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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[English]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table today, in both official languages, the Public Accounts of Canada 2012.

The Government of Canada is committed to strong financial management and reporting to ensure accountability and transparency. For the 14th consecutive year, the Auditor General of Canada has provided an unqualified audit opinion of the Government of Canada's financial statements and, indeed, the Government of Canada can be justifiably proud of this record.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 59 petitions.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations and I would ask for unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 45, any deferred recorded division, scheduled to take place on Wednesday, October 31, 2012, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business pursuant to Standing Order 98, be deferred anew until Wednesday, October 31, 2012, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to move the following motion: That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, clauses 179 to 184 of schedule I, related to the construction of a bridge spanning the Detroit River between Windsor and Detroit, be removed from C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, and do compose Bill C-47; that Bill C-47 be entitled "an act respecting a bridge spanning the Detroit River between Windsor and Detroit and other works"; that Bill C-47 be deemed read a first time and be printed; that the order for second reading of the said bill provide for the referral to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities; that Bill C-45 retain the status on the order paper that it had prior to the adoption of this order; that Bill C-45 be reprinted as amended; and that the law clerk and the parliamentary counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary to give effect to this motion.

We are proposing this because the new bridge between Windsor and Detroit has been a long process in evolution and included new legislation that was passed under the International Bridges and Tunnels Act. That process has been defined and developed, and we want to make sure that it is consistent.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

PARKS CANADA

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as you probably know, there were recent cuts announced to Parks Canada. Some of those cuts will impact the Rideau Canal, which is a UNESCO world heritage site, and the Trent-Severn Waterway. I have a petition in which the petitioners are asking Parks Canada not to reduce the hours of operation or shorten the seasons of operation and to return service to 2011 levels.

They are also asking for Parks Canada to receive the necessary funding for both the Rideau Canal and Trent-Severn Waterway to return to 2011 operating hours and lengths of seasons in order for Canadians and visitors to safely enjoy these waterways. The petitioners and I look forward to the minister's response.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to present five petitions signed by Canadians from several provinces who are calling on the government to reverse its decision to close down the Experimental Lakes Area, in order to protect aquatic ecosystems.

Need I add that that program has allowed scientists to gather data after monitoring fresh water in Canada and that the research conducted in the Experimental Lakes Area has earned international recognition?

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present four petitions.

The first petition has to do with safeguarding the Experimental Lakes Area.

People from across Canada have signed this petition calling on the government to recognize the significant impact of the research done there and to continue to fund that research and support scientists.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition was signed by many Canadians who oppose Canada's withdrawal from the Kyoto protocol and who want to ensure that Canada has a clear plan to fight greenhouse gases.

PENSIONS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two more petitions signed by people from my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry. The petitioners want the government to continue funding old age security and to reconsider its decision to increase the age of eligibility from 65 to 67. These people want to continue enjoying the protection of the government.

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when there is a great need for attention to issues like bedside care, our old age supplement programs and increasing community policing, I have a petition from individuals asking the government to rethink its argument that there is a need for additional members of Parliament here in the House of Commons.

The petitioners are asking the government to maintain the current number of MPs at 308.

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the government to recognize the importance of the Experimental Lakes Area and the government's mandate to study, preserve and protect aquatic ecosystems.

The petitioners are also asking the government to continue to staff and provide financial resources to the Experimental Lakes Area at the current or higher level of commitment.

● (1010)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on behalf of Canadians who are very concerned about Canada's Experimental Lakes Area.

The petitioners are calling on the government to reverse the decision to close the ELA research station and to continue to staff and provide financial resources to the ELA at current or higher levels of commitment.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of a petition with respect to the Experimental Lakes Area as well.

The petitioners indicate that since 1968 the Experimental Lakes Area has been the global leader in conducting whole ecosystem experiments. The petitioners are extremely concerned about these closures. They recognize the importance that this has played in preserving and protecting aquatic ecosystems, and would like the government to reverse its decision to close the Experimental Lakes Area research station. The petitioners also ask that there be continued support for the staff and financial resources at the current or higher level.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to submit a petition on behalf of residents of Toronto, over 50% of whom were not born in Canada.

The petitioners continue to express serious concerns about Bill C-31 and, among other things, the dividing of refugees into tiers based on their country of origin and unnecessarily punishing them as a result.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 852, 858 and 872.

[Text]

Question No. 852—**Mr. Paul Dewar:**

With regard to the 29.2 million dollars in Strategic Review reductions assigned in the 2012 Budget to Parks Canada for fiscal years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015: (a) what are the overall reductions for National Historic Sites (including historic canals, and federal funding in support of national historic sites not administered by Parks Canada), federal heritage buildings, heritage railway stations, heritage lighthouses and historic places; (b) of the 638 full time equivalent (FTE) position reductions announced by Parks Canada, how many will be taken from each of the program elements referred to in (a), and how many of those positions are in (i) Parks Canada field units, (ii) service centres, (iii) the national office; (c) what are the specific impacts (expressed in dollar and FTE reductions) on each National Historic Site (including Historic Canals) administered by Parks Canada; (d) what are the specific impacts (expressed in dollar and FTE reductions) on support for (i) national historic sites not administered by Parks Canada, (ii) federal heritage buildings, (iii) heritage railway stations, (iv) heritage lighthouses, (v) historic places, including the Canadian Register of Historic Places and Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada; and (e) what is the reduction in operating hours and other services to the public for each National Historic Site, including Historic Canals, administered by Parks Canada?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parks Canada is contributing to government efforts to reduce the federal deficit by decreasing its operating budget by \$29.2 million. In addition, the agency must also absorb salary increases as announced in budget 2010, along with inflationary increases. To do this, Parks Canada is undertaking several measures to improve internal efficiencies and reduce costs while focusing on agency priorities and quality service delivery to Canadians on our important mandate, including consolidating and streamlining service centres and the national office; aligning the seasonality of its workforce across functions to the highest requirements; and focusing recreational boating service at canals and creating new waterway management units that are 100% dedicated to canals.

In 2011, national historic sites under the administration of Parks Canada were generally open from the Victoria Day weekend to the Thanksgiving weekend. In 2012, the majority of national historic sites have maintained similar opening and closing dates; however, some sites opened on June 1 and closed on the Labour Day weekend. There was no change to the 2012 operating season at historic canals. No decision has been made with respect to operating hours for the 2013-2014 season at those canals.

The reductions made by Parks Canada will have no impact on support provided by the agency for national historic sites not administered by Parks Canada, federal heritage buildings, heritage railway stations, heritage lighthouses or historic places, including the Canadian Register of Historic Places and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

In 2013, Parks Canada will move to self-guided visitor activities at less visited national historic sites while maintaining guided activities at the busiest national historic sites. No Parks Canada national historic sites have been closed as a result of the reductions.

The overall reductions related primarily to national historic sites include the following: approximately 90 FTEs in field units, \$5.2 million; 54 FTEs in service centres, \$3.8 million; and 24 FTEs at the national office, \$1.8 million. This amounts to a total of 168 FTEs, \$10.8 million. Please note that these reductions do not include cuts related to historic canal operations, as analysis is ongoing.

Parks Canada will continue to maintain programs and services across its parks and sites to tell the stories that are important to our national identity, manage species at risk, provide meaningful experiences that promote an understanding and appreciation of Canada and support communities through tourism, as it has done for the last 100 years.

Question No. 858—Ms. Jean Crowder:

With regard to hospitals, clinics or sanatoria established by the government to treat First Nations, Inuit or Métis with tuberculosis: (a) how many such hospitals have been established by the government; (b) what area did each hospital serve; (c) how many patients were treated at each hospital; (d) what was the average length of stay for patients; (e) how many patients returned to their community after treatment; (f) how many patients did not return to their community; and (g) what was the age breakdown of patients?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, historically, and in keeping with the treatment models of the time, the federal government supported hospitals specifically

to treat tuberculosis or TB. However, as the rates declined and treatment regimens changed, these hospitals were no longer needed and many were converted to provide more general health care services. Rates of TB in Canada have significantly decreased since the 1950s, falling to a rate of 4.6 cases per 100,000 population in 2010. This decrease in rates was largely due to the discovery of antibiotics for TB in the late 1940s. The introduction of this effective treatment greatly shortened and facilitated recovery, thus decreasing the need for hospitals dedicated to the treatment of TB.

Health Canada does not have historical data specific to hospitals supported by the federal government for the treatment of TB.

Currently, provinces and territories have the legislated authority for TB prevention and control within their jurisdictions. Health Canada supports TB prevention and control in first nations on-reserve by either providing services directly or providing funding to first nation communities, first nation organizations, provinces or regional health authorities for the delivery of services.

The Public Health Agency of Canada does not collect information on hospitals or centres that treat tuberculosis. However, the Canadian Tuberculosis Reporting System, CTBRS, managed by the agency, collects information on all individual reported cases of active tuberculosis diagnosed among aboriginal people in Canada. Reports of all new active and re-treatment tuberculosis cases are annually submitted to the agency by all provinces and territories. For more information on the CTBRS and the most recent data available, please consult the following website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tbpc-latb/pubs/tbcan09pre/index-eng.php>.

*Routine Proceedings*Question No. 872—**Hon. Hedy Fry:**

[English]

With regard to emergency preparedness at the Department of Public Safety and the decision by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to develop four additional nuclear reactors at the Darlington Nuclear Power Generation Station: (a) what are the plans in the event of a nuclear accident at Darlington for (i) communication to radioactive-affected areas, (ii) evacuation to specified and alternative areas in the event of changes in wind directions, (iii) immediate health care to evacuees, (iv) immediate protection for emergency workers, (v) patients already in hospital who would need to be evacuated outside the affected zone, (vi) accurate and timely information to the media; (b) what are the plans for ameliorative distribution of iodine tablets; (c) what immediate protective measures will be promoted and how will information about these measures be communicated; (d) what is the replacement source of power in the event that the accident eliminates the use of the Darlington nuclear reactors; (e) what are the plans to ensure access to uncontaminated food sources and distribution channels; (f) have emergency workers been trained in the handling of radioactive material and actions within radiation contaminated areas; (g) where will additional emergency workers be drawn from and what arrangements will be made to register all workers and follow their radiation exposure levels; (h) what are the plans to measure soil and plant contamination and what is the baseline radioactivity in the biosphere in the 100 kilometre zone around Darlington; (i) will all potential victims of an accident be registered, including their locations at the time of the accident, and will there be epidemiological studies of subsequent effects; and (j) what are the plans to provide support to evacuees including (i) mental health care, (ii) finding re-employment for those whose jobs have been lost, (iii) redirecting the expertise of the nuclear power plant workers, (iv) providing income support and how would it be indexed to affected people?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, CNSC, is a regulatory organization that licenses the facilities and ensures their safety. The decision to build additional reactors was a decision made by the provincial government.

In the event of an incident at the Darlington nuclear power generation station, the following federal plans would be used: the Federal Nuclear Emergency Plan, FNEP; and the Federal Emergency Response Plan.

Public Safety would coordinate the federal response in cooperation with other federal departments and agencies; however the majority of responsibilities lay directly with the Government of Ontario.

The federal government, in accordance with the FNEP would provide support to radiological assurance monitoring for first responders and the at-risk population. Similarly, Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Health Canada would support the province in determining water, soil and air contamination levels within the 100-kilometre area surrounding Darlington while the Canadian Food Inspection Agency would support the confirmation of uncontaminated food sources and distribution channels. The CNSC would be overseeing the emergency response activities within the Darlington facility while also supporting the federal response. Public Safety would also lead and coordinate federal support for the provincial effort.

Long-term disability and workers' compensation are the responsibility of the employer and the Government of Ontario; however, unemployment compensation and benefits are the responsibility of Service Canada.

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 821, 834, 845, 859, 861, 864 and 871 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 821—**Mr. Peter Stoffer:**

With respect to mental health and suicide in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP): (a) how many RCMP members and RCMP veterans participated in Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) clinics each year from 2005 to 2012 inclusive; (b) of those listed in (a), how many were male RCMP members; (c) of those listed in (a), how many were female RCMP members; (d) how many families of RCMP members participated in OSISS clinics each year from 2005 to 2012 inclusive; (e) what percentage of RCMP members and RCMP veterans suffer from an Operational Stress Injury; (f) what percentage suffer from (i) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, (ii) anxiety, (iii) depression, (iv) substance abuse; (g) what are the statistics on RCMP member and RCMP veteran suicides for the last twenty years, broken down by year; (h) how are suicides tracked for currently serving RCMP and RCMP veterans; (i) what, if any, mental health surveys have been undertaken by the RCMP; (j) what were the survey questions; (k) how many RCMP members were surveyed; (l) what were the conclusions and recommendations of these surveys; (m) what specific steps have been undertaken to address mental health concerns in the RCMP; (n) what efforts have been undertaken within the RCMP to address the stigma of mental health; (o) is the RCMP considering implementing its own OSISS program specific to RCMP members and RCMP veterans; and (p) is the RCMP considering offering its own VIP-type home-care program specific to RCMP members and RCMP veterans or working with Veterans Affairs in offering this benefit?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 834—Mr. Mike Sullivan:**

With regard to federal disability programs: (a) what is the amount of spending in the last five fiscal years, broken down by year and province, for the (i) Athlete Assistance Program, (ii) Canadian Deaf Sports Association, (iii) Canadian Paralympic Committee, (iv) federal/provincial/territorial projects related to sports programs for people with disabilities, (v) funding for national sport organizations' Long-Term Athlete Development Model, (vi) Special Olympics sports funding, (vii) disability component of sports participation funding, (viii) Canadian Institutes of Health Research funding related to disabilities, (ix) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities, (x) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program – Secondary/Garden Suite, (xi) national transportation accessibility, (xii) Enabling Accessibility Fund, (xiii) disability component of Social Development Partnerships, (xiv) Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities, (xv) Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, (xvi) Permanent Disability Benefit, (xvii) Assisted Living Program, (xviii) Special Education Program for First Nations students, (xix) Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program; (b) what is the projected spending for the next three fiscal years, broken down by year and province, for (i) Athlete Assistance Program, (ii) Canadian Deaf Sports Association, (iii) Canadian Paralympic Committee, (iv) federal/provincial/territorial projects related to sports programs for people with disabilities, (v) funding for national sport organizations' Long-Term Athlete Development Model, (vi) Special Olympics sports funding, (vii) disability component of sports participation funding, (viii) Canadian Institutes of Health Research funding related to disabilities, (ix) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities, (x) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program—Secondary/Garden Suite, (xi) national transportation accessibility, (xii) Enabling Accessibility Fund, (xiii) Disability component of Social Development Partnerships, (xiv) Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities, (xv) Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, (xvi) Permanent Disability Benefit, (xvii) Assisted Living Program, (xviii) Special Education Program for First Nations students, (xix) Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program; and (c) with respect to successful applications for funding in the last five fiscal years, what was the location and value of each project, broken down by year, province and federal electoral district for the (i) Athlete Assistance Program, (ii) funding for national sport organizations' Long-Term Athlete Development Model, (iii) disability component of sports participation funding, (iv) Enabling Accessibility Fund, (v) disability component of Social Development Partnerships, (vi) Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, (vii) Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 845—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With regard to children's health and the environment: (a) what action has the government undertaken to integrate children's environmental health into existing public health programs; (b) what specific action is the government undertaking to advocate for the consideration and assessment of hazardous environmental influences on children's health and development, (i) in Canada, (ii) internationally; (c) what specific action is the government undertaking to raise the political profile of children's environmental health, (i) locally, (ii) regionally, (iii) nationally; (d) in relation to its contaminated sites, (i) what specific action is the government undertaking to raise awareness about children's environmental health, (ii) what are all contaminated sites where action has been taken to raise awareness, (iii) what was the risk; (iv) what was the action taken; (e) what are all government activities focused on children's environmental health; (f) what are all existing government activities focused on prevention of environmental exposures aimed at protecting children's health; (g) what governmental action has been undertaken to prevent (i) pre-conception, prenatal, and childhood exposures, (ii) air, consumer products, food, soil/dust, water, and other physical environmental exposures, (iii) biological, chemical, and physical hazards; (h) how has the government taken children's vulnerabilities into account in developing environmental and health policies, regulations, and standards; (i) what targeted environmental and health policies, regulations, and standards have already been put in place to protect children's health, and what policies, regulations, and standards are currently under consideration; (j) what action is being undertaken by the government to measure the extent to which pregnant women and their babies are exposed to common environmental chemicals, and what health risks, if any, are associated with the chemical levels measured; (k) what pregnancy health risks, if any, are associated with exposure to heavy metals, namely, arsenic, cadmium, lead, manganese, and mercury; (l) what pregnancy health risks, if any, are associated with exposure to bisphenol A, organochlorine pesticides, perfluorinated compounds, phthalates, polybrominated diphenyl ethers, polychlorinated biphenyls; (m) what are all federal government bio-monitoring studies to assess the presence of toxic chemicals in Canadians, and particularly, in children, and for each study, what are the details of (i) all baseline data, (ii) reference ranges for

concentrations of chemicals in Canadians, (iii) comparisons of exposure levels in subpopulations in Canada, (iv) any trends of exposure levels in Canadians over time, (v) the efforts related to the management of toxic substances that are resulting in better health outcomes; (n) what is the risk management strategy, including, but not limited to, the strategies' objectives, priorities, and systematic process for periodically assessing progress made in managing risks, for (i) lead, (ii) mercury; (o) what action, if any, has been taken to develop labels to inform consumers of chronic hazards that may result from multiple or long-term use of a product; and (p) what action has the government taken to educate healthcare workers, environment professionals, industry, non-governmental organizations, policy makers, and parents about children's health and the environment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 859—Ms. Jean Crowder:

With regard to the Budget 2010 announcement of \$25 million over five years to address the high incidence of missing and murdered Aboriginal women: (a) how much of that funding has been allocated; (b) to which organizations or entities was the funding allocated; (c) what supports for victims have been provided by this funding; (d) what improvements to the justice system, to respond directly to cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, have been announced or implemented; (e) what quantitative analysis has been done on the effectiveness of this funding on reducing the high incidence of missing and murdered Aboriginal women; (f) how many groups applied for funding; (g) how many groups were denied funding; and (h) what was the rationale for denying funding to those groups?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 861—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:

With regard to the Enabling Accessibility Fund—Mid-Sized Project Component: (a) what was the score given to each of the projects at (i) the initial screening stage, (ii) the external construction expert stage, (iii) the internal review committee stage; (b) what projects were recommended to the Minister by (i) the external construction experts, (ii) the internal review committee; and (c) what was missing from the project proposal for the Centre Jean-Bosco in Maniwaki according to (i) the external construction experts, (ii) the internal review committee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 864—Ms. Marie-Claude Morin:

With regard to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS): (a) how many programs in total are funded through the HPS (i) currently, (ii) for the period from April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2011; (b) what programs that existed prior to March 31, 2012, were funded again for the period ending March 31, 2014; (c) what new programs were funded under a new request for the period from April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2014; (d) what are the percentages of HPS-funded programs that were new requests as of April 1, 2012; (e) what is the geographic distribution of HPS-funded programs, for each year from April 1, 2007, to date; (f) what amounts are the programs receiving as HPS funding (i) for the period from April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2011, (ii) for the period from April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2014; (g) what were the wait times between receipt of an application for HPS funding and ministerial approval of the application (i) for the period from April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2011, (ii) for the period from April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2014; (h) what were the wait times between receipt of an application and receipt of a response from the Minister's office for each organization that submitted an application between (i) April 1, 2007, and March 31, 2011, (ii) after April 1, 2012; and (i) for the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, how many organizations received the requested funding amounts (i) for the period from April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2011, (ii) for the period from April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2014?

(Return tabled)

Government Orders

Question No. 871—Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:

With regard to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, since April 1, 2007: (a) how many organizations have applied for funding, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province/region and (iii) electoral district; (b) how many organizations have received funding, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province/region and (iii) electoral district; (c) what is the average amount of funding received, broken down by (i) year and (ii) province/region; (d) what was the average length of time taken to notify organizations that their application had been rejected or accepted, broken down by (i) year and (ii) province/region; (e) how many organizations that have never before received funding have been granted funding for the 2012-2014 period and which organizations are they; (f) how many organizations that received funding before have been refused funding for the 2012-2014 period and which organizations are they; and (g) how many applications for funding have been refused by the Minister despite being recommended by the Joint Management Committee/Agences de santé et de services sociaux, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2012

The House resumed from October 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert has seven minutes remaining for her speech.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take up where I left off yesterday.

Like Bill C-38, Bill C-45 is another massive omnibus bill that makes changes to many laws. Once again, the Conservatives are trying to ram their legislative measures through Parliament without allowing Canadians or their representatives, the MPs, to carefully examine them. The 400 pages of this bill contain many areas of concern. I would like to focus on a few specific points since, if I wanted to get into any detail, I would barely have time to address the table of contents of this mammoth bill in the 10 minutes that I have to speak.

The first point that I would like to speak about is health, particularly the decision to eliminate the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission, which falls under division 13 of part 4 of the bill. The commission was an organization that helped to regulate hazardous materials protected by business confidentiality by ensuring that employers and workers had the information they needed to safely handle hazardous materials in the workplace.

I would like to know what prompted this change at this time. Was the organization, in its existing form, not doing its job properly? I doubt it. Why is it necessary to give the mandate that is currently being carried out by the commission to a group of people who will

be appointed by the minister? These are the questions that we should be examining. The government did not provide much in the way of justification for this change. It keeps hiding significant changes in giant, complex bills to prevent MPs from discussing and thoroughly examining the impact of these changes.

Unfortunately for the government, it has clearly not yet learned its lesson. The official opposition will not let the government impose new omnibus bills without resistance. Canadians deserve better. We will do our job and we will expose the bad decisions that this Conservative government is making.

The other point that I would like to address is the impact of the cuts to research and development. My riding, Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, is lucky enough to have in it a number of specialized aerospace companies through the Saint-Hubert airport. The North American head office of Bombardier Transportation is also in my riding, in Saint-Bruno.

The changes to research and development proposed by the Conservative government will affect all these businesses and their workers. Various measures in the bill eliminate \$500 million for entrepreneurs at a time when Canada already lags behind in investment in research and development. In my riding many people depend on the aerospace industry, and this situation is creating instability at a bad time.

Canada's aerospace industry is ranked fifth in the world. It employs over 150,000 Canadians directly and indirectly. It generates \$22 billion in revenue annually and invests approximately \$2 billion in research and development. That is significant.

These cuts are being made at a most unfortunate time because the sector is growing internationally and competition is increasingly fierce. In this context, I cannot understand and I deplore the decision made by the government to slash funding for an important tool that can spur innovation and productivity and maintain existing jobs. Technology and innovation have given Canada a comparative advantage in these leading-edge industries. Strategic investments in research and development as a whole are vital in order for Canada's industrial sector to compete with emerging countries and for Canada to retain its competitive edge internationally and its well-paid jobs.

•(1015)

I am not making this up. In its pre-budget consultation brief, the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada said that these measures to boost research and development are important for the future. The association said the following in the brief it submitted to the Standing Committee on Finance:

These measures will foster competitiveness and productivity, ensuring our industry is positioned to take advantage of the outstanding growth in demand for aircraft and thus create long-term, high-quality jobs for Canadians.

Government Orders

The NDP has called for a better balance between tax credits and direct support to businesses, which is what countries such as Israel, Sweden and Finland do, and they are ranked the most innovative countries according to OECD. But the budget only decreases the government's support for research and innovation.

And the Conservatives are proclaiming loud and clear that the 2012 budget creates jobs. We know that that is not true. In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer believes that the budget will lead to the loss of 43,000 Canadian jobs. This budget would increase the unemployment rate. I have to say that they are not walking the talk.

This bill is proof that the government says one thing but does another. It claims to want to support job creation, but there are no concrete measures to strengthen existing jobs, let alone create new ones. The Conservatives got elected in 2006 by promising Canadians that they would be transparent and accountable. But the government is hiding major reforms from Canadians by putting them into omnibus bills like this one and the earlier Bill C-38, and it does not want to give the Parliamentary Budget Officer the figures related to cuts to federal departments and agencies.

The NDP will always stand up proudly for transparency and accountability.

• (1020)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that, at the end of the day, the government is cutting back on thousands of civil servant jobs across the country. This will have a profoundly negative impact on the quality of services being provided, whether they be employment insurance programs or immigration programs.

The government is doing this during the same year it is actually increasing the size of the House of Commons, believing there is a need for more members of Parliament. This contradicts what a vast majority of Canadians want. Canadians do not want more politicians; they want those services maintained.

Would the member comment on the government's bad priorities when it comes to providing those important services that Canadians want?

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

Of course, that is what I just said in my speech. When the Conservative government was elected in 2006, it promised Canadians transparency and accountability. Unfortunately, considering these major omnibus reforms, Canadians can never know what this government will try to bury in its bills. That is why the opposition has asked several times for the government to be transparent and to split the bill up, and this is obviously in order to highlight this government's poor practices.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my hon. colleague on her speech. I would also like to ask her if she has heard many comments—and I suspect she has—from her constituents regarding the current government's tendency to keep people in the dark.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher for his question. Of course my constituents are very concerned. They are always asking me what an omnibus bill is. Ordinary Canadians do not always understand our parliamentary jargon. They are very worried about the government's cuts to employment insurance, health care and several other crucial sectors, such as housing, when those are some of the basic things needed to ensure the well-being of ordinary Canadians. My constituents are very worried about the situation and are saying that they cannot wait for 2015.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to my hon. colleague's speech, I was looking across the way and realizing that the Conservative government is presiding over the largest deficit in Canadian history. The Conservatives are very poor fiscal managers, and then they present a document here that is actually going to decrease employment. We already have youth unemployment at officially 15%, and the member across the way is laughing. I would like to see him laugh at the young people in his riding who cannot find a job.

Is my hon. colleague hearing the same stories in her riding about young people? Why is it that the Conservatives laugh at young people who are looking for a job?

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. Young people are worried about the fact that this government is going to leave them with a huge deficit. In addition to the fiscal deficit, the environment will also be threatened, which is unfortunate for young people. We will all suffer from the cuts and from this government's policies regarding young people, women and seniors.

I would like to assure my colleague that young people today are more aware of government policies than they were in the past. They are the next generation and history will prove them right.

• (1025)

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I take great pleasure in speaking in favour of the speedy passage of Bill C-45, jobs and growth act, 2012.

I am also pleased to congratulate the Minister of Finance for the outstanding job he is doing on behalf of all Canadians.

Canada is recognized internationally for the sound economic and fiscal policies of our Conservative government. Leadership on the economy is something that average Canadians who work hard, obey the law and pay their taxes understand.

While there are many benefits to passing Bill C-45 for the people of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, in the short time I have, I intend to focus on those aspects of this second budget implementation bill that are of interest to my constituents.

Government Orders

I intend to focus my comments on the Navigable Waters Protection Act. I've listened to a number of comments, starting with those of the Leader of the Opposition, which are ill-informed at best and misleading at worst, about this part of the budget bill and I believe it is important to set the record straight. Historically, the impetus behind the Navigable Waters Protection Act of 1882 was the result of representations made by Ottawa Valley lumbermen looking to protect the principal means they had at the time to bring their product to market.

In the 19th century, when the Navigable Waters Protection Act was legislated, rivers played an important role in the commerce of our great nation. The lumber trade of the upper Ottawa Valley relied upon rivers to bring the logs to market. Twelve years before the Navigable Waters Protection Act became law and three years after Confederation, Parliament passed An Act Respecting Certain Works on the Ottawa River. This act gave the federal government exclusive legislative authority in the construction of any works to ensure the Ottawa River is navigable. This was done to protect commerce and done years before the Navigable Waters Protection Act. That legislation is still on the books today.

What Canadians find misleading is when opposition members read things into the legislation that do not exist. Environmental protection for such things as pollution and fish habitat is covered by other legislation, not the Navigable Waters Protection Act. It was never intended for that purpose when it was written 140 years ago. The opposition may wish to stay trapped in the past, but our government believes it is time to leave the 19th century for the 21st century.

The public right of navigation is a common-law principle that dates back to Roman times. To my paddling friends, nothing in Bill C-45 detracts from the right to navigation in Canada. We respect the navigable qualities of any body of water that is indeed navigable, recognizing that any contemplated works need not compromise or undermine the recreational status of any body of water that is now or was previously the domain of paddlers.

This brings us to the Petawawa River. The decision by the federal government to include the Ottawa and Petawawa rivers in the list of 62 rivers retaining navigable waters constitutional jurisdiction protection was based in part on the real concern, on my part as well as that of my constituents, that the provincial environmental assessment process is being manipulated by the Ontario government to match a hidden agenda called the Green Energy Act. We needed to take an extra step to protect the Petawawa River.

In the province of Ontario the so-called Green Energy Act has been used to stifle democratic debate at the local level, running roughshod over the objections of local residents who are now being forced, through their power bills, to pay for unwanted and unnecessary power projects. Projects are being promoted under the guise of so-called green energy, when in fact the only green is in the pockets of the Liberal Party insiders who lobbied for 20 years to have industrial wind turbine contracts at outrageous financial subsidies. The collapse of the Liberal Party of Ontario and the resignation in disgrace of its leader led to the migration of these same individuals to Ottawa into positions of influence with their federal cousins.

● (1030)

The town of Petawawa unanimously passed the following motion at its September 4, 2012 council meeting:

That the Town of Petawawa advises the Premier of the Province of Ontario and his Ministers of Energy and Infrastructure, the Environment and Natural Resources that it does not and will not give any support or sanction to any project that is seeking or will be seeking ministry approval under the 2009 Green Energy act and in particular its "feed-in-tariff" provision.

To quote councillor Treena Lemay, who moved that motion: "The act promoted 'fast tracking' of environmental approvals for all electricity infrastructure projects, removed the long-established local planning process and left rural residents without effective noise complaint protocols and municipalities with no voice in their own community development".

I thank councillor Treena Lemay for her leadership on this issue at municipal council.

In the case of the Petawawa River, plans to construct dam-like structures would destroy the fish habitat as well as recreational activities, including whitewater kayaking that now takes place on the river. I support the residents of Petawawa and their town council in objecting to the damming of the Petawawa River and will continue to object at the federal level until this proposal is withdrawn.

I share the concerns expressed by the Ontario Rivers Alliance about the fate of our other Ontario rivers, like the Vermilion. To quote the alliance:

We all want Green Energy, but let's ensure it is truly Green, and not the "Green-washed" version that is being proposed for many of our Ontario rivers.

While I appreciate the concerns of Ontario residents and groups like the Ontario Rivers Alliance about the need for a federal presence in certain instances to provide a system of checks and balances to ill-conceived legislation like the Ontario Green Energy Act, these checks and balances remain in place with the passage of Bill C-45.

When the Navigable Waters Protection Act came before Parliament previously in 2009, I was honoured to welcome Jack MacLaren, a seventh generation Renfrew County orchard farmer, to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance. Mr. MacLaren contacted me after he ran into trouble with the Navigable Waters Protection Act. In his case what should have been a simple matter became a complicated issue because of a piece of legislation dating back to the 1980s.

I had also been contacted by municipalities that complained to me about the time and expense to clean out a municipal drainage ditch because of the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

In short, it is clear that changes are absolutely necessary to this act.

Government Orders

The other issue I intend to respond to is the criticism by the opposition that Bill C-45 is too detailed and complicated for them to understand. The opposition call Bill C-45 omnibus legislation, hoping that Canadians will buy into its delay tactics because it would rather complain than do its job.

Bill C-45 is the second budget bill. Here, I draw members' attention to a debate in the House that took place on June 13 of this year on the first budget bill between the opposition member for Markham—Unionville and the hard-working Conservative member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. In that exchange the opposition member complained about a program he claimed was cancelled by our budget. Our government member responded with shock at what he had heard. He proceeded to set the record straight, reading directly from the budget that the program in question, the Canadian innovation and commercialization program, had not only been funded for another three years but had also been built up and made permanent. This led the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore to ask the opposition member if he had even read the budget. The opposition member obviously had not read the budget, which brings me to my last point.

• (1035)

The opposition has had a copy of our budget for months, with plenty of time to analyze the budget document. If they were doing their job, they would be ready to debate and scrutinize all aspects of the budget now. Opposition for the sake of opposition is not acceptable to Canadians. The Library of Parliament can help out with a legislative guide for all things not understood, like the history of the Navigable Waters Protection Act. This is why it is so important at this time to modernize a 140-year-old piece of legislation and proceed with the passage of Bill C-45.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing to hear Conservative members try to defend two budget bills that are in excess of a thousand pages, amending in excess of a hundred pieces of legislation, and try to say this is the norm. The member then picked up on the navigable waters section of the bill and asked why we should not make the proposed changes. She highlighted an issue, that there are many different parts of this particular bill and the bill that preceded it in the summertime.

These bills should have been separated. There should have been dozens of other pieces of legislation that would have allowed all members of the House to engage on the wide variety of issues at stake.

Why did the member's government not support allowing a legitimate process of debate inside this chamber on the huge number of bills the Conservatives are trying to sneak through in this budget debate?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member opposite does not have a question on the substance of the bill.

Sky-high electricity rates have led to plant closures in Ontario, for example. This means that people are on employment insurance, a federal responsibility. This is the jobs and growth act, 2012, so it is directly related to electricity, which in turn is related to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The reckless spending by the province also

brings into focus the aspect of the equalization payments that we will be forced to administer over time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was surprised to hear the member tell us to read the budget, when we have read it from cover to cover. What she mentioned about navigable waters protection was not even in the March 2012 budget. So it is a bit surprising that she is talking about a subject that was not even in the budget but that appears in this 450-page bill.

How can she explain that a subject that was not in the March budget and that had never been mentioned is now in this omnibus bill?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, the Navigable Waters Protection Act is being amended to allow for jobs and growth. This budget is specifically about ensuring that jobs increase and that those people who have jobs can sustain them.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to question the colleague of mine, who is from the same class of 2000. I have had the pleasure of serving with her and know that she is a very strong fiscal Conservative. I know that she cares so much about her constituents, as I always see her working hard and sending notes and getting ready for events.

One of the strongest recommendations made by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business year after year is that our government move back toward balanced budgets and reduce the deficit. I am wondering if my colleague would speak about the importance of the economic action plan to move toward balanced budgets and decrease and get rid of the deficit.

• (1040)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, our goal is balanced budgets. It is something that we promised in the last election. Unfortunately, during the global economic downturn that began in 2008, we were required by the begging and bewildering calls of the opposition to increase spending to keep the economy afloat. As a consequence, the deficit was a little higher for that year and we are working diligently by controlling spending to get the budget balanced.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-45.

As a number of members who spoke before me have mentioned, it is absolutely ridiculous for the government to include all kinds of measures that have nothing to do with the budget. There are all kinds of clauses in the bill that have nothing to do with the budget. Content aside, anyone can see that the Conservatives are going about things the wrong way and that they do not take this seriously.

It is unrealistic for a single committee to study a bill in so little time, and this shows the Conservatives' bad faith. The government itself is unable to assess the true impact of its budget on job losses or even job creation, or the effects it will have on Canadians. Yet the Conservatives did nothing to allow the Standing Committee on Finance to properly study the bill.

Government Orders

The Standing Committee on Finance is working on other matters, such as pre-budget consultations. It has been allocated little time to study this more than 400-page bill, which contains measures that have nothing to do with finance or the budget.

Canadians are not fools and know that the government has tried on several occasions to quietly pass measures that will be disastrous for Canada. I do not have much time, but I will attempt nevertheless to highlight some of the main elements of this budget.

In my opinion, one of the few positive measures in the budget is the elimination of the penny. That is good news for Canada. As a result of inflation, today this coin has practically no value and costs more to make than what it is worth. The Government of Canada will save \$11 million a year with this measure, and businesses and consumers will save a lot of time when making cash transactions. This measure is not in the bill, but I wanted to mention it because I had not had the opportunity to do so previously.

Returning to a balanced budget is also a good point and necessary for Canada's economic well-being. There again, it all depends on what you cut and how you do it. Although I agree with the government that we should cut the fat, we must make a distinction between what is and what is not useful.

The government constantly tells us that services will not be affected, but no one has provided any studies or reports confirming that items cut are actually optional. The government has decided to cut 10% from one service and 5% from another without having any idea of the impact.

The Liberal Party wants facts, expert reports and studies. However, as we have seen for a number of years now, the majority Conservative government is improvising and still refusing to accept reality, preferring to blindly trust its ideology. The Prime Minister himself recently confirmed that any organization that is in conflict with the Conservative ideology will no longer receive public funding.

[*English*]

Bill C-45 continues the reckless Conservative abuse of power. The omnibus budget bill is another example of the Conservatives steamrolling of democracy, as we have said again and again, forcing unpopular, non-budgetary measures through Parliament and trying to do it with as much speed and little debate and scrutiny as possible.

Bill C-45 is a 414 page document with 516 clauses, amending over 60 different pieces of legislation. The measures that do not belong in this finance bill, as my other colleagues have spoken about, include the rewriting of laws protecting Canada's waterways, the redefinition of aboriginal fisheries without consulting first nations and the elimination of the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission.

By rushing these massive omnibus bills through Parliament, the Conservatives deny Parliament and Canadians the opportunity to carefully consider the proposed laws to identify flaws and propose solutions.

Bill C-45 actually includes a number of measures to fix mistakes in the last bill, Bill C-38, its predecessor, including omissions in the amended Fisheries Act regarding the passage of fish, and the poor

drafting of transitional provisions in the new environmental assessment law.

• (1045)

There is ambiguity around the ministerial approval process for certain investments by public investment pools as well.

Today, a majority of Canadians are worried about growing income inequality, between both individuals and regions. The Liberal Party has put forward motions and discussed it in Parliament. Again, we do not see anything in the budget that addresses this income inequality that Canadians are worried about.

An area where the budget bill could actually create jobs, and in turn does not, is an area where it actually slashes investment tax credits that encourage economic growth and job creation, like the scientific research and experimental development tax credit, the Atlantic investment tax credit and the corporate mineral exploration and development tax credit.

The Conservatives are using Bill C-45 to avoid lawsuits, like exempting the Detroit-Windsor bridge from environmental laws and regulations such as the Fisheries Act, the Species at Risk Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012. If the Conservatives want to avoid lawsuits, they should just follow the laws that are in place instead of weakening the ones that are meant to protect our environment.

One example I would like to cite where there has been a little back and forth is on the cuts to research and development. The Liberals oppose the government's plan to cut the SR&ED program. The SR&ED program is a federal tax incentive program that encourages Canadian businesses of all sizes and in all sectors to conduct research and development in Canada. It is the largest single source of federal government support for industrial R and D. The R and D program gives claimants tax credits for their expenditures on eligible R and D work done in Canada. The government has opted to decrease these credits, promising to reinvest the savings into direct grants. The grants mean that the government would pick which companies would benefit from government support, rather than providing an across the board tax credit available to any business undertaking R and D. A company may not know anyone in the government and have a great idea.

Government Orders

Instead of making the R and D program much better, the government decided to make four changes: reducing the general SR&ED tax credit from 20% to 15%; reducing the prescribed proxy amount, which taxpayers use to claim the R and D amount from overhead expenditures, from 65% to 55% of salaries and wages of employees who are engaged in R and D activities; removing the profit element from arm's length third-party contracts for the purpose of the calculation of R and D credits, by allowing only 80% of the value to be counted toward eligible expenditures; and removing capital from the base of eligible expenditures for the purpose of the calculation of R and D.

I could go on. I have about three pages of notes on this subject.

My point on R and D is that, as a former member of the finance committee—I chaired it and I was vice-chair—I heard numerous groups, whether accounting groups, business groups or tax groups. They all said to make the program easier. The government has done what it has done for other programs, slightly tweaked it, made it more complicated, reduced percentages and increased certain percentages. It decided to just cut things and has taken a whole lot of money out of there, and politicized it by saying it would now give out grants.

I understand my time is coming to an end. I will be taking questions. I will not be supporting the bill in the form it is in.

• (1050)

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats have consistently been against omnibus budget bills, dating back to the 90s when the then Liberal finance minister, Paul Martin, routinely introduced these measures. It is interesting to see the Liberal Party now coming around toward being against the very beast it created in the first place.

Leaving that aside for a minute, the Conservatives have posted the largest deficit in Canadian history, but they have their paws all over workers' and employers' moneys through the EI fund. This, as well, is a practice started by the Liberals when they were in government.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would agree that, if the Conservatives had not followed the Liberal practice of taking the money out of the EI fund to help pay for its corporate tax cut schemes, we might not be in this kind of situation. Would you agree with that?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind members to address their comments to the Chair and not to individual members of Parliament.

The hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, it is good to see that the NDP is trying to read budgets today, as opposed to the year 2000 when it just voted against them. However, in talking about omnibus bills, I will try to address some of the questions the member had.

The omnibus bills we used to table were not even 100 pages long. They addressed issues that were in the budget. However, in this case, in my speech I gave at least four or five examples of items that are in the omnibus bill but not in the budget. Therefore, I do not see how the situations are comparable.

In terms of unemployment, I do not see why we are faulted. We had great economic growth and made great decisions in terms of

moving the economy ahead. The unemployment insurance premiums were being held in a separate fund but they were used for the debt. It is not as if the money was spent on items for political purposes, as the Conservative Party does.

The money was still there and still accounted for. We just did a good job with the economy and did not have to pay out a lot of the EI premiums that were collected, because people were actually working instead of being on unemployment insurance. I do not see what the problem is.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech and I certainly enjoyed serving on the finance committee with him in the past.

I would like to ask the member if he supports the part of the bill that deals with changes to the Indian Act in part 4, division 8.

He and I were both in Kamloops, where we heard from Manny Jules on changes to the Indian Act with respect to ownership by first nation people on reserves and private property. I think he supported the concept of the idea at the time. I wonder if he is supportive of the changes in this specific piece of legislation dealing with this issue.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question from the member opposite, even though he is a Conservative. We have actually worked quite well together.

I was very favourable to the ideas of Manny Jules in Kamloops. We saw the place and thought it was a great initiative. We are still debating it within our party, which is something the Liberal Party does: we debate issues, and that is what we are asking for on the omnibus bill.

Certain measures in the omnibus bill need to be debated separately by people who have the expertise. We need to have witnesses come before the proper committee, and not just for five minutes, to look at the pro and cons. What might be of benefit to one community or stakeholder may not be of benefit to another.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, back in 1994, the Prime Minister addressed the Liberal omnibus bill, which was a 21-page document, and I want to quote what he said back then when he was in the opposition:

We can agree with some of the measures but oppose others. How do we express our views and the views of our constituents when matters are so diverse? Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent the views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill.

He asked the government members particularly to worry about the implications of the omnibus bill for “democracy and functionality of Parliament”.

Would the member not agree that the Prime Minister's words back then echo those of today, loud and clear?

Government Orders

●(1055)

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, of course, what was said by the Prime Minister then applies today. It is complete hypocrisy. We had a motion on this and the Prime Minister actually voted against his own words.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to be able to stand in the House today and to speak on behalf of my constituents in support of this budget bill. We are debating the implementation phase of our budget, our jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. The good news is that this government is steadfast in our commitment to help create jobs for Canadians.

The other good news is that our plan is working. The plan is showing a great deal of success. September, last month, again showed strong job growth. We have heard it in the House before, that more than 820,000 new jobs have been created. Out of those 820,000 new jobs, 90% are full-time. All the time, we hear from the opposition that they are part-time jobs, but 90% of these jobs are full-time. Eighty per cent of the jobs are within the private sector. This is not a government that is saying we are going to create jobs by hiring more people for the public service, hiring more people so they can work for the government. This is the private sector people saying they believe that, as bad as this global downturn is, they have confidence that they can create jobs and build an economy here in Canada.

Jobs are what Canadians want. Canadians elected our government with a strong mandate to do what we can to help families grow and prosper. Canadian families know that when Mom or Dad or even some of the young people in that family have a job, everything is better at home.

Canadians also know that this global economy remains fragile. Especially when we look at the news and see what is going on in Europe with just one country after another in turmoil and also in our closest trading partner, the United States, Canadians realize that this is a global economy that is very fragile. We know our largest trading partners are having a difficult time, so that means Canada is not immune to the challenges coming from outside our borders.

That is why Canadians elected the Conservative Party of Canada and not the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party. They know we had a plan that would work.

Our Conservative government is working hard to support local economies with positive pro-growth measures in this economic action plan 2012. It is not just talk. On this side of the House, we are offering the job-creating hiring credit for small businesses, among other measures. In my riding of Crowfoot, there are many small communities that are taking advantage of this, small communities where there are small and medium-sized businesses that can take a look at our plan. Even when I put out my householder with the tax guide for 2011, we talked about the job-hiring credit. Many people in my riding are picking up on this, and people are taking advantage of it in rural Canada as well.

Budget 2012 is full of measures not just for the big corporations and big business. It is full of measures for families and for small and medium-sized business. Our government is committed to increasing Canada's exports to the Asia Pacific. It is not all about only finding tax measures and hiring credits and measures for here at home; we

are also recognizing that we need to look abroad. This is critical to industries in Canada to help create jobs and to level the playing field to allow Canadian companies to be competitive.

Canadians can clearly see that our government is promoting trade. However, every time we come forward with a new trade agreement or negotiations toward a new trade agreement, we know even before we table the thing that it will always be opposed by the official opposition. The New Democrats vote against it. That is another reason why Canadians gave this government a strong majority here in the House of Commons; they realize we have a proactive agenda for building trade and building our economy around the world.

In my riding, we need a government to help us export our products around the world. Our Minister of International Trade, our Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and our Prime Minister have done a remarkable job in this area. They are garnering markets for our products all around the world, not only agricultural products, not only in places like Jordan and others that are taking our pulse crops or Colombia and other places. Around the world, for many different sectors in our economy, our government is getting the job done.

●(1100)

Some 60% of the people in Canada's workforce do not have a pension. We have spoken of this before in the House of Commons. In my constituency, small businesses are having a hard time attracting people to work because some of the benefits of being able to buy into a pension plan are not available. Therefore, when our government comes with a pension plan, a smaller pension plan, small business appreciates it. It is very simple. When people go from one job to another, they can take their pension with them. It is a positive that a lot of people are looking forward to and are using.

We are doing other things. Pooled registered pension plans are working. There are a lot of other things in this budget that are good.

The House has been debating this bill for close to three months. We have talked about this budget for over three months. The finance committee created a special subcommittee, as per the request of the opposition. Together, these committees have held over 70 hours of meetings and have heard from over 100 witnesses who came in front of the committee to testify.

I really believe the finance committee chair is probably one of the hardest-working people in the House. That committee has had over 70 hours of meetings. I know our public safety committee is on its 55th meeting and we are busy. The finance committee has had 82 meetings. The finance chair is up and working before Uncle Charlie in Wainright is milking the cows, so the committee is getting the job done.

Bill C-38 has had more debate in the House than any other legislation over the last 20 years. The opposition tries to delay. It tries to implement and deny hard-working Canadians and taxpayers the benefits of the budget, which this implementation act would help implement. The opposition has always done that.

There is a lot more I could speak about in the implementation bill. I want to quickly move to some examples of things that are very positive in the bill.

Government Orders

The first is streamlining the process for the approval of energy projects. This is one of the things, over a period of time, to which our government has committed to ensure that our economy can grow, to ensure that if there is one project there is one review and to ensure that there will not be an endless degree of delay. All those things hinder our economy. We want to, in many different ways, move the economy forward. We want to, as I have already said, help Canadians find jobs. We want to remove redundant and extra layers of bureaucracy.

A press release was issued a number of months ago. In one case, the bureaucracy was diminished by the CFIA having a building and Agriculture Canada having a building a block away. In the CFIA building there was a whole section of IT, mail systems and computer systems and, again, a duplication of those services in the building just a block away.

We are able to combine streamline some of these things to reduce the number of bureaucrats and the levels of bureaucracy in Ottawa and around Canada, for example, taking the Department of Fisheries and Oceans out of the creeks and watersheds of the Prairies and focusing its work on fish habitats on our coastlines.

It is important to ensure that the fish stocks grow, but they will not grow in east central Alberta because there is a lack of lakes. However, we still have a lot of people who come and give their opinion on some of those issues of growth.

This summer I received an email from my daughter. After some time in education she received her nursing degree and was able to get a job. This is the email she sent me after receiving her first paycheque, "Okay, Dad, something needs to change. I made \$4,158 this month and only take home \$2,842. Do something, this is so stupid".

I told her the opposition, according to the Broadbent Institution, believed that she was not spending enough on her taxes, that it wanted to see higher taxes. We are committed to seeing this economy grow and we are committed to lowering taxes.

• (1105)

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friend's comments very closely. I would like to go back to the very beginning of his speech when he talked about jobs. I know the member to be very clever. I know him to be hard working. I know he is not fooled easily, but I wonder if he has been tricked by his own talking points.

It is my understanding that fully one-third of the full-time jobs he has talked about are temporary foreign worker jobs. Would the member have the exact number of temporary foreign worker jobs that are part of those figures about which he has talked?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, no, I do not.

What I do have are groups and businesses from across Alberta and Canada coming to my office as well as the offices of members of Parliament from Alberta. The number one issue is labour and being able to secure good, skilled labour to work, whether it is in the oil patch, small business, agriculture or wherever it may be.

We will slow down as an economy if we do not have the people who can be put into those positions and jobs. In order for the

economy to grow, we will take every opportunity to hire local, skilled, trained Canadians for the job. If those are not there, especially in Alberta where there is such growth, then we need to secure labour.

Many of the jobs are foreign labour, but I am talking about Canadian jobs. We are talking about Canadians who are looking for jobs and who are willing to work. We want to ensure that the economy avails them the opportunity to find that job.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was going to get up on a point of order on this, but the member was in his own little fantasy world and I did not want to interrupt him.

I have a bill called Bill C-45. The first reading was October 18. The member across said that we had been discussing it for three months. Then he went on to say that the bill has been around for 20 years.

Is this his fantasy world? Are we talking about the same calendar year and the same bill?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being able to set the record straight and inform the member that, yes, he is correct, the budget implementation bill was just announced.

However, the budget came down in March. This is the implementation bill. Let me just explain for the member that this implementation bill is the technicalities of how the bill is implemented. For example, the other day the member spoke day about the Judges Act and judges' payment. Four or five pages in the budget implementation bill lay out the pay for our judges. It is a very technical implementation bill.

The budget is there. It has been discussed for three months. This bill is to help us implement it.

• (1110)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for outlining much of the good work that our finance chair does at the committee level. It is incredible.

The member also mentioned, a number of times, the issues of job creation. I cannot say how many times I have heard in my riding over the last number of months how job creators, business people are appreciating our low-tax environment, which allows them to invest in job creation in Canada.

Near the end of his speech, my colleague commented just briefly on the Ed Broadbent Institute. Could he further elaborate? I have just come across something from the institute that is headed by former NDP leader, Ed Broadbent. I want to read a very short section of it. It says:

Taxes are the hinge that links citizens to one another and to the common good... We should also consider eliminating...the 'boutique' tax credits of recent budgets... consider implementing taxes on very large inheritances of wealth which pass morally-unjustifiable class privilege...Significant revenues could be raised by the introduction of a financial transactions tax...Green taxes—such as a carbon tax and higher taxes on natural resources—need to be considered as a means of financing...

Could my colleague comment on whether he agrees with that?

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, all around the world governments are leaving socialist ideas and programs because they realize they just simply are not working. I have listened to the NDP propaganda and Mr. Broadbent. They have said that we do not pay enough taxes in our country, period. The NDP's agenda is to have a higher tax and have government become almost like a god, so we will go to government and it will give us all everything we need.

We want to put \$3,100 back into the pockets of Canadians. We do not want a big \$21 billion carbon tax that will kill the economy. This is a good budget implementation act and we need to support it.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I, along with my NDP colleagues, oppose this monster budget bill. I oppose it on both content and process. First I will talk about the process.

The Conservatives talk about the unprecedented level of debate and hours of debate on this bill and the previous budget bill. Even the member for Crowfoot, who spoke before me, talked about unprecedented debate in the House. Let us review that to see if they are right.

Bill C-20, which was what the budget bill was called in 1991, was six pages long and between first and third reading in the House of Commons, there were 192 days of debate. In 1995, it was Bill C-76 and it was 48 pages long. There were 78 days of debate in the chamber. Bill C-32 in 2000 was 29 pages long, it went down a bit in size, and there were 60 days of debate. Bill C-33 in 2004 was 76 pages long and it received 79 days of debate in this chamber.

What happened this year? This spring the omnibus budget bill touched or outright repealed over 70 laws. A third of that budget bill was about gutting environmental legislation. Most pieces of the budget had not been debated in the House before and most of those pieces were not campaigned on.

I do not remember the Conservatives campaigning in the 2011 election saying that they were going to increase OAS eligibility from the age of 65 to 67. I do not remember them campaigning on the fact that they were going to diminish health care transfers. In fact, during that election, I was the health critic for the NDP and I remember the opposite. The Conservatives campaigned on maintaining and increasing health care transfers.

We also cannot find any of these pieces in Conservative Party policy. If we turn to its policy, we will not find the Conservatives saying that they believe they should raise the age that people can collect their OAS.

The member for Crowfoot said that we had this budget. that this stuff had existed for so long and we should have read it. I would love for any member on that side of the House to tell me anything, even one word, about what the changes were to the Assisted Human Reproduction Act in the last omnibus budget bill, never mind what that had to do with the budget. I think most Conservatives would be hard pressed to even repeat the phrase "assisted human reproduction".

We had Bill C-38 in the spring that was 425 pages long and there were 54 days of debate. Here we are again this fall with the second omnibus budget, the son of omnibus. I do not know how long this debate will go, but the government has already moved time allocation. I cannot imagine it will be very long. I cannot imagine

it will be the heady days of 1991 when there were 192 days of debate, I highly doubt that, and we have a bill that is over 440 pages long.

The length of debate is important. Maybe the Conservatives do not think it is important because they do not like to listen when the NDP brings forward reasonable ideas. They just want to sit with their eyes closed and their hands over their ears. However, the length of debate is important for democracy because it allows entry points for civil society to engage with the legislative process. Think about it. How does civil society actually engage with this process? People cannot come here to vote or give speeches in the House, but there are entry points for them. They write letters to their MPs. They write letters to the editor. They testify at committee. They come up with good ideas and send them to us via social media. They phone us and have meetings with us in our communities. They have brown bag luncheon seminars in their workplaces to talk about how this will impact them. Sometimes they even take to the streets. The length of debate allows that process, that moment for civil society to engage with the legislative process.

The NDP brought forward amendments to the bill at committee based on what the community and civil society had told us. The opposition brought forward over 800 amendments in the House based on what civil society said, but we had 54 days of debate where that entry point for civil society was eliminated because not one amendment was made. What is the result because the government did not listen? In this omnibus monster budget, there are amendments to amendments that were made in the last budget bill.

● (1115)

Can members imagine amendments to amendments in the same year, as if we needed more evidence that the Conservatives are bad managers?

The process is undemocratic. Bill C-45 is a massive omnibus budget bill that makes amendments to a wide range of acts. Once again, the Conservatives are trying to ram the legislation through Parliament without allowing Canadians and their MPs to thoroughly examine it. They need to remember that we are their members of Parliament. It is our job to look at the bill properly, make amendments and suggest ideas. New Democrats are proud to stand in the House and actually do their job.

I fear that I am quickly running out of time, and I wanted to share some words from Canadians. I know the Conservatives will not listen to the NDP, because they do not like reasonable, good, sound ideas, but maybe they will listen to Canadians.

I have some letters I received from constituents.

The first is from Rebekah Hutten, who wrote:

My name is Rebekah Hutten, and I am a university student deeply concerned about [the budget].

Government Orders

I am writing to let you know how disturbed I am by this furtive endeavour to use an omnibus budget bill to completely wipe out years of progress Canada has made on environmental protection.... For the sake of the environment, I implore you to demand the non-budget matters—all environmental changes—be removed from C-38 [the last budget bill] and put forward as stand-alone legislation.

We took that advice and tried to do that, but the Conservatives refused to listen. We are trying to do that with this budget bill as well. We will see if they come around to their senses.

I received another letter from Bill Davidson, who wrote:

I am one of your constituents in Halifax, and I wanted to write to you to express my displeasure, or rather horror, about bill C-38, the conservatives' omnibus "budget" bill. This is not a budget, it is one of the most anti-democratic pieces of legislation ever tabled in a Canadian parliament, complete with wholesale destruction of anything resembling environmental policy. It is anti-environment, anti-science, anti-common sense, and insulting to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.... Please [member of Parliament for Halifax], don't let these guys get away with this without putting up a fight.

Leagh and Diane Colins wrote:

Our fathers and grandfathers fought for Democracy—many giving the ultimate sacrifice of their lives against tyranny and government control. Censorship against free speech and the right to protest against that which we deem to be detrimental to our society is what they fought against. This current government disrespects their memory.

Our children and grandchildren will not have much of a world to grow up in when we allow the short-sighted goals of profit to overwhelm Canada's proud legacy of its environment and wildlife.

We most emphatically urge you to speak out against this bill and these measures to still the voice of opposition to environmental destruction.

In closing, I would like to seek unanimous consent to move the following motion: That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, clauses 316 to 350 and Schedule 2 related to changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and clauses 425 to 432 related to the changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 be removed from Bill C-45, a second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures and do compose Bill C-47; that Bill C-47 be entitled "an act to amend the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012"; that Bill C-47 be deemed read a first time and be printed; that the order for second reading of the said bill provide for referral to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development; that Bill C-45 retain the status on the order paper it had prior to the adoption of this order; that Bill C-45 be reprinted as amended; and that the law clerk and parliamentary counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary to give effect to this motion.

We are proposing this motion to ensure that the bill is split for proper study at the correct committee, and specifically to ensure that the Navigable Waters Protection Act is reviewed at the environment committee, where it belongs, and which government websites would have supported until about seven days ago.

• (1120)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns of the Liberal Party, virtually since the Prime Minister went overseas and made the announcement that he was looking at making changes to OAS, our old age supplement, and to our pension program was the fact that these are a foundation or cornerstone of social programming, and we have to be there in a very real and tangible way for our seniors.

We have heard very clearly from independent officers that there is no crisis. I know that the Liberals and the New Democrats have recognized that we need to see that commitment to allow individuals to continue to retire at age 65 reinstated. This is something the Liberal Party has been clear about. I believe that the New Democrats have also taken that position.

I wonder if the member might want to provide comment on the whole issue of the old age supplement.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the OAS.

I will share a story. I was in my riding, waiting at a bus stop, and I was chatting with a constituent who was confused about the OAS and whether it would impact him. He told me what his birthdate was. Coincidentally, it was the same year as the Prime Minister's, so the changes will not affect him. He was relieved to hear that, because he needs that money. He paused and then said that it is not fair to the next generation. He wanted to know how he could help fight for the next generation. He gets it. He gets that this is about making sure that seniors can make ends meet.

My colleague is right to say that we have so many independent verifiers who say that we do not actually have a crisis when it comes to ensuring that seniors can get their OAS, GIS and CPP. We do not have a crisis right now. I absolutely agree with the member.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for being an excellent advocate for her constituents from Halifax by actually reading into the record what they have been writing.

I read the budget that was tabled in March. Recently I did an online search of the budget for the word "navigable". It resulted in zero results, because the word "navigable" does not exist in the budget. However, we are being told by members of the government over and over again that in this budget implementation act, the word "navigable" apparently exists. Maybe they have put a different version of the budget on the Internet for the public to see. I am not sure, but I searched online and could not find it.

Conservatives seem to be changing a lot in the Navigable Waters Protection Act. If my intelligent colleague can help me understand, I would very much appreciate that.

• (1125)

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Scarborough—Rouge River for really doing her homework and for doing good research on this piece. That part about navigable waters had escaped me, so I am glad she did that.

Government Orders

This is exactly what the Conservatives are doing. They claim that all of these changes are in their budget, but then they present bills that are completely different.

I am the environment critic for the NDP. I meet with environmentalists, but I meet with industry too. Industry officials were pleased as punch with the changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act in the last budget bill. I disagree with them, but they were pretty happy. Some of them were pleased with the changes to the Fisheries Act. Again, I disagree with them, but they were pretty happy.

I talked to officials about the navigable waters act, and they said, “Whoa, we didn’t ask for this”. The government seems to think that it is appealing industry, but industry never asked for this. The Conservatives are just imagining what could be another possible win for industry, and they are making stuff up. If they actually consulted with industry, they would realize that changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act was not one of their asks. Conservatives should really start doing their homework.

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C-45, the second implementation bill relating to the jobs and growth act 2012.

I would like to first preface my remarks by reminding my colleagues on the opposition benches that Bill C-45 provides the mechanisms to implement the provisions outlined in budget 2012. That legislation was tabled a full seven months ago, on March 29, 2012.

Budget 2012 has received more debate than any other budget bill in this House. I also remind my colleagues that Bill C-45 will be sent to 45 different standing committees for further scrutiny and debate, so I think there are adequate opportunities for discussion and debate.

I would like to comment on a few of the enabling legislative items in Bill C-45 that are especially appreciated by the residents in my riding of Newmarket—Aurora.

Both Newmarket and Aurora are situated at the top of the GTA, in York region. It is one of the fastest growing areas in Ontario, and residents there have clearly articulated to me that they want their government to remain focused on jobs and economic growth.

That is why, for example, they are very pleased with the implementation measures in Bill C-45 that enable pooled registered pension plans to become a reality.

Bill C-45 amends the Income Tax Act to accommodate pooled registered pension plans, or PRPPs. It sets out the tax treatment for contributions to and distributions from PRPPs. It also deals with a number of related issues, such as the registration of pooled pension plans and transfers on the death of a PRPP member.

I cannot say enough about how important PRPPs are to entrepreneurs and working Canadians in my riding of Newmarket—Aurora.

In York region, home to over one million people, 83% of all businesses have fewer than 20 employees. This will be a very valuable tool for employers. It will help them, first, to retain good

staff, and second, to provide pension options to those who currently may not—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I am fairly new to this House. I have been here just over a year. I was taken aback when my colleague mentioned 45 standing committees here in the House of Commons. As far as I know, there are only about 25 or 26.

• (1130)

The Deputy Speaker: It is a matter of debate on factual matters.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, I said 11 standing committees, not 45. I referenced Bill C-45.

Let me repeat. Eighty-three per cent of all businesses in York Region, home to over one million people, have less than 20 employees. PRPPs will be a very valuable tool for employers to help them, first of all, to retain good staff and, second, to provide pension options to those who currently may not participate in a pension plan. Third, it will allow many entrepreneurs to better save for their retirements, such as those who operate a family business and who regularly put in 70-plus hours or more a week to support their families and to provide opportunities for others to do the same.

It simply is not fair that entrepreneurs, those who take on the risk, many by mortgaging their own assets and taking out personal loans to create jobs and opportunity across our country, do not have access to a company pension plan nor have the ability to offer one to their employees. Bill C-45 would correct this inequity.

I am also pleased about the lower corporate tax rate. We know that lowering corporate tax rates creates jobs. How do we know this? The proof is in the pudding. Let us just look for a moment at Canada’s economic record.

Since 2006 our corporate tax rate has been steadily declining from 22% to 15%. As everyone is no doubt well aware, in 2008-09 Canada and the world were faced with the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. That being said, unlike other countries Canada has emerged from that downturn in a relative position of strength. For example, nearly 820,000 new jobs have been created since July 2009, the strongest job creation record in the G7. *Forbes* magazine ranks Canada as the best place for businesses to grow and create jobs, and all the major credit rating agencies, Moody’s, Fitch and Standard & Poor’s, have affirmed Canada’s AAA credit rating. Canada’s debt to GDP ratio is by far the best in all the G7.

These results did not happen by chance. They are the result of a government focused on jobs and economic growth, one that does not get sidetracked and that clearly articulates its goals and sets out a methodical plan to achieve them.

Government Orders

I remind Canadians that in 2006 when this government came to office, it set out a long-range plan to foster strong and sustainable economic growth. It set out to show the world that we were a modern, dynamic and tolerant country. There were five goals: first, to establish the lowest tax rate on new business investment in the G7; second, to chart a course to eliminate Canada's debt; third, to reduce unnecessary regulation and red tape in Canada's marketplace; fourth, to create the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world; and fifth, to build the modern infrastructure we need. That was six years ago and today we remain focused on achieving these goals.

We are keeping Canada's corporate tax rates low, lowering taxes on families, supporting a market economy with a non-interventionist government, and implementing a pro-trade agenda. These policies are contributing to Canada's relative economic success.

The opposite side of the House, however, advocates for higher taxes, such as the NDP's \$21 billion carbon tax proposal. In this high-tax scenario I argue that today's global economy businesses would simply choose other places to invest. Corporations would have a thinner bottom line and would not be able to hire or keep as many employees. This would lead to increased unemployment and lower government revenues. Government would have to take on more debt to finance its activities. What happens when a government has to pay more to service its debt? Investor confidence fails and with it, business investment and economic growth. Thankfully this is not the case and I want to assure residents in my riding of Newmarket—Aurora that this government will never subscribe to high-tax schemes.

I would like to highlight another implementation measure in Bill C-45 that is important to Newmarket—Aurora. The amendments to part IV of the Employment Insurance Act allow the extension of the hiring credit for small business to 2012.

• (1135)

Small businesses are the engine of job creation in Canada, as they are in Newmarket—Aurora. In recognition of the challenges faced by small businesses across the country, budget 2011 announced a temporary hiring credit for small business of up to \$1,000 per employer. This credit provided needed relief to small businesses by helping defray the costs of hiring new workers and allowing them to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. Extending the temporary hiring credit for small business for one year would result in a credit of up to \$1,000 against an employers' increase in 2012 EI premiums, over those paid in 2011. This temporary credit would be available to approximately 53,000 employers whose total EI premiums were at or below \$10,000 in 2011, reducing small business 2012 payroll costs.

In conclusion, I believe Canadians expect their government to work in their best interests. They want their government to stay focused on jobs and the economy. The best way to do this is to move forward with the legislation so we can ensure that the many important measures it contains, essential to ensuring the continuation of our recovery, are done. That is what Canadians want and that is what this government intends to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask more or less the same question I asked the member earlier. Either she did not understand the question, or she did not want to answer. It was about navigable waters.

In her speech, the member said that today's bill was exactly what the government tabled seven months ago: the 2012 budget, a book that several members have shown us. That was the first thing she said. However, changes to navigable waters in Bill C-45 were not mentioned in the March 2012 budget.

Can she explain why Bill C-45 includes references to the Navigable Waters Protection Act even though the March 2012 budget did not mention it? Can she explain why references to the environment were removed from the Government of Canada's website after we pointed out that the Navigable Waters Protection Act is in fact an environmental law?

[*English*]

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, let me preface everything I say by saying that this government is focused on jobs and growth. We do not want any impediments in place that would hamper jobs and growth in our country. We know the issues in the budget are available to all our provincial and municipal partners to make decisions on what would be best in their own areas to create jobs. In Newmarket—Aurora, we have people who are unemployed who are looking for opportunities and we know this budget would do that for them.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question about pensions for the parliamentary secretary.

She waxed lyrical on how marvellous these pooled pensions, which the government introduced in its budget, were. I will acknowledge that we Liberals supported that measure but only because it is better than nothing. I submit that a supplementary Canada pension plan, which we proposed, would have been far superior. This is largely because the government's proposal is private sector and Canada has one of the highest management fees in the world, whereas the supplementary CPP would be much lower cost and would have provided competition for this private sector. As well, a difference of only one percentage point in the management fee can have a huge negative effect on a person's pension because of the power of compound interest.

While PRPPs are better than nothing, would the member not agree that, for the reasons I have just given, it would have been much better to have a supplementary Canada pension plan?

Government Orders

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that he had 13 long years in the House to do something about pension plans and did not approach them at all, ever. We are putting in place the opportunity for employers to have a pooled pension plan for their employees.

I come from small business. I have run a small business for a long time and I know many of my compatriots who are members of the Aurora and Newmarket chambers of commerce have had no access in the past to any sort of pension plan. We know this would offer them the opportunity to put a pension plan in place to offer more security for their employees. We know that any change to CPP requires agreement from all the provinces. We know that may be very difficult to get, so putting in place a pooled pension plan would give more options for more people to have security for the future.

• (1140)

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech from my colleague from Newmarket—Aurora. I did speak a little about the pooled pension for individuals and organizations in my riding. I got very positive comments.

However, the member for Newmarket—Aurora also talked about small business. We celebrated Small Business Week just recently. I would like to know what her thoughts are in terms of the additional \$1,000 in EI benefits that would be available to small businesses? Would that help small businesses and encourage future growth and job opportunities?

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, it would absolutely help. It would allow those businesses that are on the verge of perhaps one more hire, because they need one more person, to make the positive decision to create that new job. That amount of payroll tax could have thrown them over the edge to not hiring that person.

This is a credit that would allow businesses to create more jobs. That is good for everyone in Canada.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to rise and speak to Bill C-45, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures. I want to start by talking about process, roles and responsibilities.

When I was elected as a member of Parliament to represent my constituents in these hallowed halls of our parliamentary democracy, I came here with the understanding that I had a key role to play in budgetary oversight, holding the government accountable for the decisions it makes in spending the hard-earned money of Canadians, and paying a great deal of attention and due diligence when it comes to fiduciary matters. However, last spring, I was prevented from doing that by the Trojan horse omnibus bill, a bill so thick and dense it is bigger than many telephone directories across this beautiful country.

During this process, the feedback from Canadians was that this was not parliamentary democracy and not acceptable. I heard from hundreds of my constituents and other Canadians who were a little shocked by a government burying so much and making such drastic changes in an omnibus bill, though when it was a government in waiting, it was always talking about transparency and accountability.

One would have thought that after having buried the deletion of immigration files, the gutting of environmental protections and many other areas that were in the previous bill, including changing the age for old age security, the Conservatives would have learned a lesson and decided to do things differently. However, it was a case of oh, no, when we came back this fall to face Bill C-45, the second budget implementation act, still the size of a phone book.

Once again, as an elected parliamentarian representing the beautiful riding of Newton—North Delta, a riding that is struggling with many issues that need to be addressed right now, I am faced with a piece of legislation that purports to be a budget implementation bill, but actually includes many new items.

I was in the House when the Minister of Finance told my colleagues to go and do their homework, that we had the budget and there was nothing new in it. However, it only took until the next morning for the media to pick up on all the new stuff that was in the budget. What became evident was that the minister himself had not done his homework and was not aware of what was in his own budget or was trying to fool Canadians by burying things in the budget and pretending they were not there.

One of those is the changes to our environmental protections such as the Navigable Waters Protection Act. People keep saying that it is not about water. However, as I keep asking: What do boats and ships travel on if not water? What are we thinking about navigating? It is not roads but waterways. Therefore, I do not see why there is that separation. Once again, here we are as parliamentarians being denied the right to exercise our fundamental responsibility and scrutinize and debate a budget.

• (1145)

I have heard colleague after colleague stand in the House to urge the government and the members across the aisle to just give us unanimous consent so that we can take portions of this budget to the appropriate committees—and there are not 45 of them—where these can be given due diligence and we can examine and amend these portions of the bill and engage Canadians in some of the discussions.

Once again, unanimous consent has not been given. My colleague from Halifax tried again today, and I was quite moved by her plea for the other side to be reasonable. However, the Conservatives were not reasonable.

One of the key points I keep hearing of this budget is that it is about job creation. However, the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer says that this budget implementation bill would actually cost over 43,000 Canadian jobs. Here we have an independent Parliamentary Budget Officer saying that, yet I hear colleague after colleague across the aisle keep talking about how this is going to be such a great boon to job growth. We know that is not so.

I am getting a little tired of all the breaks in this budget for small businesses. In my own background my family has been engaged in running small businesses and in my community the engine of our economy is our small family-owned businesses.

Government Orders

What great measure do we have built into this budget? What I am saying is that it does not go far enough. We need to support our small- and medium-size businesses by giving them the breaks, not the wealthy corporations that take the jobs and money out of the country. However, once again the government fails small- and medium-size businesses in this budget. All it has done in this budget is to provide them with a maximum of \$1,000 in credits on new EI employer payments. That is it. To add insult to injury, that is only available to employers in the 2012 tax year.

By the time Bill C-45 passes through all stages, this tax credit will actually have expired. I say this even though the government has moved a time allocation motion so that the bill will pass through all of the stages at lightning speed, because the government has majority that it is determined to abuse.

The small- and medium-size businesses I talk to my riding need a lot more attention than this. They are very worried about where the government is taking us.

I am not going to spend too much time talking about environmental issues, because my colleague does such an excellent job on that at committee. She has raised those concerns ad nauseam.

Like other MPs, I get amazing emails from my riding. My colleague from Halifax read some of those into the record today. This morning I was responding to emails from my riding opposing the Enbridge pipeline and the gutting of environmental protections, and also about the lack of support for our young people to go out and get jobs.

I am getting so frustrated and tired of the constantly put idea that we are growing jobs, when I know it is the temporary foreign worker category that has increased by 200%. I want to see a real job-growth strategy by the government, instead of words, words and more useless words.

● (1150)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in last summer's omnibus bill the government actually deleted the applications of workers who had been waiting in a backlog for many years. In this particular bill, there is another change with respect to immigration, wherein people wanting to visit Canada will have to go through a different process. It is an attempt to establish some source of revenue or something of that nature within this particular bill.

I wonder if the member might comment on these two issues in the two separate budget bills that should ultimately have been brought forward in another form to enable us to deal with them in the immigration committee and possibly here on the floor of the House, as opposed to their being bundled and pushed through in a budget bill. I say this because these are fact very important issues in their own right and should have extra consideration.

Does she not agree?

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of serving with my colleague from Winnipeg North on the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, where we have shared our frustrations.

The member may not know this, but yesterday I sought the unanimous consent of the House to take the portion of this budget

dealing with immigration and send it to the committee, where we could give it proper oversight and ensure that we not make our immigration policy on the back of a napkin.

It seems to me that we are sending the following message to people around the world that when one plays by the rules and is waiting in line to get into our country, we can arbitrarily pick a date and delete all of the applicants' files. That is not a message that I and the many Canadians I talk to want to send.

I am also saying that we have to look at the huge increase in temporary foreign workers and ensure that we do not go down the same path that led to the mistakes we made in the past. Let us hope that this does not lead to other apologies that we may have to make in the future.

● (1155)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague is along the same lines as what was said earlier.

Several elements of this bill have nothing to do with the budget, nor are they necessarily connected in any way. I will go back to what one of my colleagues said. The chair of the Standing Committee on Finance asked a Liberal member if he agreed with a specific measure. Since we agree with some parts and disagree with others, should the bill not be split? We should have an opportunity to vote on specific elements of the bill instead of voting on a huge bill that lumps together many different parts. Omnibus bills prevent MPs from doing their job.

[*English*]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, recently, we have heard a lot from the other side of the House about our voting against this and that and the other thing. However, the Conservatives open up the prospect of such voting because they put so many things in a budget bill that are unpalatable to Canadians, and then insist on holding only one vote.

Here we are again. They wanted us to vote on raising the OAS recipients' age from 65 to 67. They put that into the same budget bill in which they put immigration changes and the gutting of the environmental act.

Let us have transparency. Let us see where each of the parliamentarians stands. Let us split up this budget and vote on these items separately so we can truly hold all MPs accountable.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tremendously pleased to stand today and speak to Bill C-45, the second budget implementation bill, the jobs and growth act of 2012. I have heard the opposition say on many occasions that Bill C-45 is a large bill. Yes, it is, and necessarily so. One might ask why. It is because it is the comprehensive bill required for these economic times. It is comprised of hundreds of pages of technical amendments, as well as concrete policy that reflects, considers and demands our immediate attention.

Government Orders

Through extensive consultations with stakeholders, sector leaders, academics and everyday Canadians, we see a better way to keep our country economically robust, going forward. Bill C-45 is representative of broad-based opinion across this country. As such, our Conservative government was given a strong mandate in the last election to stay focused on what matters: creating jobs and growing the economy.

A strong economy is not just something that affects a few. It ultimately means more money in Canadians' pockets for their groceries, rent and child care expenses. It means a difference to many families that have been able to tuck away a few bucks in a savings account at the end of the month instead of living paycheque to paycheque or, sadly, in many cases, no paycheque at all. It could also mean a young couple can turn a dream of owning a house into a reality. It means that a small business owner can hire an extra couple of employees or more this year, or a farmer can continue to do what his father and grandfather have done on their land for generations.

What this bill does not do is what the socialist opposition on the other side believes the panacea for all circumstances is: raise taxes. Of the many tax increases the opposition has proposed, and we have heard it many times in the House and it bears repeating, the \$21 billion carbon tax would decimate industry, transportation, commerce and negatively affect every citizen in the country. We vehemently disagree with that approach. Raising taxes is not the answer. Raising taxes would be like killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Raising taxes raises costs, decreases productivity, decreases competitiveness and, of course, kills jobs. Raising taxes crushes entrepreneurship and affects both small and large businesses. No one is exempt. It would result in no jobs and no money for groceries, housing, child care or any of the social necessities.

Bill C-45, in contrast, has initiatives that would build a strong economy, support Canadian families and communities, and create jobs. Importantly, it would respect taxpayers' dollars because we know how hard everyone works for every dollar earned. Let me take a moment to go over some of the initiatives that would create jobs and maintain and grow our strong economy.

First, let us talk business. Speaking from personal experience, I can assure everyone that as a small business owner for over 38 years who has employed hundreds of people, both I and our Conservative government understand and recognize that small business plays a tremendous and pivotal role in the economy and in the creation of jobs. Last year, 534,000 employers benefited from the hiring credit for small business. In Bill C-45 that credit of up to \$1,000 will be extended for another year, which will encourage more hiring of employees and lower total business payroll taxes by \$205 million. We will extend the capital cost allowance, creating an environment for more investment and more jobs.

The opposition criticizes this by saying we are giving money to large and small businesses. That is categorically wrong. Businesses must invest in capital assets, building or equipment, in order to receive that taxable credit. Let me use the example of a company in my riding, one of many. Proctor & Gamble is a large company and has invested significantly in new production lines by expanding facilities and purchasing equipment.

● (1200)

This investment and job creation results, of course, in more profitability for the company, but subsequently more taxes are then received by the various levels of government: federal, provincial and even municipal from the property tax point of view. More personal tax is also received from either added employees and/or the continuation of the good jobs they are paying taxes on now.

In addition, there are all kinds of side benefits from having a strong business community. This company, as an example, and its employees, are generous contributors to local fundraising, whether it is to the United Way or health care initiatives. The spinoff to our communities is absolutely tremendous. That is the genesis of job creation.

Jobs will also be created with many measures that we have introduced to promote interprovincial trade, to improve the legislative framework governing Canada's financial institutions and to facilitate cross-border travelling where the least delay is critical. At the border, time is money. Time spent on delay costs the Canadian economy and it costs us jobs.

We also need to remove bureaucratic obstacles and reduce fees for Canadian grain farmers, and we are doing that with the Canada Grain Act.

We are supporting Canada's commercial aviation sector, where we are leaders in the world. As an example, CAE simulators, a company out of Montreal, just had a new investment at CFB Trenton and other areas. It is taking advantage of our capital acquisition cost of new aircraft. Their training facilities are a huge boon for many areas and certainly for jobs in Canada.

Very important is our government's commitment to helping Canadian families and seniors. Bill C-45 contains measures to improve the registered disability savings plan and implement the tax framework for pooled registered retirement plans.

Initiatives in Bill C-45 also promote clean energy and promote the neutrality of the tax system by expanding tax relief for investment in clean energy generation equipment. This helps to keep Canadian dollars at home, which creates jobs and stimulates local economies.

We respect the Canadian taxpayer. We are moving to ensure that the pension plans of MPs, senators and federal public sector employees are not only sustainable, but financially responsible, fair and consistent with pension plans in the private sector.

We are proud that Canada has achieved the strongest economic performance of the G7, as verified by literally all international bodies, from the World Bank to the International Monetary Fund, and the list goes on.

Government Orders

Over 820,000 net new jobs have been created since 2009. These are numbers that the entire House can and should be proud of, but we know it is not enough as long as there are still too many Canadians looking for work.

On top of that, we have challenges. The global economy remains in a delicate condition, particularly in Europe and in the U.S., where they are encouraging and actually accumulating debts in excess of \$1 trillion a year. That is definitely troublesome. Because of issues beyond our control, we must continue to focus on getting Canadians working and providing an economic climate where entrepreneurs and businesses are able to flourish and continue creating jobs.

The bill addresses, recognizes and builds upon our commitment to return to a balanced budget. We must pay down our debt. Debt is our mortgage on the future of our children. Canadians should be able to look ahead and see a bright future for themselves and their children. Our government is committed to working hard to make that a reality.

I would encourage members on all sides of the House. We have our challenges when we have different opinions, viewpoints or perspectives on an issue, but we can all commit to a passion for improving the lives of our citizens and our country. I certainly welcome comments from my colleagues on the other side of the House and I hope we can try to find a way to continue to work together to better society for Canadian citizens.

● (1205)

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest and a measure of incredulity at my colleague's speech. He talked about a strong mandate. I would like to remind my friend across the way that the government is governing with less than 40% of voters. Voters for the government were less than 20% of the eligible voting population. This is not some kind of strong mandate that members have on the other side.

Yet the Conservatives have driven up the deficit in this country to where it is a record level in Canadian history, and here they are talking about debt reduction as though they were some kind of fiscally responsible government, instead of the cowboy capitalists that they are on that side of the House. Let us be honest about it.

I have a number of questions, but page 32 of the 2008 Conservative election platform clearly states that the government intended on a cap and trade program. You should read your program and your platform. My question—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please.

I would remind the hon. member to direct all of his comments to the Chair and not to his colleagues on the other side of the House. Could he get to the question, please?

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, my apologies. I will focus my attention toward you and only you today.

My question to my hon. colleague across the way is this. How can the government table this budget implementation bill when the Parliamentary Budget Officer says it is going to actually reduce jobs in the country, not increase them?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate that the member opposite does not seem to understand the reality of the electoral system in Canada. I can give him a bit of history on it. How

many times in the history of our country has a government achieved a majority with over 50%? It is very seldom. We do not have a two-party system. We have a multi-party system. I was fortunate in my riding, I had over 50%. I had earned the support of enough people in our riding and I was very pleased to do that.

I can also recall that I was with the party at one point when we were reduced to two seats, yet we had 26% of the vote. There is always an imbalance and what is perceived to be an unfairness. However, the reality is that it is the number of seats in the House of Commons and if a party has 50% plus 1%, it has a majority. We have substantially more than that and thank goodness, because we are not held in a situation of complete stagnation and deadlock, in gridlock, as they are in the States. We can actually get something done here.

● (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about improving the lives of all Canadians and I respect his comments. We have consistently tried to do that here in terms of policy ideas coming from the Liberal Party. The best example I can give of that is the old age supplement. The government is cutting back and now suggesting that people would retire at age 67. At the end of the day, that would put more Canadian citizens into poverty.

When we look at the facts and the facts are very clear, independent sources say there is no crisis and Canada can afford to keep it at age 65.

I wonder if the member could provide his personal take on why or how the government can justify increasing the retirement age from 65 to 67, when the facts speak differently and we could improve the lives of Canadian seniors by allowing them to continue to retire at age 65?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, I can speak from first-hand experience, being a senior.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I know it does not seem possible. I only appear to be 35 years old.

One of the problems we have is that the hon. member across said there is no crisis. That was also mentioned by the leader of the official opposition. A government has a responsibility to prevent a crisis, not to act when there is a crisis. We are thinking ahead. That is what a prudent government does. It plans for the future.

One does not have to be an international economist to recognize that there is a very simple equation here. We have people growing older. We have a growing segment of seniors who will be eligible for pensions. People are living longer who are going to be receiving pensions for a significant amount of time, and there are fewer and fewer people paying into the capacity. It was 10:1 or 12:1, and very shortly, in the near future, 15 to 20 years down the road, it is going to be 4:1. That is not sustainable.

Government Orders

A prudent government thinks ahead, plans ahead and delivers results, not just for now but for later. Would it be a challenge to move to it immediately? Absolutely. I agree with my hon. colleague there. That is why we have given a significant amount of time to be able to work and provide the acclimatization that is necessary.

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show my support for Bill C-45, Jobs and Growth Act, 2012 and I am pleased to see our government continue to focus so squarely on the economic challenges facing our citizens, our communities and our country. Bill C-45 would implement key measures from the economic action plan 2012, to help grow Canada's economy, fuel job creation and secure Canada's long-term prosperity.

Throughout the year, I had the pleasure of hosting budget consultations in Barrie with a variety of stakeholders. The one common theme throughout has always been a focus on job creation and economic growth as being something fundamentally important to people from all different sectors in my community.

Each stakeholder has provided insightful contributions from the different aspects of our city, but they all shared the same concerns, as do most Canadians: ensuring good jobs are available, keeping taxes low and continuing the sensible investments being made to achieve our common goals of long-term growth and prosperity.

Through the steady leadership of our Prime Minister and our Minister of Finance, we have seen Canada's economy expand in 11 of the last 12 quarters, since mid-2009. We have seen Canada create more than 820,000 net new jobs over the same period, and Canada has had by far the best rate of job creation in the entire G7 since 2006. We have seen Canada maintain its triple A credit rating through the period of economic downturn and uncertainty, and we continue to see Canada with the lowest net debt to GDP ratio and the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment in the G7.

Both the independent International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development forecast that Canada will be at the head of the pack for economic growth in the G7 in the years ahead. I am particularly proud to share with the House what the head of the International Monetary Fund thinks of our government's handling of the economy since the global economic crisis hit in 2008. These comments came out just this week.

The IMF's Christine Lagarde declares that Canada's economy should be a model for the countries trying to fix their own financial systems. Just last week she said that Canada has been a leader in creating policies intended to rein in the buildup of household debt. She went on to say that Canada is identified around the globe by our values of coordination and consensus building, which have given our country what she called "influence beyond its years".

Ms. Lagarde also applauded the decision of our finance minister to boost down payments on new mortgages for home buyers, as an example of household debt restraint that others should follow. She said:

All of these new reforms comprise the tools so far that will help us shape the future financial system. *We* must shape the system so it cannot again hold us ransom to the consequences of its failings.

A well-capitalized financial sector and a sound regulatory and supervisory system meant that financial institutions in Canada were better able to weather the 2008 global financial crisis than those in other countries. Indeed, the World Economic Forum has ranked Canada's banking system as the soundest in the world for five straight years. Our government is committed to maintaining this Canadian advantage.

Canada has made significant progress in implementing the G20 financial sector reform agenda and will continue to play a leadership role in promoting sound financial sector regulation internationally. Our government appreciates the IMF recognizing these important achievements.

However, in all this good news, the global economy remains fragile. Canada is not immune to the renewed weakness in the global economy, especially in Europe. In particular, Canada has been affected by the lower commodity prices that are dampening government revenue growth. We need to focus even more on jobs and promoting economic growth and realizing savings within government operations to ensure Canada's economic advantage remains strong into the long term.

At the same time, it is just as important that we continue making key investments in innovation and education to help make sure Canada continues to create good jobs and that Canadians are ready to fill them. We are supporting Canadian universities and researchers with a strengthened emphasis on projects that have a commercial potential.

Economic action plan 2012 took significant steps to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and world-class research, with over \$1.1 billion in significant investments for research and development, \$500 million for venture capital, support for increased public and private research collaboration and much more.

● (1215)

Just last month, I was proud to see this have an effect in my own riding of Barrie, Ontario. I was proud to be on hand officially to open the IBM data and research centre in the south end of Barrie. This new data centre is part of a much larger project.

The federal government's \$20 million investment was a catalyst for IBM's \$213 million initiative to create a southern Ontario smart computing and innovation platform. Our government's investment targeted the creation of 145 full-time positions, high-skilled, high-paying, in three different cities in southern Ontario, including 45 positions at the Barrie site. These are not job transfers; they are new hires.

Government Orders

Our government's investment is also creating a research and development centre within the IBM site that is going to do research on clean energy, environmental systems and neural mapping. It is state-of-the-art research and it is exciting to see what a private and public partnership can do to create jobs in southern Ontario.

I would like to tell the House of another example of this focus on innovation by our government, which I have seen work first-hand in my riding. This summer, in August, I was on hand to see a company transfer its manufacturing from China back to Barrie. This company had outsourced its production of 18 jobs to China and decided to bring them back. This summer it opened up its manufacturing in Barrie again and with a \$900,000 repayable loan from FedDev Ontario it was able to repatriate those jobs. This is an important sector. Southmedic is in the medical device sector, and right now this sector is valued at \$6.4 billion in Canada. That is just the tip of the iceberg of what Canada is capable of, to see this sector grow.

These are two great examples of the types of partnerships that government is forging. These are the kinds of partnerships that will create a better future for all Canadians and, most important, new jobs.

Another great partnership that the economic action plan pledged to carry on was that of the continued cleanup of Lake Simcoe. In 2008, members may remember that this government made an unprecedented \$30 million investment into the cleanup of Lake Simcoe. It was an extremely welcome initiative because Lake Simcoe and Kempenfelt Bay are certainly jewels that we treasure in Simcoe County. Phosphorous levels were at an all-time high, and we needed action to help reverse that trend because high phosphorous levels mean excessive weed growth. In Lake Simcoe it meant reduced marine habitat. We could not have this happen to what really was a jewel in our community.

The health of our lake is paramount to the future of the city of Barrie and all of Simcoe County and the surrounding areas. Tourism is vital to our local economy, and Lake Simcoe is certainly at the heart of the tourism market. I am happy to report that, since that investment of \$30 million, phosphorous levels have gone down every year. We are making tremendous strides on the cleanup of Lake Simcoe, to make sure that future generations in Barrie and Simcoe County will have the same pristine lake that we have been able to enjoy over so many decades.

Economic action plan 2012 continues the commitment to cleanup Lake Simcoe. The five-year cleanup fund had expired, but the budget expressed a commitment to renew this fund and to continue the cleanup of Lake Simcoe. That is tremendously appreciated in our community, and I am so glad that our Minister of Finance had the wisdom to recognize that this was a fund and a partnership that was working. The federal dollars, leveraged with funds from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and all the municipalities in Simcoe County, have made a profound impact on our local environment.

I am also pleased to see that Bill C-45 would extend the hiring credit for small businesses for another year. The credit of up to \$1,000 against EI premiums is a great help to encourage more small businesses. Small businesses are the engine for job creation in Canada and are indispensable in their role as job creators. I see that

every day in Barrie. Small businesses are at the heart of our community and it is great to see a budget that would help small businesses.

I realize I am limited in time. I want to commend my colleague, the Minister of Finance, on the jobs and growth act, 2012. The bill builds on terrific work laid out in the economic action plan and it meets the economic challenges facing our country head-on. On behalf of my constituents and the various stakeholders in Barrie, I want to sincerely thank the minister and his team for their hard work on what will be an excellent investment and understanding of the Canadian economy.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is very concerned about the way that Bill C-45 was introduced. On a number of occasions, several of our members have asked that various specific sections of the bill be separated from the bill, since, in our opinion, those sections should be examined in detail on their own.

Yet, since the beginning of this debate, the government has been saying that all of these measures were announced in the 2012 budget. The Minister of Finance has also said it, but the NDP does not believe that such is the case.

Here is an excerpt from the 2012 budget.

Over the next few years, the Canada Employment Insurance Financing Board (CEIFB) will continue to set the [EI premium] rate, but the Government will limit rate increases to no more than 5 cents each year until the EI Operating Account is balanced.

This measure appears in the 2012 budget, but we learned in the budget implementation bill that the Canada Employment Insurance Financing Board is going to be abolished.

I would like the hon. member who just spoke to explain to us how the government can justify saying that the measures in this bill are in the budget when that is clearly not true of a number of items in the bill.

Second, I would like him to explain why the government is not being transparent and is refusing to allow a number of items that have nothing to do with the 2012 budget to be examined separately.

[*English*]

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the length of the budget bill, it is certainly consistent with past budget bills we have seen, whether in a previous Liberal government or in recent budgets. Obviously, this budget was ambitious, and it is important to have an ambitious agenda that covers many areas because we are in the midst of a still very fragile global economy. The fact that Canada has led the way is because we are being so ambitious and doing everything possible to make sure we have a government that is lean and efficient and that creates jobs and focuses its efforts on creating jobs.

Government Orders

I realize the New Democrats have a different philosophy when it comes to budgets, and they are certainly entitled to disagree. I remember, when they were in power in Ontario, the results of their philosophy on governing was to run the government a massive deficit, to see Ontario lose 10,000 jobs and to shut down enrolment in medical schools in Ontario. The New Democrats cut key programs. That is certainly an approach we do not adopt here.

● (1225)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments about recognizing the importance of our lakes. He talked about it from a tourist point of view and from an economic point of view. It is also the most responsible thing to do in terms of our environment. The member seems to recognize the value of our lakes; yet the Conservative government, as of course Canadians know, would close the Environmental Lakes Area, the research station, and they know the profound effect that would have in terms of the quality of our lakes and rivers.

Does the member not see that the cut of service for the Environmental Lakes Area would have a negative impact on a major component of his speech, that being the importance of our lakes and having strong, healthy lakes going forward?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member brought up the importance of our lakes because it was not just Lake Simcoe in whose cleanup the government invested funds; it was Lake Winnipeg. I am sure the member knows that our Prime Minister was in Manitoba on August 2 to make that profound commitment to Lake Winnipeg. I note that never in our history have we seen a federal government invest so much in cleaning up our lakes.

When the Liberals were in power, the party to which the member belongs, they completely declined to make any efforts to clean up Lake Winnipeg, and it was a shame. We saw Lake Winnipeg unfortunately reach its worst state because of their complete lack of interest in its health. It took a Conservative government and a Conservative Prime Minister to finally invest in cleaning up Lake Simcoe and Lake Winnipeg. If the member opposite is truly committed to supporting the cleanup of Lake Winnipeg, I would think he would support this budget wholeheartedly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on that point, I can assure the member, whether by the Liberal federal-national administrations or other political parties at the provincial level, that there have been attempts in the past to improve the quality of our lakes. In good part, they have been very successful in doing that, but there is always room for improvement. What is clear, specifically with respect to this budget, is the government has deemed it necessary to get rid of the ELA, which will have a profound impact on the quality of freshwater going forward. It is most unfortunate that the member does not recognize that cut.

Generally speaking, it is great to speak on Bill C-45, which is unique legislation, a bill which ultimately is a cheap shot at democracy. Sometimes we take things for granted. Bill C-45, taken into consideration with its twin budget bill, which was brought in just prior to the summer break, is an insult to the House in terms of its attempt to make so many changes to legislation through the back door of a budget bill. Unfortunately, this is something that is not unique. The Conservative government has tried to bring in amendments through the back door of budget legislation for the

last couple of years. However, with respect to an assault on parliamentary processes, this is by far the worst in the history of the House of Commons.

I found it interesting when the member for Wascana provided members this statement from 1994 made by our current Prime Minister when the Chrétien government had brought in a bill that was only 21 pages, compared to hundreds of pages, and dealt with only three or four items rather than dozens of items.

In 1994, with respect to the then prime minister, the current Prime Minister stated:

We can agree with some of the measures but oppose others. How do we express our views and the views of our constituents when the matters are so diverse? Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill.

The current Prime Minister saw that as an assault on democracy and, in essence, challenged the then prime minister to break down that 21 page bill. Where is the Prime Minister today and how far has his opinions changed? Bringing in so many pieces of legislation through the back door of a budget is just wrong.

I would argue that even though many might say that this is somewhat of a boring issue, going into the next election Canadians will be reminded of how the government tried to bring forward a complete legislative agenda through the back door of a budget debate. We should be talking about is the bigger picture of budgets.

We saw surpluses in past government budgets, such as those of Paul Martin or Jean Chrétien. The current government inherited a surplus and turned it into a deficit situation.

With respect to equalization payments, there was a commitment made by the Liberal administrations to enhance and give what was necessary to ensure equality through equalization and transfer payments, including health transfers. In the previous decade, more money was provided to health transfers and equalization payments in the years of the Liberal administration than ever before. The health care accord, achieved by the Liberal administration, ultimately seized the number of dollars that we see going toward health care today.

● (1230)

The government of today tries to take credit for those health care transfers, but it was a Liberal administration that came up with the formula. It was a Liberal administration that got rid of the old tax credit formula that ultimately guaranteed the ongoing financial security of health care transfers well into the future. Those are the types of ideas that Liberal administrations have brought forward.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, have been lacking in ideas and initiatives. In spending billions of dollars, they have been able to identify some things that they can do. In spending that type of money, there will be some good things. However, it is the bigger picture at which we need to look.

Government Orders

Let us look at that bigger picture of the budget. I know the government wants us to focus on the budget. What is the government really doing? It is decreasing services. For people who are on employment insurance and who try to talk to a live person, good luck. For people who are trying to deal with immigration issues and want to talk to a live person, good luck. It is just not going to happen. It is difficult.

The government has cut back on thousands and thousands of civil servant jobs. Those jobs provide real live services to Canadians. On the other hand, the government finds it quite okay to increase the number of members of Parliament. It is saying that we need fewer civil servants and more politicians.

On that point, the Conservatives have the support of the New Democrats. The New Democrats also want to see more politicians inside the House of Commons. If they tuned in to what Canadians really want, it is quality service from the civil service. It is difficult to achieve that when the government is cutting thousands of jobs. What Canadians do not want to see is what the Conservatives and the NDP want, more politicians. That is what I mean about bad priorities.

There is a need for us to recognize that jobs are important. Shortly after the last federal election, the leader of the Liberal Party said that the three most important issues facing us were jobs, jobs and jobs. Jobs are important. It is through jobs and employment that we can generate wealth and assist more people out of economic disparity.

Canadians expect the government to do things in regard to jobs. Manitoba has been fairly hard hit. Good quality jobs are what Canadians want. The aerospace industry is very important to my home province and to other provinces. When Air Canada got rid of its overall maintenance, first by bringing it over to Aveos and then Aveos disposing of it, where was the Government of Canada? Where was the Prime Minister?

In the Air Canada Public Participation Act, those jobs were guaranteed to Manitoba. Manitoba had a legislative guarantee to keep those good, quality jobs. The government did nothing.

The bottom line is that jobs are important and the government has dropped the ball in creating good, quality jobs.

Crime prevention is important to the residents of Winnipeg North and to all Canadians. The government can talk a lot about getting tough on crime. Some would ultimately suggest it has been dumb on crime. What we really need is to get smart on crime and prevent crimes. We need programs that will prevent crimes from happening. We are not seeing that sort of development.

We want to look at health care and the important role the government needs to play in providing strong, national leadership on health care. That has been lacking. We need a new health care accord that will guarantee it well into the future.

• (1235)

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we sit kitty-corner in the chamber, without any listening device, I could hear the member for Winnipeg North very well. I appreciate his passion, but it is misdirected.

I want to focus on a comment the member made about representation in the House of Commons.

We have a system where the House of Commons is a representation by population as much as possible. The member has said that he thinks there are too many politicians, or too many representatives of the people, which is another way of putting it.

Is he saying that he is not in favour of B.C., Alberta, Ontario or Quebec getting additional seats so they can be represented appropriately in this chamber? It is a bit rich for a member from Manitoba to say that a vote in Manitoba is worth more than a vote in Ontario.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, at the end of day, what the government was hoping to accomplish by increasing the number of members in Parliament could have been accomplished by maintaining the 308 representatives. By the way, the Prime Minister at one time suggested that Canada needed no more than 300 members of Parliament. However, in fact, the Liberal Party provided a document which demonstrated just how this could have been done. I suspect there is a good number of Conservative members who do not support an increase in the number of the members of Parliament.

I know the Liberal Party stands alone in recognizing what is of value and interest to all Canadians, which is that we do not need to increase the number of members of Parliament. Only the New Democrats and Conservatives believe we need to increase the number of MPs. We believe that it bad prioritizing.

• (1240)

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member struggles for some sort of relevancy in the House, he perhaps wants to offer his own position as a sacrifice to Canada's fiscal health and welfare. Sitting down, perhaps, would be a start.

I want to ask my friend about the Liberal government's record around omnibus legislation. Right now the Liberals are supporting our push to split this omnibus bill, yet in the 1990s they did the same thing.

Furthermore, in talking about jobs, we see an actual reduction in jobs with the bill. Our young people will get no support or respite from this document. There is a 15% unemployment rate among young people, which is the official rate, but we know it is much larger.

Could my hon. friend tell me how this budget implementation bill reflects the fact that Canadians need to get back to work? We need strong legislation that supports Canadian workers and we do not see it here.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, first, let me correct the member. He has absolutely no understanding in terms of what he is talking about if he believes Liberal omnibus bills were anywhere near to what the Conservative bill is.

If he is trying to say that the NDP would not bring in omnibus bills, what he needs to do is take a look at provincial jurisdictions where there have been NDP governments. The national government of Canada was no worse during the 1990s than the provincial NDP were in other jurisdictions. The member needs to get a better understanding. The NDP is not as innocent as he might like to think.

Government Orders

Regarding the youth issue, yes, youth unemployment is a serious issue, but does Bill C-45 deal with it? It would have been nice to have had more of a general discussion about the budget, but there is a challenge for the government to produce more for young people in Canada.

However, when the government cut back the Katimavik program, which was a wonderful Trudeau program, it demonstrated that the Conservatives did not really understand—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to stand in this House to speak in favour of Bill C-45, which truly would bring jobs and opportunity to Canada.

Today, I stand in this House, proud to be a representative of the Peace country. I represent the riding of Peace River, which includes the better part of northwestern Alberta. In this area, we know the value of jobs, opportunity and growth. Over the last number of years, that is exactly what we have seen.

I have often said that I am proud to represent the Peace country. It is a beautiful place, but its beauty is only a small reason for me to be so proud. The larger reason for me to be so proud to represent that constituency, the constituency that is home, that is where I was born and grew up, is that the people who live in the Peace country are dedicated to growing a local economy and building a stronger future, not only for our community but for the country in general.

A couple of weeks ago, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business announced that Grande Prairie, which is the largest urban centre in the riding I represent and the largest city in the Peace country, was recognized as the most entrepreneurial city. That was not just for this year. That was for the third year running.

The people in the Peace country understand the value of jobs and growth. This bill speaks to so many of the issues people from my riding have indicated are priorities for them. That is why I am so proud to stand in this House to support this bill.

I am proud to represent and work for the people of my riding. I am also proud to represent and work for Canadians in general, from coast to coast.

Over the last couple of years, I have had the privilege of serving in two specific and different roles. The first was as a commissioner on the Red Tape Reduction Commission, which travelled this country and heard from small business leaders across Canada. They talked about the necessity of Canada leading in reducing red tape, because one of the biggest hindrances Canadian businesses face is government-created red tape.

The second role I am going to speak to, generally, is my role as the chair of the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Committee. I have served in this capacity since the last election, and I can tell members that it is truly a privilege. This budget has some important and good news for that role, as well.

I will speak, first, to my role as a commissioner on the Red Tape Reduction Commission.

I, along with six of my colleagues, seven MPs in total, as well as seven representatives from the private sector, made up this national commission.

For over a year and a half, we travelled the country of Canada, from one coast to the other, hearing from small business leaders who were concerned about so many things.

We know, and we knew going into this whole exercise, that Canadian small businesses, and businesses in general, have a huge burden when it comes to red tape. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that the cost of compliance with red tape created by government costs businesses across the country \$30 billion on an annual basis. That is a huge amount of money. However, there is also the frustration and the missed opportunities businesses have when complying with unnecessary red tape when they could otherwise be growing their companies.

We heard a whole host of different concerns when it comes to the amount of paperwork government requires at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, and, in some cases, the redundancy of that.

As we have seen, last year's budget began the process of dealing with some of the red tape irritants. Specifically, in the act we see before us today is an issue brought up on a regular basis when we travelled the country, namely, changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

We heard from small business owners across this country about the frustration as it relates to the construction industry and as it relates to industries that actually have to service and build bridges and waterway structures from coast to coast. From fishermen to people in the tourism industry to people in the forestry sector to people in the mining sector, we heard about the frustration as it relates to navigable waters.

• (1245)

I do not have to be a commissioner at the national level to know that this is an irritant. As a matter of fact, I have an example in my hand today. It was interesting that I heard a colleague from the NDP mention that she had never heard of anybody experiencing such frustration. I can say that on a regular basis I hear of business leaders and municipalities that have had major frustrations dealing with this outdated act.

Last year I received a letter from one of the largest forest products companies in my riding. It had an unfortunate circumstance when one of its temporary bridges was washed out. The forestry sector cannot rely solely on provincial and municipal roadways. It has to have an integrated roadway network constructed and owned by forestry companies, independent of government-owned infrastructure.

I will briefly read from the letter. It was as a result of the washout of a temporary bridge that had been in place. The forest company stated:

[It] has received all necessary approvals for the demolition and construction of a new bridge including approvals from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Alberta Environment and Water. Both agencies expedited their approvals

Government Orders

They ensured that all precautions were taken as they related to the environment and protection. It went on to explain the other things they oversaw.

What was clear was that what would be undertaken by the Navigable Waters Protection Act would simply be redundant. There had already been assurance that transportation on that river, which is not used for transportation, would not be impeded. What was interesting to me was that this company was proposing a bridge that would have less environmental impact, because it spanned the water from one coastline to the other without any disturbance of the banks. This bridge was going to be much taller, so it would limit less any traffic underneath it if, in fact, somebody wanted to canoe on what was a pretty small waterway. All of the things we would consider to be common sense had already been addressed by the company, yet there was an unnecessary delay.

Somebody in the House might ask who cares if there was a delay. Let me explain. I care. They described the bridge and its use. They stated:

The bridge is used to transport timber out of the forest. If the replacement is not in place for the remainder of the winter log-haul, the mill will not have enough timber for the coming year, resulting in catastrophic economic impacts on the company and the community.

I found out that there would be mass layoffs at one of the largest mills in the province of Alberta if this bridge was not replaced.

I can say that the changes to the navigation protection act are welcomed by industry, which creates jobs, opportunity and growth in my community, and also by municipalities that have had similar circumstances and frustrations, especially as they relate to responding quickly after infrastructure is damaged as a result of weather.

The second point I want to speak to is something important that has not been discussed in the House very often in this debate and unfortunately not at all by the opposition benches. It is the whole issue of the changes to the land designation for first nations lands.

In 1988, an amendment to the Indian Act was made to create the ability for first nations to have more control over their own land to create economic opportunity and prosperity for their communities. A couple of things are going to be changed as a result of the budget act in place today. The first is that we are going to create an environment in which the threshold for voting would be similar to that of a federal, provincial or municipal election. A simple majority would allow first nations to move forward with changes to the land designation. The second is that we are going to create less onerous and reduced red tape for first nations as it relates to getting government approval.

These are just two points. I would be happy to go further in answering questions on either of these or any other points.

• (1250)

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the discussions that go on in this place, particularly with this member, who is very sincere about the bill when he talks about it.

I have a question about the first part of his speech about navigable waters.

I have been approached by a number of municipal leaders in northern Ontario. They are concerned that when changes happen within waters within municipal boundaries, a downloading process will take place, and municipalities will now have to foot the cost of environmental assessments. If that is true, that is a real problem the government has not considered. If they are not right, I wonder if the member could explain to us exactly how an environmental assessment would now take place in navigable waters that are within municipal limits?.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the primary goal of the Navigable Waters Protection Act is to preserve navigation. It is to ensure that people who want to use the waterway to float down the river are able to do that.

Of course, a lot has changed since the act was first put in place. We are talking about quite an archaic piece of legislation. It was a time when people were using canoes to transport goods for commerce. That does not happen anymore. We have different types of shipping and different mechanisms to transport our goods and services. Therefore, that provision within the bill has certainly changed based on new modes of transportation.

In terms of environmental assessments, these provisions of the past continue. There is no change to the protection of the environment as a result of changing the definition of what it is to navigate a river.

• (1255)

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for not mentioning the Canadian Wheat Board in his speech, which, as I have told him several times, is really a red hot issue in my riding.

The member mentioned small business a number of times. I would like to ask him a question about taxation of small business. Thanks to the Conservative government, as of January 1 of next year, businesses, including small businesses, will pay an extra \$410 million in EI premiums. Small businesses hate this tax, because it is a direct tax on jobs, and it affects them disproportionately. Partially in compensation, the government is providing a tax credit worth half that amount, \$205 million, which means that net, the government is increasing taxes on small business to the tune of \$205 million a year. How can the member support a bill that imposes big new taxes on small business? Is he that much in favour of higher taxes?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that if people have jobs, which our government has been preoccupied with creating, they will not have to collect EI. We know that the system works such that as people draw down on the system, more needs to be put into the bank account. If people are pulling out EI payments, more has to be put in. That is a principle everyone understands.

Government Orders

The principle most Canadians do not understand is that hard-working workers put money into the EI fund when the Liberals were in control of the coffers, and the Liberals decided to just raid the fund. We know where some of the money went. It was the \$40 million that is still missing after the sponsorship scandal. Quite frankly, if that money had not been raided, I am certain that we would not have seen the fluctuations in the rates we have had to see to ensure that there is enough money to offset the cost.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a challenge to approach a bill of over 400 pages covering 40 different laws and have 10 minutes to try to make my way through it. I appreciate this chance to speak to the bill at second reading. I will of course be watching closely for work at committee and hope that some of the concerns I have about the bill now can be repaired at committee so that I will not have to put forward hundreds of amendments at report stage, which at this point appears likely.

The increasing use of omnibus bills is an affront to democracy. It is not appropriate and while other governments have perhaps trespassed close to the line before and created howls from the members of the opposition of the day, certainly the current Privy Council holds the Olympic world record for monster omnibus bills. No other government has come close.

Here I would like to commend all sides of the House for the fact we were able to split out and deal separately with MP pension reform. Many Canadians were happy to see that work. Perhaps we can do more by co-operating in the future to separate out pieces of bills that do not belong.

What things in this bill do not seem to belong at all in a proper budget bill? I will go quickly through some examples and then delve more deeply into two in particular. I do not think that removing the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission properly belongs in an omnibus bill. Why are we getting rid of it? It helps provide critical information to business on hazardous materials.

I lament the current government's further deep cuts to research and development credits, specifically the scientific research and experimental development tax credit. If we look at our economy, it is quite true that we have weathered the economic storm better than most nations around the world. We have a better regulated banking system quite frankly, and the current government can take no credit for that. Nonetheless, we did weather the storm better.

Nonetheless, if we look at the indicators of where we are falling behind, one area is productivity and productivity, which relates to R and D. Cutting R and D does not make sense. I am concerned about significant cuts in this omnibus bill to research and experimental development tax credits.

The Windsor-Detroit bridge is highlighted in the bill and many people have waited a long time to see improvements there. We know we have some private sector opposition to it from the other side of the border. It is an extremely bad precedent that the act specifies there will be no environmental assessment and that the following acts will be exempt from the procedures for the Windsor-Detroit bridge: There will be no Fisheries Act review, no involvement of the Species at Risk Act and there will be nothing from the Navigable Waters Protection Act. This precedent, by the way, is opposed by the

member of Parliament from Windsor, who himself is a great proponent of getting this project done.

The assumption implicit in discarding legislative review under those acts is that somehow those acts are irrelevant to any project the Conservatives really care about. I am afraid that is the truth about how the government operates, but that does not make it any less lamentable to find this in the legislation.

One piece that I want to take more time to delve into may surprise the House. The bill is supposed to be about jobs and growth. We hear about that all the time. In this connection, I would mention a key economic sector in Canada that we do not hear very much about: tourism. Tourism represents more of Canada's GDP than agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined. It employs nearly 600,000 Canadians, generating nearly \$80 billion in economic activity. However, we are losing ground in tourism.

In the year 2002, Canada was rated seventh in the world as a tourist destination among all nations. Guess what? In 2011, we dropped to eighteenth place. We dropped from seventh to eighteenth in just in 9 years. What happened? For one, there are the policies of the current government. One of the first things the Prime Minister did once forming government was to remove the GST credit that foreign visitors used to get. That credit was basically a goodwill gesture. It cost this country almost nothing, because so few people applied for it. However, the Conservatives got rid of it.

Then of course there was the move by the United States to require visitors to Canada and visitors to the U.S. who travel across our borders to have passports. We cannot blame any government for what the United States decides to do, but I think we should have pushed more forcefully against it. That measure has hurt tourism a lot, just as the general climate after 9/11 hurt tourism from the United States. However, we hurt the tourism sector even more in Bill C-38 by changing the rules around seasonal workers to make it harder for seasonal workers to leave employment in an industry such as tourism and be considered reliably available to the employer when the tourist season begins again.

● (1300)

However, now we have this, found on page 270 in division 16 under "immigration and refugee protection", a whole new regime for tourists. It is little mentioned in debate on the omnibus bill but is for travellers to Canada. Any foreign national coming to Canada would now have to clear an application process in which they would have to answer questions before they planned their vacation. It would create what they call "an electronic travel authorization", although that is not the language of the act but the language of the technical briefing. In short, there would be an electronic travel authorization.

Government Orders

I have a couple of concerns about this. One is that it would hurt tourism. There is no question about that. When we put in place visa requirements for countries like Mexico and the old Soviet bloc nations, it had an effect on tourism, as anything would that creates a barrier in a competitive tourist market where tourists can decide whether they want to take the train across Canada or a tour down the Rhine by boat. They have choices. If one government says, "We'll see if we'll let you in, fill out this form", tourists will choose to go somewhere else. This would be a terrible mistake. It would be part of our over-security conscious agenda, that even if people want to visit Canada as tourists, we have the right to put them on a no-fly list to prevent their coming here. I am very concerned about that.

I will turn to the most egregious elements of Bill C-45, the changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. I hear my friends on the other side of the House refer to the many complaints about the act because only seasonally navigable water falls under the act. Surely, if that were the nature of the problem, they could deal with it by using a fly swatter. They did not need to bring in the wrecking ball. If that is the problem, get out the fly swatter. What the Conservatives would do under Bill C-45 would be to take on, I think, in the order of 99.5% of all the bodies of water within Canada, excluding our oceans, and remove them from the Navigable Waters Protection Act. They say that the act was never intended to be about navigable waters, that it was only supposed to be about navigation.

Just to go back to some constitutional law for purposes of setting the context, we cannot say with any sense or meaning that this bill was only intended to do thus and such when a bill was passed in 1882 or since 1867, since navigation is a head of power for the federal government. They cannot say that in 1867 the legislators never intended it to apply to the environmental assessment of a massive hydro dam. Of course, they did not. Neither did they intend, as Professor Peter Hogg has pointed out, that undertakings connecting the provinces would include an interprovincial telephone system. It had not been invented yet. Moreover, as Professor Hogg pointed out in one of his constitutional law texts, "[I]t is well established that the general language used to describe the classes of subjects (or heads of power) is not frozen in the sense in which it would have been understood in 1867". Then he goes on to say, "On the contrary, the words of the Act are to be given a "progressive interpretation", so that they are continuously adapted to new conditions and new ideas". Or, as a member of the high court, Lord Sankey, ruled in 1930, "The British North America Act planted in Canada a living tree capable of growth and expansion within its natural limits".

Therefore, it is entirely absurd to hear the government members continually tell us that the Fisheries Act was only supposed to be about fisheries for all time, not fish; and that the Navigable Waters Protection Act was never about waters, but only about navigation. That is bad in law, it is bad in theory and it is bad public policy. It is also false. These laws have been fundamental to environmental law in Canada.

However, I ask the question: If it is about navigation, why would the Conservatives take a wrecking ball to navigation? In the bill, they have protected lakes in precious cottage country, close to where people live, where they claim there are all the complaints, and eliminated the law for the vast tens of thousands or millions of

hectares of Canada where the lakes are not cottage country. They would eliminate the protection on all but 62 rivers and 97 lakes. Who would step up to protect our rights of navigation?

Under constitutional law, no province is allowed to step up and fill the void when the federal government runs from its responsibilities under the Constitution. It is unprecedented in the history of Canada that the federal government would willingly and deliberately remove itself from a field in which it is empowered under our Constitution. It would leave no protection for navigation, no protection for recreational use, no protection for rafting or kayaking and, in the process, would eliminate environmental law for most of Canada's waters.

• (1305)

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in her speech the hon. member referred to the electronic travel authorization, a mechanism that is actually designed to facilitate travel to Canada for low risk travellers. It would help us identify those who are of higher risk before they come to Canada. We are living in a day and age when security is of primary concern.

My question to the hon. member is simply this: Does it not make sense to work with our partners around the world to ensure that programs like the ETA are in place so that we can better protect our communities, our children and families and the places they shop or go to school from high risk situations? We need to ensure as a government that people who come to this country are of no risk to Canadian citizens.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, we have to get the balance right. Of course, we expect Canadian intelligence and security services to work diligently to prevent people who pose a danger to Canada from visiting Canada.

However, the idea that that this would facilitate tourism is clearly contrary to the facts. Tourists to Canada will be required to go online or fill out a paper form. Indeed, they must have that form with them or they will not be able to get into Canada. What kind of message does that send to tourists?

I think we have the balance quite wrong. If we want to ensure that no tourists come to Canada who could ever present a risk, then I suggest we ban tourism. However, to pretend that this would somehow facilitate tourism is simply false.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her speech. I really enjoy asking this member questions about the environment, a subject she knows very well. She makes an important contribution here in the House of Commons.

Government Orders

The Conservatives deleted the word “environment” from their website when the NDP pointed out that the Navigable Waters Protection Act was in fact an environmental law and that the website explicitly said that it protected the environment. A few minutes or hours later, all references to the word “environment” were deleted from the website, as if by chance. I do not imagine it was planned.

What does my colleague think of what the Conservatives did? Does she believe that that legislation helped protect the environment?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. This is indeed very interesting.

I found it very amusing when the hon. NDP member for Halifax asked the government ministers questions about the removal of the word “environment” from the website regarding the Navigable Waters Protection Act. This is a recurring theme. I hope I explained that under the Constitution, the federal government has a responsibility to protect rights of navigation. This is implicit in the Constitution. It includes the protection of navigable waters.

Over time, given the rise in environmental concerns, the Navigable Waters Protection Act became an environmental law. That is why the website used the word “environment” and why the changes currently proposed in Bill C-45 are really dangerous for most of Canada's bodies of water.

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled today to stand in support of Bill C-45.

The many Canadians I speak to are refreshed and excited to finally have a stable majority government that does exactly what it told voters it would do when it ran for election.

We are focusing on Canadians' priorities at a time when strong, steady economic leadership is needed. Canadians elected our government to work at building a stronger and more prosperous Canada, and that is what we have done.

We promised to streamline bureaucratic processing and build a leaner and more effective public service. We promised to eliminate government duplication, red tape and unnecessary paperwork. We promised to respect taxpayers' dollars and eliminate the deficit without raising taxes or cutting transfers. We promised to ensure the long-term sustainability of social programs, and we promised to aggressively implement pro-growth economic initiatives to create jobs.

In every area I just outlined, our government is delivering and there is no doubt that our economic action plan is working. Over 820,000 net new jobs have been created, most of them full-time, most of them in the private sector. Our debt-to-GDP ratio remains the lowest in the G7 by far, and just yesterday it was reaffirmed that we remain on track for balanced budgets. Moreover, the OECD and the IMF predict that Canada's economic growth will be among the strongest in the G7 over the next two years. The World Economic Forum has said that our banks are the soundest in the world. *Forbes* magazine has ranked Canada as the best place to do business in the world, and the IMF recently singled out Canada as an economic model for the world to follow.

Canadians know that our plan is working, and budget 2012 continues to build on the great progress we have made. Perhaps most exciting is how our plan, the direction of this government, is delivering results in my riding of Brant.

Like many communities in southwestern Ontario, the economy of Brant is evolving from large-scale historic heavy industrial manufacturing to value-added, small- and medium-size companies. Brant has a rich history of heavy industrial manufacturing dating back to the turn of the century when Brantford was the third largest economy in Canada, only behind Toronto and Montreal. We revolutionized the farm in our community by building the first tractors that were sold around the world, but recently, due to the global economic climate and necessity, Brantford has been in a large transition. I like to think of Brantford because of the great influence that post-secondary education has had on our community. Here I like to think that we are in our sophomore year.

Manufacturing continues to evolve. As our mayor so rightfully states, our goal is to build a 21st century city and county, and we are excited about our future. I will highlight the large influence of post-secondary growth in our community later in my speech.

Canada is attracting the world's attention as countries look to safe havens for trade and investment, and our government's smart economic policies are giving Brant businesses a competitive advantage to capitalize on these new opportunities. Our plan to keep taxes low, cut red tape, promote investment and aggressively expand trade is just what manufacturers and exporters need in our riding.

Cutting red tape and the small business hiring tax credit in our budget 2012 are things that I am intimately familiar with, having been a business person in the building industry who owned his own company for over 23 years. I have held many economic round tables in our community, and the two comments that keep coming back over and over again are the need to help small business hire new employees and for us to cut red tape to make the administrative side of business easier.

● (1315)

Our government is also supporting and investing in post-secondary expansion, which is attracting students, businesses, jobs and investment to our city and our now thriving downtown core. Our government has invested \$13 million for the Laurier Research and Academic Centre and recently announced \$16.7 million for the Laurier/YMCA Athletic Complex.

Government Orders

Here are some interesting statistics. In a 2011 analysis commissioned by the City of Brantford, the number of Brantford businesses reporting a positive impact from post-secondary institutions tripled to 47%, and that was up from 15% in 2005. Over the past dozen years, institutions have invested \$130 million in Brantford's downtown core, a downtown core by the way that desperately needed an injection of people and investment.

I am thrilled to stand in support of Canada's economic action plan because it responds to the needs and priorities of my community and it is delivering results for the people of Brant. Members do not have to take my word for it. Here is what Scott Lyons of Extend Communications said about his company's plan to bring 70 new jobs into our downtown:

We are really excited about re-investing in the downtown. It's a vibrant and growing community down here. Brantford has a great workforce and we are excited to be expanding our workforce down here.

Here is another recent quote, from John Dimitrieff, CEO of Patriot Forge:

Although Patriot operates on both sides of the border, very soon Patriot will be undertaking a 35,000-foot expansion that will create jobs right here in Brantford. That we are choosing to invest and expand in Canada is due in large part to the current government's plan that keeps taxes low and creates a competitive business environment.

The Massilly Group is delivering 100 new jobs to Brantford, because according to its CEO:

Brantford is an ideal location for us because of its close proximity to our core markets in Canada and the United States, its manufacturing-friendly business environment, and our ability to retain and add to our highly skilled workforce.

Wipro is actively recruiting resumé to fill more than 500 jobs it projects to create in our downtown core by 2013.

John Paul deBoer of Brant Screen Craft recently purchased a plant and moved 50 jobs to Brantford. He said:

...we had looked into locating our finishing and distribution facility in Michigan. The corporate tax cuts and programs provided by the Conservative government were the deciding factor to expand in Canada.

Brantford Mayor Chris Friel recently spoke about how small and medium-sized businesses are becoming a powerful engine of job growth in Brantford, as companies like Automodular, First Gulf, GreenMantra Recycling, and the Sunrise Warehousing Company grow and expand. He said:

It's not something that gets a lot of media attention but a lot of small to medium-sized businesses have opened in Brantford in the past year creating a lot of jobs. But I am not sure people realize or appreciate how important this is to the city.

Another statistic, office vacancy in Brantford, has been cut in half over the last two to three years. Also over the past two years, Brantford has risen 35 spots to number 64 on the CFIB "communities in boom" ranking of Canada's most entrepreneurial cities.

Cathy Oden of Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant describes how a growing entrepreneurial spirit is reviving our community:

They're opening up small restaurants, hair salons, spas and expanding retail locations. Typically, they are fulfilling a dream or desire that they have nurtured for some time.

She was speaking about that entrepreneurial spirit that we are feeling and experiencing.

Canada's economic action plan is supporting jobs and growth in my riding of Brant. The good news does not stop there. I would encourage all members of this House to support Bill C-45 on its speedy passage through the House of Commons.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting speech. He spoke about small and medium-sized businesses and about jobs in his riding. He said that Bill C-45 could really help people and that his government had helped the small and medium-sized businesses in his riding.

While looking over Bill C-45, I noticed that one of the proposed measures is a temporary hiring tax credit for small businesses. It is the most significant job creation measure in this bill. However, this tax credit is temporary and the maximum amount is \$1,000. In addition, it is only applicable in the 2012 tax year. In other words, this measure will no longer be available even before Bill C-45 is passed.

I would like my colleague to comment on this. What does he find of particular interest to small and medium-sized businesses in this bill?

[*English*]

Mr. Phil McColeman: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question because, again, this is my background in terms of having a company that employed on average 20 to 30 people at any given point in time.

On the extent of the small business tax credit, it is known that half a million employers in Canada have taken advantage of it. We are moving forward with the small business tax credit and extending it to businesses. This is a job creator.

The other item I mentioned in my speech that I would like to underscore is the fact that we are dealing with the red tape with which small business people generally have a hard time dealing. They do not have the resources to have someone on staff or to take on the additional costs of dealing with all the things that government demands of them on the administrative side of their businesses. When we look at Bill C-45 and the action we have taken, we see we are moving forward to make it a lot easier for small businesses to deal with government.

• (1325)

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Brant County. I know that his background is in small business.

The statistics that the member has talked about in Brantford speak exponentially about not only the policies and legislation that has been brought forward by this government. If we follow this man back to his riding, members would understand the commitment he has had to rebuilding part of his county, Brantford, and I thank him for that.

I am going to follow up on the question from a colleague across the way because it was sort of minimizing of the significance of small businesses. We know that 98% of the businesses in this country are small businesses and they hire over 50% of the people.

Government Orders

I wonder if my colleague could expand a little beyond what the extension of a tax credit for small business is about. What has happened over time that it has built? This government builds continually from one budget to the other. What can the member help us with in terms of small businesses?

Mr. Phil McColeman: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the opportunity to describe in a little more detail what our policies have done for small business.

We have continued to make a more attractive environment for people to begin small businesses. Many communities like ours rely on the creation of new businesses. It is not a perfect world where all the companies within one's riding or community stay in business. Some companies shut down or move to other jurisdictions because of economic and competitive pressures. That is a reality. It is always fluid within our communities.

Therefore, Bill C-45 is important in what it does. It maintains the path we are taking to create the platform for businesses to prosper. They are the job creators. Small and medium-sized businesses employ 80% of the people in this country. We continue to lay out for Canadians exactly what we said we would, which are policies that align themselves to simplify being in business and to prospering and creating jobs.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak against yet another omnibus budget bill brought forth by the Conservative government, as with its spring's Trojan horse budget bill. New Democrats oppose Bill C-45 both on content and process grounds.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-45 is over 400 pages long and contains a huge number of disparate measures. Despite what the minister says, not all of these measures were in the 2012 budget.

Bill C-45 would amend over 60 laws and even contains a totally new law. With this bill, the government is pursuing the same agenda it put forward in its Trojan Horse budget bill: it is giving the minister more power and weakening environmental protection legislation.

Once again, the Conservatives are trying to rush their legislative measures through Parliament without giving Canadians and their MPs a chance to examine those measures closely.

Writing about the Trojan Horse budget bill, conservative commentator Andrew Coyne said that there was something quite alarming about Parliament being obliged to rubber-stamp the government's whole legislative agenda at one go.

Alarming is right. This bill is reprehensible, and the NDP will not support it.

[*English*]

The Conservatives continue to claim that their budget is about job creation. However, like Bill C-38, Bill C-45 is lacking in significant measures to create jobs and stimulate growth in the long term.

Contrary to what my colleagues across the way have just said, tax credits to small business are short term, small in size and will only be available to employers for the 2012 taxation year, meaning they will almost be over by the time Bill C-45 is passed.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has stated, "In total, federal spending cuts could lead to the elimination of over 70,000 full-time equivalent positions". These are both public and private sector losses. Therefore, where is the Canada-wide strategy to create good jobs, while 1.4 million Canadians are still unemployed? It is clear that the austerity plan of the Conservatives is not working. Instead it is a drag on our economy.

In fact, on the very day that this bill was released, the minister suggested a downgrade would be announced in the fall economic update, but despite the growing evidence that their plan is not working, the Conservatives are stubbornly refusing to change the course.

At a time when most Canadian businesses need to increase innovation and productivity to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy, support to small business research and development, a driving force in innovation and productivity, has been cut.

In its prebudget consultation brief, BIOTECanada wrote:

Leading industrialized countries including Australia and France have recognized the spin-off benefits of investing in R&D tax credits and have recently made significant improvements to their respective programs. In order to ensure Canada retains a competitive edge in attracting foreign direct investment and growing domestic research and development capacity, the SR&ED program should be examined with an eye to ensuring that it remains a global leader.

Where is the minister's plan to make the SR&ED program a global leader? We are not seeing it.

At a time when countries around the world are recognizing that environmental sustainability and economic growth must go together, the Conservatives continue to barrel down the path of environmental deregulation without consultation.

In response to this spring's budget bill, Jessica Clogg of West Coast Environmental Law wrote:

By gutting Canada's long-standing environmental laws, the budget bill gives big oil and gas companies what they've been asking for—fewer environmental safeguards so they can push through resource megaprojects with little regard to environmental damage...It is Canadians and our children who will pay the cost.

● (1330)

The Conservatives have clearly not learned their lesson on the environment and, instead, are further weakening our ability to protect the environment and ensure sustainable development for future generations. Bill C-45 completely guts the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Thousands of waterways will be left without protection, which will mean fewer environmental reviews by Transport Canada. In fact, Bill C-45 removes the words "water protection" from the name of the bill. It is now about "navigation protection".

Eriel Deranger of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation has said:

Government Orders

This is unacceptable. They have made a unilateral decision to remove the protection of waterways without adequate consultation with First Nations and communities that rely on river systems for navigation and cultural practices protected under treaty.

Where is the plan to build a sustainable economy that will keep Canada competitive in the 21st century? This bill shows just how out of touch Conservatives are with the needs and goals of Canadians. Unfortunately for Canadians, the Conservatives want to convince us that massive omnibus budget bills and an increasing lack of consultation and decreasing government transparency are apparently the new normal.

I just returned from monitoring the elections in Ukraine. Ukrainians have faced numerous challenges and roadblocks when it comes to democracy and yet they keep fighting hard to exercise their democratic rights. In our country, we have a proud democratic tradition and yet we have a government that continues to undermine Parliament and the rights of Canadians with undemocratic bills. I find it particularly striking that I am standing in the House today debating an omnibus budget bill that continues on the disturbing Conservative trend of increasing the concentration of power and reducing government accountability.

• (1335)

[Translation]

Bill C-45 would eliminate a number of commissions, giving the ministers more power to make decisions without consultation or accountability.

Last spring, the NDP organized public consultations on the implementation of the Trojan Horse budget bill. During one of those consultations, Matthew Carroll of Leadnow said that Canadians want effective participatory democracy.

New Democrats will always be proud to stand up for transparency and accountability. They will always stand up for environmental protection. Canadians deserve a government that listens to the concerns of its people.

Last spring, the Conservatives used their Trojan Horse budget implementation bill to attack old age security, employment insurance and provincial health transfers. The Conservatives are transporting us back to the stone age in terms of environmental regulation.

This bill shows that the Conservatives did not listen to Canadians who were outraged by Bill C-38.

[English]

While Canadians want us to take action to protect our environment and grow a sustainable economy for the future, the Conservatives are focused on gutting environmental protection. While Canadians want increased transparency from their government, Conservatives are continuing to keep Canadians in the dark and make changes to laws without consultation.

New Democrats will oppose budget 2012 and its implementation bills unless amended to focus on the priorities of Canadians: creating good quality jobs, protecting our environment, strengthening our health care system, protecting retirement security for all and ensuring open and transparent government. Canadians deserve better.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in what the member had to say. She is a very kind and considerate member of Parliament. We do not always agree on issues, but disagreeing on issues of importance is hardly a crime.

One of the things the member brought up a number of times was the gutting of environmental regulations. I represent a large portion of rural Ontario, not an urban Toronto riding. A number of small municipalities, farmers and producers, for example, have to deal with overlapping regulations that cost a lot of money and really hurt rural economies in places like northern Ontario, eastern Ontario and, in fact, throughout the country. One thing the government has sought to do, because we have listened to municipal leaders, farmers and rural leaders, is get to a position of one project-one approval. That is a sensible position. The standards are identical for one project-one approval.

I would like very much for the member to speak to this. Does she believe in private property ownership rights and, if so, does she support the idea of one project-one approval?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his very kind words about me. Respect for our colleagues across the House is so important.

Many Canadians own their own homes and their own property. Of course we respect their rights with respect to their property. What Canadians expect for this and for future generations is that we are good stewards of our land, air and water. When we remove 27 of the 37 designated Canadian heritage rivers so they will no longer be subject to environmental protection and regulation, Canadians are concerned about that. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, these are fundamental to our survival as a country and as a species. Canadians understand we need strong environmental protection, not gutted environmental protection, in order to defend the interests of Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the member's closing comments. Along with environmental research, the Environmental Lakes Area research station will now be closed under this administration.

Canadians as a whole recognize the importance of fresh water and research so we can maintain quality fresh water, which will be a wonderful commodity not only today but well into the future. I ultimately argue that the importance of the research station is becoming greater, not diminishing, yet we are seeing the government cut and close the research station.

Would she provide comment on that decision by the government?

Government Orders

• (1340)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, the closing of the Experimental Lakes Area project is one that has deeply troubled so many Canadians. This unique project brought together some of the finest scientific minds and was doing cutting edge research for such a long period of time. This was addressed in the spring budget implementation act. It is part of a growing trend of the government to silence, or layoff or underfund projects that it does not want to hear from.

We just have to look at the weather system, Hurricane Sandy, that has come up through North America over the last few days to see the importance of climate scientists and the kind of research that was done at the Experimental Lakes Area project. This is the kind of cutting edge work we should be investing in and not silencing.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the constituents of Northumberland—Quinte West to participate in the debate about the second budget bill, Bill C-45, our jobs and growth act, 2012, and how it would benefit all Canadians.

Our government's goal through the bill is to strengthen the financial security of Canadian workers and families to aid in job creation and long-term prosperity from coast to coast to coast.

Our jobs and growth act, 2012 would provide new support for families through improvements to the registered disability savings plan. This measure was designed to help ensure the long-term financial security of children with severe disabilities. To provide greater access to registered disability savings for small withdrawals, the 10-year-rule measure replaces the requirement to repay any Canada disability savings grants or Canada disability savings bonds paid into the plan in the 10 years preceding a withdrawal, with a requirement to pay these back at a fixed ratio to the amount withdrawn.

This will provide greater flexibility for parents who save in registered education savings plans for children with disabilities. This measure allows an investment income earned in an RESP to be transferred on a rollover basis to an RDSP, if the plans share a common beneficiary. This measure ensures that children with severe disabilities will be given the financial security that necessitates their daily lives into adulthood.

Our jobs and growth act, 2012 would ensure fairness to hard-working employees through taxable benefits from group sickness or accident insurance plans.

When an employer contributes an amount to a group sickness or accident insurance plan in respect of an employee, a taxable benefit is not currently realized by that employee. To encourage fair and neutral tax treatment for beneficiaries under group sickness or accident insurance plans, our government is proposing that the amount of the employer's contributions be a taxable benefit for the employee. Our jobs and growth act, 2012 proposes that the amount of an employer's contributions to a sickness or accident insurance plan is a taxable benefit and must be included in a person's income for the year in which the contributions are made.

Our jobs and growth act, 2012 would help small businesses grow and flourish through the small business hiring tax credit.

Our government is amending the Employment Insurance Act in order to extend the hiring credit for small businesses. Entrepreneurs and small businesses truly are the engine of our economy. The hiring credit for small businesses provides a credit of up to \$1,000 against any potential increases in a firm's EI premiums from one year to the next. In the past this credit provided needed relief to small businesses by helping defray the costs of hiring new workers and allowing them to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities as the economy continues to recover amid continuing global economic uncertainty. The extension of this measure continues our government's strong record of support for small businesses, which includes help for entrepreneurs, a reduction in red tape and lower taxes for those businesses that stimulate our economy.

Our jobs and growth act, 2012 would provide support for seniors through retirement compensation arrangements, or RCAs. This measure would amend the Income Tax Act to allow a taxpayer under certain conditions to split his or her income from a retirement compensation arrangement with his or her spouse or common law partner.

Our government, through the jobs and growth act, 2012, also proposes to introduce new anti-avoidance rules to prevent the use of schemes that seek to take advantage of the features of the RCA rules to obtain unintended tax benefits. These rules will be similar to the existing rules for registered retirement savings plans, RRSPs, registered retirement income funds, RRIFs, and tax-free savings accounts, commonly known as TFSAs. The amendments to the retirement compensation arrangements would increase accountability and benefit seniors when they need it most.

• (1345)

Our jobs and growth act, 2012 would expand opportunities for aboriginal peoples to participate more fully in the economy. Maintaining the current designation provisions of the Indian Act would perpetuate the slow and cumbersome process that impedes economic development benefiting first nations on reserves. It would also undermine first nations governance while incurring unnecessary costs to Canada and first nations.

Reducing the timeframe for processing designation would align with the objectives of the 2009 federal framework for aboriginal economic development to enhance the value of aboriginal assets and remove impediments to developing the land and natural resource base on reserves. The amendments would also build on our government's commitment to ensure that aboriginal people benefit from economic development by streamlining land-related approval processes.

Government Orders

The government recognizes the contribution that aboriginal peoples can make to the labour force as the youngest and fastest-growing segment of the nation's population. Equipping first nations people with the skills and opportunities they need to fully participate in the economy is a priority both for this government and for first nation peoples. We have a plan to invest in first nation education on reserve, including early literacy programming and other supports and services to first nation schools and students.

Further, to the school programs, we propose school renovations on reserve, which would provide first nation youth with better learning environments. Our government is also committing to the introduction of a first nations education act and to working with willing partners to establish the structures and standards needed to support strong and accountable educational systems on reserve.

When it comes to job creation for first nations, our government will improve the incentives of the on-reserve income assistance program, while encouraging those who can work to access training that would improve their prospects for employment. Furthermore, our government would renew the urban aboriginal strategy to improve economic opportunities for aboriginal peoples living in urban centres.

I am content with the progress that has been made and the work that will continue to be done to balance the budget. In the past two years, we have already cut the deficit in half by ending our targeted and temporary stimulus as planned and by controlling growth and spending. Economic action plan 2012 would build on these efforts by implementing modern restraint in government spending and by ensuring that internal operations of the government are leaner and more efficient. In fact, our government is returning to balanced budgets, while continuing sustainable increases in transfers for health, education and social programs.

Going forward, I am proud to support the second budget bill, Bill C-45, for the benefits it would provide to the constituents of Northumberland—Quinte West and to Canadians across our great country.

I am prepared to answer any questions that may be posed.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the Conservatives talk about the budget. They often talk about their economic record, but they seem to have a selective memory when it comes to the economy. They often forget to mention that we currently have the largest deficit in the history of Canada because of the Conservative Party. We also have the largest trade deficit in the history of Canada. That is another fact that the government seems to overlook fairly often. In addition, there are 300,000 fewer manufacturing jobs than there were before the recession. The Conservatives seem to forget about all these facts in their speeches.

Can the member talk about these very real facts? Are there any solutions?

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, it is important at this stage to remind my hon. friend that since the depths of the recession we have

created 820,000 net new jobs, one of the best records in the OECD. What my friend also forgets to mention is that *Forbes* magazine says that Canada is one of the best countries, if not the best country in the world, in which to invest.

He also needs to realize that we are not just talking about investment. We have been doing the things that a country must do to meet the challenges of the future. I admit we do still have too many people out of work and that is why this budget actually attacks that. How does it do it? It does it by making sure that small businesses continue to receive Government of Canada support by lowering their taxes and encouraging the hiring of new employees, as I mentioned in my speech, the \$1,000 tax credit for hiring. This is huge in Northumberland—Quinte West and the member needs to know that this has received approval from almost every organization that represents small businesses as well as the Northumberland Manufacturers' Association.

The member quite rightly says that there are too many people out of work. We agree with that. That is what this budget does. It encourages people to find work and encourages small businesses to hire more people.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for his speech. As with other Conservatives, he spends a lot of his time boasting about assistance for small business while, in fact, the opposite is the case.

It is true that there is a credit related to EI worth \$205 million per year, but what he totally forgets to say is that the Conservatives are bringing in an increase in EI premiums as of January 1 next year worth \$410 million. On a net basis, far from reducing the taxes of small businesses, Conservatives are increasing those taxes to the tune of \$205 million based on higher EI premiums, which is a direct tax on jobs.

Is the member in love with higher taxes? How can he support this tax raising bill?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, what I am in love with are the small businesses in Canada, especially in Northumberland—Quinte West, that are telling me and this government how proud they are that we are supporting them. We have lowered their taxes. I just mentioned the \$1,000 tax benefit for hiring new employees.

However, what I failed also to mention, because of time constraints in this place, is what the continued support of our CFDCs and the eastern Ontario development program have done for small businesses by taking people who want start-up money and giving them a hand up, and by helping them organize their ideas into a presentable package so that they can take it to the bank and present a business plan. This is what people value, help for small businesses and help for start-up businesses.

Government Orders

What the member also forgot to mention when he was talking about small businesses was the fact that under this government, under the EI program, small businesses, especially those who are single entrepreneurs, now have the benefit of EI should they become pregnant. We just cannot single out one small thing we have done and put a dollar tag on it. We have done many things and when all those dollar tags are put on, as I mentioned, it far outweighs any kind of negativity.

This government supports small businesses. We have since 2006 and we will continue to do that.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion: “That notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, clauses 210 to 218 related to the Judges Act be removed from Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, and do compose Bill C-47; that Bill C-47 be entitled an Act to amend the Judges Act; that Bill C-47 be deemed read a first time and be printed; that the order for second reading of said bill provide for the referral to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights; that Bill C-45 retain the status on the order paper that it had prior to the adoption of this order; that Bill C-45 be reprinted, as amended; and that the law clerk and parliamentary counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary to give effect to this motion.”

This measure, which deals with the changes to the government's implementation of the Judicial Compensation and Benefits Commission's recommendations, among other things, deserves full consideration. The government proposed that parts of the bill be referred to committee but not be amended or voted upon separately. The motion solves this problem by creating a separate bill so that this important issue can be thoroughly examined and debated.

I am convinced that, in respect for the independence of our judiciary, I will not have any problem getting the unanimous consent of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker: There is no unanimous consent.

[*English*]

Resuming debate. With three minutes remaining in government orders, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to oppose Bill C-45, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012, and other measures.

We oppose budget 2012 and its implementation bill unless it is amended to focus on the priorities of Canadians: creating good quality jobs; protecting our environment; strengthening our health

care system; protecting retirement security for all; and ensuring open and transparent government.

On March 29, the Minister of Finance presented Bill C-38, budget 2012, that recklessly cut services Canadians rely on, including old age security, health care transfers to the provinces and environmental assessment.

Despite the government's claims of job creation, it is also suggested that these cuts would lead to 19,200 job losses in the public sector.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has estimated that the budget would cost 43,000 Canadians their jobs. Combined with the previous rounds of cuts, the PBO projects a total job loss of 102,000 jobs.

Not only did the budget gut services to Canadians, its omnibus nature was an attack on transparency and democracy. The Trojan Horse budget bill outraged Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

I personally received large numbers of emails from constituents of Scarborough—Rouge River who were angry about the undemocratic processes and the concealed method the government used to spend their tax dollars. By introducing yet another massive omnibus bill, the Conservative government continues to keep Canadians in the dark by ramming it through Parliament without allowing a transparent, open process of consultation.

By avoiding a thorough study of their second 400-plus page budget implementation bill and its implications, the Conservatives certainly have not learned their lesson. The official opposition, the New Democrats, will not let them quietly pass their new omnibus legislation. Canadians deserve better.

The massive omnibus bill makes amendments to a wide range of acts. Over 70 different pieces of legislation are being changed. It further erodes government transparency and accountability by dismantling a series of commissions and giving more power to the ministers, another recurring theme from the government.

Ironically titled the “jobs and growth act”, Bill C-45 completely lacks measures to create jobs and stimulate growth in the long term for Canadians. Actually, we are seeing more and more cuts to jobs. As I mentioned earlier, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that over 102,000 jobs will be lost because of this budget—

• (1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time for government orders has expired. The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River will have seven minutes remaining when this matter returns before the House.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois, along with thousands of other individuals, demonstrated last weekend in Thetford Mines, in front of the office of the Minister of Industry, the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, to condemn employment insurance reforms.

The government is ravaging the employment insurance system, and we must stand in solidarity with workers and the unemployed. This is not the government's money; this money belongs to workers and employers.

During this demonstration organized by Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi, the participants condemned the passage of Bill C-38, which amended the employment insurance rules. These changes will affect not only workers—especially seasonal workers—but also employers, who could lose their experienced employees. These changes tighten the eligibility rules and force claimants to accept jobs further from home and at lower pay.

The government cannot ignore the thousands of people who spoke out not only in Thetford Mines, but also in the Gaspé and elsewhere. And this is only the beginning.

* * *

*[English]***SAULT STE. MARIE**

Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, jobs, growth and long-term prosperity are all evident in Sault Ste. Marie. I am pleased to speak today about a recent survey published in *The Financial Post* entitled, “Communities in Boom: Canada's Top Entrepreneurial Cities”. The survey was conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and it ranked my riding of Sault Ste. Marie second in Ontario and 23rd in the country. The survey, based on entrepreneurial rankings, studied things such as business-hiring growth, overall state of business, industry diversity and life satisfaction.

In the last year, Sault Ste. Marie has climbed in its entrepreneurial ranking from 49th to 23rd in Canada, one of the biggest increases in the “Communities in Boom” rankings. The economic health and growth of a community correlates with the life satisfaction of those who live and work there. In the study, Sault Ste. Marie scored exceptionally high in the life satisfaction component.

Saultites are proud of their city, and I am extremely honoured to represent them here today.

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SUPERSTORM SANDY

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the advance of superstorm Sandy through the United States and into Canada, our thoughts and prayers go to the communities being battered by this storm and to the families of victims. Unfortunately, the deadly effects of superstorm Sandy have reached into Toronto. Tens of thousands lost power, trees were knocked down, property

was damaged and tragically, a woman was killed last night by flying debris in a commercial plaza at Keele and St. Clair West in my riding of York South—Weston. On behalf of this place, I would like to offer our sincerest condolences to the family and friends of this victim.

As well, I would like to pay tribute to all the front-line responders: our police, firefighters, paramedics, hydro workers, municipal employees and health care professionals, all of whom are members of unions, who worked through the night to keep our communities safe and secure. On behalf of my colleagues in the NDP official opposition and I, I would like to say a big thanks for their work.

* * *

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to recognize a local hero, Deputy Chief Paul Agar, who recently retired after 45 years of loyal and dedicated service to our community.

During his time with the Grand Valley and District Fire Department, Deputy Chief Agar proudly served his time as a volunteer, chief and deputy chief, while also becoming a mentor to fellow firefighters. He always gave his time unconditionally to protect the community wherever there was a fire call. His outstanding leadership and commitment to volunteer firefighting has set a wonderful example for everyone to follow. This is underscored by the fact that his family is also involved in firefighting, including his wife Carol, his son Mike and his daughter Deborah.

On behalf of the residents of Dufferin—Caledon, I sincerely congratulate Deputy Chief Paul Agar on 45 years of exemplary community service and I wish him all the very best in his retirement.

* * *

● (1405)

EID AL-ADHA

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the occasion of the Association of Progressive Muslims of Canada's 18th annual Eid al-Adha dinner this evening. Marking the occasion of the Hajj, Eid is a time when Muslims in Canada and around the world take time to consider the most disadvantaged members of society, to donate to charities and to share a meal with the less-advantaged members of their community. It is also an occasion for Canadians of different backgrounds to see first hand the rich cultural and religious mosaic that is one of the defining features of Canada.

I would also like to thank Mobeen Khaja, president of the Association of Progressive Muslims, whose work in promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue has contributed to the tolerance, respect and mutual understanding that are the cornerstones of the society we are privileged to be part of.

Statements by Members

I look forward to attending this year's dinner and wish everyone a very happy Eid al-Adha. *Eid Mubarak*.

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HOMECOMING CELEBRATION

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on June 4, I rose in this House and asked all Canadians to join me in a prayer for Lydia Herrle, a 13-year-old who was severely injured by a garbage truck while exiting her school bus.

It is with joy that I tell this House that our prayers have been answered. On October 9, Lydia returned home. She remains fragile and easily overwhelmed and still faces a difficult journey of recovery. Prayers are still needed and appreciated.

On November 1, a homecoming celebration will be held, and thousands of tattered green ribbons will greet her. These ribbons have lined our streets all summer on trees, mailboxes, vehicles and fence posts. The elements have taken their toll on them, but I share the Herrle's gratitude to our community: "These tattered ribbons renew our hope and faith, and have regularly reminded us that we do not stand alone".

My heart will be with Lydia and her family as they celebrate. As Lydia said: "I am excited for the green ribbon party".

I thank Canada for praying for Lydia.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's telecommunications industry is booming. It is helping businesses become more competitive and giving people better ways to communicate. However, there is a downside to the industry too.

People I consulted told me that they were upset about telecommunications towers going up near their homes since they were never consulted. In Châteauguay and Mercier, a developer did not consult the municipalities at all, nor did it check their development plans before building towers in residential areas. When I consulted more widely, I received letters from people across Canada who were having the same problems in their regions.

I therefore introduced Bill C-429 to create stricter guidelines for telecommunications antenna development. I believe that, at the very least, people and local governments should be consulted before any antenna development projects go ahead. The first hour of debate will take place this Friday. I hope that all members will support my balanced bill, which addresses public concerns without hindering the development of the industry.

* * *

[*English*]

STUDENT TRIP

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a special group of students in Ottawa today. They are participating in a program I call a Capital Experience. Student leaders from each of the seven high schools

in my riding come to Ottawa for three days to learn about career opportunities in public life.

They have visited Parliament, the South Korean embassy, Amnesty International, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the press gallery, the University of Ottawa and Summa Strategies.

I wish to thank those who have shared their time with these students and the businesses and service clubs who sponsored them.

Today I welcome to Parliament: Emma Drake and Iain Sullivan from Brock; Kelcey Cathcart and Kelsey Numan from Crestwood; Casey Barber and Raine Storey from Fenelon Falls; George Charlebois and Laura Pottier from Haliburton; Joey DeCunha and Jessica Sutton from I.E. Weldon; Amy Doiron and Eleanore Roundsky from L.C.V.I.; Megan O'Neill and Jessica Weitz from St. Thomas Aquinas; and Julie Hockridge from Apsley.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing these young people all the best as they make decisions regarding their future careers.

* * *

● (1410)

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is an industry in Canada that boasts over \$65 billion in sales and that employs more than one million employees. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is one million employees.

As the fourth-largest employer in Canada, with more than 80,000 locations, the restaurant industry is one of the three top job creators in our country. The over 18 million restaurant visits happening each day in Canada amount to more than \$6.5 billion a year.

The restaurant industry is a contributor to the social and economic fabric of Canadian communities, and it donates over \$277 million in charitable contributions each year. As a 40-year-plus restaurateur myself, I am proud to share the success story of this industry.

It is the first employer of many of our youth, the trendsetter for customer services and the sponsor of many youth sports teams. It is all this and great food and fun too.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, members of my family, like so many Canadians, maintain close ties with certain restaurateurs. My seven-year-old son thinks that a box of Timbits is a nice reward for working hard at his judo club in La Pocatière. When my wife and I have a rare evening alone, we often go out to one of the fine restaurants in Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup that offer delicious, specialized cuisines.

Statements by Members

We have restaurant owners to thank for the many comforts and the joy of discovery that they provide. The thousands of restaurants offering Canadian, Irish, Asian, North African and many other cuisines have made our cities and towns so much richer and more attractive. And now the restaurant industry is moving fully into the 21st century. For instance, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association just launched the “Conserve” program to help the industry improve its energy use and waste management practices.

To everyone who works hard to keep us fed, from early in the morning until late at night and on weekends, on behalf of all members of the House, please accept our sincerest gratitude.

* * *

[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with the Navy League of Canada in honouring six Royal Canadian Navy and naval reserve units for acts of heroism and exceptional service. The Royal Canadian Navy protects Canada's coastlines and waterways and conducts operations in oceans around the world.

Canadians remember the important role our navy played in the protection of the citizens of Libya just a year ago. HMCS *Charlottetown* was fired upon in combat for the first time since the Korean war. Today, HMCS *Regina* is continuing the anti-terrorism operation in the Arabian Sea.

At home, our navy has been hard at work protecting Canadians. The Royal Canadian Navy has assisted communities hit with floods, participated in counter-narcotics operations and participated in Operation Nanook.

Canada is very proud of its navy, its history, its accomplishments and, most importantly, its members. True to its motto “ready, aye, ready”, our sailors are always ready to defend Canada and proudly safeguard our interests and values no matter where they are in the world.

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KACEY LYNN FUND

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the annual Kacey Lynn Halloween dance was held in my riding. The story of the Kacey Lynn fund is one of great inspiration.

Kacey Lynn was a 5-year-old girl who battled cancer for four and a half years. The financial hardship this illness placed on her family brought the attention of the community to the need for a program to help with families in similar situations.

In 1995, a trust fund was established in Kacey-Lynn's name to assist her family and other families in Welland, Port Colborne and Pelham. This program has expanded and now assists families with sick or disabled children in all other areas of the Niagara region through the HOPE Centre. Funds for the program are made possible through local fundraisers held during the year.

The Kacey Lynn committee is also moving in other directions through its assistance for prevention and recreational programs for well children.

The Kacey Lynn fund is a great example of the amazing things communities can accomplish when they come together. I would like to recognize them today and thank all the volunteers for their years of hard work, especially Mary and Jim Dolan, for their tireless efforts since its inception.

* * *

VANDALISM

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn a senseless act of violence in my riding of Brampton—Springdale. Early last Friday morning the Brampton fire department responded to an alarm at the Coptic Orthodox Christian Church of Archangel Michael and St. Tekla. A fire bomb was thrown through a window of the church basement. This has damaged floors, walls and furniture and there is further damage from the excessive smoke.

This was a shameless act of bigotry that must be unequivocally condemned. Freedom of assembly and freedom of religion are fundamental values that make Canada a strong and free nation.

I ask that all hon. members join me today in standing with the Coptic Orthodox Christian community in Brampton and all those affected by this disgusting act of vandalism. May those who perpetrated this shameful act be brought to justice.

* * *

● (1415)

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to commemorate the Navy League of Canada's Navy Appreciation Day.

Our Royal Canadian Navy has a rich and storied history. During World War I, our navy valiantly defended North American coastlines from our adversaries. The second world war saw the Royal Canadian Navy become the third largest in the world, as it made major contributions to the Battle of the Atlantic. Throughout the war our sailors accomplished amazing feats, sinking 27 U-boats, sinking or capturing 42 enemy ships and facilitating over 25,000 merchant crossings.

Throughout the Korean War, the Balkan conflict and most recently the Libyan conflict and anti-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia, the RCN has diligently contributed to the safety of Canadians, our allies and, indeed, the entire world.

Today, I join the Navy League of Canada and Canadians around the country in expressing my deepest gratitude for our men and women of the RCN for their service and sacrifice.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

2014 WINTER OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, cold weather will soon be setting in and this reminds us that our remarkable Canadian athletes will be participating in the 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi, Russia, in less than 500 days.

[English]

Canadians will once again be going for gold against the best in the world. They deserve our country's full support and encouragement.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast are already familiar with the famous HBC Olympic mittens worn to show support for our amazing athletes in Vancouver, West Vancouver and Whistler.

Today, in recognition and support for our Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls training for Sochi, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the next generation of HBC Canadian Olympic red mittens that will be helping Canadians show their Sochi stripes in support of our amazing Olympic and Paralympic winter athletes during the World Cup season and right up to Sochi 2014.

Go, Canada, go.

* * *

MEMBER FOR LETHBRIDGE

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since returning from the summer session, Conservative MPs have been sullyng this House with fabricated policies and outright untruths.

The member for Lethbridge is the perfect example. Instead of representing his constituents in this House, he knowingly aids his Ottawa bosses in propagating these falsehoods.

Canadians have become adept at recognizing when their tax dollars are being misused. When they see a member standing in this House to repeat statements they know are untrue, Canadians see right through it.

The message is simple: the member thinks it is more important to stand and attack the NDP on behalf of his Ottawa bosses than represent his constituents. This misguided regurgitation of falsehoods by the Conservatives is nothing short of an embarrassment.

I encourage the next speaker to find the courage to stand up and speak for her riding, do what is right for her constituents, what is right for this House and what is right for them.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as October draws to a close, Halloween is just around the corner. Tomorrow, children in my riding and across Canada will put on their finest costumes, dressing up as princesses, superheroes and evil villains in hopes of getting delicious candy and treats.

Unfortunately, the NDP wants to impose one of the spookiest things of all, an evil \$21 billion carbon tax listed in black and white

on page four of its party platform, a carbon tax that would hurt Canadian families and raise the cost of celebrating Halloween.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1420)

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for Mississauga South.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we will not support the NDP's sneaky tax scheme that will increase the cost of everything, including candy, costumes and pumpkins.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that he anticipated lower growth for the Canadian economy to the tune of \$22 billion. He said that the Conservatives' decision to get rid of measures that support economic stimulus and job creation would mean at least 125,000 fewer jobs for the Canadian economy.

A few hours later, the Minister of Finance was forced to lower his own estimates.

Why is the Prime Minister getting rid of the economic stimulus measures and sacrificing 125,000 jobs?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when this government came forward with thoughtful ideas to help Canada's economic action plan, the NDP voted against them. When we came forward with money for municipalities, the NDP voted against it. When we came forward with investments for affordable housing, the NDP voted against them. Despite the NDP voting against all of this, the measures have helped create more than 800,000 net new jobs.

The job is not done. This government remains focused on this year's economic action plan to create even more jobs, more hope and more opportunities.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Minister of State (Finance) said, "our economic projections are on track". Simultaneously outside the House, the Minister of Finance was forced to admit that he had to downgrade the same economic projections.

Where is their applause now?

Who is telling the truth, the Minister of State (Finance) when he says that everything is on track or the finance minister when he admits that the Conservative economic plan has gone off the rails?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it will not come as any surprise to the leader of the NDP that I totally reject the premise of that question.

Oral Questions

Let us look at the reality. We have seen economic growth month after month, we have seen more jobs, more hope and more opportunity created because of the thoughtful policies pursued by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of State (Finance), who have done an extraordinary job. We have seen, because of the fiscal discipline exercised by this government, a gradual return to balanced budgets and the creation of more jobs to help Canadians who are looking for work.

The job is not done. We remain focused on economic growth so that every single Canadian looking for work can find a job.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the recession hit very hard, particularly among young people. Four years after the 2008 crisis, Canada's youth unemployment rate is at 15%.

The Certified General Accountants Association of Canada is reporting that even among those who find jobs, one out of four university graduates is underemployed. The CGAs explain that this systematic underemployment results in loss of revenue, health problems, and that, of course, it has a negative impact on economic growth.

Why not give young people a chance to contribute to Canada's economy through good jobs and real careers?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government will not be satisfied until every single Canadian who is looking for work has employment. That is why we have come forward with initiatives to support small business, we have come forward with initiatives to reduce taxes, we have come forward with initiatives on infrastructure. These initiatives, as part of our economic action plan, have helped create more than 800,000 net new jobs.

Our work is not done. We remain focused on economic action that is seeing real results. Canada's economy will grow by more than any other G7 country, and every single time we come forward with a measure to support job creation, the NDP stands in its place and votes against it. All it wants is a big \$20 billion carbon tax.

* * *

POVERTY

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives only wish they had an ounce of Mr. Page's credibility. The report from the PBO makes it clear that the Conservative approach to the economy will cost 125,000 jobs. That is bad enough, but adding to that is today's report from Food Banks Canada, which shows that the number of families needing help is up 31% over pre-recession levels. The picture is even worse.

Does the government have any response to hunger, other than tax cuts for its big business friends?

● (1425)

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the question about the economy because it gives me an opportunity to clarify the record.

Despite what the opposition would have us believe, the PBO report actually says some good things about our job market. It states: "Canada's labour market is currently significantly outperforming some countries with struggling economies (e.g., the U.S., and the Euro area) and Canada also scores above average among the G7 and OECD countries".

Just like the minister said earlier, 820,000 net new jobs is the best job growth record in the G7. We are going to continue—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. The Conservatives' budget did not help the 880,000 Canadians using food banks. That is what we voted against on this side of the House.

Conservative cuts in EI did not help anyone either. Nor did a budget bill that raids vacation pay and health insurance.

Why will the government not act to help the hundreds of thousands of Canadians living in poverty? Why are these Canadians being left behind by the government?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing. We are acting to help those who are struggling, because our heart goes out to them. The difference between us and the NDP is we are acting.

In fact, let us take a look at the record. We brought in the working income tax benefit and increased it. That helps over one million people get over the welfare wall. We brought in the largest increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our poorest of seniors, the largest increase in a generation. We have also put in programs to help disadvantaged youth get ready for a job, get the job, to help them get over that welfare wall.

Once in a while, it would be nice if the NDP supported us in those efforts.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal 2005 budget increased CRA's funding by \$30 million to crack down on international tax havens. A recent ATIP of CRA records shows us that this \$30 million investment allowed the government to collect an additional \$2.5 billion that would have been lost to international tax havens.

Therefore, why are the Conservatives cutting the budget of CRA? Why are the Conservatives being hard on CRA and soft on tax evasion?

Oral Questions

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, different from the Liberal Party, when we are government, the federal government presents one budget a year, not as many as three budgets that were presented when the Liberals were in power.

The reality is we have taken a thoughtful approach to balance—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs has the floor.

Hon. John Baird: Mr. Speaker, we have taken the thoughtful approach to find efficiencies within government spending so we can return to balanced budgets—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs has the floor.

Hon. John Baird: Mr. Speaker, we have taken a thoughtful approach to find efficiencies to balance the budget.

What we will not do is return to the days when the Liberals were in power, when they gutted health care and gutted funding for our provinces and municipalities.

I can remember the leader of the Liberal Party criticizing the Liberal Party when he was premier of Ontario. We will not go back to those dark days when the Liberals cut health care.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians remember the fact that those were balanced Liberal budgets.

[*Translation*]

When the Liberals increased the Canada Revenue Agency's funding by \$30 million, this allowed the government to collect an additional \$2.5 billion.

With this kind of return on investment, why are the Conservatives making cuts to the agency?

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals come into the House day after day, asking for more government spending, more taxes and more debt. This government is taking a thoughtful approach to find efficiencies within government and to return Canada to a surplus. We have one of the best—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs has the floor. It is eating up a lot of time that I have to keep giving him the floor back because of the interruptions. I hope we do not have to find that time somewhere else.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. John Baird: Mr. Speaker, this government has one of the best fiscal records in the developed world because of the strong leadership and the fiscal discipline. More jobs are being created, more hope, more opportunity. We are on the right track and we are going to continue to stay focused on job creation.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would be great if the government would start focusing on tax collection from those who are putting their money into offshore tax havens.

The reality is Australia is doing a better job than the Conservative government in terms of cracking down on tax evasion. It created Project Wickenby to fight the illegal use of tax havens. It has collected hundreds of millions of dollars of lost revenues as a result. It has charged 67 people and convicted 26.

Why will the government not follow the Australian government's lead and actually crack down on tax evaders who use these tax havens?

• (1430)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government and the Minister of National Revenue have done an extraordinarily good job in ensuring that every Canadian pays his or her fair share, and that is tremendously important. Good, honest, hard-working taxpayers pay their fair share and they expect all Canadians to do so. That is exactly what the very talented and capable Minister of National Revenue and her team are doing for this great country.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, members opposite must be getting dizzy from all the spin around their talking points on the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

First, they claimed that the changes had nothing to do with environment. They were just reducing red tape for cottagers. However, even Conservatives knew that this law actually did have a role in environmental protection, although they did try to deny it by rewriting websites and history.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance changed his tune again and said that these changes were actually about austerity.

What is the real answer here? Why is the government gutting environmental protection from this bill?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for years, provinces and municipalities have asked us to cut the red tape associated with the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The act has created a bureaucratic black hole, holding up simple projects that do not impede navigation.

Under our plan, only projects likely to offset navigation require approval to changes about navigation.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Red tape is interesting answer, Mr. Speaker.

Oral Questions

Last night the truth was exposed because these changes were actually politically driven. Eighty-nine per cent of the protected lakes and rivers are found in Conservative ridings. Therefore, whoever decided what bodies of water were protected sure seemed to have a riding map handy.

Canadians deserve better than Conservative preferential treatment of their friends. Why are the Conservatives making environmental protection a privilege of the few?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. It said:

The changes announced today will allow local governments to spend less time processing paperwork for small, low-risk public works projects by removing redundancies, red tape and project delays that result in higher costs for property tax payers.

That is about navigation. We are doing the right thing.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Navigable Waters Protection Act protects the environment. Dismantling the act will affect 99.7% of Canada's lakes. Of the 97 remaining lakes that will be protected, only 89% are in Conservative ridings. What are the chances of that? The protection of natural spaces should not be reserved for millionaires with cottages in the President of the Treasury Board's riding.

How can the Conservatives justify these Duplessis-style environmental protection policies?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe my ears. To my knowledge, the St. Lawrence River flows near Vaudreuil. It is on the list of waters. The municipalities and the provinces have been calling for these measures for years. We have been asked for inquiries and studies of things that did not have to be considered under the Navigable Waters Protection Act. These changes will affect navigation, period. We are doing the right thing. We believe it is important to help businesses and municipalities cut costs and by cutting red tape.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, some of the Conservatives' changes are very partisan. The Conservatives' millionaire friends will be able to continue enjoying their view of the lake, but workers and middle-class families will not. That is extremely unfair. It is ridiculous that only 97 lakes in Canada will be protected if their mammoth bill is passed. More ridiculous still, only four of the protected lakes are in Quebec. All Canadians enjoy outdoor activities involving lakes and rivers.

Why are the Conservatives refusing to protect lakes? Why refuse to protect Canada's loveliest outdoor ice rinks?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will quote the Federation of Canadian Municipalities:

Municipal leaders have consistently called for common sense reforms in Ottawa that deliver better results for Canadians. We look forward to working with the federal

government to turn the reforms announced today into a strong, sensible action plan that strengthens our communities, and protects our waterways and the environment.

We are working on navigable waters, and we are talking about navigation. That is what we are doing.

• (1435)

[*English*]

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only are Quebec waters losing protection, but B.C.'s lakes and rivers are an afterthought to the Conservatives. Only 15 lakes in B.C., most of them in the interior, remain protected, while not a single river on Vancouver Island will stay under federal jurisdiction.

The Cowichan, a Canadian heritage river and one of the finest steelhead fishing areas in B.C., did not get a mention in the Conservative budget. The same with the Campbell River and the Bella Coola.

Why are Conservatives allowing so many important B.C. lakes and rivers to be put at risk?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Canadian Construction Association, "This new legislation will certainly help construction companies better predict their own requirements on future construction projects". That is about navigation. That is not about construction. That is about what we are saying. We want to help the country develop projects, not for small rivers or small places where we do not have to consider the water.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative omnibus bill has declared open season on Canada's lakes and rivers. Of the 30,000 lakes across this great country, only 97 will be protected, almost all are in Tory ridings and 12 are in the riding of the gazebo king, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. He protected Lake Rosseau that is home to Hollywood millionaires. He protected Lake Joseph where a cottage will set one back a cool \$5 million.

I love Muskoka, but does the minister really think exclusive lakes of millionaires are worthy of more protection than the lakes in the rest of Canada?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, data from the Canadian Hydrographic Service's nautical charts, Statistics Canada data on freight movement and historical data from the Navigable Waters Protection Program was used to create the list.

That is science talking and we will continue working this way.

Oral Questions

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they talk about millionaires bombing around on their Sea-doo's. That is the reason the government is bombing through with this legislation, so the Muskoka minister can cut special environmental deals to his millionaire friends, while the rest of Canada's lake users are told to buzz off. This is an abuse of public trust.

How about we pull out the clauses of the bill? We could set up a new bill perhaps called the "Goldie Hawn property preservation act". Even better, we could call it "protecting millionaire buddies of the Muskoka minister so he can get re-elected act". How about some navigation there?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities applauds the federal government for the introduction of amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

We are doing the right thing. Our transport department is working on navigation. That is what we are doing.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' approach to trade policy is both reckless and irresponsible.

The Canada-China foreign investment promotion and protection agreement does not adequately guarantee reciprocity for Canadian businesses and could force Canadian taxpayers to pay millions of dollars in claims.

The Conservatives are refusing to let Parliament study the agreement even though it will be in force for 31 years.

Will the minister extend the October 31 ratification date?

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remind the NDP that it had three separate occasions in which it could have debated the treaty in the House. It refused to debate it.

This treaty has been very well received by Canadian investors. In fact, it is fully reciprocal. It is designed to protect and promote Canadian investment by setting out a clear set of rules under which investment takes place and a clear set of rules under which dispute resolutions take place.

Canada's policy will continue to support transparency and public access to any dispute resolution under this agreement.

I remind the member that it was this Conservative government that established a formal tabling policy.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the government is able to bring agreements with Jordan and Panama in front of the House, but why not China? The scope and scale of this 31-year investment deal is unprecedented, but it fails to protect Canadian companies and lacks basic reciprocity.

The government controls the House agenda and ratification timing. Will the government House leader schedule the NDP's next opposition day before the deal is ratified?

● (1440)

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP had three opportunities and passed them up.

I would remind the member opposite that this agreement represents a very significant step forward in protecting Canadians when they invest in China. The treaty will give Canadian investors greater confidence when they invest in China, in turn creating jobs and economic growth right here at home.

What Canadians are asking is this. What has the NDP done recently to promote trade and investment? The answer is a mammoth carbon tax that would be sucked out of the pockets of Canadian taxpayers. Shame on those members.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about the two Nigerian students in sanctuary in a Regina church, the Minister of Immigration said yesterday that one of them was not a student and was working. However, the University of Regina said that was not true and at all relevant times both these young women were properly registered as U of R students. The government's only complaint against them is their honest mistake of working for two weeks last year at Walmart.

The Government of Saskatchewan supports these students and opposes deportation. Will the minister now review these cases and agree to a more proportionate sanction?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have information in hand from the Canada Border Services Agency indicating that one of the subjects had not attended classes at the university in the winter 2011 semester, was required to discontinue studies based on a failure to meet the academic standards, appealed, the appeal was denied and so forth.

In any event, we have an immigration system that is predicated on the rule of law where laws are enforced independently by highly-trained public servants, in this instance, by agents of the Canada Border Services Agency.

Unlike the opposition, we do not believe laws should be politicized. We think they should be enforced consistently. The fair application of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Wascana.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to these Nigerian students whose only offence was the honest mistake of working for two weeks at Walmart, the minister knows that deportation would destroy their education and damage them for life.

Oral Questions

He claims such cases are for independent public servants to handle in a consistent manner. Deportation is not mandatory. There are other remedies. Other people in similar circumstances have been given simple fines, so why deportation in these two cases? How is that consistent with others who have just been given fines?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member seems to be interposing his judgment for that of our highly trained public servants as it relates to the application of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: You're the minister.

Hon. Jason Kenney: I know the Liberals had a history of this. They had ministers of immigration—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has the floor. I will ask members to allow him to finish answering the question.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals had ministers of immigration who issued special permits to campaign volunteers and to other illegal immigrants.

The view of this government is that the fair rules established by this Parliament should be consistently applied, and we need to discourage people from working illegally and taking jobs that would otherwise be available to Canadians and permanent residents.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was three months. That is how long it took the cabinet to respond to an international warrant for Conservative insider Nathan Jacobson.

Did the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety sit on this case for months?

The government members cannot wait to rush two poor Nigerian foreign students out of the country, but their Conservative buddy walks around with impunity. Were they waiting for Jacobson's donation cheques to clear before they acted?

Why the special treatment? Why the hypocrisy?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Jacobson's good friend from Winnipeg Centre, the NDP member, indicated, he was unaware of any of these legal difficulties that Mr. Jacobson was having.

I was similarly unaware, and I do not involve myself in the day-to-day matters involving the arrest of individuals.

For that person to make that kind of accusation is simply scurrilous, and she knows better.

● (1445)

LABOUR

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, workers, businesses and investors are all voicing concerns over Bill C-377, including Canada's police officers.

The bill would require that names and addresses of police who retire or officers who are sick or injured be posted on the Canada Revenue Agency website. Not only is this a massive breach of privacy; it also puts the safety of front-line police officers at risk.

Does the Minister of Public Safety agree with his Conservative colleagues that retired, sick and injured police officers should have their names and addresses posted online?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if that member had been paying attention to our committee business, he would have seen and heard that there are actually some amendments that will be proposed to deal with some of these measures.

Let me remind the House that Bill C-377 is a private member's bill, not a government bill, and we will do due diligence in the finance committee in examining the entire bill.

If the hon. member would like to sit in, I encourage him to take the spot of another member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, no one has seen these famous amendments.

This bill was poorly drafted to begin with, and it will cause significant collateral damage for our workers and our economy. It violates privacy rights, attacks pension funds and buries them under paper work, attacks private companies that do business with unions, and will cost millions of dollars to oversee.

All that because just six people filed a grievance against 4.2 million unionized workers. What is more, all the cases have been settled.

Does the Minister of Labour agree with her colleague from Edmonton—St. Albert that this bill is ill-conceived and will she oppose the creation of this bureaucratic monster?

[*English*]

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, it is obvious the reason why NDP members would not want to have any more transparency when it comes to unions. After all, they already accepted at least \$340,000 in illegal union money.

We do not know how much other illegal union money the party has accepted, and that is why we need more transparency here.

We could also use transparency on the member's position. He gave 29 donations to a hard-line separatist Quebec party. Why does he not stand and indicate to us in the spirit of transparency whether he is a federalist?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to see the hon. member practising asking questions for when he becomes a member of the opposition. That day is coming. It is coming.

Let us now speak about the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and his unpaid flights, which mean that he illegally exceeded his election spending limits or accepted an equally illegal corporate donation. But that is not all. Six directors of a construction company donated huge amounts to his election campaign, and five of them used their employer's postal code to make the donations. Illegal donations do not magically disappear at the whim of the person who is making a mockery of this chamber.

Will the minister finally rise and explain himself today?

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, the official agent will answer all of Elections Canada's questions.

[English]

I find the audacity of the hon. member impressive, his ability to stand and talk about illegal donations when he and the rest of his party, especially his leader, tried to cover up \$340,000 in illegal union money. While he gave donations to a separatist party while sitting in a supposedly federalist caucus, he then stands in the House of Commons and refuses to answer today if he is a federalist or not. Now is his chance.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the new official agent can explain this. It is the minister who needs to take some responsibility and show transparency. We have top executives at Pennecon collectively donating \$5,500 to the minister's election campaign and the problem is the context behind these donations. They came in after the minister had won his seat, and five of these donors claimed Pennecon's postal code as their own. On top of this, the minister has had business connections to Pennecon.

When will the member for Labrador own up and start answering the growing questions around his campaign?

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, the official agent is answering all those questions to Elections Canada. The real issue before the House is when the NDP will own up to the \$340,000 in illegal union money that it forced out of the pockets of unwilling workers right across this country. We still do not have any answers to when the leader of the NDP knew about these illegal donations, or why it is that when asked repeatedly on the floor of the House of Commons to come clean about them, he covered them up.

● (1450)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Forces serve this country with unparalleled honour, valour and dedication. Our Conservative government has consistently stood up to ensure that these heroes are provided with the support they need, not only while they serve but also as they transition from military to civilian life.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs share what steps our government is taking to make that transition as smooth as possible?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to sit next to the hon. member for Edmonton Centre given his unwavering support for our veterans.

[English]

Today, I announced a comprehensive veterans transition action plan, including cutting red tape, improving service delivery for veterans and creating new career opportunities. As well, our government is providing funding to support the groundbreaking veterans transition program that was developed by the University of British Columbia. This is a group-based, peer support, soldier-to-soldier approach that provides valuable assistance to transitioning veterans, and we are pleased to designate this program as an official provider from Veterans Affairs Canada and the government.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after months of doing nothing, the Conservatives have hired an independent firm to redo the AG's work. KPMG is already studying the costs, an independent firm must now study the process, and the fabled PWGSC National Fighter Procurement Secretariat is studying other options, just as a special defence committee is doing.

Given all of those studies, can someone finally tell us, apart from the F-35, what other aircraft are being considered?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not clear if the member is opposed to using outside experts and independent members to review the work that we are doing, but I am definitely in favour of it. That is why we set up the national federal procurement secretariat and we have two independent members sitting on that secretariat. In addition, we are hiring external firms with external experts. We want to get this right. We have not spent any money on the acquisition of any aircraft to replace the CF-18, and we will not spend any money until we do the full due diligence, and that is what these firms are hired to do.

Oral Questions

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one would not know it from that answer, but my colleague's question was actually quite simple: Name some planes other than the F-35.

We have heard about the seven-point plan that became a six-point plan. We know about the \$1 million that the government is spending to find someone to contradict the AG.

Here is another simple question: Has the Minister of National Defence amended the statement of requirements so that it is not wired for the F-35?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, the member knows full well that we have set up the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat to ensure that there is full transparency and due diligence in the seven-point plan.

We have accepted the recommendation of the Auditor General. His one recommendation was to ask the Department of National Defence to table updated cost estimates in the House. We agreed with that, but we took it one step further. We want independent validation of DND's numbers. In fact, we are also reviewing the process leading up to the decisions that were made.

I think that doing independent validation is a good thing. We want to make sure that we have all the information on the table, all the options on the table, before we make a decision.

* * *

POVERTY

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report from Food Banks Canada released today shows that food bank use has hit record levels this year. More than 882,000 Canadians had to use a food bank just to make ends meet. That is 31% higher than before the recession began. It shows that the government's management of the economy is failing vulnerable Canadians.

When will the government finally take hunger seriously and adopt a comprehensive long-term strategy on food insecurity and poverty in Canada?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do feel for those who are struggling and we are trying to help them in a number of ways. We are helping them get the training they need to get a job. Also, more than 750,000 families are benefiting from our affordable housing efforts, and there are 46,000 new affordable housing units. We brought in the working income tax benefit to help people get over the welfare wall when they do work.

We are doing these things because we want to help our vulnerable. It is a real shame that the NDP has not supported any one of these initiatives.

• (1455)

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to poverty and food security, the HungerCount 2012 report clearly demonstrates the Conservatives' incompetence. A

record number of Canadians had to turn to a food bank this year. Some families have to choose between paying their rent and buying groceries, because there is a shortage of affordable housing. Despite the federal government's disengagement, CMHC is still subsidizing co-operatives and social housing, but the agreements are about to expire.

Do the Conservatives realize that by privatizing CMHC, they are putting many of these agreements at risk?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to people in need, and that is why we have introduced a number of measures to help them, such as the working income tax benefit, which has helped over 1,500 people. We have also invested in affordable housing, which is helping over 750,000 families. That is very important. We are doing these things to help people. We are also helping people find jobs. Unfortunately, the NDP opposes all of our efforts.

* * *

[English]

PENSIONS

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, if there is one in the government, to delay the old age security to 67 years of age would provide the federal government a meagre 0.3% of the GDP in 2030. However, the federal government committed to offset provincial costs for all the seniors who would, unfortunately, need welfare.

What would remain of this 0.3% once the provinces are compensated?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure where that question is going—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development has the floor.

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure where that question is going, but I can tell members where we are going—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We have now lost quite a bit of time having to give the floor back to ministers answering questions. We will have to make that time up.

The hon. Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I can tell members where we are going, and that is helping seniors in their retirement and making sure that they have the funds in their pockets to afford their retirement. That is why we introduced pension income splitting. That is why we increased, not once but twice, the working age tax credit. That is why we brought in the biggest increase in guaranteed income supplement in over a generation.

We are there to help our seniors. We are also making sure that old age security is there for them not just today but in the future as well.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the most recent revelations about the member from Labrador's election campaign irregularities have undermined the confidence of Canadians in our institutions. Today we are asking the leader of the current government to comment on the probity of amounts that were not disclosed to Elections Canada during this campaign.

We want to know if the government plans on relieving the member of his ministerial duties, given his statements about this matter.

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, after being rejected by Canadians in the last election, the Liberals are trying to explain the loss by conducting a smear campaign against the Conservatives, who earned the respect and support of Canadians.

[English]

As a result, they have tried to make up robocall controversies of which they have been found to be the only guilty parties. They have failed to clean up their own houses with almost \$500,000 in illegal loans that their leadership candidates have accepted.

* * *

[Translation]

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the demise of the Canadian Conference of the Arts is directly related to its critical opinion of the controversial copyright reform. When the organization shared the concerns of artists from across the country, it suddenly lost its funding. The transitional assistance provided and the time allocated for the transition were insufficient, which was fatal for the organization.

The Canadian Conference of the Arts lost its funding because it expressed a dissenting opinion. The minister had a choice between spending \$25 million to rename a museum or spending less than \$400,000 to save an organization that helps hundreds of thousands of artists.

How can the minister justify his choice?

• (1500)

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 35 years, this organization is still receiving some 60% of its operating funding from the hard-working taxpayers of this country.

We did provide some transition funding for this organization this year, so that it could actually go to a new system of financing and ask its stakeholders and the people who actually support this organization to play a bigger role in helping them move forward.

Canadians work very hard in this time of economic crisis, and we want to make sure that those funds are used wisely for all Canadians.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are two sets of rules governing arts and culture: one if the artists are liked by the Conservatives, and one if they are not. The Canadian Conference of the Arts is the latest example.

When the minister does not like an art exhibit or an organization or the name of a rock band, an unmistakable chill gets sent out across the land.

Canada is big, complex and diverse. Do we really want to have our arts and culture sector governed out of the office of one politician in this country?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said with respect to this organization, after 35 years it is still receiving some 60% of its budget from hard-working taxpayers. It is time it moved to a different system of financing, one where it asks the people who support it, the stakeholders, to contribute a little more.

This government is making a lot of investments in arts and culture. The NDP continues to vote against all of those investments. We are bringing our investments throughout the country. We are supporting festivals. We are supporting community theatre. We are making the types of investments that will lead to better jobs, better opportunities and better results for our artists across this country.

* * *

[Translation]

TREASURY BOARD

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the government tabled the 2011-12 public accounts, the most comprehensive report that the government produces. Could the President of the Treasury Board explain the importance of this year's report to our ongoing efforts to eliminate the deficit in the medium term?

[English]

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for his most excellent question. As per usual, he is representing his constituents very well.

I would also like to say that this government is leading the way to returning to balanced budgets, and the public accounts prove this. The public accounts also confirm that Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 highly industrialized countries.

We are the government that has created more than 820,000 net new jobs working with the private sector. We are proud of that record, too.

In contrast, the other side is focused on a \$21 billion carbon tax.

* * *

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, six years after the government approved the Vale takeover of Inco and two years following Vale's announcement that it will shut down the refinery and smelter in Thompson, it is at it again. Vale is telling the people of Thompson that it is shutting down one mine site and shelving the proposition for a new mine, jobs lost in a community and a province that will continue to hurt.

Will the federal government join the province, the city of Thompson and the steelworkers to bring Vale to the table to save Canadian jobs?

[Translation]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, since taking office, we have implemented a tax policy that benefits companies. We are also in the process of cutting red tape and we have an open investment policy.

One thing is certain: imposing a \$21 billion carbon tax on Canadians will not keep jobs here in Canada. On the contrary, this tax would drive up the price of everything, and we would no longer be competitive at all. So, we will not impose this tax.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday former senior Liberal cabinet minister Joe Fontana was asked whether he would resign during the RCMP investigation of his activities as a senior Liberal cabinet minister. Mr. Fontana's response was to point to the poppy on his lapel and hide behind the sacrifices of our courageous war veterans as his reason not to resign. Veterans from London are condemning the comments from the former senior Liberal cabinet minister.

Will the Minister of Veterans Affairs explain how our government supports the poppy campaign as a sign of our respect toward our veterans?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that our government condemns the comment by the former senior Liberal cabinet minister in the strongest terms possible. This is totally unacceptable. Hiding behind our courageous veterans to avoid one's own potential legal problems is reprehensible. It does not have a place in our country.

Oral Questions

I hope that all members of the House, including the members opposite, will join us in condemning these inappropriate comments, which should not be connected to our great veterans who gave their lives for our country.

* * *

● (1505)

[Translation]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after announcing that the Quebec City search and rescue centre would close in April 2012, the Conservatives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The member for Québec.

Ms. Annick Papillon: Mr. Speaker, after announcing that the Quebec City search and rescue centre would close in April 2012, the Conservatives have now postponed the closure until April 2013. Annie Mathieu, from the newspaper *Le Soleil*, reports that the closure will likely be postponed a second time, until the fall of 2013.

Can the government confirm that it still has not found qualified bilingual staff in Halifax and Trenton and that it plans on postponing the closure of the centre in Quebec City until the fall of 2013?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, search and rescue is the highest priority of the Canadian Coast Guard and the consolidation of the marine rescue sub-centre in Quebec will in no way increase any risk to the public. The provision of bilingual services is essential and the Coast Guard will continue to enhance bilingual service as part of the consolidation.

* * *

[Translation]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after abandoning the Quebec forestry industry and going after seasonal workers in all regions, the Conservatives are now targeting one of Quebec's areas of expertise, the aluminum industry. By changing the structure and role of the Aluminum Technology Centre, or the ATC, the federal government is hindering SMEs in this industry of the future. These businesses need this important development and innovation tool.

Will the minister put an end to the harmful uncertainty surrounding the ATC and immediately meet with the stakeholders who want to meet with him?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member for Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour said, the government has not abandoned any industries; it is untrue to say that it has abandoned any industry. We have not abandoned the aluminum industry or the forestry industry, and we will not abandon the Aluminum Technology Centre in Chicoutimi, which is an excellent centre that provides unparalleled services to the aluminum industry in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, Quebec and Canada. Unlike what the member said, this centre will remain open.

Government Orders

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of six members of the Royal Canadian Navy who are taking part in Navy Appreciation Day today.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I regrettably rise to raise some questions about unparliamentary language, which was utilized by the member for Burnaby—Douglas under the rubric of member statements under Standing Order 31. As members know, it is not appropriate to accuse other members of lying in the House. That is considered unparliamentary language. I know when the NDP became the official opposition, its members made a great deal of their commitment to a new decorum and to improving the level of debate in the House. That appears sadly to have slipped away in the member's statement today.

In referring to the member for Lethbridge, the member for Burnaby—Douglas accused him of “outright untruths”, “propagating...falsehoods”, “statements [known to be] untrue” and “regurgitation of falsehoods”. These all fall into the category of unparliamentary language. What is more and what is worse is that these are all in reference to statements about the NDP carbon tax, and the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas actually ran under a platform that had on its fourth page a commitment to a \$21.5 billion carbon tax. These statements not only are incorrect but they are unparliamentary and he should—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. Does the hon. member wish to respond? The hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I retract any unparliamentary language, although in his statement the House leader had his own untruth so I think the game continues.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I would simply remind the hon. member that I have tabled before the House a copy of the platform under which he ran, in which there was a \$21.5 billion—

The Speaker: Order, please. We are getting further into debate here.

The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

• (1510)

[Translation]

TABLING OF DOCUMENT

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the veterans transition action plan that I mentioned in question period and that I announced this morning here in Ottawa.

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in light of the point made by the government House leader, I think what he is drawing attention to is the fact that, this fall particularly, there has been a tendency in the Standing Order 31 statements to drift pretty far away from what was the original intent of Standing Order 31, into a realm where there is, quite frankly, an exchange of insults across the floor of the House. That lowers the tone of the House and it creates a tendency toward disorder in the House, as members can see from the reaction on both sides.

I would simply encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to exercise greater discipline in terms of the content of these motions so they do not become disrespectful and, at the end of the day, do not cause the House to become disorderly.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for that. Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

JOBS AND GROWTH, 2012

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to continue my speech. Ironically entitled the “jobs and growth act”, Bill C-45 completely lacks measures to create jobs and stimulate growth in the long term for Canadians. In fact, the budget plans for unemployment to rise. The tax credits provided in the bill to small businesses are small and only for a very short time period. Additionally, Bill C-45 cuts support for business research and development. This does not seem to make any sense at a time when Canadian businesses need to increase innovation and productivity to be able to succeed in our knowledge based local economy and the ever changing global economy. Moreover, the changes in the bill will hurt the manufacturing sector, which provides many good jobs to my constituents in Scarborough—Rouge River, as firms will be more likely to move their R and D activities to other countries with better incentives.

What we need is a long-term Canada-wide strategy to create good jobs for the 1.4 million Canadians who are still unemployed, not a budget bill that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has estimated will cost 43,000 Canadians their jobs, with a projected total of 102,000 jobs lost when combined with the previous rounds of cuts. It is simply outrageous.

Government Orders

The changes in Bill C-45 to public service pensions creates a two-tiered workforce where younger people will have to work longer for the same retirement benefits. Along with little action on crippling student debt and youth unemployment, younger Canadians cannot rest assured that the government is looking out for their best interests.

Moreover, statistics show that women are overrepresented in Canada's public service, so the government's proposed changes to public service pensions will disproportionately and negatively affect women across the country. Additionally, changes to the method of calculation for payment for holiday work in Bill C-45 will negatively affect those who change jobs often, and those who work part-time or on a commission basis. Once again, these are predominantly youth, newcomers and women, who usually do not have many other options than to take on these more precarious forms of employment.

Canadians want us to take action to protect our environment and grow a sustainable economy for the future, yet the Conservatives are shamefully focused on gutting environmental protection regulations.

Bill C-45 continues down the road of this spring's Trojan horse budget by further weakening our ability to protect our environment. The budget implementation bill guts the Navigable Waters Protection Act and further erodes the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. If one were to do a search for the word "navigable" on the online version of the budget, the word "navigable" does not even appear once. The word does not appear in the budget, yet it is all over the implementation bill of the same budget. The changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act will leave thousands of waterways without protection and result in fewer environmental reviews by Transport Canada.

While the removal of "waters protection" from the name of the act and the change in the name to the "Navigation Protection Act" may appear very simple, it is quite revealing of the government's intentions. This name change demonstrates to Canadians just how out of touch the Conservatives are when it comes to the environment, as well as their lack of concern about Canadians' call for its protection and the need to build a sustainable economy.

In addition, the bill makes little effort to support clean energy generation equipment. There are two minor expansions of tax credits for certain types of equipment. However, these are hardly noteworthy, totalling just \$3 million in the next fiscal year.

Bill C-45 is one more nail in the coffin when it comes to environmental protection by the government. Under the Conservatives, Canada's environmental ranking has dropped to among the worst in the world. The 2011 climate change performance index ranks Canada 57th out of 60 nations surveyed, well behind G8 countries like the U.K., France and Germany, which all scored in the top 10.

• (1515)

I am outraged by the bill and Canadians are outraged by the actions of the government. I have received countless emails from constituents demanding that we oppose this bill. While families and communities are struggling, the bill certainly shows the government's priorities with the tens of millions of dollars spent on propaganda and advertising while at the same time Conservatives are telling Canadians there is just not enough money for employment

insurance and old age security. With all of these flaws and more, it is no wonder that we, along with Canadians across the country, oppose this bill.

The NDP will always be proud to stand up for transparency and accountability. We actually listened to our constituents and consulted Canadians across the country. We will proudly stand up for environmental protection. We will also continue to be the leader in the House in standing up for retirement security and health care. We stand up for Canadians, and Canadians deserve something much better than what the government is offering.

New Democrats are committed to fighting for the real priorities of Canadian families: jobs, health care, pensions and protecting our environment. We have a plan to support these priorities by improving health care services; rewarding the job creators; encouraging our youth; fighting climate change; and supporting seniors, not attacking their benefits.

I urge the government to take these concerns into consideration as well as the concerns of Canadians from coast to coast to coast and accept amendments to this bill or split it and have its components studied by all committees.

There are over 400 pages in this budget implementation bill. Let us actually have some time to study the bill.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities did an exhaustive study of the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Among the witnesses were seven provinces and two territories who spoke up and said that they agreed with Transport Canada. They stated on May 6, 2008, that "a total rewrite of the act is something that is well worth doing". They further stated:

At a minimum, we [the provinces and territories] believe, the changes should eliminate the need for a project proponent to first ask Transport Canada if the act applies to a given stream....

Then they went on to define that a bit further.

This is the approach they were asking for. How does the member opposite respond to the provinces and territories who wanted this type of regime for deciding when and where navigation permits should be given for a project?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague again proves my point that if the government wants to talk about the Navigable Waters Protection Act, then it should include it in its budget. We know that the word "navigable" was not included in the budget presented by the minister in March, yet this budget implementation bill has navigable all over it. How is it that the government is being truthful, honest and transparent to Canadians when it is changing the Navigable Waters Protection Act in a budget implementation bill whereas the budget itself does not even talk about that act?

Government Orders

My suggestion to the government through the member is to be open and transparent with Canadians. If the transport committee had expert witnesses who said we should talk about the Navigable Waters Protection Act, then let us do that, but let us do it openly and transparently, not the secret backdoor way.

• (1520)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Liberal Party demonstrated on this particular omnibus bill is that it is in fact divisible. If the government had the will, it could divide it into a number of different bills. We saw that when it agreed with the Liberals that at the very least it should bring out the MPs' pension portion. We appreciate that it has done that, but we would ultimately argue that there is a lot more that could be done in that way.

When the Prime Minister was in opposition back in 1994 he stated:

Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent the views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill.

That was a 21-page bill, not a multi-hundred page bill, and now the Prime Minister's opinion has changed.

I ask the member if she might want to reflect on the massive size of the bill. If the government really wanted to do a service to the House of Commons today, the best thing it could do would be to recognize how massive the bill is and break it down into a number or series of legislative proposals. That way there would be due diligence given to every major issue on which the bill is attempting to make changes. Would she not agree with that?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his pertinent question, because the government has proved it is willing to split the bill when it brought out the pensions portion from the bill. The NDP has requested time and time again the unanimous consent of the House to do that exact same thing and to break up this humongous bill of over 400 pages.

The debate is now under time allocation, so we do not have the opportunity as members of Parliament to have the full debate necessary to go through these 400 pages. It is our fiduciary duty to our constituents to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate debate in this House, and that is exactly what the government is ensuring will not happen.

The government is muzzling scientists and parliamentarians. It is muzzling everyone. The government is not allowing us as members of Parliament to perform our fiduciary duty to our constituents.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on the jobs growth act which would implement key provisions for our 2012 economic action plan.

The legislation would serve to implement additional measures of the 2012 budget in order to continue to grow Canada's economy, fuel job creation and secure Air Canada's long-term prosperity.

First, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance as well as the departmental officials for their great work at the technical briefing of the bill. What we heard from officials at the technical briefing were clear and precise details outlining the department's rationale for each of the fiscal issues that make up Bill C-45. It was six hours well spent.

While I consider my riding of Red Deer, I reflect on its people and its prominence in the province of Alberta. Not only are its people innovative and hard working, but our riding is centrally positioned along Alberta's transportation corridor and acts as a vibrant industry service hub, and agriculture is one of those critical industries. It has been and continues to be vital to our community of Red Deer and I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes that Canada's agriculture industry is a key economic driver, not only for rural communities but for our nation as a whole.

Today I am pleased to recognize the exciting future that is in store for Canada's grain sector with the introduction of Bill C-45.

Earlier this year, western Canadian wheat and barley farmers were released from the shackles of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly. After 75 long years of being legally prohibited from selling their own grain, they are at last able to reap the benefits of their hard work.

In conjunction with new freedom for western wheat and barley growers, today's bill, the jobs and growth act, proposes much needed legislative amendments to the Canada Grain Act in order to streamline and update the operations of our century-old grain commission.

I would also like to speak about the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce which presented to its national policy convention a resolution that encouraged marketing freedom for western Canadian wheat and barley growers, and it was passed by that organization.

Farmers' interests are best served when unnecessary costs and regulations are eliminated and when farmers can deliver grain into a competitive and efficient grain handling system. It has been 40 years since the Canadian Grain Commission was last updated to meet the needs of farmers, so it is definitely time for us to remove red tape and unnecessary regulations for grain growers.

Bill C-45 removes the requirement for inward inspection and weighing by the Canadian Grain Commission. This proposed change will eliminate over \$20 million annually in unnecessary costs from the grain handling system; costs that have been downloaded onto farmers.

The original purpose of inward inspection and inward weighing was to ensure that grades and weights were recorded at each stage as grain moved through the system. The service was established when primary elevators, terminal elevators and transfer elevators were owned by different companies. Grain companies needed a system of checks and balances to follow the grain as it weaved its way through the system. The Canadian Grain Commission was required to act as a third party to ensure that this happened.

However, there have been many changes in the industry, which now call in question the need for the Canadian Grain Commission to inspect and weigh every shipment of grain that is unloaded at terminal or transfer elevators. These services are no longer required in a business environment where a prairie grain elevator is often shipping its own grain within its own terminal system. These inspections are redundant and unnecessary.

Government Orders

The shippers will be able to request third party inspections, but as for who provides these inwards services, that would be best determined by those involved in the transaction. The shipper and the elevator operator will also have the right to appeal to the Canadian Grain Commission for binding determination of grade and dockage if there is a disagreement.

There has been some criticism from across the way on these changes and I sometimes wonder whose interests opposition members are looking after. However, our government has consulted extensively with farmers on how to modernize the grain handling system and we are pleased to have the support of industry for these changes.

Richard Phillips, executive director of the Grain Growers of Canada, in a press release dated October 23, said:

Under the current system, we see duplication of services with grain company staff and grain commission inspectors both inspecting the same tens of thousands of railcars every year...This change will certainly reduce unnecessary overlap. The Grain Growers have always pushed hard to reduce red tape and regulatory burdens for our grain sector and so we fully support this change.

The industry agrees that this is the way forward to modernize the Canadian grain handling system and to provide an efficient competitive environment for farmers to operate in.

• (1525)

The other important change that is designed to benefit farmers is the introduction of insurance-based producer-payment protection. A key role of the Canadian Grain Commission has been to protect primary producers from the risk of industry participants going belly up. The commissioner requires that all elevators post a bond in an amount equal to the value of the grain that they are handling. The current payment protection program adds significant costs to western Canadian producers, but it is not cost effective and the costs of the program are ultimately borne by farmers.

Unfortunately, we have seen that despite the licensing regime, the bonding system does not necessarily protect producers from the financial failure of grain elevators. If an elevator is bonded, the security held by the Canadian Grain Commission is insufficient in some instances and producers are left with a loss if a company goes under. Unfortunately, all that this requirement has done is tie up a significant amount of operating capital in the industry without protecting farmers.

Bill C-45 would change this by allowing an insurance-based program that would reduce costs to the grain sector and reduce risks to producers. Grain elevators and dealers would continue to be licensed and providing security would continue to be a requirement of becoming licensed. However, an insurance-based program would reduce risks to farmers as an insurance program would guarantee that farmers would not be left without payment.

As I have already said, these amendments reflect extensive consultation with industry and are supported. The Western Canadian Wheat Growers stated in its press release of October 22 of this year that it applauded changes to the legislation that would provide greater flexibility in how payments to farmers were secured. It has recognized that replacing the traditional bonding system with an insurance system could provide farmers with better coverage at a lower overall cost. Kevin Bender, president of the Western Canadian

Wheat Growers, who happens to also be a constituent of mine, said, "the amendments represent a good first step toward modernizing the Canadian Grain Commission".

The Canadian Grain Commission is essential to our country's system of grain handling, but it has been very difficult for the commission to keep up with changes in the industry both in Canada and abroad. The result has been a restrictive approach in regulating Canada's grain industry.

It is the Conservative Party, a party that has many farmers sitting in the House, of which I am one, that fights for this industry. It is this Conservative government that has followed through on studies and consultations with the grain industry to come up with the important amendments that we see today.

We received feedback from the grain sector during the 2006 Compass review, the recent Rail Freight Service Review, the Canadian Grain Commission's 2011 user fees consultation and the commission's engagement with stakeholders earlier this year. We have listened and we are acting.

There are a few things that I want to summarize so people recognize the significance of the points that are being made.

First is the removal of the inward inspection. The farmers deliver the grain. If they wish to confirm the quality, they bag it, tag it and send it to the Canadian Grain Commission. Then they know what they are going to be paid for because the weights have already been determined. That is the end of their transaction. That is the beauty of what we have had without the Canadian Wheat Board.

The grain companies are the ones that own it. They then move it through their system and by not forcing farmers to continue the inward inspection, there are no more extra costs added to the movement of the grain within the grain companies. Based on that, it means that they will not be downloading extra charges. It has been mentioned that there are tens of thousands of rail cars are being continually inspected and the cost of that ends up going to the farmer.

The second point that I have heard others talk about is the Grain Appeal Tribunal. With the removal of inward inspections, the need to arbitrate, therefore, becomes unnecessary. This has nothing to do with the producers. Remember they no longer own the grain. Their transactions were completed at the grain elevator. The discussion is between the Canadian Grain Commission, company X and company Y, not the farmers.

It is this Conservative government that is helping farmers by putting the Canadian Grain Commission on a track to keep pace with the industry in the 21st century. The status quo is not acceptable for grain producers in Canada. Therefore, I urge all members in the House to support these important legislative amendments.

• (1530)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I note the member is from Red Deer and was elected in 2008. Now that we are talking about the budget, I notice something is missing.

Government Orders

When you campaigned, I am sure, from door to door in Red Deer, you probably took your platform with you. In the 2008 Conservative platform—

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the member to address his comments to the Chair, not to individual members of Parliament.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, page 23 of the Conservative platform says, “Prohibiting the Export of Raw Bitumen to Higher Polluting Jurisdictions”. It says, “A re-elected Conservative Government will prevent any company from exporting raw bitumen”.

I do not see that in the current budget. Could the member explain why that has not been included and why he has broken his promise to his constituents?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at the types of things and the extra amount of work that has been done in the budget process, I am extremely proud of the people who have worked on it.

Again, I am not sure whether we want to get into carbon tax discussions. I had the opportunity to know Ernest Manning who was premier of Alberta many years ago. He was once asked “What is the magic bullet that you have here in Alberta that has allowed you to be so successful?” He said that it was the election of the NDP governments in B.C. and in Saskatchewan as it drove all of the capital to Alberta. They still have all of the opportunities and they have all of the resources there.

We are looking at this situation. Of course the biggest concern people have, especially in Saskatchewan where I have some great friends who have come to Alberta, including my mother who was part of that group, is that it took the human capital as well.

We are looking at these kinds of situations. Every budget we have has to look forward to the future.

• (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about the Canadian Grain Commission. I think a number of Prairie farmers are quite concerned about the future of the Grain Commission.

I would very much appreciate it if the member could expand on where he sees the Grain Commission four or five years from now? What will it look like?

A great deal of trust that many farmers had was lost because of the way the government dealt with the Canadian Wheat Board. Many are looking at the government and are somewhat fearful in regard to the Canadian Grain Commission. That is why I pose the question in terms of four or five years from now.

Does the member see a healthier Canadian Grain Commission with strong regulation? How does he envision the Canadian Grain Commission four or five years from now?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, I welcome any opportunity to speak about the grain industry and especially the types of moves and things we have done with regard to the Canadian Wheat Board, changing the monopoly and giving it the opportunity to move from the single desk into a dual marketing system. Amazing things have happened in western Canada.

I know people are taking pictures of their trucks as they enter with the first grain off the fields and are able to sell it as number one wheat, get the cheque and go home with it. These are the kinds of things happening.

Part of my answer is there has been a fair amount of fear-mongering that was presented at that time, about trying to cut the Canadian Wheat Board out and everything else, which was never true. The situation we have now shows that we are moving forward. The Canadian Grain Commission is part of that. It is an integral part of that.

To answer the question specifically, I see it moving forward with the industry. It is an important part. People are asking what is going to happen to the quality of grain. Let us remember that it is not the Canadian Grain Commission, it is the great farmers of Alberta, great farmers of Saskatchewan and the great farmers throughout the country who produce the quality grain that we need.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to speak about Bill C-45. This is not the first time that the Conservative government has introduced this omnibus bill. The Conservatives introduced it in the spring and they are introducing it now. It is the second part of the budget. How many laws does this 400-page bill contain?

First, the bill prevents parliamentarians from representing their constituents. In my opinion, in a democratic country and a supposedly democratic Parliament, when election day comes and Canadians choose representatives in Ottawa, it is so that those representatives can do something. First, parliamentarians have the right to talk about a bill. Second, they have the right to examine it. Third, they have the right to vote on it.

I would say that this Conservative government is a reform government because that is really what it is. The Conservative Party used to be a progressive party but such is no longer the case. This majority government is introducing bills that are setting back democracy.

I do not understand how Conservative members can feel comfortable with this situation. Even the public is starting to stand up and say that it does not make sense that their elected representatives are no longer allowed to do anything because of the Conservative—or the reform—government. Democracy is suffering.

I do not have much time so I would like to give some examples right away. Ten minutes is not a lot of time. In fact, two minutes have already passed and I have only eight minutes left.

Let us look at employment insurance. This is an issue that is close to my heart, and I will explain why. In my riding, there are a lot of seasonal jobs. Seasonal workers do not exist. There are only seasonal jobs.

Government Orders

In July, there were five demonstrations in my area: one in the riding of Miramichi, three in the riding of Acadie—Bathurst and one in Madawaska—Restigouche, the riding of the Minister of State for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. This is the same minister who said that people should have to have a grade 12 education to be eligible for employment insurance benefits. He is also the one who told his constituents that there are still people out there today, in 2012, who would prefer to collect employment insurance benefits so that they can go hunting instead of going to work. What an insult to workers!

On the weekend, I participated in a demonstration that deeply touched me, and I will tell you why. More than 2,000 people participated in this demonstration. When Acadians and anglophones from New Brunswick marched on the J. C. Van Horne Bridge in Fredericton, they saw aboriginal peoples from Gaspé and franco-phones from Quebec marching towards them. It was called the meeting of the peoples. We told the Conservative government that it was not heading in the right direction with employment insurance reforms.

In this budget, the Conservatives could at least have changed some of the regulations. What they are doing is cruel. We talk about cruelty to animals. What they are doing to workers who have lost their seasonal jobs in the fisheries, forestry sector or tourism, is cruel.

Every week, those very people have to present themselves to employers and ask if there are any jobs. Women over 60 are calling me to say that they have to go into stores to ask about being hired, otherwise the government will cut their employment insurance benefits. They are being humiliated even though they have worked their entire lives in a fish processing plant, for example.

In my riding, no matter if the person lives in Caraquet, Shippagan, Lamèque, Miscou, Tracadie-Sheila, Inkerman, Saint-Simon, Maissonnette, Anse-Bleue, Grande-Anse, Saint-Isidore or Paquetville, there is simply no work.

The government boasts that it has created 820,000 jobs, but it does not talk about the jobs it has eliminated. For example, it eliminated jobs at the Canada Post call centre in Fredericton and replaced them with jobs that pay \$12 an hour and no benefits. The government does not talk about that.

• (1540)

They humiliate people and scare them by making cuts to the employment insurance program. I get calls from employers who tell me that they have no jobs to offer. They have a small store with two employees. They get 50 to 300 people every week who come in asking for a job. They say that the government is hurting their businesses. These are not customers coming to buy from them; they are people looking for a job.

[English]

We see the way the government is acting. It is forcing people down home to go elsewhere to look for jobs. I understand what the Conservatives are saying. They are saying that if people are on EI, they are supposed to be looking for jobs.

However, they live in an area where unemployment is up to 20%, because the fish plant has closed down and tourism and forestry have

closed down for the winter, because that is what we have at home. They are telling those workers to look for jobs three times a week, and if not, they will cut their employment insurance.

Store owners are calling our office saying that they do not have jobs, and when these people go to their establishments, they are hurting their enterprises. It is not that they do not like them, but they are not buying in their establishments. As a matter of fact, they are putting signs in their windows now, stating that they are not employing anybody. As matter of fact, some of them are saying that they are going to start charging \$15 for each person who wants to have the owner fill in the form human resources wants. Some of them are saying that they are going to start charging \$20 for the forms human resources wants them to sign.

Just imagine that. They have already lost their jobs. They are only getting 55% of their wages, and they have to travel around the Acadian peninsula looking for jobs that do not exist. Imagine the amount of money they are spending just on gas, and that is money they do not have. How can the government say that it has put that in place to help people find jobs where they did not know that a job existed?

I invite the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development to come down to the peninsula to Acadie—Bathurst, Miramichi or Madawaska—Restigouche any day to see if there are jobs. The jobs are not at home. In her bill she is saying that they have to look an hour away from home. Does she understand where they are living?

• (1545)

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have been listening for the last few minutes. I think the member is debating Bill C-38 and not Bill C-45 at this particular moment. I would ask you to ask him to be relevant to Bill C-45.

The Deputy Speaker: I see that parts of the bill certainly are relevant to the EI changes. If the member wants to respond to the objection, I will let him have a few minutes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind responding if it does not take any of my time, because it is a point of order.

I will not lose time. Thank you.

Employment insurance is what I was talking about, if he was listening, on the other side. I said that what was missing in the bill were changes for the workers. That is relevant to the bill, because it is a money bill. Workers will be losing money. To me, it is relevant.

The Deputy Speaker: I will take that with agreement. Again, there is only so far one can go with that. I already made that comment once before, a few weeks ago. However, I will allow the member to continue. He has roughly two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the questions, comments and what we think about the bill are on the agenda today. We can also talk about what is missing from a bill. We must never limit debate in the House of Commons to the content of a bill; we must be able to talk about what is missing.

Government Orders

Once again, the government is trying to shut us up so that it does not look bad. What did it do? For example, through its bill it is requiring people to work until the age of 67. This direct attack on workers is unbelievable. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Labour say that they are doing this to help people. That all this is being done in order to help people.

They want me to talk about Bill C-45. So I will talk about temporary foreign workers. Does it make sense for us to bring in temporary foreign workers who will be paid 15% less than Canadians? What does this mean? It means that employers will be able to keep temporary workers in their businesses. There is a reason why Canadians who go to work in Cap-Pelé are sent home after working 20 hours. Temporary workers can stay for 40 hours.

There is a reason that, in Caraquet, some workers are not called back to work in a fish plant. Temporary foreign workers have taken their place because the employer can pay them 15% less and make them work in a different way given the regulations in effect in New Brunswick. There are laws that are not obeyed in New Brunswick. If the poor foreign worker who wants to earn money disagrees with what his employer says, the employer calls Immigration Canada and says that the worker he got is not working out.

How can employers bring temporary foreign workers to their workplaces when the unemployment rate in Acadie—Bathurst is 20%? That is crazy.

Here is what the Conservatives are doing with this bill: they are opening the door to what I call “foreign worker slavery” and to the loss of jobs for local workers. Then they turn around and tell us that they want our people to work.

Here is what they really want: they want our people to go work out west, and they want foreign workers to do seasonal jobs, pay taxes and pay employment insurance premiums before being sent back to their country without receiving any benefits at all.

The government could do the same thing the Liberals did: take \$57 billion contributed by workers and spend it however it wants. That is what the Conservatives are doing, but it is not the right thing to do. People need to wake up and realize that.

I am proud that I went to the demonstration in Campbellton this week. However, I was not proud to see the fear in people's eyes, nor was I proud of the way the government has treated workers.

I meant it when I asked what workers did to the Conservative Prime Minister to make him hate them so much. Because that is the truth: he hates workers. He is constantly making their lives more difficult.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is generally a pretty jovial guy, so it is surprising to see him so grumpy today and so negative about this bill. There are a lot of good measures in Bill C-45. The registered disability savings plans are being improved. The EI credit for small business employers is being continued. It is a credit of up to \$1,000 against a small business employer's increase in 2012 premiums. This is available to over 536,000 employees.

Does my colleague agree with these improvements in Bill C-45? Finally, I would like to ask if he could also say how he feels about the comments of his former leader, Mr. Broadbent, when he said:

Taxes are the hinge that links citizens to one another and to the common good... We should also consider...implementing taxes on very large inheritances of wealth which pass morally-unjustifiable class privilege.... Significant revenues could be raised by the introduction of a financial transaction tax... Green taxes—such as a carbon tax and higher taxes on natural resources—need to be considered as a means of financing

I would like my colleague to respond to those three questions.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the member's question about taxes my way, with what I think. If people were not paying any taxes we would not have hospitals, schools or highways. We would not have any of that. Instead the government wants us to believe that it will give \$100 to parents to take care of their children, but at the same time it will take back half of what it has given them at income tax time. That is the Conservative Party's way. It gives tax breaks at one end and then grabs money back at the other end.

Most of the jobs being created in our country right now are part-time jobs. Most young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are working part-time. Those are the kinds of jobs that have been created. Looking at the big number, people are working three jobs. That is what the Conservative government has done. How many of those young people who go to school and work hard and have university degrees are working part-time? That is what the Conservative government has done. Instead of creating steady jobs for those people, they are creating more part-time work. The Conservatives tell us that according to a study that was done they are creating jobs. They are actually the creators of people losing their jobs. Nineteen thousand people in the public service have lost their jobs. They were providing a service to Canadians.

That is not what Canada is all about, my friend.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind all speakers to address their comments to the Chair, not to other members of Parliament.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to comment first on the point of order that was brought up by friend from Essex. It is easy to wander off on this legislation when it is as sprawling as it is. It is easy to think that perhaps a member has gone a bit off topic. That is probably why the minister could not answer two-thirds of the questions that were posed at finance committee, because they were under the realm of somebody else's portfolio. On behalf of all opposition members, I will issue an apology through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Essex for our tendency to wander.

Fifty-three per cent of the regional GDP in Atlantic Canada is found through seasonal industries such as the fishery, agriculture, forestry and tourism. What kind of impact will these cuts to EI have on these sectors? In my riding they will have a decimating impact on access to skilled labour for those industries. I would like to get my colleague's opinion as to how the cuts will impact his riding?

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst has only 30 seconds to answer the question.

[*English*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I have never in my 15 years as a member of Parliament received so many calls from employers saying this is hurting their industries. Their industries are respectable. Their jobs are seasonal. They are losing their people. I have never received so many calls. As a matter of fact, I never received any before, but I have received many since the spring.

Canadians like our lobster. Canadians like our cod fish. Canadians like all our fish. They love to come to the Atlantic as tourists, and we welcome them. The government is hurting all of those industries.

• (1555)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to participate in the debate on Bill C-45, the jobs and growth act, 2012.

This act would implement key initiatives that would bolster Canada's economy and help improve communities across Canada with measures that create jobs, support families and communities and respect taxpayer dollars.

Many of my colleagues have, over the course of this debate, highlighted the numerous important measures that are proposed in the bill. These include extending the hiring credit for small business, removing red tape, reducing fees for our grain farmers and improving the administration of the Canada pension plan.

However, I would like to use my time today to focus on the aspects of the bill that are key to the continued economic growth of my riding of Prince George—Peace River, namely our government's commitment to the streamlining of the regulatory process in order to promote the responsible development of our natural resource sector.

As we all know, a key part of our nation's future lies within our natural resources. In my riding, these resources play a significant role in the local economy. Few regions are as blessed with natural resources as British Columbia, and this sector has been a key driving force for our local economy for decades.

Few jobs in the region are not directly affected by the development of these resources. Nationally the natural resources sector, directly and indirectly, accounts for nearly 20% of our economy. That is one-fifth of all economic activity in Canada. It is massive.

That generates 800,000 high-quality jobs in Canada. Add to that the additional 800,000 indirect jobs in other sectors, and we have close to 1.6 million jobs that depend on natural resource development, nearly 10% of all jobs in Canada. It is huge indeed.

There are more than 600 major Canadian resource projects planned over the next 10 years or currently under way. These projects represent approximately \$650 billion in investments, a significant increase from the \$500 billion in investments that had been identified only a year ago.

It is no secret that in today's modern society, all of us use natural resources on a daily basis, and it is clear by these numbers that the

global demand for these resources is growing even stronger. However, we will have to compete with those other resource-rich countries for those vital job-creating investment dollars.

Acting on this opportunity means putting in place a world-class regulatory system. We need a system that ensures timely, efficient and effective reviews, a system that promotes business confidence in investment while strengthening our world-class environmental standards.

In economic action plan 2012, we introduced our government's responsible resource development plan, and in Bill C-45 we are continuing in our efforts to streamline the regulatory process while also maintaining rigorous environmental standards.

This commitment to streamlining the regulatory process and responsibly developing our natural resources would have a positive impact on all Canadians. In doing so, we would not be only creating and sustaining high value jobs and economic growth, but also generating billions of dollars in tax revenues to help pay for important social services.

Let me be clear. Despite continued fearmongering on the part of the opposition, projects would not proceed unless they could be done safely and responsibly. Eliminating duplication or updating legislation does not mean we are weakening the environmental standards. On the contrary, by streamlining our regulatory process we can focus environmental assessments on major projects.

For example, our proposed changes to the navigation protection act are a continuation of our government's commitment to streamlining the regulatory process. These changes would clearly define the major waterways upon which regulatory approval is required, and rely on the common law to protect navigation in non-listed waterways.

Canada's waters would continue to be protected by Transport Canada's marine safety laws, the Fisheries Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, as well as various provincial statutes.

In fact, Canada has nine acts of Parliament governing marine safety. These strict rules and regulations govern the development and shipment of products like oil and gas to safeguard public health and the environment. For example, Canada requires ships to provide 24 hours' notice before entering its waters.

The federal government also inspects every foreign tanker on its first visit to a Canadian port and, for vessels making multiple visits, at least once a year thereafter.

All large crude oil tankers must now be double-hulled. Smaller vessels must be double-hulled by the end of 2014.

Government Orders

Thanks to tough legislation and technological innovations, there have been no spills from double-hull tankers in Canadian waters, period. Nor have there ever been spills from tankers escorted by tugs with a local pilot aboard.

• (1600)

In addition, oil-handling facilities are required to have oil pollution prevention plans and oil pollution emergency plans in place. The government reviews the plans and equipment and evaluates the oil-handling facility's capabilities through exercises. With regard to pipeline safety, pipelines are currently the safest and most efficient method of transporting large volumes of oil and petroleum products over long distances, and our government has similarly tough legislation and rules in place to prevent spills.

The National Energy Board subjects pipeline development proposals to an extensive review that ensures pipelines are safe and protect the environment and the public. Permits are only granted once environmental issues and first nations concerns have been considered. Pipelines and equipment must also meet Canadian Standards Association specifications, which are considered among the most stringent in the world. Safety, integrity and emergency response programs specific to each company's infrastructure are regularly reviewed and audited by the National Energy Board. The ongoing monitoring of pipelines, inspections and site visits, as well as the ability to issue mandatory compliance orders, are also some of the tools in place to ensure pipeline safety. We are taking every possible measure to reduce the risks associated with resource development and transportation. In fact, we are going further than any government before, under our responsible resource development plan.

Why am I bringing up all these important safety measures? While Bill C-45 would continue our government's commitment to streamline the regulatory process, we would continue to have a rigorous environmental review process that would ensure our resources are developed responsibly.

As I said previously, my riding of Prince George—Peace River is a resource-rich region in Canada, with many of my constituents reliant on the development of our natural resources.

I strongly believe that we must continue to remove duplication from our regulatory system, while also ensuring that our changes would not negatively affect our strict environmental protection standards. I believe that is what we would do with the measures we have introduced in Bill C-45. We can remain good stewards of the environment and our natural resources at the same time. That is why I am proud to support Bill C-45.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very familiar with the area my hon. colleague represents. I have travelled all over northwest British Columbia. Major pieces of infrastructure could go through rivers like the Dease and the Stikine, as well as lakes where the water is safe to drink. These regions should be protected by UNESCO, because they are very sensitive ecosystems.

Is my colleague worried about the fact that there is almost nothing left to protect these waterways and lakes? What does he think of the

fact that there are practically no more environmental hearings? What will protect that area?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I had the experience of working on pipelines as a young guy, and one of the jobs we worked on was actually a replacement of a pipeline that was 50 years old. We saw that on the side wall there was hardly any erosion with a 50-year-old pipeline. It was basically intact, the way it was put in the ground 50 years before. This was from 50 years ago in terms of the standards and the rest of it. We are proposing even more increased standards than we had then and than are in place today.

I do not see any concern in terms of navigable waters or of the waters of concern that the member mentioned. I do not see it. Frankly, we live around pipelines all the time in northeastern B.C. and see very few incidents.

• (1605)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we previously heard from some of my colleagues from Atlantic Canada that the previous Conservative budgets are killing their area. In Cape Breton, we see what they have done, with more than 300 jobs being cut, and now we will see it with the seasonal help.

In this budget, in the previous budget and in budgets to come, do the Conservatives have a bit of a plan of privatizing rural Canada, of taking services out of rural Canada, whether it is Parks Canada, the EI changes, what they are doing to fisheries and what they did with the Wheat Board? Is there some sort of agenda here to privatize rural Canada? Can my colleague answer that question?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, as I said before in my speech, responsible resource development is about jobs, especially in my riding.

The member asked the question about jobs and I would say 100% of our jobs are either directly or indirectly related to natural resource development in Prince George—Peace River. The jobs question is an obvious one. It produces jobs and will produce jobs for well into the next century. Natural resource jobs will be part of our story and a good positive economic story for Canada.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the member. The member who represented that riding before was an esteemed member of the House and I think the current member is doing a fine job. His constituents should be proud of him.

He talked about the importance of streamlining regulations. The Navigable Waters Protection Act has been causing tremendous problems and cost delays, especially for the forestry industry. I point the member to some testimony at the Standing Committee on Transport in 2008, where one official testified that the forestry industry would go into an area, say every spring, that they would typically cut and they would have to, at times, seek individual approvals for up to 3,000 temporary bridges over creeks that no one could even get to with a canoe or a kayak.

That will now not be the case. What does the member think about that, particularly for the forestry industry in his riding?

Government Orders

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, just to confirm what the member said, in the reviews prior to this, the environmental assessments have been done on even the most minor projects. We have seen the replacement of a culvert have an EA or the construction of a boat launch have an EA, or a similar project as the member referred to. These simply are not going to be required under the legislation. It is appropriate. EAs are meant for higher impact projects and the fact that we are moving in a way that streamlines the process is a good thing.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join this debate. Certainly, there have been some valid arguments brought up, especially with respect to the size of the bill. I want to speak particularly about one aspect of the bill and that is the changes to EI. However, certainly the size of the bill is worth noting off the top of my comments.

We look at the vast impact it has on so many different government departments and pieces of legislation. To lump them all into one omnibus bill was a practice that was very much frowned upon when our current Prime Minister was a member of Parliament back through the mid-nineties and was the leader of the opposition. He spoke passionately in the chamber about his opposition to omnibus legislation. Probably one of the most interesting debates we could have would be between the current Prime Minister and himself circa 1993, because I think we are looking at two different people with respect to what he said then and how he practises the administration of his duties currently as Prime Minister.

Between the years of 1993 and 2001, the total number of pages in the budgets presented by the then Liberal governments still would not add up to the number of pages in this particular budget and the impact that it has on the various departments.

As I indicated earlier, the Minister of Finance appeared before the finance committee and could not answer two-thirds of the questions because they fell under the responsibility of the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of Fisheries or the Minister of Transport. To lump all of these into one bill, I think it is a huge injustice. We have heard that from group after group. Certainly, we in the Liberal Party do not support a budget of this size and the approach that the government has taken.

I want to speak specifically about the changes to EI but, even more importantly, about the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor that has gone on since the government has taken power. Today there was a study released citing an increase of 31% in the use of food banks since 2006. In a perfect world we would not have food banks. Unfortunately, there are some people who slip through the cracks for one reason or another. However, to see that the usage has increased by 31% since 2006 is substantive.

What worries me is that we know who would be impacted by certain measures in the bill, such as increasing the age of OAS from 65 to 67. It would not impact corporate lawyers.

It is funny that today the Minister of Human Resources talked about what the government is doing with respect to income splitting for the poor people in this country. I am sure the guys down at the Salvation Army hostel were high-fiving each other when they heard that the government is coming forward with income splitting.

First of all, one has to have an income before it can be split. The government has turned its back on the most vulnerable in our society time after time, and certainly in this instance.

When we look at the increase in the OAS from 65 to 67, that would hurt the poor, the low-income earners in our community, the people who are not in a position to save going forward. They are just able to pay their bills from week to week, let alone save going forward.

• (1610)

This would also hurt those people who try to get by living with disabilities. I have had an opportunity to speak with several groups that represent people with disabilities. They say when some of these people hit 65 and get OAS and the guaranteed income supplement, that is the most wealth they have ever had in their entire lives. They hit easy street when they finally reach 65 and are able to receive OAS and GIS. We are widening the gap.

I want to speak specifically about the changes to EI and one of the programs in particular, working while on claim. This was a fairly good pilot project, one that was started in 2005 under a Liberal government and renewed by the Conservative government in 2007 and renewed once again.

It was a program for people receiving EI benefits who wanted to earn some additional money and had an employer who had a job for them to fill. It would allow them to earn 40% of their EI premium. If they were making \$200 a week on EI, they could make \$80 and keep that \$80. It was a program that worked fairly well. For someone making full benefits on EI, they could make \$195 without losing a dollar.

The government said it was going to increase the program to 50%, but it did not say the 50% was on total earnings. There was no mention of that being on total earnings. Now what happens is that people lose the 50¢ right from dollar one. Now that person who was making \$200 a week and made \$80 in a part-time job would lose \$40 of that.

What is that doing to our economy, especially in communities that are driven by seasonal industries? I got a call from a farmer from Prince Edward Island. He tried to get someone to come and grade potatoes for an afternoon—

• (1615)

The Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Essex.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, again, the member said he was going to get up and speak about EI and the budget implementation bill.

The only two measures contained in here are the extension for one year of the EI hiring credit and the rate setting for the EI finance board, the continued mechanism for setting the rates for employment insurance. Working while on claim was in a different bill.

Government Orders

I would ask that some modicum of relevance be enforced in that regard.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not totally disagreeing with the objection. If the member can stay within the parameters of the bill, it is preferable. Since there is only about two and a half minutes left, perhaps the member could address comments to that part of the bill.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, if I could, on the same point of order, I would say it is the budget implementation bill and the budget included changes to the working while on claim program that will devastate local economies. It did away with the five-week extension that is going to hurt areas of high unemployment in this country. I think those points are relevant.

The Conservatives are talking about jobs, and there are some people who want jobs but are not able to access those jobs. The relevance is obvious.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not finding that it is irrelevant. I think I was clear on that. On the other hand, if the speaker also wants to address these other two points, I would invite him to do so.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I would just ask for clarification.

If there is a bill in the House, I cannot see why we cannot talk about what is not in the bill to correct certain measures. It is a bill on—

The Deputy Speaker: I think we have made it clear. The Speaker has made it clear in other rulings that relevancy allows for that type of an approach. I think it is also clear that one cannot apply one's entire time in the course of a speech, whether it be a 10-minute speech or a 20-minute speech, on what is not in the bill.

Perhaps the member can stay within those parameters, which have been a long-standing practice in the House. It is correct to say, "This is something that should be in the bill". That is quite acceptable, but the member cannot spend his entire time on that.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Once again, Mr. Speaker, that is a very fair and just ruling, which I appreciate.

I will be quizzed by the other side on why I do not support this budget implementation bill because of the EI credit for new hires. Every bundle of thorns may have a couple of roses in it. Actually, that is not a bad measure. That is a good measure and I support it, but it is the other measures around that.

The other problem around this are the employers in rural communities that operate seasonal industries. They will not have employees to hire if families are unable to sustain themselves in rural communities. That is the essence of how I would tie this together. The credit will be no good to them if there are no skilled workers in those communities left to support those industries.

• (1620)

Mr. Yvon Godin: I do not know any more, Mr. Speaker, if it is in the bill, out of the bill, close to the bill.

With regard to foreign workers, does he find that foreign workers accepting 15% less in wages compared to other Canadians is discriminatory with this type of formula?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. We have to be careful how we address the issue of temporary foreign workers and I do not think we have it right yet. Temporary foreign workers are an important part of our economy, especially rural economies. If people go to the agricultural sector, some of the best workers are temporary foreign workers. A group of temporary foreign workers may come in every harvest. Those temporary workers are able to work and sustain other seasonal workers within that industry. That is where the crops are grown and the fish are harvested. That is where a lot of the wealth from the country is realized.

If there are 20 people working the fields, there is probably an infrastructure of another 10 or 15 that are being supported by those workers in the field. They have to be treated with respect. They get that money and go back to their own communities. It is almost an indirect form of foreign aid. It is of benefit to them, it is of benefit to the workers in that industry and it is of benefit to the businesses and communities.

We are hearing it not just from people that receive EI benefits, we are hearing it from municipal and community leaders who know that these changes are going to have a negative impact on their communities. That is why we stand and represent them today.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the member to comment on a couple of statistical facts.

Canada has the lowest debt to GDP ratio in the G7 countries. I believe it is 34%, projected to go as low as 32%. In addition, the International Monetary Fund has predicted that Canada will be a leader in the global economy over the next two years. There have been 820,000 and some odd jobs created since the global recession ended in 2009.

Could the hon. member tell us what people in his riding have said about the jobs that have been created and about the fact that Canada has come out relatively well from the global economic recession in relation to other countries around the world?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, I love the opportunity to speak about the foundation that was laid by the Jean Chrétien-Paul Martin years, and John Manley and the member for Wascana in their stewardship of the Department of Finance.

When we talk about statistics, the unemployment rate has actually increased under the Conservative crew. They say that they have created 800,000 jobs, but those jobs have been created in Alberta, Saskatchewan and a few in Newfoundland. The Conservatives can separate their shoulders patting themselves on the back, but it is the resource sector that is creating those jobs.

Let us talk about the statistics. Let us talk about the record debt in the history of our country that the Conservatives continue to accrue.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs stood today to say that the Liberals used to present three budgets and that the Conservatives only presented one. However, our three budgets were balanced at least. Those guys have not been able to do that and I do not really see anything in the future that would show they might be able to balance it either.

Government Orders

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Churchill, The Environment; the hon. member for Western Arctic, Fisheries and Oceans; the hon. member for Manicouagan, Aboriginal Affairs.

The hon. member for Essex.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to finish off the last debate on the foundations put forward by Jean Chrétien, the member for Cape Breton—Canso sat there while that government took \$53 billion from workers and businesses from the EI surplus.

Bill C-45, the jobs and growth act, 2012, is about the budget implementation act, part 2, which would implement some extremely important measures from the March budget. There are many provisions to improve our economy, which continues to be the primary focus of this government.

The results are beginning to speak for themselves in terms of the economy. There are over 820,000 net new jobs since the worst of the great recession in July 2009. Of those jobs, 90% are full-time, which speaks to strong private sector job growth.

The World Economic Forum said that our banks were the soundest in the world. *Forbes* magazine ranked Canada as the best country in the world in which to do business. The OECD and IMF predict that our economic growth will be among the strongest in the industrialized world over the next two years. Our net debt to GDP ratio remains the lowest in the G7 by a country mile or two. All three major credit ratings, be it Moody's, Fitch, or Standard & Poor's, have all reaffirmed Canada's top credit rating.

The global economy obviously remains fragile. To look at the European Union, the newspapers yesterday were filled with stories about Spain and its continued problems. Also, the U.S. growth, if we exclude the quantitative easing measures by the current administration—

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not know what this has to do with the budget. This is off topic. We are in Canada not in the United States. The budget has nothing to do with the United States.

I would like the member to stay on the budget, in the same way he asked me to do a few minutes ago.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, I waited eight minutes into his speech to raise a point of order. I am 60 seconds in on setting the general tone of the economy as the context for the budget measures, which will continue to improve economic growth. The member should at least allow me seven more minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: As I have indicated in the past and again today on the relevancy issue, which I think is the point being raised, there certainly was not anywhere near enough time given to the member for Essex to get to that.

The member is welcomed to proceed.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member. I take it in the good spirit that the member intended it of course. It is very collegial in the House and Canadians who are watching at home should understand that is how we do business in the House.

I would just like to finish my thought on the economy. If we exclude the quantitative easing measures, the recent second stimulus of the U.S., its growth failed to meet expectations in the last quarter. We are watching that economic development and responding to it. We understand there is more work to do and that is why we are doing it.

Bill C-45 continues our low tax trajectory. The extension of the EI hiring credit, for example, is a measure specifically against taxes incurred by small businesses. We continue on that low tax trajectory for creating jobs and growth.

Contrast that with the opposition. Those members like a high tax trajectory. Their plan is full of it. The member for Nickel Belt, on October 25, lamented that the government was not collecting enough taxes from Canadians. They support a much different approach, but it is one that would kill jobs, not expand economic growth. We cannot increase the cost of doing business as significantly as those members have proposed and expect that businesses will somehow create jobs.

We support many measures in Bill C-45 and I wish opposition members could bring themselves to stand on their feet and support them.

One measure is our attempt to extend the EI hiring credit for small business another year. It benefited over half a million businesses last year and stands the prospect of doing similarly in this current context as well.

I would think the NDP would oppose our shift from oil and gas tax preferences to bio-energy, but that does not seem to be the case.

There are two major issues I want to talk about with respect to Bill C-45, which I wish the NDP would support.

The first issue is the changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities since 2007. We looked at this issue extensively for many months back in 2008. We are seeking to clarify the intent of the bill first of all. It is about protecting navigation. It was that way in 1882 when the bill was brought in and it was, quite frankly, that way up until the mid-1990s. It is a series of court interventions that have broadened the definition of a navigable water to the point where it is no longer useful. If a canoe or a kayak can be floated in four inches of water for a small distance that is considered a navigable water even if one has to portage that canoe or kayak five times over the course of a kilometre. They consider that a navigable water. Most of us in terms of applying common sense would know that is actually not the case.

Government Orders

We are looking to clarify that act, and that is important for a number of reasons. One is the infrastructure projects that roll out across the country, building critical infrastructure. We need to have a regulatory environment that focuses on allowing those projects to move forward. We are applying scrutiny where we need to apply scrutiny, which is where navigation has a serious likelihood of impairment. Our approach does that.

We had to consider two options. One is do we narrow the definition of a navigable water or do we take an exemption approach or a list approach as to which waterways we look at and which ones a navigation permit will not apply.

Witness after witness for weeks could not come up with the definition of a navigable water. It is incredibly complex and the nature of waterways across the country are exceedingly complex. That makes it difficult to come up with a workable definition of what a navigable water is. We had the municipalities come before committee. Representatives of seven provinces and two territories were at committee. They agreed with the approach that we are taking, which is to look at which waters we apply this to and which ones we do not.

• (1630)

Where are navigational interests to be protected and navigational rights to have that additional scrutiny, and where will they not? When we debated it back then, we had three parties supporting that approach. Sadly, that is not the case as we debate this measure today.

I gave the example earlier when asking the member for Prince George—Peace River about a forestry company going into an area where navigability is not an issue. If one were to take a kayak somewhere, according to the way the courts have defined navigable water, it would take one, in some cases, hundreds of kilometres to get to that particular area, if one even dared to go there. These are areas where logging companies go in and cut on a regular basis. However, for every temporary bridge across a creek, even if it were an intermittent creek, there would have to be a separate application to get a navigable waters permit. If there are 200 temporary bridges, it would take 200 applications. If an inspector from Transport Canada has to go there and do a site inspection, we can imagine how unwieldy and difficult it would be for one to develop a plan when navigability is not even a remote issue at all. We are moving to a risk-based approach and one that makes a tremendous amount of sense.

The second item I want to talk to is the bridge to strengthen trade, DRIC. The new Detroit River international crossing is this government's single most important infrastructure priority. We have not only said so here but have consistently proven it in this place, whether via the establishment of the borders and gateways fund in 2006, or the International Bridges and Tunnels Act in 2006, or the budgetary measures to support the parkway and the DRIC in 2007 and beyond. This act would insulate the DRIC from frivolous lawsuits. We already have 10, including three NAFTA challenges, aimed not at ensuring that the project is compliant with Canadian laws but to slow it down and kill it. The opposition stands for that delay and it should not. Its members should get behind this and Bill C-45 so that we can get jobs going.

Some 10,000 construction jobs and thousands more will be created from the necessary long-term business investment that will come because we have predictability at that corridor. Our trucks can move our goods across the border. Billions of dollars and thousands of jobs are waiting for this to go ahead. Opposition members stand for delay. Shame on that party. The members should instead stand up for it.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's fine statement was very interesting to hear, but the problem is when the government's only priority is to export Canada's raw materials as quickly as possible without any processing, and when, in order to do so, it destroys environmental laws.

The following question comes to mind: does the government really believe that the models used by some third world countries, that is, exporting only raw materials, have helped those countries develop?

[*English*]

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, the member should have been here in 2008 to attend these committee hearings, because when we were looking at the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the kind of regulatory regime that stakeholders were looking for, we were not talking about a third world regulatory regime. We were and are talking about applying approaches, for example, that are in other major jurisdictions like the United States. We are not far off the mark in that. We are looking for efficiency in the regulatory environment.

We have other laws and other means of capturing environmental concerns, for example, if those are the concerns of the member opposite. However, for navigation on particular waterways, we are applying a common sense approach to whether or not an issue should be granted a navigable waters permit or not.

I would encourage the member to support the approach of the government and vote yes to Bill C-45.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the member's comments regarding employment insurance. At the end of the day, the reality is that the Auditor General of Canada is the one who recommended that EI funds go into general revenues. The government might not necessarily have liked that or support the Auditor General on that, but that is the reality of it. The other reality that the member needs to be aware of is that under Liberal administrations, we saw employment insurance premiums reduced on those working from over \$3 for every \$100 of earnings, virtually every year, whether it was under Jean Chrétien or Paul Martin.

Government Orders

When we now see the Conservatives in power, their understanding of the benefits and the need to use those benefits to support industries has been prompted best by my colleagues from the Atlantic caucus who, day after day, have had to hammer the government to try to make improvements to some of the changes it has made to the system. Fortunately, from the pressure of members from the Atlantic caucus of the Liberal Party, there were some changes made but not enough.

Why has the government not treated unemployed workers with the respect necessary to allow them to sustain themselves during difficult times in industries that really are dependent on the provision of some sort of assistance?

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, of course nothing could be further from the truth. We have demonstrated time and again through our measures that we have not only been able to support those who are unemployed and have lost their job through no fault of their own, but also that we have been working as quickly as possible with a low-tax plan to try to create the jobs so they can get back to work in the long range.

However, while we are talking about employment insurance and Bill C-45, I would point the member to page 272 of Bill C-45, division 15, dealing with the Employment Insurance Act and the extension of the small-business hiring credit. Can the member say today whether he will stand in this place in just a few minutes and vote yes to Bill C-45 so that small businesses can get the relief they need to hire more workers and get them back to work? Or does he want them on employment insurance as well?

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that with Bill C-45, our colleagues on the other side of the house are leading us into another series of tragedies like the one that occurred in Walkerton, from the economic, social and environmental standpoints. For those who are unaware of what happened, Walkerton is a small village in Ontario whose water system was tainted because the municipal employees did not know how to conduct water purity tests. Government services at the time had been cut by a Conservative government. We are headed in that direction once again.

Economically speaking, we are headed towards a tragedy like the one in Walkerton. The current situation is bleak. In the manufacturing sector, 500,000 good jobs and good salaries have been lost. The number of unemployed workers is now 1.4 million, which is 300,000 more than in 2008. Employment has not improved, and we have suffered a major setback.

We also have a trade deficit of \$50 billion. It is not difficult to figure out. We export low-cost raw materials and import high-cost finished goods. That is not how to go about improving the balance of payments. Household debt is currently 163%. People are stretched to the limit. We also learned recently that 842,000 people had to ask for help from food banks. That is the current situation, and it needs to be fixed. Budgets are supposed to solve problems, not make them worse. The current government is doing the very opposite. It is not solving any of the problems mentioned, and it is creating new ones.

This monster bill is not doing anything to get the economy back on its feet. It does not include any tangible industrial policies to boost the economy, create jobs—good jobs not McJobs—or to recover the jobs that were lost. That is why people are now much poorer than they used to be. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has pointed out that this budget will cause 43,000 jobs to be lost. Some estimate that as many as 125,000 jobs will be lost. A budget that creates unemployment is not what Canada needs.

The Conservatives have decided to make cuts everywhere. Nothing is exempt: the tax credits that once encouraged investment, business modernization, and research and development. There is nothing left for Canadians when everything is given to cronies.

From the social standpoint, it is a fiasco. They showed no mercy. In this International Year of Cooperatives, not one housing cooperative was established. Everything has been slashed, even old age security. I will not bother to mention the wrecking of employment insurance because everyone has spoken about it. In the sacking and pillaging department, Attila the Hun could not have done better. And I have not even mentioned the budget cuts for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which helps people keep afloat. They too have been cut. I would, however, like to mention the lack of any concrete measures to support aboriginal communities. The Conservatives have made some fine speeches, but in the gap between what they say and their track record on keeping promises, there ought to be a budget. But that budget does not exist. Bill C-45 certainly is not that budget.

This is also an environmental fiasco. Previously, the Kyoto protocol and the Copenhagen accord were tossed out. The Conservatives did not want to hear about them. Now they are attacking the Navigable Waters Protection Act. So now it is possible to build a bridge or a dam anywhere, no problem, because people no longer have to worry about that act.

Greedy big businesses think nothing of charging us high prices for gasoline. The price of gasoline has risen like never before. Even if the price of oil does not go up, the price of gasoline at the pump does. And it is consumers who pay the price.

In fact, in our society the rich are getting richer while everyone else is getting poorer. That is what is called a plutocracy. For those who do not know, a plutocracy is a political system in which power is held by the rich and the owners.

• (1645)

The vast majority of Canadians are currently growing poor, while a few are getting ridiculously rich. That is a poorly planned economy.

Are we going to sacrifice our fisheries and our health? XL Foods is a prime example, but there will be others. We are handing regulatory oversight over to private businesses and saying we trust them, but if certain people decide to take shortcuts, Canadians as a whole pay the price, rarely the Conservatives and their friends. It is Canadians who wind up poisoned. It is Canadians who lose their jobs. It is Canadians who can no longer sell their livestock at a good price.

Government Orders

That is the penalty. This kind of budgetary campaign is a chainsaw massacre of all public services, and it is the public who will suffer.

Allow me here to paraphrase Albert Einstein, who said that two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity. In this case, it is the Conservatives' stupidity in public administration that is infinite. I am not so sure about the universe yet.

Canadians are afraid, and rightly so. Services are declining, their savings are disappearing, and their pension funds are at risk. Everything is going down, and this government has an obligation to achieve results when it brings down a budget. After 10 years of poor economic policies, where do we stand? Corporations are sitting on \$600 billion in savings, and that money is not being reinvested.

After 10 years of bad results, the government should start thinking about its good-for-nothing policies. The unemployment rate is up: the number of unemployed has increased from 1.1 million to 1.4 million. At the time, household debt was 115% and now it is 163%. It is time for the government to wake up and table a budget that will stimulate economic growth. Instead, it has tabled a mammoth budget that is anything but a tool for economic recovery. It is a tool that will make some Canadians rich. As for the others, they will have to rely on divine intervention.

That is a Conservative budget. It is a budget worthy of Reagan or Bush, people who led their countries into debt. This government is like the one in Britain, where government measures have pushed the country into a recession. And this recession is especially hard on the people who need jobs. These people do not want to use food banks, but they have no choice. They are looking for affordable housing, but there is no more social housing. As was the case in Walkerton, catastrophes take place, but nothing is done about them.

With this budget there will be major problems down the road. Just like in Walkerton, people will have to pay the political price. It is unfortunate that the people who pay the political price will not be the ones who suffer the consequences.

This government is gutless, heartless and, above all, devoid of economic competence. After 10 years of bad management, it should wake up and realize that Canadians' lives have deteriorated.

● (1650)

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my distinguished colleague for his speech. In a week, I will join my constituents in participating in a food drive for food banks in the region, in particular those in Saint-Jérôme.

I have been listening to all of the comments on the budget. I hear about navigable waters. We are not living on the same planet. I am being asked to support this budget; meanwhile, I am collecting food for people who have to use food banks. This year, 882,000 people visited food banks and there is nothing in this budget to support food banks.

I would like my colleague to comment on this situation. How can we pass a budget like this?

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, the problem with food banks is that they exist at all.

Canada is an extraordinarily and fabulously rich country: rich in industry, raw materials, knowledge and education. But in Canada, people are going hungry. This indecency is on you. It is your responsibility to ensure that Canadians are not going hungry.

As long as you continue to support your friends instead of the people who are hungry, these individuals will always be forced to use food banks.

The Deputy Speaker: Once again, I remind members to address the Chair and not other members of Parliament.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous Conservative speaker challenged me, saying why not vote in favour of one aspect of the budget.

When the Prime Minister was in opposition, back in 1994, he raised a question on voting on the omnibus bill. That was a 21-page document, back in the 90s. He stated:

Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill.

He asked government members in particular to worry about the implications of an omnibus bill for democracy and the functionality of Parliament.

I believe that those words are true today when we look at a bill that has hundreds of pages, compared to 21 pages back then. The Prime Minister of today has changed considerably since he was in opposition back in the 90s. I wonder if the member might provide comment on that particular change in the Prime Minister's attitude.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, I have nothing but respect for the member for Winnipeg North, but I am not sure where he gets the idea that this budget is for Canadians. That was never the case.

This budget was designed to ravage this country. This budget was designed to make Canadians poorer. This budget does not address any of the needs Canadians have. This budget only satisfies the financial community and the foreign friends of the oil companies. That is it.

With all due respect, I would say that this budget has nothing to do with Canada. It aims to destroy the country that we have spent generations building.

● (1655)

[English]

Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about the budget implementation bill and to put a few comments on the record about how I see it and how people in the constituency I represent see it.

Government Orders

I often refer to Brandon—Souris as the heart of Canada. I think many would agree that if something will sell in Brandon, it will probably sell in either the eastern part or the western part of Canada. It just seems to be the kind of community and the kind of region where we understand a lot of the little intricacies of each province and each part of the country. I am very proud to represent the people of Brandon—Souris.

When I look at the budget implementation bill, it is obvious that a lot of the information has been put before the House in a previous bill. This is basically the implementation part, which looks after the acts and updates the current acts so that they can actually apply to what was stated in the previous budget.

I see a couple of things. Obviously, I see a very challenged situation, not only for our country but for countries around the world. We know that many countries are struggling to get their financial feet under them again. They have had to make many difficult decisions. In some cases, I might suggest, they are not making enough of them and are not making them in a timely fashion.

I want to congratulate our government for taking the hard steps they have. Everybody would know that when faced with a tough financial situation, be it in one's home or in one's business, in our provinces or in our country, one has to make decisions and resolve to continue along that path. I think that is what this budget and what this implementation bill does for Canadians.

We have known for quite a while that other parts of the world are working and are working hard. They hold Canada up as an example of how things can and may be done to improve the lives of the people in the countries they represent.

The Prime Minister, cabinet and our government have listened to what people are saying. I do not think I would be underestimating by saying that hundreds of consultations have taken place across Canada. I know that I have been fortunate to participate in many of them with ministers and with members of communities to find out their needs and concerns.

One of the issues we heard, particularly in the communities I represent, was the benefit of the hiring credit for small businesses. It is a measure that provides an incentive for small businesses to hire new workers. What we want to do is create that opportunity, that first job, that first position where people can get their feet wet and get an understanding of what lies ahead of them.

The one thing I heard from my communities was that the credit is applied automatically. I think everybody here who has ever filled out a form of any kind finds that the paperwork continues to be burdensome. Every time a person finishes one page and thinks it is finished, another page is presented. That is not what we did. Businesses like it. They like the fact that it is simple and straightforward.

One of the other things I believe has benefited my communities and Canadians is the fact that every member of the government is committed to developing and signing free trade deals. We are fortunate to have ministers who understand the need, be it in agriculture or trade, to go out there and look for the opportunities. People in retail know that the situation is that nothing ever comes to them. They have to go out and find the opportunities. If they go out

and find them and create those opportunities, not only do Canadians benefit but the people in countries we actually do business with benefit. The intent is to improve their quality of life as well. Both countries will benefit from that.

We know that jobs are not automatically created. There has been an investment in the people, in the Canadians, who will fill these jobs.

● (1700)

I know there has been a lot of discussion about employment insurance. It is a very difficult challenge. Yet, if we talk to, say, the old timers, my father's generation and friends of his, they would suggest that employment insurance, at one time unemployment insurance, was merely a fund to provide a person with an opportunity until his or her next job.

I know there has been a lot of discussion about where jobs and opportunities are. I do not think any government or any person should suggest that because people do not have a job today where they want to live, they should stop looking for work. Opportunity presents itself in many forms and in many varieties. Sometimes if we close our minds to just one item or one opportunity, we miss many of the opportunities that might present themselves. I think it is important for Canadians to open their minds.

Yes, we have challenges. No one is denying that. However, I think what we want to do is to try to create the opportunity where if someone is unemployed and an opportunity presents itself, they can take that step. It is a first step and it could be a step into a far better opportunity.

We are a government in Canada, the federal government, that has said to people that the way we create the opportunity is, one, to not raise taxes on people and, two, to find ways to reduce taxes to allow them to put more money in their pockets and more opportunity to spend that money as they see fit. I think that is the right way to go. If we give people \$500 and tell them to spend it as they see fit, they are going to spend it on their needs. If we tax them and give them \$250, they are not going to be quite as happy and they will not invest in the economy, which we are trying to continue to keep going and keep growing.

There are a couple of things that I do want to highlight about the implementation bill. One that I know my colleague spoke about is navigable waters. In reality, most of the changes that we are now talking about were implemented in 2009, when they were first introduced, so it is not a shock to people.

However, I can tell members and I can give examples. Having served as a municipal councillor and a provincial member, I know that provinces and small communities were being crushed by the burden of paper, the burden of rules and regulations. I am not saying they are not important, but I will give members the example of a small community that had a rock bridge washed out. All they ever wanted to do was to replace the rock and the culvert that washed out. It took them five years to get that done. How they got it done was that they waited until the flood last year, when pretty much no rules applied and they could actually do it with approval.

Government Orders

I know we have heard it before, but I think it is important to continue to mention that we believe we are on the right track. We believe that we have created the environment. Governments do not create jobs. They create environments so that businesses and investment want to come to our country and create those opportunities.

When we talk about the 820,000 net new jobs. We did not create them. The government did not create them. We created the opportunity for it to happen and businesses have stepped up. For that, I am very proud.

What happens is, first, they do a study. Then they say, "This is not right. You have to meet this challenge". They do that, and then there is a next one and a next one. It is extremely burdensome. Just look at the projects in Canada that were up for infrastructure dollars, that were up for infrastructure investment in their communities. Many of them could not go forward because of the time constraint that was imposed upon them, because we were trying to stimulate the economy. However, many of them could not go ahead because of the burdensome regulations that were imposed upon them.

I think it is important to note that, as everyone else has, we all often talk about our own programs. I think that is the best way to sell what we are trying to do. I have heard about the \$20 billion carbon tax, maybe. What I am saying is that the intention of what we are doing is for the good of all Canadians. We are trying to move the ball forward in a very difficult economic time and I think it is important that we all do.

One of the members from further down suggested that he can find things that he likes about the budget. I encourage members to do the same and perhaps instead of focusing on the negative, focus on the positive. There are good things in every budget that we like or do not like. I think at this particular time, in this particular economy, it is important that we focus on the positive things that would help our communities and help Canadians in general

• (1705)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, when speaking to the bill, I started by concentrating on a positive thing, which was that all sides of the House agreed by unanimous consent to pull out the parts that we thought needed immediate action, the reforming of the pensions of members of Parliament. That was a very positive thing and I would like to see more of it in this place.

It is not being unnecessarily negative to notice when a piece of legislation that has been fundamental to protecting navigation rights in this country since 1882 is blown apart in a way that seems to show no reason or consideration. National heritage rivers are excluded. In percentage terms, over 99% of the internal waterways of Canada will no longer have a right to protect navigation unless the individual concerned goes to court.

There is an economic impact to this. I do not know if the hon. member is familiar with it, but many companies make their living bringing Canadians to remote areas of the country, for instance, for rafting excursions on Yukon rivers and in the Northwest Territories. Throughout Canada, there are companies whose livelihoods depend on these rivers being navigable and now they are being removed as

though they do not exist. How does my hon. friend suggest we fix this in committee?

Mr. Merv Tweed: Mr. Speaker, it is probably not for me to give advice to the opposition as to what it may or may not do, but I can give another example.

There are ditches that run alongside our roadways that, in the spring, have water in them for about eight days. By definition, those are termed navigable waters. It was never meant to be, never intended to be, never talked about when they thought about building roads or intersections, but over time the act has overtaken every definition. If someone can float something in a ditch or, as one of my colleagues said, in my glass of water, it could be termed a navigable water and that is what we are trying to correct with this bill.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member said employment insurance was there for people to find jobs and opportunity. I found opportunity in 1972. I came from a family of 11 people, who left home and went to work in northern Ontario. Is that what the member is saying, that everybody has to leave Atlantic Canada to work in the west? Is that what he is saying?

The minister clearly said that is not what she wants. She did not want people to travel more than an hour from home. She said she did not want to hurt the seasonal industry or workers, yet the member is saying people should go find jobs. I would like the member to clear that up. Is he saying the same thing as the minister or is he going his own way?

Mr. Merv Tweed: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to check the record, I spoke about the older generation. I spoke about my father, who, as an employer, dealt with people who were looking for work. The definition at that time was that it was a bridge to carry people from the job they just lost to their next job. I am not disagreeing with what the minister said. I am just saying that in days gone by that was the way it was.

Now we are saying one hour. I drive an hour to work. You probably drive more than a half hour to work. It is not unthinkable that people would do that. If there is an opportunity an hour away, we would encourage people to consider that job.

The Deputy Speaker: The Speaker only drives about 15 minutes to work and I would again remind members to please direct their comments to the Chair.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question to my colleague across the way is in regard to the Environmental Lakes Area and the need for that research station. It has played a critical role in terms of coming up with scientific information that ultimately improves the quality of our lakes and waterways.

My question to the member is this. Why does he believe the government has seen fit to cut that research, which is so critically important to Canada?

• (1710)

Mr. Merv Tweed: Mr. Speaker, a government dealing with taxpayers' money and big issues has to make choices.

Government Orders

The member will note that we made a huge investment in the lakes north of Winnipeg because that became our government's priority. We have made an investment and commitment to clean up those lakes, which, long term, benefits me because I am upstream. The water that we are going to continue to send into those areas will be better and create a better quality of life for the people who live around those lakes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last spring, the Conservatives invoked closure to have the House vote on Bill C-38. The bill contained 425 pages and amended approximately 70 laws and regulations.

Many Canadians and media outlets decried this way of doing things. Even the *National Post*, generally considered a right-wing newspaper, called into question the Conservatives' approach. This fall, just a couple of months after Bill C-38 was passed, the Conservatives are at it again and have introduced yet another mammoth bill, Bill C-45.

Bill C-45 contains 445 pages and amends 60 Canadian laws. Together, these two bills contain approximately 870 pages and thousands of measures that are, in many instances, unrelated to each other.

I have an important question to ask my colleagues opposite: at what point does all this become undemocratic? Where will it all end? While they are at it, the Conservatives could very well convene Parliament only once per session and invoke closure to introduce and pass one single gigantic bill, and then shut down Parliament. Why not? This is a relevant question, if you look at it in the cold, hard light of day.

Canadians are wondering in whose name the Conservative party is acting when it garnered fewer than 40% of the vote. The Conservatives seem to forget that our parliamentary system is democratic, and should remain so, and that it attributes importance to public debate on proposed legislation, policies of public interest, and the conduct of the executive branch. This notion is crucial, and is part and parcel of democracy.

Democracy is not simply about the electoral process, it is an ongoing process. Once elections have been held, members have the duty and obligation to monitor the government's activities on behalf of all Canadians. They are duty bound and obliged to closely review all legislation that is introduced in Parliament and express varying points of view that must be voiced and defended in the public sphere.

If this is not possible, then I wonder what purpose the members we elect serve. What kind of democracy is it when the majority prevents elected opposition members of Parliament from doing their job? It is completely unacceptable that things would work this way in this Parliament. It is truly unacceptable.

If the government wants to govern autocratically, it should say so openly. The government should tell Canadians that it thinks that winning fewer than 40% of the popular vote entitles it to flout our democratic traditions. We will see how Canadians react to this. That is exactly what this government is doing.

The Conservatives are governing as if the most elementary rules of the democratic process did not exist. They are behaving like there is no need to be accountable to Canadians, and like they have no duty and obligation to be transparent. I believe—and I am choosing my words carefully—that the way the Conservatives are behaving is scandalous.

The Conservatives' actions demonstrate a flagrant lack of respect for our institutions and a democratic tradition that has existed in this country since its founding.

If Bill C-38 and Bill C-45 only made minor technical changes, it would be a different story. We could perhaps live with that. We are not necessarily against omnibus bills. It is possible to conceive of certain situations where they may be useful. For example, when it comes time to make minor technical amendments to certain pieces of legislation. But that is not what the Conservatives are proposing.

Bill C-38 was an attack on old age security, employment insurance, and federal health transfers, and plunged us back into the stone age in terms of environmental regulation.

Bill C-45 does the same thing. We completely oppose this bill at second reading. We believe that the bill further weakens environmental protections, guts the Navigable Waters Protection Act, amends the Canada Labour Code, and takes aim at public service pension plans.

● (1715)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made Thursday, October 25, 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 Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1755)

[*English*]

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 486)*

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
 Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Carmichael
 Chong
 Clement
 Davidson
 Del Mastro
 Dreeshen
 Dykstra
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Flaherty
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Gourde
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Jean
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kent
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Miller
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Rathgeber
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Toews
 Trotter
 Tweed
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Sky Country
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 147

Adams
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Clarke
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kerr
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Menzies
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 Paradis
 Penashue
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Uppal
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to

Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bellavance
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulerice
 Brahmi
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Chow
 Coderre
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Eyking
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hassainia
 Hughes
 Jacob
 Karygiannis
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Marston
 Masse
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nash
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Perreault
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Scott
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Turmel

Andrews
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brisson
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Duscault
 Foote
 Gambeau
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hsu
 Hyer
 Julian
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 Mai
 Martin
 Mathysen
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Nantel
 Nicholls
 Pacetti
 Patry
 Pilon
 Quach
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Thibeault
 Tremblay
 Valeriote — 124

PAIRED

Nil

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

Private Members' Business

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Speaker: There being no motions at report stage on this bill, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question of the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Geoff Regan moved that Bill S-201, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like members to stay in the chamber and enjoy the wonderful speeches I am sure they are going to hear this evening on this topic of Bill S-201, the national philanthropy day act. I am very happy to be speaking to this bill. I hope that during the speeches from members of other parties, they might indicate whether they would be agreeable to a motion for unanimous consent to have the bill passed at third reading today. I will not move that at the moment.

I am very proud to sponsor this bill in the House of Commons and to offer my congratulations to Senator Mercer, who initiated this piece of legislation. He has committed a good portion of his life to various charitable efforts. The good senator has touched a lot of lives over the years in Toronto, Halifax and Mount Uniacke, where he now resides. He has lived in all those places over the years.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to colleagues from the government benches and the opposition benches of the NDP for their generous support of the bill and what it is trying to accomplish.

The all-party support we have seen for Bill S-201 shows the commitment of all sides of the House for the establishment of National Philanthropy Day.

We should all give our thanks to the countless volunteers who make Canada the most caring country in the world.

I am very pleased that the bill was reported back to the House by committee without amendments. I am pleased to hear about the strong level of support it received at committee and about the stories others in this place have shared, here and in committee. They are members who share a commitment to helping others through a wide

range of fundraising efforts. I know that many members are involved in charitable efforts across the country.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage said, this bill is about more than Canadians helping Canadians, although it is certainly about that. It also recognizes that we step up when help is needed around the globe. Just look, for example, at the recent disaster relief efforts in Haiti, Japan, and East Africa. I am sure that there are Canadians involved along the eastern seaboard of the United States where they have been affected by Hurricane Sandy. We hope the devastation from that storm is finished or is about to be finished.

This act would designate the 15th day of November each year as National Philanthropy Day.

Let me recap the purpose of the bill. First of all, it would increase public awareness of National Philanthropy Day as a time to thank those who give throughout the year. Second, it would focus public attention on the major accomplishments made possible through philanthropic contributions. Third, it would honour key local individuals and corporations for their philanthropic endeavours. Fourth, it would recognize local fundraisers and volunteers, which is really important, and thank them for their time, their talent and their dedication, which is so critical in our society.

This type of nationally recognized day would encourage schools, community groups and individuals to become more aware of the impact of philanthropy and to get involved themselves as volunteers or donors.

Some organizations are having a tough time these days. Some of their volunteers are getting a bit older and have decided that they have given their time and are going to do something else now or take a break from their volunteering. Some organizations are having a difficult time getting new volunteers.

It is really important that we find ways to encourage Canadians to give the time they have. Most Canadians are very busy. They have busy lives, often with young families. They are running them off to soccer and hockey and so on. We need to encourage people to take part in volunteering activities.

This day would also be used to recognize and pay tribute to the great contributions philanthropy has made to our lives, to our communities, and of course, to our country.

● (1800)

My colleague from Sudbury knows about this, as the former executive director of the United Way in Sudbury. He was right when he said earlier in debate on the bill that he believes that National Philanthropy Day will heighten public awareness of the importance of charitable giving and volunteerism. It will also move us towards having nearly 100% of Canadians getting involved and getting engaged in charitable activities on a regular basis. Those are worthwhile goals he alluded to.

The first National Philanthropy Day was held in 1986 to celebrate the endless daily contributions individuals and organizations across the country and across the world make to countless causes and missions.

Private Members' Business

This year, more than 100 National Philanthropy Day events and activities are taking place across North America. Over 50,000 people are taking part.

Sixteen Canadian events honour philanthropists and volunteers in most major Canadian cities.

When Senator Mercer testified at the heritage committee of the House, on October 16, he pointed out that recent research revealed that the troubles we have with the economy have negatively impacted charitable giving. In difficult times, it becomes tougher.

A lot of Canadians have a history of digging a little deeper in tough times. It is just that fewer Canadians have had the ability, perhaps, to dig as deep during an economic slowdown.

As Senator Mercer said:

The number of Canadians giving to charities has stagnated, and donation levels are not rising in response to the increase in the need for the services that charities provide.

That is why he believes it is so important to recognize people who so generously give of their time, their energy and their resources.

Canadian giving has dropped for the last three years, according to Statistics Canada. The charitable sector, however, has over \$100 billion in annual revenue. It is made up of more than 161,000 organizations in Canada. The numbers involved here are incredible. There are over a million paid staff and over six million volunteers. That is a huge chunk of this country's population. It is a remarkable number.

Both at home and around the globe, Canadians are recognized for their generosity and compassion. As members of Parliament, we all continue to be inspired by the dedication of volunteers who give freely of their time to improve the lives of others.

Through Senator Mercer's persistence, dedication and hard work, the Senate has passed the bill on several occasions in the past. However, it has always been sidetracked for one reason or another, whether it was elections or what have you. I hope that this time it will be passed by my colleagues in this House and given royal assent by our Governor General.

Every one of us is a beneficiary of Canada's generous spirit of volunteerism. I think of the ways I benefited as a young person, as a child, from hockey coaches, soccer coaches and teachers who went out of their way to give extra time to help out. I probably needed lots of extra time.

We can all think of ways we have benefited over the years. Today I benefit from the fact that my son has people in scouts. He is in Venturers now. Leaders in scouting and Venturers make contributions to my family with their great work.

The philanthropy I am speaking of is exemplified by organizations such as Beacon House, a food bank that serves the Bedford-Sackville area, part of which is in my riding, and Phoenix House, in Halifax.

My colleagues across the way are anxious to have the question asked, I think. I am getting a good sign about possible unanimous consent.

Large organizations such as Feed Nova Scotia, which collects and distributes food to over 150 food banks and meal programs, thrive under the caring spirit of Nova Scotians.

Nationwide, Canadians give more than two billion hours of their time a year to help others. Two-thirds of all Canadians donate to charitable organizations each year.

As members of Parliament, we know about the thousands of groups that do tremendous work in our towns, our villages and our cities. I know that all colleagues here are most generous with support for these groups. They have shown their support for Bill S-201.

It is in recognition of these immeasurable contributions that we look to recognize National Philanthropy Day every year, and with their support, we are about to see that happen.

● (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our position is also clear: the NDP supports the senator's bill. That said, an official day of philanthropy is not enough; it is merely a first step.

In my colleague's opinion, apart from simply declaring an official day of philanthropy, what concrete measures should be taken to help organizations and volunteers?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, who is also my neighbour in the Confederation building.

I agree that other measures are needed. We talked about a tax credit for certain volunteers. There are various ways we can help organizations that make significant contributions to our communities.

This bill is about a national philanthropy day, and that is important. As my hon. colleague knows, it is up to the government to decide on spending. All we can do for now is create a philanthropy day to indicate that it is very important to recognize people who donate their time or money to good causes.

● (1810)

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member for Halifax West that we ought to be celebrating volunteerism every day of the year. However, it is a great idea to have one day a year to celebrate it officially through a national philanthropy day, which is the inspiration of good Senator Mercer, of the other place. It is a great idea. I think we can all agree on that.

Would the hon. member agree, as well, that we should also find ways to strengthen support for volunteers? We have moved forward in certain ways with, for instance, tax credits for volunteer emergency service workers, such as volunteer firefighters. Would it be helpful to make those tax credits refundable such that low-income firefighters would benefit as well? Is that one of the ideas we should be considering as a House?

Private Members' Business

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and friend from the neighbouring riding of Kings—Hants, where Senator Mercer resides. I know that he was not rising just to solidify that vote in the next election. He already has that, but his point is well taken. It would be a positive move if the existing tax credit for firefighters, for example, were extended so that it was refundable, because at the moment, people who are low income would not receive it. That would be a very positive move.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's presentation quite attentively. For a nation of 34 million people, we are a nation of givers. Our nation was built on the backs of volunteers. It might be interesting to note that there are over 13 million volunteers in this country.

I am standing in support of the member's bill. I applaud him for taking the time to put this together and bring it to the House. It highlights the importance of saying a big thank you to the many volunteers who make Canada, and its communities, the country it is.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, this is, of course, the time for questions and comments, and that was a very appropriate comment. I am grateful for the House's support for this legislation and for all the comments we have heard.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank the hon. member for bringing this bill forward. I also thank the gentleman from the other place who sponsored it.

We have seen this bill come forward in the House before. As was mentioned, it came before the Canadian heritage committee and it was one of those moments at committee where members really took in what was being said and agreed on everything.

It goes without saying that volunteers have helped build our country. It is on the backs of people who have volunteered their service to the country that we have built the nation we have.

The member for Richmond Hill stated quite succinctly how important volunteers were to our country.

On the weekend, I had an opportunity to be at what is called the "Celebration of Hope". It is the 24th anniversary of this spectacular event in my riding, where volunteers bring together hundreds of people to raise funds for cancer research.

At that time, I also had the distinct pleasure to present the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal to two people who had helped make this 24-year fundraising campaign such a success, Allan and Betty Bell, two pillars of the community, who despite the fact they suffered the loss of Ms. Bell's daughter and Allen Bell's sister, they took that and built it into something that raised hundreds of thousands of dollars over 24 years for our community. It was not just the fact that these two individuals had spent so much time building and putting their time and efforts into making the Celebration of Hope such a success. It was the thousands of people who came together on a Sunday afternoon to hear the stories of people who had been touched by cancer and to hear of the successes that 24 years of fundraising by not only the people in this organization but from across Canada had led to by providing better results for people who suffered from cancer.

I also had the distinct honour this weekend of presenting 17 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals to individuals from across Ontario, but predominantly from my riding, who had done the same. They have gone just a bit further, worked just a bit harder and have given a lot of their time and energy to causes to help build our community and our province, and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee is an opportunity for us to thank them.

I will not take up too much of the House's time with respect to the bill. It is quite clear that members on all sides of the House are supportive of taking a day and recognizing all the individuals who have helped to build our country and to thank them for their service to their communities and the province. I know we on this side of the House, as well as members on both sides of the House, look forward to moving this bill forward and having that one day a year to build on, as the Prime Minister announced, November 15, the day that we would celebrate our volunteers. He also brought forward the volunteer service awards in recognition of those individuals who had worked so hard. We will build on that. This is a great opportunity for us to do that.

I thank the members of the heritage committee who helped bring this forward very fast and the hon. member for his stewardship of it through the House.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last time I was here, I talked about philanthropic organizations. I spoke from the heart about my bill, C-399, for 15 minutes. I was very clear and I never looked at my notes. This subject is very important to me. Yesterday I mentioned that it was "Madeleine Nadeau's bill"; Madeleine Nadeau was my grandmother.

Today I am going to take another tack and ask everyone to be patient. I am going to go at this point by point because it is important to paint a picture of the situation.

National Philanthropy Day is important, but, for me, it is the first stage. In the strategic planning of a responsible government, it is important not just to thank people, but also to adopt a vision and put specific measures in place.

The purpose of National Philanthropy Day is to increase public awareness of charitable activities and to thank people who make donations throughout the year, not just those who give money, but also those who offer some of their time on a volunteer basis.

A Statistics Canada study based on 2010 data confirms that the number of Canadians who donate to charities has stagnated since 2007, which is troubling. The volume of donations has also not increased, despite the greater need for services. As for volunteer hours, the same study shows that, despite an increase in the number of people who do volunteer work, the number of hours has not changed.

Failing an adequate number of donors and volunteers, charities will be unable to provide essential services to the communities we live in. It is therefore essential to put tools and mechanisms in place to help these organizations continue to offer their services. In a way, these organizations are our last resort.

Private Members' Business

Since macroeconomic statistics do not provide a clear idea of the pressures many Canadians are under, let us consider some more telling figures. In 2011, approximately 3.5 million Canadians, nearly one in 10, were living in poverty; that is enormous. According to Food Banks Canada's 2011 report, no less than 850,000 people—that is almost one million—used food banks in March 2011. That is a 25% increase over the figures observed before the 2008-09 recession.

The European economy could go back into recession and that of the United States is still very fragile. Emerging markets are also slowing down. Consequently, people who are vulnerable are increasingly so.

The Canadian economy does not operate in isolation. We are subject to everything that goes on around the world. The pressures on food banks and other charities, which are straining to make ends meet, will rise further. Despite the increase in demand, the supply of assistance to charities could unfortunately be limited. Most charities depend to a large degree on government financial assistance. Those organizations will have to fight for the essential funding to maintain their activities.

In short, today I believe we have to ask ourselves two basic questions about National Philanthropy Day. First, why is it important to recognize National Philanthropy Day? Second, what more can the government do to assist this essential sector?

The answer to the first question is quite clear. This kind of day obviously costs the government very little and can generate big returns. On the one hand, National Philanthropy Day is an occasion to encourage Canadians to do volunteer work, to make donations and simply to say thank you. On the other hand, it is also an opportunity to pay tribute to major donors, to philanthropists and to local volunteers for the services they provide to the community.

The second question is much more specific and more complicated. First, we must determine what the organizations need. Imagine Canada and other organizations have asked that question many times and have made demands to the government. For example, in August 2011, they proposed an increased tax credit for charitable donations. This proposal is currently under review, but it is not clear whether the government will agree to it.

The sector also asked us to ease the limits on political activities that the Conservative government set in 1986. It is still trying to do that here, and it has almost succeeded. No matter what the government may think, political activities are important to this sector. They are often the only way to be heard amidst the flood of claims and lobbying from the private sector.

● (1820)

I have an example. A mining company opens in a region where people are very poor and rely on the existing services. For contractual reasons and all kinds of other reasons, this company does not fulfill its commitments. It pollutes, destroys and does not give back what it should to the community. The community ends up just as poor as it ever was. The only collective recourse it has is to get together, create an organization that will inform officials about the issue and that will promote the community's interests.

However, this government has decided that this organization must absolutely not be involved in any kind of politics. But it knows the local issues. That is how the community can represent itself.

Let us look at the private sector. In 2011, about \$26 billion was spent on lobbying. Let us assume that the volunteer sector spent 10% of its total expenses of \$10.6 billion, which represents about \$1 billion. What did it spend this billion dollars on? To inform the government about existing problems. And what was done with the \$26 billion? It was spent on advertising, providing misinformation and on spinning the situation.

People who have problems also have the solutions, and they are the ones who do something about it. They are also the ones invited to be in government, to stand for election, and they have lived the reality.

In closing, let us consider the mammoth budget implementation bill that was introduced in the spring and which would crack down on expenses related to political activities. I just cannot imagine that, nor can charities. We have to start thinking more strategically in order to ensure that the sector is strong.

That is why I introduced Bill C-399. It conveys the message that a national philanthropy day is a good thing and that it is important. Our position will not change. We are grateful and thankful, every day, that people who are victims can receive services, and that the poor are lifted out of poverty through the great generosity of volunteers. Introducing the bill is a way of saying that we want to take this one step further. The government has to take responsibility and do more.

Today, our position is that a national philanthropy day is important. However, the matter is not closed. There are the demands of the organizations and volunteers, but, above all, there are the demands of the people who are not satisfied with current services, whether they are private or public services, because of budget cuts. People are tightening their belts, people are starving, people no longer have the resources to move forward. We want a strong country that can move forward in the future. It is our responsibility to provide the tools.

Yes, philanthropy day is important, but we need a global vision.

● (1825)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of speaking in the House, I am once again honoured to rise today to speak about this particular private member's bill, because it fundamentally deals with how we love and support our communities.

Private Members' Business

Some time ago at the heritage committee, I had the honour of witnessing Senator Mercer's bill and hearing him talk about how he so passionately believed in this. He has been such a strong advocate for the necessity of what we are now doing that he impressed everyone at committee.

We talked about many aspects of establishing this philanthropy day, including charities and how they work throughout this country. Here I will for a moment be somewhat provincially biased in saying that Newfoundland and Labrador, according to the statistics, is by far one of the most giving provinces in this country. That is for the record, of course.

I also want to talk about the fact that Canadians in general are very giving, because we are passionate and have a belief, to our central core, about who we are as a community and how we love our communities and children. As a result, there are millions, if not billions, of dollars devoted to philanthropy in this country. We have to look at the essential character of this country and recognize the people who have given so much of their time and finances that they have made this country as great as it is.

As I have said before, when it comes to volunteering time, there are 200 communities in my riding alone and the amount of money saved by volunteers providing essential services to our communities is absolutely phenomenal. The measure of humanity involved is absolutely phenomenal. To declare a national philanthropy day as a token is well worth receiving by anyone who volunteers in this country on behalf of any Canadian.

I would like to congratulate everyone who has spoken on this bill. I would also like to congratulate Senator Terry Mercer of Nova Scotia and my hon. colleague from Halifax West who brought this forward. To the people who spoke on this, I say congratulations. This is an immeasurable token that we can give to people who give of their time and finances. What a beautiful day it will be to recognize people who give so much to their communities, provinces and country.

On that note, I would like to seek consent for the following motion, that at the conclusion of today's debate on Bill S-201, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day, all questions necessary to dispose of Bill S-201 be deemed put and that the bill be read a third time and now pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): There is no consent.
● (1830)

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I admit that I heard a no, but I did not hear a no from inside the House.

I heard a no from a stranger outside the House. If you ask the people in the House now—

An hon. member: This is not a charade.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Frankly, what we are about to witness is an extension of the charade. We heard a no, I admit it, but we heard a no from a stranger outside the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans on this matter. In fact, for voice votes members will know that members do not necessarily have to be in their appointed seats, as long as they are in the chamber. Members will also know that if the Chair senses that there is not consent for a motion, there is no consent, which is what I declared, and then we proceed.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North is rising on the same point of order?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I do think we have to be delicate in how we deal with this matter.

When my colleague asked to have the motion passed, and when you canvassed the House to see if in fact there was anyone opposed to it, I, too, was listening and did not hear anyone within the chamber. I did hear someone yell no from the other side of the door, and that was after the question was put.

I would ask that we find out if there were anyone inside the chamber, because to my understanding, no one was inside the chamber when you posed the question.

It would be a terrible precedent for us to allow people outside of the legislative chamber to deny the opportunity to see this particular motion pass in the manner that has been suggested. Therefore, I would ask that if there were someone inside the chamber who said no, we get that reaffirmed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member.

I will get to the member for Terrebonne—Blainville momentarily.

To the member for Winnipeg North, indeed, as he acknowledged, there are in fact two questions. The first question is to get the consent of the House that the motion be proposed. The second question is whether it is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, at which point at least one member who was in the House, and I appreciate that the member may not have been able to see that from his vantage point, did say no at the time. That member was in the House at the time. That is why I declared the fact there was no consent.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville is rising on the same point of order.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say that I am not a stranger. I am an elected member of this House.

I was indeed inside the chamber and I said “no” loudly and clearly. The Speaker can confirm this. He saw me. I was physically present in the House. This could resolve the matter.

However, I repeat, I am not a stranger.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage rising on the same point?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, just quickly on a point of order, I would simply say that this is about a national philanthropy day. The Canadian public wants to know why it is so important that the government move very fast to get its agenda through the House. If the NDP cannot even approve quickly a national philanthropy day—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

That is really not a point of order. It is a matter of debate as to the facts.

We are resuming debate.

The hon. member for Brampton—Springdale.

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today and speak in support of Bill S-201, which would designate November 15 of every year as National Philanthropy Day. This official designation would enact into law the government's 2009 declaration that November 15 be known as National Philanthropy Day in Canada.

While underscoring the government's commitment to supporting philanthropy and volunteerism, I would point out that volunteerism is woven into the very fabric of Canadian society. Indeed, one of the remarkable characteristics of Canadians is their willingness to give their time, money and skills for the wellbeing of others and their communities. The generosity of Canadians as individuals and as a nation is a recognized part of the identity defining us all.

The Government of Canada has shown its commitment to promoting volunteerism through the creation of the Prime Minister's volunteer awards. These awards honour Canadians who are making extraordinary contribution to their communities, their regions and, of course, our country. Announced in January 2011, these awards were established to inspire Canadians to find ways to make a difference in their communities and to recognize the contribution of volunteers and reinforce their importance.

I will expand a bit on these awards, as they illustrate the many forms that Canadian volunteer contribution can take. In total, 17 awards are presented: 2 national awards and 15 regional awards. One of the national awards recognizes life-long achievement and is awarded to volunteers who have demonstrated significant dedication and have volunteered for 20 years or more. The other national award is for emerging leaders who have volunteered for less than three years and who are building stronger communities through exceptional voluntary leadership. The regional awards recognize community leaders, businesses and business leaders, and social innovators. The awards recognize individuals or groups who have provided an exceptional contribution to their community, who demonstrate social responsibility and who use innovative ideas and approaches to improve their ability to respond to social challenges. Awards are an occasion for this government to pay tribute to the generosity of individuals, companies and organizations, all of whom contribute to

our country and inspire Canadians to take an active role and make a difference in their own communities.

As all members of this House know, Canadians are also generous in giving beyond our borders. When a need arises or a disaster strikes in a foreign country, the Government of Canada, Canadian organizations and individual Canadians all respond. They respond with an outpouring of monetary donations, food, clothing and direct assistance on the ground in affected areas. This past October, our government acted to provide assistance to those affected by flooding in Nigeria. After heavy rains in August and September, Nigeria experienced its worst flooding in more than 40 years. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced by the flooding and schools in affected areas have been closed. The Government of Canada partnered with the Red Cross to alleviate the suffering and help those who were impacted by providing housing and working to meet the immediate needs of those most affected.

• (1835)

Moreover, the Government of Canada announced in August 2012 that it would provide matching funds, dollar for dollar, for donations made to registered Canadian charities responding to the crisis in the Sahel region of West Africa. To date, the government has made a contribution of \$10 million to the Sahel crisis matching fund, which will support humanitarian agencies as they provide food, emergency health care, clean water and sanitation to those in need.

When Haiti experienced a devastating earthquake in 2010, Canadians also took action. The Government of Canada created a matching fund campaign to encourage the generosity of Canadians. Canadians donated \$220 million to eligible Canadian charitable organizations in support of Haiti. That amount was matched dollar for dollar by the government. Canadian organizations constructed transitional shelters, provided clean drinking water and vaccinated children to protect them from diseases.

The support to Haiti continues to this day. The Government of Canada is helping to revitalize the national agricultural sector in Haiti to increase income and food security, while also investing in the future of the nation by providing hot meals to children at schools around the country. Our government is also helping to strengthen health services at the community level by increasing the number of medical care facilities and the number health professionals in Haiti.

All across Canada and in many countries around the world, Canadians are hard at work and donating financially to provide comfort, relief and hope to others. Devoted Canadian volunteers are working long hours in difficult and often very dangerous conditions to improve the lives of those in need.

Every person who gives, either through grand or small gestures, is having an impact and touching lives. These people are an inspiration to us all and by recognizing November 15 as National Philanthropy Day, we are promoting recognition of the value of philanthropy and honouring those who are generously donating, volunteering and, to quote His Excellency the Governor General, building our strong and caring nation.

Once again, I want to thank all hon. members for allowing me the opportunity to speak on this important piece of legislation.

Private Members' Business

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, when 850,000 people rely on food banks for their groceries, it is time for this government to thank those who provide the food, rather than brag about its achievements.

I am honoured to rise here today to support Bill S-201, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day.

Six other, similar bills have been introduced in this House. Unfortunately, they all died on the order paper.

Like all of my NDP colleagues, I support this measure and I hope that all members of this House will do the same.

It is high time that Canadian philanthropists and volunteers were recognized thanks to National Philanthropy Day on November 15. I also hope that this recognition will serve to make the public more aware of the importance of philanthropy.

Despite the wonderful prosperity we are heading towards, some of our most vulnerable citizens are being left behind.

Volunteers and philanthropists give their time and energy to take care of those less fortunate. They do so with tremendous dedication. If governments took on those responsibilities, it would cost the state billions of dollars—\$71.9 billion, to be exact, according to Statistics Canada, or 7.8% of the GDP. That is more than the automotive or manufacturing industry. Granting these people one day of recognition is the least we could do.

The riding of Laurentides—Labelle is a model of solidarity and community spirit. It has a multitude of community resources for various aspects of the lives of its residents: organizations for youth and for the elderly, for the food, accommodation, education and environment sectors, and for international solidarity.

In the Antoine-Labelle RCM alone, there are more than 250 non-profit organizations run by volunteer boards of directors.

If the children of unemployed workers who are not receiving benefits have something to eat, it is no thanks to the sensitivity of the minister, for whom the penny dropped at the last minute just in time to patch up her botched reform. It is rather thanks to the volunteers of an organization in Antoine-Labelle called La Manne du jour, which collects donations from businesses and residents. In 2011, the organization helped to feed 1,229 people, including 465 children. This was the result of 11,110 hours of volunteer effort.

With the current investigations into corruption and collusion, there are too many stories making the rounds about elected representatives, business people and entrepreneurs undermining the well-being of society to line their own pockets and boost their status.

Fortunately, there are still people in this world who are willing to set their own personal comforts aside to devote their energy to ensuring that everyone can live in dignity.

These people are working to create a better world, which makes up for the others who are motivated by competition and personal ambition.

Canada has 160,000 non-profit and charitable organizations, more than half of which are run entirely by volunteers.

I unreservedly support Bill S-201. However, I would add that simply establishing National Philanthropy Day is not enough. Giving recognition on paper to these volunteers is only a first step towards proper recognition for what they do all the time, and the resources and tireless efforts they deploy to help society and to build a better world. This initial step needs to be followed by concrete action.

We need to face reality and look at the other side of the coin. Establishing Philanthropy Day is hypocritical given the cuts now being made by the Conservative government.

It is indeed distressing to see that at the very moment we are speaking of establishing National Philanthropy Day, philanthropic organizations are having their funding curtailed.

• (1845)

The government talks about austerity when it makes cuts to assistance programs for the poor. It talks about cuts as though they were a magic solution to economic problems. Many charities and non-profit organizations face financial uncertainty and wonder how they can meet the growing demands of Canadians living in precarious circumstances.

In the context of these draconian cuts, we also see partisan selection at work. Some organizations remain excluded; some are greatly disadvantaged by the selection and grants process, while others experience outright interference, which forces them to abandon their work. The volunteer sector is more than neglected by the Conservative government.

We have to wonder about the future of philanthropy and determine what direction we want to take. We must not send a contradictory message, by proposing to establish a National Philanthropy Day on the one hand and making serious cuts to grants to philanthropic organizations on the other. That simply makes no sense. I sincerely believe in the benefits of philanthropy and in establishing a National Philanthropy Day to recognize the work of all those men and women. I also believe it is necessary to offer more resources, to them and to the organizations with which they work.

I would therefore call upon the government to pass this bill. However, I would ask it to take action by introducing specific measures. As we have not yet entirely solved the social problems of Canadians, and as they are not all young and healthy, it is time for the government to take a serious interest in all these philanthropists and volunteers who are striving to correct the government's mistakes and negligent acts. Philanthropists and volunteers deserve real assistance to help them continue their work. Otherwise our entire society will lose out.

Private Members' Business

•(1850)

[English]

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. A few minutes ago the member for Terrebonne—Blainville had an outburst in the chamber. I would like to know if you could review the blues to determine if the words that she was using as she left the chamber were unparliamentary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I did not hear anything unparliamentary. I certainly take the point under advisement.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville has the floor on the same point of order.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Mr. Speaker, if I said anything unparliamentary, I apologize. I would like to apologize to the House. However, I would like to point out that disturbing statements were also made on the other side of the House. Some very personal insults were hurled, and I heard them. I wanted to make that point. I also want to point out that the things I said as I was leaving were not intended for the House, but for my colleagues. My words were not part of an official speech.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just accused members on this side of the House of saying things that were unflattering about her and no member from this side of the House actually did that. I am hoping that the hon. member will take the opportunity to review what was said in the House, and will come back tomorrow and apologize to the members on this side of the House whom she accused of saying personal things about her.

What we are trying to do is to get a bill that recognizes volunteers through the House. That is what we are actually trying to do with co-operation—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. We have a question concerning a point of order in front of us. As we heard, the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville offered an apology for any untoward words or phrases. I think we would consider the matter closed.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, philanthropy is something that many Canadians from coast to coast contribute to every day of the year. What the bill is attempting to do is to recognize, on November 15, the efforts of those people who give generously with caring hearts. What we are asking for is that this November 15 be the very first day. That is the reason we hope the bill will pass, the sooner the better.

With those few words, I appeal to members, in particular to those in the New Democratic Party, to allow it to go through.

[Translation]

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to support Bill S-201, which would designate the 15th day of November of every year as National Philanthropy Day.

Some people think that philanthropy is just about donating money, but that is only one part of the picture. Philanthropists are, above all, people who give their time to help causes they are concerned about. Simply put, philanthropy can be explained as doing something to make the world a better place. Philanthropy can take many forms, from donating money to volunteering time. It shows itself in grand gestures and small. It is both personal and collective. It can be public or even anonymous.

As many Canadians know, our government is committed to working with communities, young people and organizations so that together, we can build a more prosperous nation and foster a deeper sense of attachment to Canada. We firmly believe that a strong attachment to Canada unites Canadians in a common purpose and enables us to succeed as individuals and as a nation. I am sure—

•(1855)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I was just uncertain as to how much more time was left in this debate and how many more speakers we have.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In fact, there are about three minutes remaining for debate. I do not know whether that is a point of order or rather to inform the House.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

[Translation]

Mr. Jim Hillyer: Mr. Speaker, to speed up passage of the bill, I will conclude my remarks by stating that I will support the bill.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know how much time I have for my remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): There are two minutes remaining under private members' business.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: Mr. Speaker, I will take full advantage of those two minutes.

I am pleased to rise to speak briefly about Bill S-201.

It seems that everyone is happy to see this bill to institute National Philanthropy Day before us today.

A little earlier, my colleague spoke about the importance of supporting the volunteer work that is done in Canada, in terms of the impact it has on people, the services that are provided and the economy. If we add up the hours of volunteer work that are done, we realize that it would cost a lot of money to pay all those people. Passion and conviction motivate people to volunteer, but in so doing they provide tangible services to the public.

Of course having a day to recognize philanthropy is wonderful, but what tangible results will that produce on the ground? I do not think that this question can be separated from Bill S-201. The two go hand in hand and cannot be separated.

What are we going to do to really encourage people to get involved? Are we going to get out our party hats and noisemakers once a year and tell them that they are doing a great job? I do not think that this is enough.

Let us move forward with Bill S-201, but let us ask more questions, delve deeper into the issue and see how we can really make a difference in terms of philanthropy in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard will have eight minutes when the House resumes debate on this motion.

[*English*]

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to revisit a very critical debate in this House, the future of the Experimental Lakes Area. Many of us in the NDP have raised this issue, this blight, and the work that the Conservative government has done to debase and weaken the environmental standards in our country.

The Experimental Lakes Area is an institution that all of us ought to be proud of and, through that, pay homage to the tireless work of scientists and researchers, not just Canadian but from around world. They have contributed key scientific research that has played a critical role in policy and economic development. This work has truly shown that Canada is a country that goes forward with economic development in a way that ensures environmental stability; frankly, until now.

The Conservative government has waged a full-on attack on environmental regulation, on scientific research, period. Frankly, it is an offensive against anyone who dares speak out on the importance of research and scientific evidence.

The Experimental Lakes Area was founded in 1968. It is an area in northwestern Ontario that covers 58 lakes. It requires a mere \$900,000 operating budget and involves roughly 15 to 20 core staff. Some 745 peer-reviewed scientific articles have been produced based on ELA research, and those are the peer-reviewed articles that have been key in shaping policy when it comes to government or the work in which the private sector engages.

I would note, as the MP for Churchill, that I appreciate the significant work ELA scientists have done to benefit Lake Winnipeg, the first nation communities and other communities that depend on Lake Winnipeg for their livelihoods, and for all of us Manitobans who benefit from a better environmental policy that has been shaped in part by the work of the ELA.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is absolutely mind-blowing that the Conservative government has failed to see the value of the ELA and has attacked people who have spoken in favour of it. The government is keen to dismantle a program that has been so critical in the work that has been done.

I want to end by quoting Diane Orihel, director of the Coalition to Save the Experimental Lakes Area, who said "I call upon [the environment minister]...to do the right thing for Canada, for Canadians, and take over the operation of the ELA and its team of freshwater scientists".

My question for the member across and for his government is this. In order for Environment Canada to be able to truly fulfill its mandate, it requires the work of the ELA. Will Environment Canada take over the operations of the Experimental Lakes Area?

● (1900)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the member opposite on the important issue of the Experimental Lakes Area and environmental research.

After conducting a full review of its operations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will be reducing the cost of operations and program delivery. This means that the department will increasingly focus its resources on priority areas that directly support conservation and fisheries management.

As such, the department will no longer conduct experimental research that requires whole lake or whole ecosystem manipulation. We believe universities and non-government research facilities are better suited to carry out the type of research done at the Experimental Lakes Area.

Indeed, the research conducted at the Experimental Lakes Area is of interest to many other organizations. This is why departmental officials are working to transfer the facility to another operator who can continue to perform this type of scientific research.

We are hopeful that another operator can be found. The facility offers a unique opportunity to conduct ecosystem experiments; there is significant interest in this type of research within the broader science community; and the department has been very successful in collaborating with universities and other organizations.

While Fisheries and Oceans Canada is winding down its research program at the Experimental Lakes Area, the department will continue to invest in freshwater research in response to departmental needs.

The department's Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg has an active science program. The science staff are continuing to conduct research on freshwater fisheries and habitat science.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada also operates the Great Lakes Laboratory for Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences in Burlington, Ontario. Staff at that laboratory conduct freshwater fisheries research related to fish habitat and sea lamprey, and provide scientific advice to support the department's mandate.

Adjournment Proceedings

This summer, department scientists and biologists at these institutes, as well as other locations across Canada, were out in the field and in laboratories undertaking research that will help guide environmental policies and regulatory decision-making.

Departmental scientists are conducting research on aquatic invasive species, one of the leading threats to aquatic biodiversity and ecosystem health. They are conducting research on freshwater species at risk. They are conducting research on fish habitat and the impacts of human activities.

The department will continue to invest in priority scientific research, including environmental science. For example, the department has recently launched an aquatic ecosystems research fund. The strategic program for ecosystem-based research and advice began funding aquatic research projects across the country this summer, including freshwater research.

In addition, the department launched the aquatic climate change adaptation services program. This research program will support departmental science aimed at understanding climate change impacts on Canada's oceans and inland waters.

Departmental scientists are also continuing to collaborate with academia on priority research, doing science projects in partnerships with universities and supervising graduate students.

The department remains committed to freshwater science in support of its mandate. The department will continue to conduct science on the aquatic environment and fisheries resources that supports long-term sustainability and conservation. We will continue to invest wisely in priority science areas that directly support conservation and fisheries management.

• (1905)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, with all respect to the member across, it is a difficult message to believe after we have seen the changes the government has made to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

If I could note to the member across and to his government some information they already know, I would like to put it on the record that scientists say that transferring control of the program and its lakes to a university is not ideal. Universities are not in the business of conducting decades-long research, and the liability involved in deliberately contaminating a lake may be too risky and too bureaucratically complicated for a school or non-profit research foundation to take on.

What we are really talking about here is losing the wholesale range of work that ELA was able to do. It would be great if the government would just come out and say that work will no longer be done, because everybody, certainly scientists, are indicating as such.

Finally, I would like to note that the Experimental Lakes Area is doing critical work in studying ecosystems, like those affected in northern Alberta by the tar sands. They would be in a key position to study the impact of chemicals in diluted bitumen and oil sands tailings ponds.

Is the government afraid of the kind of facts that ELA would come up with when it comes to the damage we are seeing in the tar sands and the tailings ponds?

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is fearmongering, of course.

We acknowledge the quality scientific research that can be conducted at the Experimental Lakes facility. However, we believe that other organizations are better suited to conducting this type of foundational research. We look forward to transferring the facility to another operator.

The member should be assured that scientists and biologists at Fisheries and Oceans Canada will continue to conduct research on freshwater ecosystems in various locations across the country, including at the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg. The department will continue to provide funding for priority ecosystem research.

Science research and advice is and will remain one of the key considerations when making decisions that could impact the future of Canadians.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to engage the government in a discussion about the need for an international treaty on Arctic fisheries.

This summer, the loss of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean reached its greatest extent on record, shrinking to less than 3.5 million square kilometres, which is less than half the area typically occupied four decades ago. Approximately 25% of the ice mass is intact in that area.

Loss of permanent sea ice has opened up as much as 40% of this pristine region, making commercial fisheries viable for the first time in human history.

This area is beyond the 200-mile exclusive economic zones of the eight Arctic nations, so it is international water and is not covered by a fisheries management regime.

In April of this year, more than 2,000 scientists from 67 countries urged Arctic leaders to develop an international fisheries agreement that would protect the waters of the central Arctic Ocean. The 2,000 scientists recommended that Arctic Council members take the lead in developing a precautionary international fisheries management agreement; start with a catch level of zero until sufficient scientific research can assess the impact of fisheries on the central Arctic ecosystem; and set up a robust management, monitoring and enforcement system before fishing begins.

With the ocean warming and the sea ice melting, Pacific sockeye salmon, Atlantic cod, pollock and other commercially attractive species may well move northward.

Adjournment Proceedings

Within 200 nautical miles of shore, jurisdiction to regulate fishing falls exclusively to the coastal state. However, stocks that live in the high seas beyond this zone or that move between the high seas and this zone are vulnerable to over-exploitation. The lack of regulation makes the now ice-free Arctic Ocean a tempting target for high-seas trawler fleets from non-Arctic nations.

The 1995 Straddling Stocks Agreement enables coastal states to create a regional fisheries organization to manage straddling and highly migratory stocks in the areas beyond 200 nautical miles from shore by setting quotas and through other means. However, any such organization must be open to states outside the region. Any state wanting to fish within the region must join the organization. By doing so, it is able to participate fully.

We have a situation in the Arctic. The Arctic is changing rapidly. There is great concern about what is going to happen with the fisheries there, obviously.

When we speak to the importance of the work on this that is going ahead right now, we can look to the Arctic Council. Canada is taking over the chair of the Arctic Council this spring. There is an opportunity, perhaps, not to fully engage the nations in the opportunity to put forward agreements and treaties but, with a two-year timeframe for the chairmanship, to initiate that procedure.

It is going to take the government making plans, very early in the process, to accomplish anything within that two-year timeframe. That is why it is important for the government to outline whether it is interested and ready to take that step. Negotiation of an Arctic fishery organization agreement would have to at least include the European Union. The Arctic Council can take the lead. Many other countries are going to be involved.

This summer, the Chinese icebreaker, the *Snow Dragon*, took a direct route over the North Pole. It took 20 days to go from Iceland to the Asian coast. That is the reality of the situation we are facing in the Arctic.

• (1910)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to my colleague by discussing DFO's approach to emerging fisheries, including possible new fisheries in the north. I know the member is a northerner and is vigilant about issues relating to the north, so I appreciate his interest.

Currently there is subsistence fishing across the Canadian Arctic and some commercial fishing in the Canadian waters off Nunavut. Within domestic waters for new, unfished areas we employ an emerging fisheries policy. This policy follows the precautionary approach and allows for carefully managed exploratory fisheries to gather the necessary data to inform managers of the characteristics of the fish stocks and whether they can form the basis of a sustainable fishery. Our approach is to try and inform ourselves of the nature and scope of fish stocks before making any conclusive management decisions. That is the general approach we take with new unfished areas and emerging fisheries.

Further, it is important that we take into account land claim agreements and interests of northern communities. There are specific

rights and obligations that need to be factored in when considering the harvesting of natural resources in the north.

This Canadian approach, where we build our knowledge and consider aboriginal interests in order to inform the best management option, is the kind of approach we seek outside Canadian waters as well.

It is recognized that the knowledge of Arctic fish stocks is incomplete. The five Arctic coastal states agree that further research is a priority. It is far from clear that commercially viable fish stocks exist in the international area of the Arctic Ocean because many of the characteristics needed for robust fisheries are not a reality in the deep, generally low productive region of the central Arctic Ocean.

In addition, conditions in the Arctic Ocean continue to be harsh. The margins of the Arctic Ocean are starting to experience longer open water seasons, as my colleague has said. However, the international areas will continue to have access issues due to persistent and treacherous ice conditions for some time to come.

A commercially viable international fishery in the Arctic Ocean is not imminent. It is important to remember that the area is not without a governance framework as the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea already apply. It is not clear yet that there is a need for a new regional fisheries management organization treaty or that a complete moratorium is necessary.

While a moratorium is one option, Canada supports a pragmatic, precautionary approach whereby we can gather the necessary information and fully consider northern aboriginal interests before management decisions are taken.

Discussions among Arctic coastal states as to how potential Arctic fisheries could be managed were launched at the Arctic Ocean foreign ministers' meeting in March 2010 in Chelsea, Quebec. Subsequent to that, officials from the five coastal states met to consider the legal, technical and scientific issues related to Arctic fisheries.

Additionally, the United States hosted a fisheries experts workshop last summer in Alaska, where Canadian scientists joined other experts to determine the state of knowledge with regard to Arctic fisheries and identify research needs. Officials of the coastal states are looking forward to meeting again to determine how best to fill these important information gaps.

The Arctic coastal states agree that improving our knowledge of the state of the Arctic fisheries and their habitat is a priority and Canada will continue to work collaboratively to address these important information needs and develop an international approach that respects Canadian interests and ensures sustainable Arctic fisheries.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1915)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's approach and the government's approach to the conditions that will exist in the Arctic is very conservative. Quite clearly, the extent of the ice decomposition in the Arctic has moved along much faster than anyone predicted over the last number of years. The opportunity for the ice to completely leave the Arctic is now considered within the next decade.

We have a situation where things are moving very rapidly. The extent of a clear ocean now extends, in many cases, past the 200 mile limit, about which my colleague talked. Therefore, we are already in a position where we can start to assess the relative fish stocks in the area. It is important to move forward with this. There is no reason to slow down the examination of this issue. It requires attention.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, experts are telling us, as they get together to talk about these things, that there is no clear evidence of an imminent commercial fishery in the international waters of the central Arctic, but that does not mean we are not moving ahead with gathering information. We support, as I have said, a pragmatic and precautionary approach to fisheries management, where we can gather the necessary information we need and fully consider northern aboriginal interests before management decisions are taken, and that is the direction that we are going in.

We agree with the other coastal states that improving our knowledge of the state of the Arctic fisheries, their potential and habitat is a priority. Canada will continue to work collaboratively to address these important information needs and develop an international approach that respects Canadian interests and ensures that any Arctic fisheries will be sustainable.

[*Translation*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am truly honoured to participate in the adjournment debate today to speak about the right to housing, and more specifically, access to quality housing in remote northern communities. This is relevant because it ties into something that I initiated several months ago.

In fact, some of my colleagues and I did a tour of different communities in Quebec. I started this series of visits with my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue. We visited the Algonquin communities, including Long Point in Abitibi, where there are some obvious shortcomings in terms of investment in infrastructure.

Just recently, I travelled with my colleague from Joliette to the community of Manawan, near Joliette. It is about 1 hour and 30 minutes from here by helicopter. You have to go by helicopter, which means you fly over the forests and can see the flora and fauna.

We arrived in Manawan about four days ago to meet with the people who live there. There are approximately 3,000 people in this community. We visited with Chief Paul-Émile Ottawa. We visited the various organizations in the community, including the elementary school.

Today, we are talking about quality of housing. However, I will focus on the quality of and significant problems with infrastructure in general in remote communities.

The community of Manawan is cut off from the rest of the world. The village has road access, but the road is a logging road. The community is several hours away from Joliette.

A visit to the elementary school revealed some serious problems with hygiene and the dilapidated state of the facility. The school was first built in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Construction happened in stages until recently.

My colleague and I and other stakeholders who were there noted the presence of mould, which we have also seen in homes in various places. There were also problems with access to toilets for the children. They had to take a card or a number to go to the toilet because there was a limited number of toilets available.

Today I would like to talk about the obvious infrastructure problems in these remote communities.

The community of Manawan went to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada offices last year. The community also demonstrated in front of offices in Quebec City. I feel that the demonstration was not well received. When we talked to community representatives, they told us that their education budget was slashed by \$430,000 over the past year.

In my opinion, which is a well-informed one, these are repressive measures meant to punish communities that are a bit too feisty, that speak up in public.

This logical connection was brought to my attention and derives from my own observations over the past year. The Conservatives sometimes punish communities that do not support them, communities that are less docile, and they are generous toward communities that support their policies. That is what I have observed. I wanted to put that before the House today.

• (1920)

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in response to the question by the hon. member for Manicouagan. I appreciate his sharing his personal experience in this matter. Those of us who have travelled to first nation communities in our provinces, for example in my case British Columbia, have seen some of the same things he has seen.

Where we agree is that our government recognizes that access to safe and affordable housing is essential for improving economic and social outcomes and supporting healthy, sustainable first nations communities. In fact, our government recognizes that on-reserve housing must be improved.

Adjournment Proceedings

That is why we continue to work in partnership with first nations to address housing needs and ensure that long-lasting infrastructure is in place to support both current requirements and future development as well. As members know, on-reserve housing projects are an important part of community development and we will continue to provide support to first nations in that regard.

We are clearly focusing our efforts on making a real and measurable difference in the lives of first nations people. Since 2006, our government has made significant investments, including additional investments through Canada's economic action plan, to support housing on reserve. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada alone allocated more than \$1 billion in on-reserve housing support to first nation communities. In addition, from 2009 to 2011, our government provided an additional \$400 million to support the construction of new on-reserve housing and the renovation of existing housing and related housing activities. Over 4,400 units were built or renovated and nearly 1,200 lots were serviced through the department's \$150 million allocation under Canada's economic action plan alone.

What is more, the health and safety of first nation communities is of primary concern to our government. There, we do recognize that mould is a problem and a health hazard. That is why the minister's department encourages a joint approach to mould remediation and partnership with first nations and other service providers, such as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Health Canada. Our government will continue to work with first nations to address housing requirements and ensure that sustainable infrastructure is in place to support current and future development.

We are fully aware of the challenges facing first nations in the area of housing and are working to address those challenges. Clearly, our government is committed to helping first nations meet their housing needs.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his response. Just as I feared, it was replete with detailed facts and figures. It is the type of response we usually get from the Conservatives.

Since he likes figures, I would like him to know that the community of Manawan has 300 housing units for 3,000 people. I chose to study law because I am pretty hopeless at math, but even I

know that this means that there are 10 people per housing unit. That is a real concern right now.

I would like to reiterate what I said before. According to the figures that I was given today, billions of dollars have technically been invested. It remains to be seen whether the Conservatives have been cherry-picking who to give this money to, in other words, whether they have been redistributing the money to communities as rewards—in the extreme—or as incentives for good behaviour and for supporting the existing Conservative policies. That is the most disgraceful thing in 2012.

I do not have much experience in the House. I was not very involved in politics before I came to Ottawa. Over the past year, I have seen how the Conservatives work. The amounts that are invested for Indians across the country are invested to pay them back for behaving the right way or adopting the right positions according to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The time allocated to the hon. member for Manicouagan has expired. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, I need to say that the member opposite is drawing conclusions that just are not warranted by the facts. If he looks more closely at the information, he will find that our government has consistently shown its commitment to first nations across the country through significant investments and concrete actions to enable them to participate in, contribute to and benefit from Canada's prosperity. The way forward is always done in consultation with first nations' leaders.

We have recognized that access to safe and affordable housing is essential for improving economic and social outcomes and supporting healthy, sustainable first nations communities. That is why we have made the investments that we have, and we will continue to invest in this area to improve the outcomes for first nations.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:29 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Public Accounts of Canada

Mr. Clement 11629

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lukiwski 11629

Business of the House

Mr. O'Connor 11629

Motion 11629

(Motion agreed to) 11629

Petitions

Parks Canada

Ms. Leslie 11629

Experimental Lakes Area

Ms. St-Denis 11630

Ms. Quach 11630

The Environment

Ms. Quach 11630

Pensions

Ms. Quach 11630

House of Commons

Mr. Lamoureux 11630

Experimental Lakes Area

Mr. Rafferty 11630

Ms. Sims 11630

Mrs. Hughes 11630

Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Cash 11630

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski 11630

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lukiwski 11632

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Jobs and Growth Act, 2012

Bill C-45. Second reading 11634

Mrs. Sellah 11634

Mr. Lamoureux 11635

Mr. Nantel 11635

Mr. Cash 11635

Mrs. Gallant 11635

Mr. Lamoureux 11637

Mr. Dusseault 11637

Mr. Sorenson 11637

Mr. Pacetti 11637

Mr. Cash 11639

Mr. Rajotte 11639

Mr. Lamoureux 11639

Mr. Sorenson 11640

Mr. Rafferty 11641

Mr. Pacetti 11641

Mr. Albrecht 11641

Ms. Leslie 11642

Mr. Lamoureux 11643

Ms. Sitsabaiesan 11643

Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora) 11644

Mr. Dusseault 11645

Mr. McCallum 11645

Mr. Payne 11646

Ms. Sims 11646

Mr. Lamoureux 11647

Mr. Dusseault 11647

Mr. Kramp 11647

Mr. Cash 11649

Mr. Lamoureux 11649

Mr. Brown (Barrie) 11650

Mr. Caron 11651

Mr. Lamoureux 11652

Mr. Lamoureux 11652

Mr. Fletcher 11653

Mr. Cash 11653

Mr. Warkentin 11654

Mr. Rafferty 11655

Mr. McCallum 11655

Ms. May 11656

Mr. Menegakis 11657

Mr. Dusseault 11657

Mr. McColeman 11658

Ms. Doré Lefebvre 11659

Mr. Shipley 11659

Ms. Nash 11660

Mr. Del Mastro 11661

Mr. Lamoureux 11661

Mr. Norlock 11662

Mr. Dusseault 11663

Mr. McCallum 11663

Ms. Sitsabaiesan 11664

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Employment Insurance

Mr. Bellavance 11665

Sault Ste. Marie

Mr. Hayes 11665

Superstorm Sandy

Mr. Sullivan 11665

Retirement Congratulations

Mr. Tilson 11665

Eid al-Adha

Mr. McCallum 11665

Homecoming Celebration

Mr. Albrecht 11666

Telecommunications	
Mr. Chicoine	11666
Student Trip	
Mr. Devolin	11666
Restaurant Industry	
Mr. Preston	11666
Restaurant Industry	
Mr. Lapointe	11666
Royal Canadian Navy	
Ms. Young (Vancouver South)	11667
Kacey Lynn Fund	
Mr. Allen (Welland)	11667
Vandalism	
Mr. Gill	11667
Royal Canadian Navy	
Mr. McKay	11667
2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games	
Mr. Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	11668
Member for Lethbridge	
Mr. Stewart	11668
New Democratic Party of Canada	
Mrs. Ambler	11668

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mr. Mulcair	11668
Mr. Baird	11668
Mr. Mulcair	11668
Mr. Baird	11668
Employment	
Mr. Mulcair	11669
Mr. Baird	11669
Poverty	
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	11669
Mrs. Glover	11669
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	11669
Ms. Finley	11669
Taxation	
Mr. Brison	11669
Mr. Baird	11670
Mr. Brison	11670
Mr. Baird	11670
Mr. Brison	11670
Mr. Baird	11670
The Environment	
Ms. Leslie	11670
Mr. Lebel	11670
Ms. Leslie	11670
Mr. Lebel	11671
Ms. Quach	11671
Mr. Lebel	11671

Ms. Quach	11671
Mr. Lebel	11671
Ms. Crowder	11671
Mr. Lebel	11671
Mr. Angus	11671
Mr. Lebel	11671
Mr. Angus	11672
Mr. Lebel	11672
Foreign Investment	
Ms. Laverdière	11672
Mr. Fast	11672
Mr. Dewar	11672
Mr. Fast	11672
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Goodale	11672
Mr. Kenney	11672
Mr. Goodale	11672
Mr. Kenney	11673
Public Safety	
Ms. Foote	11673
Mr. Toews	11673
Labour	
Mr. Garrison	11673
Mrs. Glover	11673
Mr. Boulerice	11673
Mr. Poilievre	11673
Ethics	
Mr. Boulerice	11674
Mr. Poilievre	11674
Mr. Harris (St. John's East)	11674
Mr. Poilievre	11674
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Hawn	11674
Mr. Blaney	11674
National Defence	
Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	11674
Ms. Ambrose	11674
Mr. Kellway	11675
Ms. Ambrose	11675
Poverty	
Ms. Charlton	11675
Ms. Finley	11675
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	11675
Ms. Finley	11675
Pensions	
Mr. Dion	11675
Ms. Finley	11675
Ethics	
Ms. St-Denis	11676
Mr. Poilievre	11676
Arts and Culture	
Mr. Nantel	11676
Mr. Calandra	11676

Mr. Cash	11676
Mr. Calandra	11676
Treasury Board	
Mr. Trottier	11676
Mr. Clement	11676
Mining Industry	
Ms. Ashton	11677
Mr. Paradis	11677
Veterans Affairs	
Ms. James	11677
Mr. Blaney	11677
Search and Rescue	
Ms. Papillon	11677
Mrs. Shea	11677
Mining Industry	
Mr. Plamondon	11677
Mr. Bernier	11677
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	11678
Points of Order	
Statements by Members	
Mr. Van Loan	11678
Mr. Stewart	11678
Tabling of Document	
Mr. Blaney	11678
Points of Order	
Statements by Members	
Mr. Goodale	11678

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Jobs and Growth, 2012	
Bill C-45. Second reading	11678
Ms. Sitsabaiesan	11678
Mr. Watson	11679
Mr. Lamoureux	11680
Mr. Dreeshen	11680
Mr. Stewart	11681
Mr. Lamoureux	11682
Mr. Godin	11682
Mr. Albrecht	11684
Mr. Cuzner	11684
Mr. Zimmer	11685
Mr. Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	11686
Mr. Eyking	11686

Mr. Watson	11686
Mr. Cuzner	11687
Mr. Menegakis	11688
Mr. Watson	11689
Mr. Giguère	11690
Mr. Lamoureux	11690
Mr. Giguère	11691
Mr. Dionne Labelle	11692
Mr. Lamoureux	11692
Mr. Tweed	11692
Ms. May	11694
Mr. Godin	11694
Mr. Lamoureux	11694
Ms. Turmel	11695
Motion agreed to	11696
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)	11697

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Philanthropy Day Act

Bill S-201. Report Stage	11697
Mr. Regan	11697
Motion for concurrence	11697
(Motion agreed to)	11697
Bill S-201. Third reading	11697
Mr. Larose	11698
Mr. Brison	11698
Mr. Menegakis	11699
Mr. Calandra	11699
Mr. Larose	11699
Mr. Simms	11700
Mr. Gill	11702
Mr. Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	11703
Mr. Lamoureux	11704
Mr. Hillyer	11704
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe	11704

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Environment	
Ms. Ashton	11705
Mr. Kamp	11705
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Bevington	11706
Mr. Kamp	11707
Aboriginal Affairs	
Mr. Genest-Jourdain	11708
Mr. Kamp	11708

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