax bill in over 10 years, and both the experts and the opposition agree that it is long overdue.

For those watching at home who may not be familiar with this legislation, the technical tax amendments act moves to clear the backlog of outstanding technical tax amendments created as a result of Parliament's delay in passing such a bill.

What is remarkable with the opposition's delay tactics is that the government provided them with an advance copy of the bill before it was introduced in Parliament and indicated it would work with them to make any necessary changes to the legislation. However, that was not the opposition's only opportunity.

Government Orders

One would never know from the NDP's blustering partisan rhetoric that the government conducted a wide range of open and public consultations on the majority of the proposed amendments included in this legislation. Specifically, from 2009 to 2011, the government had no fear of any of these consultations that were inviting comments from Canadians, including NDP members. If the NDP had concerns, it could have shared them with the government in December 2009, July 2010, August 2010, November 2010, December 2010, March 2011, August 2011, October 2011, or at any point thereafter.

Instead of working co-operatively to bring certainty for Canadian taxpayers, the opposition has chosen petty delay tactics at the taxpayers' expense. It is not only that, but the NDP needles over a 100-day filibuster and has gotten so out of hand that groups like the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants have come to Ottawa to plead with Parliament to end this ridiculous charade.

The NDP has heard this message loud and clear. Why will it not show some respect for taxpayers and get moving on Bill C-48? While the NDP drone on about process, despite the bill having been before Parliament for over 100 days, failure to move it has real consequences for the Canadian economy, and the experts have warned us of these consequences.

It was just this week at finance committee that Larry Chapman, executive director and CEO of the Canadian Tax Foundation, reminded parliamentarians of the importance of swift passage of this legislation. This is what he had to say:

...it represents 10 years of repairs and maintenance in updating of the Income Tax Act and the Excise Tax Act. Its passage is important to all Canadians. [...] I want to emphasize it again, its passage is very important to all Canadians.

I urge my colleagues in the NDP to listen carefully to his words, which bear repeating. This is very important to all Canadians.

It is not just members of the tax community urging swift passage of this bill. Indeed, the Auditor General of Canada, in a recent report, identified the existing backlog of technical amendments as a pressing issue requiring Parliament's immediate attention. Our government agreed with each of the Auditor General's recommendations and moved quickly to bring forward technical amendments to address them, amendments currently delayed by the NDP in the House.

During its recent appearance before the finance committee, the Office of the Auditor General went even further and explained why delay would do nothing but fan the flames of uncertainty, resulting in lost tax revenue for the government and higher costs for taxpayers.

● (1245)

Let me quote one of those comments at length for the benefit of the opposition, and perhaps it will come to its senses. It states:

Our system of income taxation depends on taxpayers self-assessing their tax obligation based on a clear understanding of the law.

Legislative clarity is important if taxpayers are to easily self-assess and correctly calculate their taxes. When the intent of the legislation is not clearly conveyed by the words, taxpayers may face higher costs to obtain professional advice, may be more willing to use aggressive tax plans, and may need to re-file a tax return at additional cost.

Uncertainty about how the tax law should be interpreted can also affect the efficiency of tax administration. For example, there are higher costs for the Agency to provide additional guidance and interpretation to taxpayers and tax auditors. There

are also increased administrative costs for the Agency to obtain waivers from taxpayers to extend the limitation period for audit reassessments until the uncertainty is resolved.

It may even result in lost tax revenues. One would think that those words alone would be enough to bring the NDP onside, especially with its \$56 billion in proposed new spending. It could be planning to make up the difference with the \$21 billion carbon tax. I do not know.

Nevertheless, the Auditor General has made it clear that we cannot put up with the NDP hyper-partisanship when it comes to the simplest of routine proceedings. While the NDP wants to filibuster a highly technical bill, the majority of which has been in the public domain for years, it feigns ignorance of the need for its timely passage.

In closing, let me recount the recent exchange between the NDP finance critic and an expert tax witness, and Canadians can decide for themselves the true motives of the NDP's needless delay. In response to a question from the member for Parkdale—High Park asking whether it is negative for our economy if we do not pass these amendments in a timely manner, expert witness Gabe Hayos of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants replied, "Absolutely. [...] there's just no doubt about it".

With that, I urge the NDP to show some concern for our economy, demonstrate respect for Canadian taxpayers and get moving on Bill C-48.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it unfortunate that the member would falsely accuse the NDP of holding up this bill. It is perhaps because he is frustrated. If he had been listening this morning, he would have heard that I checked with the table and we have been debating this bill for nine and a half hours. Where I come from, nine and a half hours is a long way from a hundred days. I did not know there was that much of a time difference between British Columbia and northern Ontario.

He also said in his speech that the NDP was filibustering this bill. Until today, there has not been a single Conservative MP who has stood up to speak to the bill. All of a sudden, today the Conservatives are filibustering the bill. Why are they so frustrated, and why can they not tell Canadians the truth about debating the bill for nine hours?

● (1250)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, a simple challenge to the member, then, would be to vote in favour and pass the bill.

The Certified General Accountants Association of Canada, representing over 75,000 tax professionals, stated:

Some of the measures contained in today's bill [Bill C-48] were initially proposed as early as 1999....

With unlegislated tax measures, taxpayers and professional accountants must maintain their records and forms—sometimes for years—to be in a position to comply, even without knowing when and if these measures will be approved by Parliament and enacted. This uncertainty and unpredictability places an enormous compliance burden on taxpayers, businesses, professionals and their clients.

Again, I would ask the NDP to pass this bill.

Government Orders

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly the NDP do not have a good track record when it comes to supporting the financial initiatives of the government. I think of past budgets and the estimates process. Estimates have just moved through many committees, all of which were voted against by the NDP. Now we have some common sense tax amendments that build on other things we are doing.

I would ask my colleague why it is he thinks the NDP have voted against all of these measures. The fruit of these measures are seen in 50,000 new jobs created in the month of February and 950,000 new jobs since 2009.

I would ask my colleague for his thoughts on why the NDP absolutely refuse to support good common sense measures, such as these tax amendments that we have in front of Parliament today.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that I do not know. A lot of these measures simply make sense, as the hon. member stated in his comments. Obviously, they make sense to a lot of other taxpayers and to us as a government.

The challenge I made before to the NDP members is that they simply let us get this done and pass the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, I have the pleasure of sitting on the Standing Committee on Finance.

However, I see that my colleague knows what he is talking about more or less.

Given the scope of the bill, I had to focus on particular sections, such as clause 195, which provides a number of definitions including the one for restrictive covenants.

Tax experts have approached me and thanked me for tackling this matter because the definition seems to be inadequate. However, we will have to pass Bill C-48 in a rather haphazard manner.

Can my colleague assure me that we will find the time to address certain problems with C-48? The proposed measures are poorly defined or somewhat obsolete.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that this member would consider it a botched process.

According to the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada, they welcome Bill C-48.

As the last technical income tax bill was passed by Parliament in 2001, a significant backlog has accumulated and must be addressed.

My colleague might make comments according to your experts, but we have experts, too, who say that the bill needs to be passed. Experts and Canadians would agree that it needs to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we resume debate, I would remind all hon. members to address their comments to the chair rather than to their colleagues.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on Bill C-48, the technical tax amendments act of 2012. The bill proposes amendments to the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act and related legislation. It would close tax loopholes and create a fairer tax system for all Canadians.

The bill also contains proposals that have been public for quite some time, some going back the late 1990s, as well as measures that have been previously released for public consultation.

The proposals in the bill reflect the feedback the government has received from Canadians and aim to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of tax and is treated equitably under our tax laws.

After all, there are few areas where the integration between governments and citizens is more direct than with respect to taxation.

Our governments collect taxes to fund health care, social programs and other vital services for Canadian citizens. The vast majority of Canadians pay their taxes willingly and they pay them honestly. In return, they expect the government to manage their tax dollars wisely and to take no more from each taxpayer than is their fair share. Canadians can count on this Conservative government to do both.

The efficiency and fairness of the tax system should be improved on an ongoing basis by closing tax loopholes as they are identified. The bill before us would go a long way to doing this in respect.

In the 2010 Speech from the Throne, the Conservative government committed to taking aggressive steps to close tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to take advantage of hard-working Canadians who pay their fair share of tax.

By broadening and protecting the tax base, we are helping to keep Canadian tax rates competitive and low, thereby improving incentives to work, save and invest here in Canada.

In keeping with this commitment, the legislation before us today proposes to strengthen Canada's tax system by closing tax loopholes and improving fairness for all Canadian taxpayers. The bill would also make the tax system easier to comply with, which is what Canadians have been asking for.

For example, it would make changes to the Income Tax Act to better target rules relating to non-resident trusts. The bill also includes amendments to rules dealing with foreign affiliates of Canadian multinational corporations. These changes would enhance the fairness and integrity of Canada's international tax system.

The bill before us today would also line up many loose ends already contained in the tax system. Indeed, it has been over a decade since Parliament last passed a comprehensive package of technical income tax amendments. This has created a significant backlog of outstanding measures that need to be addressed to provide certainty for Canadian taxpayers.

Government Orders

The Auditor General of Canada has identified the backlog of technical amendments as an issue requiring pressing attention by the government. The amendments proposed in the bill address the backlog through the inclusion of outstanding income tax and sales tax amendments, the vast majority of which have already been released for open and public consultation.

The bottom line is this: the legislation would provide certainty in the application of our tax system, making it easier to comply with and administer and improving fairness for Canadian taxpayers.

Our government has great successes in creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. The future of this country depends in no small part upon strengthening business competitiveness. Strong economic framework policies foster competition, attract new investment and help businesses thrive and create jobs.

In Canada's economic action plan, the government has taken action to strengthen business competitiveness by promoting an open investment framework and by making fundamental changes to reduce red tape for business. By providing a strong environment for investment and reducing red tape, our government is helping to ensure that Canadian businesses have increased access to the resources required to compete in the global economy and create high-value jobs. This plan is working.

Only today, Statistics Canada announced that employment has increased in our country by over 50,000 net new jobs created in February. Even better, the unemployment rate remains at a post-recession low of 7%, the lowest level in four years.

February's strong employment gains, along with the over 950,000 net new jobs created since the depth of the global recession in July 2009—and of these, 90% are full time and 80% are in the private sector—are very positive signs that we are on the right track with Canada's economy.

• (1255)

What is more, unlike what others would have us believe, Canada has the strongest job growth record among every single one of the G7 countries in recent years.

Furthermore, lower Canadian tax rates play a particularly important role in supporting economic growth by enabling businesses to invest more of their revenues back into their operations. These business investments in machinery, equipment, information technology and other physical capital will boost Canada's productivity. Additional capital boosts businesses' competitiveness, encouraging firms to grow and create more better-paying jobs for Canadians, thereby raising everybody's living standard. As a result of the bold tax reduction plan passed by Parliament in 2007, Canada's tax advantage has continually improved.

The final stage of our step-by-step reduction in the federal business tax rate came into force at the beginning of 2012. It is the accumulation of a process that has seen the federal corporate income tax rate fall from over 22% in 2007 to just 15% today. This has allowed Canadian businesses and Canadians who work for those businesses to drive Canada's economic recovery and future growth.

We eliminated the capital tax at the federal level and encouraged provinces to do the same with their general capital taxes, and the provinces have agreed to do that.

These and other tax changes have allowed Canada to achieve an overall tax rate on new business investment that is lower than any other country in the G7. Indeed, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters had this to say only this week about what our low-tax plan has meant for them. They said:

...lower corporate income taxes attract more investments and therefore have a positive result on government revenues, at all levels of government. This is good news for our economy, and I am confident our tax environment will attract more investments in the years to come.

There is great support for this government's tax plan. Nevertheless, Canada faces a fast-changing global environment with increasing competition from emerging market countries and a global economy that remains fragile and uncertain.

I assure members that our government remains committed to keeping Canada strong and prosperous by creating the right conditions to enable Canadians and Canadian businesses to feel confident and to invest, create jobs and grow our economy.

Canada's performance has been one of the most resilient amidst considerable global uncertainty. Compared to most advanced economies in the world, we are in a relatively good position. Since our government introduced Canada's economic action plan to respond to the global recession, Canada has recovered more than all the output and all the jobs lost during the recession.

We will continue to treat Canadians with the utmost fairness and respect with regard to Canada's taxation system. Canadians deserve nothing less, and that is why I call upon all parliamentarians to support Bill C-48.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): I have a very simple question. I listened to my esteemed colleague and he did not mention comfort letters. He did not talk about the very essence of Bill C-48, the 200 comfort letters that are being incorporated into the Income Tax Act or the 1,000 pages of text accompanying these 200 amendments.

Did my esteemed colleague bother to read these 1,000 pages? Does he understand the legislative path an Income Tax Act comfort letter takes?

His speech clearly shows that he understood nothing and that he did not read a single one of the 1,000 pages.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, I can tell members what I do understand. I understand that on our side of the House we believe in jobs, growth and long-term prosperity and on that side of the House they believe in raising taxes. Raising the carbon tax, raising the iPod tax, raising corporate tax rates, raising the GST are all part of the NDP plan for the future of Canada. That is not our plan, that is their plan. We believe in low taxes. We believe in creating jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I emphasize a need for the passage of the legislation in the sense that for many years now Canadians have been waiting for legislation of this nature to pass, because if we look at our tax books, we find that there are many asterisks and I made reference to the greyed-out areas that highlight changes that are pending legislative law being passed. This has been going on for a number of years now.

To what degree does the member believe changes to the Income Tax Act should be made on more of a regular basis? And going forward, how often do you feel that there is a need to bring in legislation of this nature to implement the changes that are going to be taking place into the future? Every two years or three years, do you take in a combination of a number of changes?

• (1305)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I go to the member, I want to remind all hon. members for the third time in less than an hour to direct their questions to the Chair rather than to their colleagues.

I appreciate that members slip into a bad habit, but the rule is there for a reason. If members continue to address their comments and questions to each other rather than the Chair, the Chair will intervene and terminate the exchange.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General indicated that there are several different aspects of this particular piece of legislation that need to be changed very quickly because we have left this situation in place for several years. We need to continue to make changes as we find loopholes and find ways to lower taxes for Canadians. We also have to find ways to make the tax system easier to understand and deal with.

The hon. member is getting at the fact that governments across North America and the G7 have to make sure all their tax systems meet today's technology and needs. I think we will see tax measures like this coming on a much more regular basis, based on the Auditor General's comments.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to Bill C-48 as well. Before doing so, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking today on International Women's Day. I would like particularly to salute the contributions of the remarkable women in my community of Victoria.

The official opposition will support the bill at second reading stage. This legislation is called the technical tax amendment bill, and for a very good reason. However, we should not forget the enormity of its importance.

One of the witnesses appearing before finance committee, of which I am honoured to be a member, noted that 80% of the government's revenue is collected from income tax and excise taxes. Therefore, this is an important bill, although it is masquerading as a very technical, and some would say, dry subject.

We heard many witnesses. Many speakers today have remarked that over 1,000 pages of legislation is at issue, but that needs to be put into context. That is on top of the 2,882 pages of the Income Tax Act.

This is important but convoluted legislation. A lot of it has to do with comfort letters that need to be turned into real legislation so that Canadians have the certainty to know what the law on taxes would be.

In her 2009 report, the Auditor General noted serious problems, and I quote:

Taxpayers' ability to comply with tax legislation depends on their understanding of how the rules apply to their own circumstances.... Uncertainty about how the law should be applied can also add to the time taken and costs incurred by tax audits and tax administration.

It is inexcusable that this legislation, 1,000 pages in length, has taken 11 years, since the last technical amendment bill. I want to talk today about the content of the bill very briefly, why we say the delay has occurred, the consequences of that delay, some process questions and suggestions. That is where I would like to go in the time available to me.

There is much in this bill to like. Several provisions close tax loopholes, and some are of great interest to the opposition, because we are studying tax havens and tax evasion at committee stage. I am honoured to be part of that study.

These rules are also going to frustrate those who are involved in aggressive tax planning and tax avoidance transactions, rules to deal with foreign tax credit generators and specified leasing rules. There is some important legislation here to close loopholes. This could not in any way, shape or form be construed as a partisan piece of legislation. Going after tax havens, getting more money for the Canadian fisc, is obviously something people on all sides of the House would agree with.

Why has there been the delay? We believe the reason is simply that this has not been a priority for the government. The Conservatives had a number of excuses they trotted out during the committee stage. The first reason was that there have been a lot of minority governments. However, the bill has been in Parliament at least twice, and there was unanimous agreement from all MPs to proceed with the predecessor bills. That excuse does not wash.

The Conservatives then said that it was likely that all parties would support this version. Therefore, what was the problem? What was the excuse for such a delay? In committee, the Minister of State (Finance) went so far as to blame the recession, although it is hard for me to understand what that had to do with anything here.

Government Orders

Last, and sadly, we were told in committee by Conservative members that the NDP was responsible for the delay, as if we were somehow trying to slow it down.

The facts are that rather than the 100 days the Conservatives claim this has taken, and that somehow there was a filibuster, this legislation has only been three days before the House. The government then invoked time allocation.

To me, there is no excuse except for a lack of prioritization, which, for reasons I have explained, is critical. These delays have consequences. It has been costly for Canadians. It is a lot of work for people who are tax professionals. That is true, but we know who pays the bills when tax professionals are involved.

The head of the Canadian Tax Foundation, Mr. Chapman, a very wise speaker, appeared before our committee, and he used a useful analogy. He said that like a home or a car, these statutes need to be repaired and maintained to properly serve their purpose. He asked us to imagine how much work would be required if no repairs had been made to a home or a car for more than 10 years. That is exactly what has happened with this legislation.

•(1310)

The process is what I would particularly like to focus on. A tax lawyer in my jurisdiction, Mr. Thomas McDonnell, referred to this 1,000-page technical tax bill, and wrote “This Bill will also be passed”, and he is right, “without much in the way of informed debate in the House”. We have certainly seen that. Further:

Most parliamentarians voting on it will admit that they have not read it, let alone tried to fully understand the consequences of voting for (or against) it. This is not how Parliament is supposed to deal with one of its essential functions—the raising of revenue. It's sad to say it, but I don't think most of our parliamentarians understand this aspect of the role of Parliament, or, if they do, have the courage to go to the wall in defending it.

We have a massive bill, 11 years in the making, 11 years since the last one came along, and here we are.

Going forward, how can we avoid this kind of mammoth bill being debated a decade later? This is likely the last chance we will have to talk about this kind of process question for technical tax bills. We do not know when the next one will be coming. I understand that there are still scores of changes to be addressed and comfort letters that are still outstanding and the like. We know that we are going to have another one of these bills. How can we avoid the debacle this has constituted?

At the committee stage, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance moved the following motion:

That the Finance Department provide an annual update to the Finance Committee on the status of all outstanding technical tax changes.

However, as my learned colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques pointed out to her, this proposed annual update actually applies only until prorogation. It will not survive until the next prorogation.

We need to make a real effort on tax simplification. Ideas such as the office of tax simplification in the U.K. have been suggested by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. I think that is an excellent suggestion.

Second is the idea of establishing an expert panel, or indeed, even a royal commission to look at tax reform going forward. A sunset clause was suggested by the Certified General Accountants. That needs study as well.

The bottom line is that we need to do something. We need to address this in terms of process, because it is just not acceptable that we would be faced with a 1,000-page bill to scrutinize in the way in which this has occurred and then have time allocation imposed upon us.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 1:15 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, March 7, 2013, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

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

•(1315)

[*English*]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I ask that you see the clock at 1:30 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed from February 4, consideration of the motion that Bill C-464, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act (parental leave for multiple births or adoptions), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to review the reasons we cannot vote in favour of Bill C-464 on this side of the House. Quite simply, the bill from the member for Verchères—Les Patriotes bill goes against the spirit of the Employment Insurance Act.

EI parental benefits provide eligible parents with a maximum of 35 weeks of parental benefits to care for their child, regardless of the number of children that resulted from a pregnancy or adoption. This is because it is the lost earnings the individuals are insuring, not their social or financial circumstance. This is fundamental to the concept of employment insurance.

If parents decide to share the benefit between themselves, it can be split so that the benefit can be received either simultaneously or concurrently. The private member's bill proposes to double the number of weeks parents are eligible for parental benefits from 35 to 70 weeks in the case of multiple births or adoptions. It would also allow one of the parents to collect the entire 70 weeks of benefits if he or she so desires.

We recognize the hon. member's good intentions. However, EI is an insurance program. It is not a social welfare program whereby the financial needs and the circumstances of the individual are considered in determining the eligibility, entitlement and rate of weekly benefits.

I know this seems a bit confusing to the members opposite, so let me explain what I mean. If we look at the other benefits, we see that the requirements are universal for an event. Sickness benefits do not change upon the illness an individual has. Compassionate care benefits, again, do not change depending on the type of illness that has put a family member at risk of dying. This is because the benefit is based on a category of life events that earnings are insured for.

The legislation is clear. The EI parental benefit is not tied to the number of children born or adopted at any one time. Doubling the number of weeks during which parents are eligible to receive these benefits would go against the very essence of the EI program, making it more similar in concept to a social welfare program.

Our government knows the importance of family. That is why this government is providing families with fair and adequate assistance through the EI program as well as through several other measures. These measures include the Canada child tax benefit, the national child benefit supplement, and the universal child care benefit. We have also delivered on our commitment to provide income support to Canadian families through the Helping Families in Need Act.

We agree that families are the bedrock of our society and that parents need adequate assistance to provide adequate care to their children during the formative years. This government, more than any

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other previous government, understands the importance of families. However, the bill would not be financially responsible at this time, and it would undermine the insurance-based principle of the EI system.

It was estimated by the member of Parliament for Verchères—Les Patriotes that the extension of the parental benefits proposed by Bill C-464 would cost \$27 million. However, the government estimated that the cost would be closer to \$100 million in program costs alone, not including the administrative costs.

So far we have seen the NDP propose almost \$8 billion a year in new EI spending. That is per year. This is \$8 billion that would need to be contributed by workers and employers through increased premiums to pay for these benefits.

I would encourage all members of the House to join me in voting against this legislation.

• (1320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to speak to an important issue.

Employment insurance has been a great benefit to people who find themselves in difficult situations when they have to change occupations. Quite often they are not doing it on a voluntary basis but because of a shift in industry, a decrease in demand for a product that ultimately leads to layoffs and, in some situations, individuals being fired.

We need to reflect on what we are trying to achieve here today. We in the Liberal Party are open in principle to the idea of an extension of parental benefits. To that degree, we are prepared to allow the bill to go to committee and see what others have to say. We will listen and hopefully even improve the bill, or pass final judgment in third reading. However, at the very least, let us see it get out of second reading.

Employment insurance was created a number of years ago, back in the 1940s. Prior to that, the provinces were responsible for providing for the unemployed. In fact, it took a constitutional change, which ultimately empowered Ottawa. It was a Liberal administration back then that sought and was successful at getting the constitutional change necessary for Ottawa to establish a national unemployment program.

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We did not stop there. Unemployment insurance provided some very basic dollar amounts, and it would have been basic at that time. Through the years there has been a great deal of consideration of how we could expand the program, dating all the way back to virtually when it was first brought into existence. Today we are talking about the potential of increasing parental benefits with Bill C-464, but it was about 40 years ago, back in the 1970s, when Pierre Trudeau actually brought in maternity benefits in recognition that there is value in providing employment insurance for individuals who have to leave the workforce to have a child. That was a fairly bold move back around 1970 or 1971.

There have been other areas where we have seen employment changes and enhancements. In the last federal election, I recall knocking on doors and talking with people on the issue of employment insurance, primarily because we in the Liberal Party were talking during the election about using employment insurance to provide for different types of care situations.

For example, quite often there is a need for direct care for a parent or close family member who is terminally ill. In situations like that, are there things we could do within the employment insurance programs to allow that to take place?

It is not strictly a cost, in the sense of money going out of the employment insurance program; it is about the quality of life. It is about allowing families to be together during difficult times. Quite often when we do something of that nature, we save at the other end, because then the need for other health care services is greatly diminished. Health care services are very expensive, especially for people who require home care services. Because no one in their immediate family is able to be with them in their homes, quite often they will end up in palliative care units in a hospital or long-term care facility, which is exceptionally expensive.

• (1325)

When we talk about how employment insurance can be utilized to compensate individuals who are not able to work for a good reason, we should, at the very least, be open to that idea.

The support the Liberal Party is providing on this bill by encouraging members to allow it to go to committee will ultimately allow a healthy discussion at the committee level. For example, to what degree can employment insurance be used as a tool to compensate individuals who have been in the workforce and for a good reason need to be taken out of the workforce for a relatively short period of time? I would welcome the opportunity to hear what other members have to say.

One of the speakers on the bill indicated that we should try to narrow it so that it would apply strictly to people who find themselves unemployed because they have been fired or laid off. Maybe that is all that speaker feels anyone should be entitled to.

I would have to disagree. I believe that in a number of situations within our community or within our workforce, we should be open to allowing an individual to stay home from work for a short period of time and not have to fear not having the income necessary to sustain himself or herself in the short term. The best way to achieve that is through the employment insurance program.

No political party owns all the good ideas out there, but I would suggest that if we allow it to go to committee, we might hear what different stakeholders believe on this issue of the extension of parental benefits. There could be other things that would come out of it. That is the reason I think it would be of great benefit to allow the bill to get to committee stage.

As I indicated to the constituents I represent, I believe in social programs that are effective in improving the life standard of all Canadians. The employment insurance program has a critical role going forward, as it has in the past, but we should be looking for creative ideas going forward to enable people to be off work and not have to worry about their household income. That is the reason we should be looking at it.

Michael Ignatieff, the former leader of the Liberal Party, talked in a very passionate way about caring for family members. I believe the idea of allowing individuals the opportunity to be with close family members was very well received by most Canadians.

The other issue is in regard to the number of hours one has to put in to qualify. In 2000, the Liberal government increased parental benefits to 35 weeks from 10 weeks and reduced the hours of eligibility from 700 to 600, allowing more parents to spend more time caring for their children without having to worry about the loss of income from not being employed.

The bottom line is this: let us see the bill go to committee. Let us allow for presentations on the idea of how parental benefits could be further enhanced. If it makes sense in the committee, I suspect we will have a better chance of getting support at third reading.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to wish everyone a happy International Women's Day. I would like to encourage all parliamentarians in the House to continue fighting for women's rights. We unfortunately have a Conservative government that views the struggle for women's rights as an advertising campaign, but we must nevertheless work together to take real action.

I am very pleased this afternoon to speak to the bill of my colleague from Verchères—Les Patriotes, which amends the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act to correct the injustice done to parents in the case of multiple births and adoptions. I want to thank her for her excellent work with families.

We have heard Conservative members say at length that parental leave can be improved in Canada. Before going any further, I would like to compare the parental leave offered in Canada with that offered in other jurisdictions elsewhere in the world.

In Canada, parents are entitled to 35 weeks at 65% of their salary, to a maximum of \$501 a week. In Sweden, parents are entitled to 47 weeks at full salary or 69 weeks of leave at 80% of their salary. In Norway, parents are entitled to 44 weeks at full salary and those in Germany are entitled to 47 weeks at full salary. It is therefore entirely possible to improve this program, as my colleague from Verchères—Les Patriotes is trying to do.

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The Canada Labour Code currently draws no distinction between cases involving single or multiple births or adoptions. Parental leave in both cases is 35 weeks. That leave may be taken entirely by a single parent or by both parents, simultaneously or consecutively. Parents of twins and triplets are doubly in need of a break.

The bill amends the Canada Labour Code to increase the amount of leave to a maximum of 72 weeks in cases of multiple births or adoptions. It also amends the Employment Insurance Act to increase the maximum number of weeks during which parental benefits may be paid in the case of multiple births or adoptions to 70.

While the birth of a child is a joyful occasion, it is important to recognize that parents of multiple births face increased physical, financial and psychosocial stresses. Having a child—especially in today's world, where both partners usually have to work and grandparents often live in another city—requires a lot of time and effort from parents. Of course, when it is a multiple birth or multiple adoption, parents' responsibilities increase exponentially.

It is unfortunate that the Canada Labour Code and the employment insurance system do not take this simple reality into account. I am sure everyone would agree that it takes more hands and more energy to care for two children than just one. There are two mouths to feed and twice as many diapers to change. There is twice as much care to give and, often, half as much sleep for parents.

It is important to also recognize that multiple births often lead to medical complications. In particular, twins are often born prematurely, and mothers who give birth to twins often have to stay longer in hospital in order to avoid fatigue and other health problems.

Like my colleague from Verchères—Les Patriotes, I believe it is important to provide the parents of multiple births with more support. They need to be given enough time to deal with the challenges associated with a multiple birth.

As we all know, it was a couple from Ottawa who ignited the spark that led to this bill. They have been fighting in the courts since 2009. Christian Martin and his wife, Paula Critchley, both applied for 35 weeks of parental leave, or 70 weeks in total, when their twin daughters, Lucie and Athena, were born in April 2009.

The couple argued that since parents of children born a year apart are entitled to two 35-week periods of parental leave, parents of twins should receive the same privileges.

• (1335)

In September 2009, the Canada Employment Insurance Commission agreed with them. Christian Martin was given 35 weeks of parental leave and his partner was also given 35 weeks—one parental leave per child. However, an umpire and a Federal Court judge overturned the decision because the Employment Insurance Act allows for 35 weeks of parental leave for care given to one or more children resulting from the same pregnancy.

Now Christian and Paula want to take their case to the Supreme Court. They feel that the Employment Insurance Act violates the right to equality set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We will see what will happen with this case, which is so important for families, but I think we could solve the problem right now by passing Bill C-464, which is before the House this afternoon.

It is even more important that we pass this bill because the number of multiple pregnancies is constantly climbing. In Canada, the explosion in the number of multiple births in the last 30 years is consistent with that found in the rest of the developed world. Between 1974 and 1990, birth of twins has risen 35% per 100,000 successful pregnancies. Over the same period, the incidence of triplets and higher order multiple births has increased over 250%. In Quebec in 1980, there was one twin birth for every 54 births. In 2010, that number has risen to one twin birth for every 33 births. The number of births from multiple pregnancies is going to rise even more because more people are using assisted reproductive technology.

I would also like to remind my colleagues that the cost of this bill is reasonable. The parliamentary officer recently reviewed his first estimate and determined that extending the parental benefits period under the employment insurance system would benefit 6,700 families a year, for an initial annual cost of approximately \$40 million.

I was quite shocked to learn that the Conservatives are opposed to this bill when they claim to want to help families. The Conservatives like to boast about their measures that are supposed to help families, but in reality, they are abandoning many parents. For example, in 2007, they implemented a children's fitness tax credit. It certainly made for nice photo ops during the election campaign. However, what they did not say was that the tax credit mainly helped wealthy families who had enough money to register their children in organized activities. People had to spend \$1,000 to get a \$150 credit. Of course, I am not against encouraging young people to play sports. However, I would simply like to point out that the government is doing little bits here and there just to try to win votes and, if it would get its priorities straight, it would not have any difficulty finding the \$40 million needed for this bill.

I would also like to remind hon. members that the Conservatives opposed another NDP bill that would have helped Canadian families by improving pregnant women's access to healthy and safe working environments. On May 9, 2012, they opposed Bill C-307, which was introduced by the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. This bill proposed amending the Canada Labour Code in order to allow female workers to avail themselves of the provisions of provincial legislation regarding preventive withdrawal when those provisions are more beneficial. This is another example of the Conservatives betraying families.

In my opinion, Bill C-464 is a good investment because it allows parents to get back on their feet after a multiple pregnancy and ensures that the newborns get a good start in life by giving parents more time to look after them.

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In closing, I would like to point out that my colleague's bill is supported by Multiple Births Canada, an organization that advocates for the equality of parents of multiples, and by many other organizations. I hope that the Conservatives will not miss this new opportunity to prove that they have not completely abandoned Quebec families and that, in the end, they will support this bill. This bill must be sent to committee so that we can hear from Canadian parents and the organizations that represent them.

● (1340)

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-464. The bill would amend the Employment Insurance Act to double the maximum number of weeks of parental benefits for new parents who are blessed with multiple children from a single pregnancy, or who adopt more than one child at the same time.

Our government supports all Canadian families, including multiple-birth families. However, our government cannot support the bill because it would contradict the intent of the Employment Insurance Act.

Please let me explain. EI is not a social welfare program where an individual's financial needs and personal circumstances are determinants in deciding whether or not he or she is eligible. EI is an insurance program. This means that eligibility criteria and entrance requirements apply to all claimants equally.

The Employment Insurance Act is very clear in terms of the treatment of multiple births for the purposes of receiving parental benefits. It states that the maximum number of weeks that could be paid in EI parental benefits as a result of a single pregnancy or adoption is 35 weeks. Parental benefits are intended to support parents in balancing demands of work and family by providing the flexibility they need to stay home and care for their newly born or newly adopted children.

The Employment Insurance Act provides flexibility, allowing moms and dads to share the weeks of benefits as they see fit. They can either be taken consecutively or concurrently, providing flexibility for those families. In addition to the 35 weeks, the mother is also entitled to 15 weeks of maternity benefits. The principle underlying maternity benefits is that the mother should be protected from an earnings loss caused by her physical inability to work or to seek work in the weeks surrounding the birth.

There is considerable evidence that shows that parental care in the first year of life is critical to parent-child bonding and to establishing a foundation for subsequent growth, development and learning. That is why our government provides a full year of EI maternity and parental benefits and requires only 600 hours to qualify for those benefits.

In Canada, access to EI maternity and parental benefits is high. Women continue to make up the vast majority, which was 86.5% of the claims in 2011. However, the number of claims for men is increasing, and this signals that more couples are sharing the benefits between men and women.

Canadian families are a priority for our government. We have done a lot recently to help families going through a difficult period.

Our government is also supporting the parents of critically ill or injured children, by creating a new EI benefit of up to 35 weeks for those parents under the Helping Families in Need Act. We have also amended the Employment Insurance Act to facilitate access to sickness benefits for parents should they fall ill while receiving EI parental benefits.

We have also made amendments to the Canadian Labour Code, to ensure employees in federally regulated industries have job protection and are not penalized when they have to take time off work for the special circumstances that I previously mentioned. The Canada Labour Code covers about 128,000 workplaces and close to one million people across Canada. These people work in federally regulated industries, such as transportation, communications, banking and crown corporations.

Our government is helping Canadian families in other ways as well. We have introduced changes so that military personnel in Canada who must report for duty have improved access to parental benefits. Through the Fairness for the Self-Employed Act, our government extended access to EI special benefits, including maternity and parental benefits, for self-employed people who opt in to the EI program. We have also provided greater flexibility under the EI program for parents who foster children and have committed to adopting them, through earlier access to parental benefits.

We believe that families are the bedrock of our society. That is why each year we spend billions of dollars in transfer payments to the provinces and territories to support early childhood development and child care. We also help Canadian families through direct spending and targeted tax relief. For example, the Canada child tax benefit, the working income tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement provide income to support low and middle-income families across this nation.

Our government will not waiver from its commitment to support the well-being of our country by investing in the bedrock, which is our families.

● (1345)

Canada's economic action plan has further strengthened the universal child care benefit to help 1.5 million families and more than 2 million young children every year. An estimated 22,000 families have been lifted out of poverty since this benefit was introduced. Working parents are important to our economy, so we have invested heavily in the creation of new spaces for child care.

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As members can see, our government supports parents in many ways. Working parents are vital to a strong and prosperous economy. That is why we want to help them balance work with their family responsibilities and their family obligations. That being said, we will not change the fundamental nature of a national program such as EI that has already proven to be flexible and adaptable to parents' needs. Time and time again our government has demonstrated its commitment to helping families.

Our government has costed this bill at around \$100 million a year, and that does not include the cost of administration of the bill. This would be in addition to the \$8 billion a year cost to Canadian taxpayers that EI measures that the NDP would like to create, including a 360-hour work year. The result of implementing the NDP's EI agenda would see a 40% increase in EI premiums, which would be economically crippling to these people in fragile economic times.

While our support for families is clear, it is also clear that Canada cannot afford the risky financial plan of the NDP, the one it has for Canadian taxpayers. I would encourage all members of the House to vote against this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about Bill C-464, introduced by our colleague from Verchères—Les Patriotes. She is a very progressive MP who, unlike the Conservatives, thinks about the future. I can assure the people of Verchères—Les Patriotes that they are very well represented in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

I am not surprised that the Conservatives are not supporting this bill. I do not think anybody should be surprised. They used to be a progressive party, but they are a long way from being progressive right now. Of course, we costed this bill at \$26 million. The Conservatives have costed it at \$100 million, and we should not be surprised by that either. After all, their costing numbers have been out in space ever since they became government. We only have to look at the F-35s and the way they costed those. They are applying the same costing system to this bill. If anything, I would like to see this bill go to committee so that we can discuss it properly and the costing can be reviewed. If we do that, I am sure that we will see that \$26 million is a proper cost.

It certainly is a pleasure for me to rise today, for personal reasons. We have multiple births in my family. We also have multiple births in my wife's family. I could have been a parent of twins. Unfortunately, because of unfortunate things that happened, we are not parents of twins, but that is history. The fortunate thing that happened because of that is that a couple of years later, I got to meet my daughter for the first time. Maybe, if I get lucky, she will present me with twins some day.

My mother-in-law is a twin, and as I said, my wife was pregnant with twins. My aunt also had twins, way back when. I can still remember the difficulty of raising twins back in those days. It is not easy today. It was not easy back then. However, we can help families with multiple births today by passing this bill or at least by sending it to committee.

On my wife's side of the family, my nephew and his wife gave birth to twins. I can remember that they were having difficulty with their twins. It is not easy raising one baby. Imagine raising two babies at once. My wife and their mother and mother-in-law and others went to help. It is very important that these parents of multiple births get help.

Would it not be nice if we were to amend the EI Act so that the father could take part in raising his kids, his twins for, I believe, 35 or 37 weeks? That would certainly make a big difference in the lives not only of the mother but of the babies. Hopefully we can send this bill to committee.

People at Multiple Births Canada had this to say about multiple births and this bill. They said that if this bill is passed or sent to committee, "parents will be able to provide their infants with better (quality and quantity) bonding time—with more weeks, with one primary caregiver or two parents at home, parents will have more opportunities to interact individually with their infants".

• (1350)

I want to remind people in the House today and people who might be listening in that it is so important that both parents be involved in the first months of a child's life. It is doubly important in the case of twins.

The primary caregiver will be better equipped to handle physical and emotional stress.

I have two kids. It is physically challenging for a woman who has been through a difficult birth to take care of one baby, let alone two babies. This bill would certainly go a long way in supporting the parents.

Another thing this association says is that:

Parents can focus on their babies, not their financial challenges—...more financial resources to meet the increased cost of two or more babies, and more flexibility to work when it best meets their needs. Also, there will be less need to seek daycare for their infants, which is difficult to find for two or more babies at the same time and extremely expensive for twins or more.

Except for those who live in Quebec, where people are quite fortunate to have responsible daycare, it is very expensive to have one child in daycare. Let us imagine having two children in daycare at the same time. It becomes very expensive and is onerous on the parents.

In the past, governments have made changes to EI. They have adapted to certain situations for illness and different reasons, mortality for example. We are asking that the bill go to committee so we could look at making changes that would allow parents of multiple births or adoptions to be given more time to spend with their new children.

Raising one child is difficult and costly, but raising twins is double the cost and double the work. It is double everything. It would certainly be a blessing for these parents to get help from the government. I guess that is too much to ask from the Conservatives. They are not really interested in helping ordinary Canadians, let alone mothers who have multiple births.

Private Members' Business

I just want to read one more line from Multiple Births Canada:

Mothers will have better support after pregnancy complications—with more time, be it with one primary caregiver or two parents at home, mothers have more time to rest and recover while caring for their babies.

Sometimes pregnancies can be complicated, especially where twins are involved. It is rather difficult for a mother who has just given birth to recuperate from a difficult birth or pregnancy. This bill would address this, and it certainly would go a long way in helping mothers and fathers, but most of all it would help in the bonding between parents and new babies.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will speak today from experience. On June 27, 1968, life gave me a very generous gift. I had twin daughters. They came into my life when my oldest daughter was only 27 months old. It was hard work, but I was young.

Having a child turns parents' lives upside down. While parents feel a tremendous amount of love as they build a relationship they will enjoy for the rest of their lives, they also have to work harder to include the newborn in their daily lives and to make things work at home. You can imagine how much energy it takes to raise two newborns at the same time. In 1968, things were different, because you only learned that you were having twins at the birth.

Parents with twins encounter many challenges. The babies are never hungry at the same time and so parents are constantly on standby. Daily life is a marathon of diaper changing and feedings. I can assure you that after all these years, I still remember those days. However, they are happy memories. Parents must also discover the distinct personality of each child, stimulate them and see to their needs without making compromises, and all the while not overlooking the older sibling.

In the first few months, taking care of an infant is a full-time job. Having twins requires even more energy, and is much like a vacation. I can say from experience that having twins is twice the amount of work of a single baby.

That is why I strongly support the bill introduced by my colleague from Verchères—Les Patriotes. It is synonymous with social justice and equality for all parents. Why would we abandon parents of twins when we help all other parents?

The NDP believes that we must help Canadian families because our economy, our societal choices and our communities revolve around them. At a time when the birth rate in Canada is declining, anything we can do to help parents must be taken seriously. I will explain why this bill is a good opportunity to help parents.

We already have several programs in Canada to support families, but we can do better. The Canada Labour Code gives an employee a maximum of 35 weeks of leave. The Employment Insurance Act also gives 35 weeks of parental benefits. Is that really fair in the case of twins? A major difference, from my own experience, is that people generally need two incomes to survive in this economy. I know that with my three little ones, including a set of twins, I would have needed much more than 35 weeks at home.

Even with a single child, parental leave in Canada is not an extraordinary amount of leave compared to what you find elsewhere. In Canada, parents are entitled to 35 weeks of leave at 55% of their salary to a maximum of \$485 a week. During that period at 55% of the salary, families are not living the high life. In Norway, parents get 44 weeks at full salary; in Germany, 47 weeks at full salary. In Sweden, parents are entitled to 47 weeks of leave at full salary or 69 weeks at 80% of their full salary. Sweden also gives an additional six months of leave for each additional child. Things are even better in France. Mothers are entitled to up to three years of leave. In addition to that, France also graciously provides a number of services, including subsidized daycare services and generous monthly allowances.

Those are some concrete measures for dealing with the declining birth rate. It is fair to say that Sweden and France encourage families. However, that is not the case in Canada, even less so when it comes to parents of twins. By all indications, Canada prefers to give tax exemptions to corporations rather than families. Bill C-464 is a step in the right direction if we want to remedy the situation.

• (1400)

My colleague is proposing that we amend the Canada Labour Code to increase parental leave to a maximum of 72 weeks. This would allow both parents to take adequate leave.

At a time when we are striving for equality in all aspects of society, the least we could do is allow each parent to have the same level of involvement at home.

My colleague is also proposing that we amend the Employment Insurance Act to extend the number of weeks of parental benefits to 70 in the case of multiple births. Parents of twins and triplets, just like all other parents, contribute to employment insurance and deserve to receive adequate benefits.

Not every member of this House shares the view that employment insurance belongs to those who contribute to it. I must remind members that employment insurance is a service paid into by workers, for workers. Why should parents of twins not get their fair share?

People may like to know that the amendments to EI and to the Canada Labour Code proposed in Bill C-464 would cost \$40 million. That amount of money might shock some, but it is nothing compared to the dormant \$526 billion sitting in the coffers of major Canadian corporations in the form of tax exemptions.

Rather than setting up programs that would really help Canadian families, the Conservatives prefer to give gifts to large corporations under the ideological premise that the money will be automatically reinvested. Yet, we know that it is not being reinvested. Large corporations are saying “Thank you and so long”.

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Bill C-464 is therefore an opportunity to make amends to Canadians by showing them a little bit of respect. We have the duty to support the economy, and that can be done in several ways, including putting SMEs, new green technologies and research to good use. However, let us not make the mistake of abandoning families because, as I said before, our society revolves around them.

In closing, I would like to point out that multiple births are on the rise in Canada. In fact, their number has been steadily increasing over the past 30 years.

It is therefore high time that the House take responsibility and provide families with what they expect from us: policies that really help them in their daily lives.

I therefore urge hon. members to vote in favour of Bill C-464, which was introduced by my NDP colleague, because it is definitely a step in the right direction.

• (1405)

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, March 20, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among all parties and I think, if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the deferred recorded division on the motion for second reading of Bill C-464, an Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act (parental leave for multiple births or adoptions), be further deferred to Wednesday, March 27, 2013, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Accordingly, the deferred recorded division stands further deferred until Wednesday, March 27, 2013, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

It being 2:10 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 18 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28 (2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:12 p.m.)

APPENDIX

**ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS WITH THEIR
CONSTITUENCIES, PROVINCE OF CONSTITUENCY
AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS;
COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE,
THE MINISTRY AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. JOE COMARTIN

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BRUCE STANTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

MR. NATHAN CULLEN

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

MS. NYCOLE TURMEL

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	Ontario	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	Québec	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	NDP
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	CPC
Bélangier, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	NDP
Bergen, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	Québec	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie.....	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boivin, Françoise.....	Gatineau	Québec	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	NDP
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boulerice, Alexandre.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie....	Québec	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine.....	Hochelaga	Québec	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik.....	Saint-Jean.....	Québec	NDP
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen.....	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	Québec	NDP
Brown, Gordon.....	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora.....	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South.....	Manitoba	CPC
Butt, Brad.....	Mississauga—Streetsville.....	Ontario	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	Lib.
Calandra, Paul , Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Carmichael, John.....	Don Valley West	Ontario	CPC
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	NDP
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health....	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island....	Lib.
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	Ontario	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant..	Québec	NDP
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu.....	Pickering—Scarborough East ..	Ontario	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Choquette, François	Drummond	Québec	NDP
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob.....	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh.....	Ontario	NDP
Côté, Raymond.....	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin.....	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crockatt, Joan	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	Ontario	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	NDP
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	NDP
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	Québec	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of International Cooperation	Vaughan	Ontario	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Associate Minister of National Defence	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	NDP
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	Québec	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	Québec	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	NDP
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	Ind. Cons.
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	Québec	NDP
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	NDP
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	NDP
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Ind.
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	NDP
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	Ontario	NDP
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	Lib.
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	Québec	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	NDP
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	NDP
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	Yukon	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	Ontario	CPC
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	NDP
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	NDP
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	Ontario	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	Ontario	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Michaud, Éloïse	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Québec	NDP
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.....	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude.....	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	NDP
Mourani, Maria.....	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	NDP
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	Québec	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval.....	Québec	NDP
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.....	Calgary East.....	Alberta	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills....	Ontario	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre.....	Ontario	CPC
O'Toole, Erin	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel ..	Québec	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec.....	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable.....	Québec	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	BQ
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat.....	Alberta	CPC
Péclet, Ève.....	La Pointe-de-l'Île.....	Québec	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	CPC
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm.....	Québec	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London ...	Ontario	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	NDP
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rafferty, John.....	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert.....	Alberta	CPC
Ravignat, Mathieu.....	Pontiac.....	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	Québec	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Québec	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	Ontario	CPC
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	NDP
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	NDP
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	Lib.
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	Ontario	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	NDP
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	Ontario	CPC
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	NDP
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversi- fication)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	British Columbia	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Crockatt, Joan	Calgary Centre	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Ind. Cons.
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Associate Minister of National Defence	Delta—Richmond East	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	CPC
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	NDP
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	NDP
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	CPC
Bergen, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Madawaska—Restigouche	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	NDP
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Labrador	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
NUNAVUT (1)		
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	CPC
ONTARIO (106)		
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of International Cooperation	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	NDP
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ind.
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	CPC
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	CPC
O'Toole, Erin	Durham	CPC
Poillievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	CPC
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	CPC

QUÉBEC (75)

Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	NDP
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	NDP
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	NDP
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	NDP
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	NDP
Choquette, François	Drummond	NDP
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	NDP
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	NDP
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Groghé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	NDP
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	NDP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	NDP
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	NDP
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	NDP
Label, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	NDP
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	NDP
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	NDP
Michaud, Éline	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	NDP
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	NDP
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	NDP
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	NDP
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	NDP
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	NDP
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	BQ
Péclet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	NDP
Ravignat, Mathieu	Pontiac	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	NDP
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	NDP
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Lib.
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	NDP
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	CPC

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of March 8, 2013 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:	Chris Warkentin	Vice-Chairs:	Carolyn Bennett Jean Crowder
Stella Ambler Dennis Bevington Ray Boughen	Rob Clarke Jonathan Genest-Jourdain	Carol Hughes Brent Rathgeber	Greg Rickford Kyle Seeback

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Associate Members

Eve Adams	Michael Chong	Daryl Kramp	Blake Richards
Mark Adler	Joan Crockatt	Mike Lake	Romeo Saganash
Dan Albas	Nathan Cullen	Kevin Lamoureux	Andrew Saxton
Harold Albrecht	Joe Daniel	Guy Lauzon	Gary Schellenberger
Chris Alexander	Patricia Davidson	Ryan Leef	Bev Shipley
Mike Allen	Bob Dechert	Kellie Leitch	Devinder Shory
Dean Allison	Dean Del Mastro	Pierre Lemieux	Joy Smith
Rob Anders	Earl Dreshen	Chungsen Leung	Robert Sopuck
David Anderson	Rick Dykstra	Wladyslaw Lizon	Kevin Sorenson
Charlie Angus	Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Ben Lobb	Brian Storseth
Scott Armstrong	Hedy Fry	Tom Lukiwski	Mark Strahl
Niki Ashton	Royal Galipeau	James Lunney	David Sweet
Jay Aspin	Cheryl Gallant	Dave MacKenzie	David Tilson
Joyce Bateman	Parm Gill	Colin Mayes	Lawrence Toet
Leon Benoit	Shelly Glover	Phil McColeman	Brad Trost
Tyrone Benskin	Robert Goguen	Cathy McLeod	Bernard Trottier
Candice Bergen	Jacques Gourde	Costas Menegakis	Susan Truppe
James Bezan	Nina Grewal	Rob Merrifield	Merv Tweed
Kelly Block	Richard Harris	Larry Miller	Dave Van Kesteren
Peter Braid	Laurie Hawn	Rob Moore	Maurice Vellacott
Garry Breitkreuz	Bryan Hayes	Rick Norlock	Mike Wallace
Gordon Brown	Russ Hiebert	Deepak Obhrai	Mark Warawa
Lois Brown	Jim Hillyer	Tilly O'Neill Gordon	Jeff Watson
Patrick Brown	Randy Hoback	Ted Opitz	John Weston
Rod Bruinooge	Ed Holder	Erin O'Toole	Rodney Weston
Brad Butt	Roxanne James	LaVar Payne	David Wilks
Paul Calandra	Brian Jean	Pierre Poilievre	John Williamson
Blaine Calkins	Peter Julian	Joe Preston	Stephen Woodworth
Ron Cannan	Randy Kamp	James Rajotte	Terence Young
John Carmichael	Gerald Keddy	Mathieu Ravignat	Wai Young
Colin Carrie	Greg Kerr	Scott Reid	Bob Zimmer
Corneliu Chisu	Ed Komarnicki	Michelle Rempel	

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Pierre-Luc Dusseault

Vice-Chairs:Scott Andrews
Patricia DavidsonCharlie Angus
Charmaine Borg
Alexandre BoulericeBrad Butt
Blaine CalkinsJohn Carmichael
Dean Del MastroEarl Dreshen
Colin Mayes

(12)

Associate Members

Eve Adams	Rob Clarke	Ryan Leef	Gary Schellenberger
Mark Adler	Joan Crockatt	Kellie Leitch	Kyle Seeback
Dan Albas	Joe Daniel	Pierre Lemieux	Bev Shipley
Harold Albrecht	Bob Dechert	Chungsen Leung	Devinder Shory
Chris Alexander	Rick Dykstra	Wladyslaw Lizon	Joy Smith
Mike Allen	Wayne Easter	Ben Lobb	Robert Sopuck
Dean Allison	Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Tom Lukiwski	Kevin Sorenson
Stella Ambler	Royal Galipeau	James Lunney	Brian Storseth
Rob Anders	Cheryl Gallant	Dave MacKenzie	Mark Strahl
David Anderson	Parm Gill	Phil McColeman	David Sweet
Scott Armstrong	Shelly Glover	Cathy McLeod	David Tilson
Jay Aspin	Robert Goguen	Costas Menegakis	Lawrence Toet
Joyce Bateman	Jacques Gourde	Rob Merrifield	Brad Trost
Carolyn Bennett	Nina Grewal	Larry Miller	Bernard Trotter
Leon Benoit	Richard Harris	Rob Moore	Susan Truppe
Candice Bergen	Laurie Hawn	Rick Norlock	Merv Tweed
James Bezan	Bryan Hayes	Deepak Obhrai	Dave Van Kesteren
Kelly Block	Russ Hiebert	Tilly O'Neill Gordon	Maurice Vellacott
Ray Boughen	Jim Hillyer	Ted Opitz	Mike Wallace
Peter Braid	Randy Hoback	Erin O'Toole	Mark Warawa
Garry Breitzkreuz	Ed Holder	LaVar Payne	Chris Warkentin
Gordon Brown	Roxanne James	Pierre Poilievre	Jeff Watson
Lois Brown	Brian Jean	Joe Preston	John Weston
Patrick Brown	Peter Julian	James Rajotte	Rodney Weston
Rod Bruinooge	Randy Kamp	Brent Rathgeber	David Wilks
Paul Calandra	Gerald Keddy	Scott Reid	John Williamson
Ron Cannan	Greg Kerr	Michelle Rempel	Stephen Woodworth
Colin Carrie	Ed Komarnicki	Blake Richards	Terence Young
Corneliu Chisu	Daryl Kramp	Greg Rickford	Wai Young
Michael Chong	Mike Lake	Andrew Saxton	Bob Zimmer
David Christopherson	Guy Lauzon		

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair: Merv Tweed

Vice-Chairs: Malcolm Allen
Frank Valeriotte

Alex Atamanenko
Ruth Ellen Brosseau
Randy Hoback

Pierre Lemieux
LaVar Payne

Francine Raynault
Blake Richards

Brian Storseth
Bob Zimmer

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Associate Members

Eve Adams
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Harold Albrecht
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Mike Allen
Dean Allison
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Joyce Bateman
Leon Benoit
Candice Bergen
James Bezan
Kelly Block
Ray Boughen
Peter Braid
Garry Breitzkreuz
Gordon Brown
Lois Brown
Patrick Brown
Rod Bruinooge
Brad Butt
Paul Calandra
Blaine Calkins
Ron Cannan
John Carmichael
Colin Carrie
Corneliu Chisu

Michael Chong
Rob Clarke
Joan Crockatt
Joe Daniel
Patricia Davidson
Bob Dechert
Dean Del Mastro
Earl Dreeshen
Rick Dykstra
Wayne Easter
Mark Eyking
Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay
Hedy Fry
Royal Galipeau
Cheryl Gallant
Parm Gill
Shelly Glover
Robert Goguen
Jacques Gourde
Nina Grewal
Richard Harris
Laurie Hawn
Bryan Hayes
Russ Hiebert
Jim Hillyer
Ed Holder
Roxanne James
Brian Jean
Peter Julian
Randy Kamp
Gerald Keddy

Greg Kerr
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APPENDIX

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