



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, April 30, 2015**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 30, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, four reports of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group.

The first report concerns the seventh annual conference of the Southeastern United States—Canadian Provinces Alliance that was held in Raleigh, North Carolina, United States of America, May 4 to 6, 2014.

[*Translation*]

The second concerns the 24th Annual Summit of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region held in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada, from July 20 to 24, 2014.

The third concerns the National Conference of State Legislatures legislative summit held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States of America, from August 18 to 22, 2014.

[*English*]

The fourth report concerns the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance conference that was held in Washington, D.C., United States, September 28 to 30, 2014.

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The first report is respecting participation in the mid-year executive committee held in London, United Kingdom, April 28 to May 1.

The second report is respecting participation in the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from October 2 to 10, 2014.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP)** moved:

That the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Finance, presented on Wednesday, December 10, 2014, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Welland.

I would like to talk about the prebudget consultations, since that is the subject of the report. I am in a good mood this morning, because yesterday we learned that the Rimouski Oceanic will be taking part in the Memorial Cup as the champions of the Quebec major junior hockey league. This will be their fourth time participating in 20 years, which is remarkable.

My good mood is a little tempered, however, by the content of the prebudget consultations. This is in no way a criticism of the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance, the member for Edmonton—Leduc, for he is doing an excellent job. I think all the parties in the House and all members of the finance committee recognize what a great job he is doing.

Although there are some interesting points in the prebudget consultation report, there are also some really troubling elements. We have no problem with some of the points, and we have supported them. Some of them even appear in budget 2015. Others, however, do pose a problem.

Until January, I was a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and had been for three years. Usually, the recommendations were a fairly accurate—though not perfect, by any means—reflection of the testimony we heard. However, the recommendations in this report, which was tabled in December 2014, make it more of a pre-election document for the existing government. Most if not all of the recommendations are from the Conservative side. Not a single NDP or Liberal amendment was accepted.

*Routine Proceedings*

Annual prebudget consultations are an opportunity to hear from witnesses from many parts of Canadian society. Whether they are from the business sector, unions or civil society, their concerns deserve to be heard and properly reflected in the prebudget consultation report.

In this case, there are a number of problematic elements. Several recommendations in the report are nothing more than lip service. For example, recommendation 23 says that the federal government should consider new ways to increase support for the Canadian aerospace industry, but does not say how. This recommendation is akin to many of the other 47 recommendations in this report in that it says where the government wants to go but not how to get there.

That is a problem because other recommendations are more than just wishful thinking. They are blatantly a rationale for Conservative policies. In any case, the committee itself was not even able to unanimously agree on those recommendations.

When the government proposes to continue reducing tariffs, for example, it fails to mention that, overall, tariffs have gone up because it eliminated the general preferential tariff.

Prebudget consultations should be an exercise that reflects what was heard in committee, but in this case what we got seemed more like the Conservative government's shopping list to prepare for the next election. We think that is unfortunate because the Standing Committee on Finance should be the place where we can thoroughly examine all the policies that were adopted by the government. That also includes Conservative members.

A committee meeting is the only place where we can call members by name. The reason for that is that, in committee, they are not government members and they do not represent their riding. They are there to use their expertise to advise the government on what direction it should take. That is not what happened in the prebudget consultations. This time, the consultations were much more negative than previous consultations and reports.

● (1010)

We submitted a minority report, which is a supplementary rather than dissenting report. It is supplementary to the 47 recommendations presented by the government. There was consensus on some of those recommendations, but the two opposition parties voted against others.

One problematic issue that the government refused to address, even though it was mentioned a number of times during the consultations, is employment insurance. The report was tabled in December 2014, but at that time, we were already worried about the government using the employment insurance fund to balance its budget since we have seen that happen before. That concern is included in the NDP's supplementary report. We had no idea what the budget was going to look like, but we were worried about that happening because of what we had been hearing. This is what we wrote in our supplementary report:

The Conservatives are banking on surpluses in the EI Account in order to fund their return to budget balance—at the same time that they continue to restrict access through the implementation of their regressive EI reforms.

By “regressive reforms” we specifically mean all the measures that were adopted during the major reform of 2012. These measures

have made it impossible for many Canadians to get employment insurance even though they contributed to it. Today, less than 38% of Canadians who contribute to employment insurance, who make their contributions expecting that employment insurance will help them, can get it when they lose their job. This does not make sense and, at the end of the day, it is very detrimental to regions like mine, like the Lower St. Lawrence, eastern Quebec, and eastern Canada. The economy in these regions has historically depended on seasonal employment, to a great extent, and still does. I am proud of the efforts my riding and my region have made over the past few years to diversify their economy and ensure that they are not as reliant on seasonal employment as they have been in the past. When we talk about seasonal jobs, we are talking mostly about jobs in the primary sector, the resource sector, the forestry or the fishery. We are also talking about jobs in the service sector, which for obvious reasons are only seasonal jobs, in the tourism industry for example. Going back to natural resources, there are also core industries such as agriculture. A farmer cannot harvest in winter. Maple syrup producers cannot do much of their work in the fall or winter either.

The government has failed to acknowledge this reality that affects several regions. We spoke out against this when the reform was introduced. Year after year, many witnesses have told us that the system is no longer adequate today. The EI fund has a surplus because of the increase in premiums imposed by the Conservatives. The government no longer knows what to do with it. One of the recommendations we received was to increase access to the program. The Conservatives completely ignored the recommendations. Instead they took part of the surplus and decided to give it to small and medium-sized businesses. That measure was passed last year. Small and medium-sized businesses were handed over \$550 million of the employment insurance surplus with the hope of creating jobs. However, the House will remember that the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report stated that it would take over half a billion dollars to create 800 jobs, contrary to what the government was saying. Today, we find ourselves in a situation where the surplus in the EI fund, which we would like to be independent, has in large part funded the balanced budget that the federal government is boasting about.

The prebudget consultation report contains several interesting items. The work of the committee chair, the member from Edmonton—Leduc was impeccable. However, I would like to submit to the House the problems that exist in terms of the philosophy of implementing the prebudget consultations. The government is moving steadily away from taking the consultations into account and that remains a serious concern for us.

On that note, I will turn the floor over to the member for Welland, who is certainly going to continue in the same vein.

● (1015)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of concern with regard to the budget and the manner in which the Minister of Finance has presented what I would suggest is a bogus balanced budget, not to mention its unfairness to the middle class on taxation policy.

*Routine Proceedings*

This is a budget that does nothing for real tangible economic growth for Canada. The government does not seem to get it. It does not understand that it is the middle class of Canada that will be the driving force of our economy. Giving strength to our middle class will give strength to the Canadian economy. That should be the priority. Obviously, the minister was not listening when he canvassed and solicited opinions on the budget.

The question I have for the member is on the general behaviour of the Minister of Finance. For example, ever since the budget presentation, he has not stood in his place to answer any questions related to the budget. I am wondering if the member might want to comment on the facade of having budget consultations and then not even having the courage to answer questions on the budget after he has delivered it.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I will start by answering the question about the balanced budget.

Indeed, a large part of the balanced budget this government brags about so much comes from sources that were not recommended in pre-budget consultations.

The first source is the EI surplus, which was about \$1.8 billion. Since the surplus announced by the government is just \$1.4 billion, it had to take the \$1.8 billion from the EI surplus and add it to the consolidated revenue fund, even though the Finance Minister's predecessor, Jim Flaherty, had said that the government would never use the EI surplus to finance a balanced budget.

The second source is the contingency fund—not just this year's fund, which went from \$3 billion to \$1 billion, but the fund for the next two years as well. This measure was not recommended in the pre-budget consultations either. No one made that suggestion.

The third source is the early sale of GM shares, worth \$3.1 billion. You have to add the \$2 billion to this \$3.1 billion. I said “early sale” because the government lost a lot of money on these GM shares. If it had waited just one more week to sell them, it would have made \$100 million more.

At the end of the day, we are talking about nearly \$7 billion taken from these three sources to achieve this balanced budget.

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Vancouver Kingsway have been very clear for a number of years about the kinds of issues they believe are important and which they really would like the federal government to address.

There is a crushing, critical shortage of affordable housing in Vancouver. People are extremely concerned about the lack of good quality, full-time jobs, the kind of jobs on which people can raise a family.

People are very concerned about the environment in Vancouver Kingsway. They are worried about climate change and protecting Canada's pristine environment. They want to make sure our children and our children's children can enjoy that.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague can comment on whether or not he feels that this budget has done an adequate job in addressing those major pivotal concerns of affordable housing, good jobs and protecting the environment.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for that very important question.

Affordable housing is definitely one of the biggest losers in this budget. Many organizations have condemned the lack of adequate funding. None of the recommendations coming out of the pre-budget consultations really address this issue in any meaningful way, despite the fact that we heard witnesses talk about the importance of investing in housing and express disappointment in the federal government's lack of interest in this issue.

Also, in our supplementary report, we specifically talked about how the government should take immediate action to address the affordable housing crisis facing Canadian municipalities by renewing social housing agreements and working to develop and implement a national housing strategy as proposed by Bill C-400.

Unfortunately, the government did not pay attention to that recommendation, which is a real shame because the affordable housing crisis is affecting the whole country and is not getting any real attention from the federal government.

• (1025)

[*English*]

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join this debate. I want to thank my good friend, as well as the other members of the committee, for all of their hard work. As he said earlier, I would thank the chair, the member for Edmonton—Leduc. I have worked with him in the past, and I have always found him to be an honourable gentleman who embodies the sense of trying to work in a non-partisan way, especially at the committee level. I appreciate all of his hard work.

I want to thank the members of our party, the New Democrats, who worked on that committee. These documents are not props, because they are documents that have been tabled and we can actually use them. This is the kind of work that goes into the prebudget consultations by a committee of parliamentarians. They go out and talk to people across the country, and people from all walks of life from across the country come to speak to them.

It is not just the financiers that folks talk to. Our members are absolutely passionate about making sure that folks from every walk of life have input, because that is what this place is about. This is their place. It is their House. It belongs to the common folk of the country, hence its name, the House of Commons. The greens out at the front are called “the commons”. They are the common place for all of us to come. That is what this document is meant to do.

*Routine Proceedings*

It is unfortunate that when the people speak through their elected representatives the government does not hear them. It seems to turn a deaf ear to the folks who come forward and say, "Here are the things that we would like to see for us". The "us" is not the members who are sitting in the House, but the folks across the country that we represent who are saying what things they would like to see, the things that they want us to work on, the things that they think would help them. What did we find? We found that basically most folks were ignored.

I found it fascinating. I looked at the supplementary report that was submitted by my good colleagues. One of the pieces was on employment insurance and what that should mean to those who are unemployed. Mr. Speaker, I know that your riding is in southwestern Ontario and, like mine, has come through a huge restructuring in the manufacturing sector. Literally tens of thousands of folks are unemployed and have gone on employment insurance.

When I first came to this place, I heard the government talk about what the previous Liberal government had done in raiding the EI fund. What it said, and I absolutely agreed with it and almost applauded it one day, was that it would never do what the Liberal government had done previously and raid the fund. What did it do to balance the budget? It raided the fund. When we have the highest youth unemployment that the country has seen in decades, instead of making sure that there is money for training, retraining, and job opportunities for young people and those who do not have work, the government took about \$2.1 billion out of the fund and decided to balance the books.

Why did the Conservatives want to do that? It is an election year. They promised that they would balance the books, but they did not promise to balance the books on the backs of the unemployed in this country. That is not what they said they would do. They said that they were good, prudent, fiscal managers and they could manage to do it without doing what the Liberal government had done years ago. Well, they failed. They failed on that score. They put the test in front of themselves and they failed.

There are teachers in this place. I would suggest that when they give the Conservatives a report card, they give them an F, because that is exactly what they deserve.

On the other hand, what we had said was that the employment insurance fund belongs to those who are unemployed. It belongs to all of those who contribute, because it is indeed an insurance fund. I have said this many times before. If we buy insurance for our car and have an accident, the insurance should cover the car. Therefore, I have no idea why it is that the government seems to think that we should enrol in the employment insurance fund and pay the insurance, but people should not be able to collect it if they become unemployed.

There is one thing that is absolutely crystal clear, and the law has been this way since the mid-1990s. The rules changed and people cannot quit their job and get employment insurance. People must be unemployed and they must have been laid off by the employer, which means that the employer put them out of work and that they did not leave voluntarily. There have been some minor tweaks to the rules, such as if there was harassment or some other things that gave just cause, or some other things can happen.

Clearly, the government failed on this particular attribute, and it failed the youth of this country. We all recognize that this country has high youth unemployment. It is apparent here in the province of Ontario. It is apparent in the province of Quebec, and across this entire country.

• (1030)

One thing we talk about in this place is the human capital, the human potential of this great country, which is embodied in its youth. We continue to say that we need to ensure we have those folks in the future who will look after us, because we all get older. The one thing I can say about today is I am a day older than I was yesterday, but I am a day younger than I will be tomorrow. The bottom line is that we will all get older and at some point in time we may need those young folks to look after us. Some of us are older than others. I will not point any fingers. I could point a finger at myself, I suppose, because I am older than some, but I am also younger than others.

The bottom line is that if we do not invest in that human capacity, that human potential, all those young folks, when will they have the opportunity and when will they finally join in the capacity to make sure that when we need them, they will be there? The government has lost an opportunity.

New Democrats, on the other hand, would not have lost that opportunity. We would have made sure that opportunity was taken. We would make sure that young folks actually have an opportunity to go forward. If youth do not have the opportunity, then they are stymied, and we put them in a place where they lose hope. If they lose hope, there is no sense in going forward, so what would be the point? The very things we want to remove in the sense of impediments, we did not do, which is really unfortunate in this case.

That takes me to infrastructure. One thing that has to be built is capacity, because we need capacity for the economy. I am not an economist, but I am a Scotsman, so I can count. God knows, I count pennies. The bottom line is that if we are going to have an economy that functions, we have to be able to move throughout the economy. We have to be able to move physically as well. It is not all just electronic stuff. It is not a question of going on the Internet, pressing a button and shooting it through the air, through the wireless spectrum. The bottom line is that goods and services and people have to move. In order to move them, there has to be infrastructure. If there is no infrastructure, they are not going to move.

The investment in infrastructure that this budget proposes is lacklustre at best, and it is also down the road. I hate to tell the Conservatives about that road, but that road has a pothole in it. In fact, it has more than one pothole. It is going to be pretty tough getting down that road to get to where we want to go if we do not fix the potholes. I will not say everyone knows this, because the Conservatives decided to remove the long form census, so they do not really know what they need because if they do not have information, they cannot make firm decisions.

That reminds me of my days when I was a municipal councillor. I know a number of us in the House at one point had that career previous to this one. That information was of absolute value to municipal politicians in deciding whether to build a home for the aged or an arena for young kids. Without the data regarding the demographics and where things are headed, it is hard to know which one to build. What should we do? Should we flip a coin, hope for the best and spend hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure that sits vacant because the group we built it for no longer exists? It makes no sense.

We need information. We need hard facts to make decisions on what is going to be done. If we have those hard facts and data, we can build the infrastructure in the appropriate places at the appropriate time to make sure we are getting what colloquially is called a good bang for the buck, which the Conservatives always say. However, I would refer them to the Auditor General's report of yesterday, which really was quite shameful in the sense that the Auditor General said that when it came to antimicrobials, it took 18 years for them to do something, and they still have not done anything, which I find surprising.

It is unfortunate the Conservatives did not listen to the folks who came before committee, but that is par for the course, because they do not like listening to us either. Time and time again there has been time allocation in this place. Over and over there has been time allocation.

Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

• (1035)

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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.

• (1110)

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

*(Division No. 386)*

**YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)  
Ashton  
Ayala  
Blanchette

Angus  
Atamanenko  
Bevington  
Blanchette-Lamothe

Boivin  
Brahmi  
Cash  
Chicoine  
Choquette  
Cleary  
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
Dionne Labelle  
Dubé  
Dusseau  
Garrison  
Gravelle  
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**NAYS**

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Bergen  
Blaney  
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Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Butt  
Calandra  
Cannan  
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Chisu  
Clarke  
Cotler  
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Dechert  
Dion  
Dubourg  
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Fast  
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*Routine Proceedings*

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Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
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**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

● (1115)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (1150)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 387)*

**YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Egliniski	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Gosal
Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
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MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Sopuck
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Truppe	Uppal
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Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Ayala



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Sitsabaiesan	Tremblay
Stoffer	
Toone	
Trudeau — 101	

PAIRED

Nil  
**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

● (1155)  
 [English]

PETITIONS

DEMENTIA

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today from several dozen residents of Burnaby and Richmond, British Columbia. They call upon the Minister of Health and the House of Commons to pass Bill C-356, An Act respecting a National Strategy for Dementia, which was introduced by the member of Parliament for Nickel Belt.

While I am on my feet, I move, seconded by the member for Compton—Stanstead:

That the House do now adjourn.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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.

● (1235)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 388)*

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)  
 Ashton  
 Ayala  
 Bevington  
 Blanchette-Lamothe  
 Borg  
 Caron  
 Chicoine  
 Choquette  
 Cleary  
 Crowder  
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
 Dionne Labelle  
 Doré Lefebvre  
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
 Freeman  
 Genest-Jourdain  
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)  
 Hughes  
 Kellway  
 Latendresse  
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
 Mai  
 Masse  
 May  
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)  
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)  
 Nash  
 Papillon  
 Péclet  
 Quach  
 Rankin  
 Raynault  
 Sandhu  
 Sellah  
 Sitsabaiesan  
 Sullivan  
 Tremblay — 75

Angus  
 Atamanenko  
 Benskin  
 Blanchette  
 Boivin  
 Brahmi  
 Cash  
 Chisholm  
 Christopherson  
 Côté  
 Cullen  
 Donnelly  
 Dubé  
 Dusseau  
 Garrison  
 Groguhé  
 Harris (St. John's East)  
 Julian  
 Lapointe  
 Laverdière  
 Liu  
 Marston  
 Mathysen  
 Michaud  
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)  
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)  
 Nunez-Melo  
 Patry  
 Pilon  
 Rafferty  
 Ravignat  
 Rousseau  
 Scott  
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
 Stewart  
 Toone

NAYS

Members

Adler

Aglukkaq

*Government Orders*

Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Bélanger
Bennett	Benoit
Bergen	Bezan
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brison	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Casey
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cotler	Crockatt
Cuzner	Daniel
Dechert	Dion
Dreeshen	Dubourg
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eglinski
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodale	Gosal
Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Leef	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 159	

PAIRED

Nil

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I declare the motion defeated.

The time for petitions having expired, questions on the order paper, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**ANTI-TERRORISM ACT, 2015**

BILL C-51—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC)** moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted for the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. At this point I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise, so the Chair has some sense of how many questions will be asked.

There seems to be significant interest. Consequently I ask members to keep their questions to about one minute and whoever is responding for the government to do likewise.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Really, Mr. Speaker, shame is the only word that comes to mind. This is the 94th time the government has used what it likes to call scheduling, but what is really closure, on important bills before this House of Commons.

When it comes to debating Bill C-51, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness stood in this House and said that the proper place to have a full debate—as he moved closure at second reading—was committee. Then when we went to committee, we had a severely restricted number of sessions that were allocated to hear witnesses. Not only has the government proven unwilling to hear from people, but it has proven incapable of listening on the bill.

*Government Orders*

We had a statement, which I just want to ask whether the Conservatives have really fully considered. That statement said:

Protecting human rights and protecting public safety are complementary objectives, but experience has shown that serious human rights abuses can occur in the name of maintaining national security.

Who said that? Who signed that statement? It was Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, Joe Clark, John Turner, five former Supreme Court justices, three past members of CIRC, and two former privacy commissioners.

How are we to deal with the serious concerns expressed across the country? Of all the amendments that were presented at committee, the government rejected all of the opposition amendments.

Clearly, the Conservatives are illustrating, once again, no willingness to listen and no ability to hear Canadians' objections to this very dangerous bill.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, I find it deeply ironic that members of the party that has twice moved to shut down the House this day—because they do not want to work anymore, do not want to have any more debate today, want the place shut down, and have moved it twice—are now complaining there is not enough opportunity for debate. There is a little bit of irony in such an approach, in such a question.

Then with regard to the question he asked and the individuals he listed who were complaining that there is insufficient political oversight of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, he listed a series of prime ministers who said that should be there, a series of prime ministers who never took that step themselves when in office and, in fact, actively resisted it themselves. That, too, is also the height of irony.

• (1240)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again what we are really debating is the issue of time allocation, and on the issue of time allocation, let us be very clear that this Reform/Conservative government, since it acquired its majority, has demonstrated a genuine lack of respect for proper procedures in the House of Commons.

Whether it is through closure or time allocation, which are the same thing, or the way the government brings in legislation as a whole—multi-hundred-page documents for budget bills, and ministers of finance who feel they have no obligation whatsoever to stand up and answer questions after tabling a budget—the government has a genuine lack of respect for proper parliamentary procedures inside the House of Commons.

My question for the government House leader is this. Why, since the Conservatives have achieved this majority government, have we seen the Prime Minister and his ministers, and particularly the government House leader, demonstrate so much disrespect for proper procedures here in the House of Commons?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the hon. member and his party for their support of this legislation. It is very important in the national interest to protect the security of Canadians. We appreciate that support a great deal and we thank them for it.

In terms of debate in this House and the use of time allocation to schedule debates with certainty, part of the side effect of the

approach used by the government that he complains of is the fact that we actually have more time for debate in this Parliament than the parallel time the British Parliament has had for debate on bills, a parliament that is often held out as a model example. In fact, on average, at every stage we have exceeded by far the amount of debate that the U.K. Parliament has on relative bills.

I think we should be very pleased that we have in this House a robust democracy, robust debate, ample opportunities for views to be heard, and in fact the record shows, more so than even in the United Kingdom.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is just unbelievable. We have seen a coalition between the Liberals and the Conservatives on Bill C-51, and that is quite problematic.

The government and, from what we can see, the Liberals are saying that Canadians should have to choose between whether they want their security or their rights. It should not be one or the other.

The government says that it is tough on crime, but it is cutting funding in areas where it should be investing. Instead of promoting discrimination, communities need more help to counter radicalization in Canada. Where is the counter-radicalization strategy to work with Canadian communities? Why is the government taking the rights away from Canadians?

The Conservatives do not know what they are doing and, obviously, the Liberals are supporting their position. That is shameful.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, on the question of radicalization, the government has a number of programs under way, and the RCMP is also engaged in community engagement that works toward countering radicalization.

I want to pay tribute. The scourge that we have been battling most of all, the rising tide, is Islamist extremism and jihadism, and it is the Islamic community in Canada that has been the principal source of intelligence and assistance in helping to counter occasions of radicalization. It is working hand in hand with the public security agencies, with the Government of Canada, and with law enforcement to protect against those isolated elements in the community that move in that direction.

What that community and law enforcement have told us, is that they need additional tools. That is why this legislation proposes, for example, the ability to remove from the Internet, on a judge's warrant, information or propaganda that is aimed at the radicalization of young people, encouraging them to commit terrorist acts. In fact, it would make, for the first time, the advocacy of a terrorist act a crime. This is long overdue. The advocacy of terrorism has to be a crime.

If we are going to do something to combat radicalization in a meaningful way, that is a key element to doing so.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to correct the government House leader who said that none of the past prime ministers had done anything about oversight. I would like to point out for him that in 2005, when Paul Martin was the prime minister, we had in place something to ensure oversight. In fact, at the time, the current justice minister, who was then in the opposition, was on side with it, and so was the NDP.

Unfortunately, it never came to pass, because the NDP provoked an election. However, the point is that we very clearly pushed for oversight 10 years ago.

• (1245)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, this brings to mind the national child care plan that the Liberal Party promised some four times and just could not get done. It brings to mind its policy on greenhouse gases, when it committed Canada to reducing them, yet increased them by over 30%. It just could not get it done.

Once again, on this, the Liberals fought it for over two decades. They just could not get it done. They finally changed their mind on an 11th hour deathbed repentance, facing the loss of government. The fact is that they just were not serious about it, and there is good reason for it.

We have robust oversight in the form of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. In terms of the additional powers in this bill, we have more significant oversight. That is before the oversight of judges with regard to the extended powers that the bill contemplates for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, which are the disruption powers. Those would only be exercised with the approval of a judge in advance under a warrant.

That is real, valuable oversight and the protection of our rights.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a critical economic infrastructure exists between the cities of Windsor and Detroit in the form of both a rail tunnel and the Ambassador Bridge. The government is intent on building a new international crossing between the two. Therefore, our community is very much interested in what a bill like this might mean for averting potential terrorist attacks that involve our economic infrastructure.

Could the government House leader give those in our community a sense of how much debate has already been invested in this and when we can look forward to legislation that would start to protect us even further?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, our borders are some of the most sensitive areas in terms of combatting terrorist threats. In my time as public safety minister working with the Obama administration, this was a matter of great concern to it. It wanted to work hand in hand with us and we did, in fact, a great deal in seeking to provide it the assurances it needed. There are elements of this legislation and previous legislation that move us down that path of providing the assurances that are actually important for our economy.

Unfortunately, one of the things we occasionally see is an overreaction on the national security side in the United States, which has the side effect, unintended, I believe, but a genuine side effect, of slowing commerce at the borders. That is why we have been working, in our partnership with the United States, to get, for

example, approval for advanced inspections for border clearance for trucks, similar to what we have, for instance, for air passengers right now. These are things that help facilitate movement and the economy, but, at the same time, provide greater assurances of national security. It is those kinds of win-win opportunities for which we have been looking.

I thank the hon. member for Essex, who is very sensitive to these issues and has been a very strong advocate for them, particularly for the manufacturing industry in Canada, as it is so dependent on those linkages.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this debate is about the decision of the government to reduce the debate on this important bill. I listened to the House leader talk about the great consultation that the government conducted with Canadians.

I took the time to meet with members of one of the mosques in my riding last week and asked them if they had been approached by or met with any of the Conservative members to discuss their concerns with Bill C-51, and they said not once. The members had actually done a survey in their mosque on the deep concerns about the ramifications of this bill. They are also concerned that no one has reached out to them to work with their members to try to prevent anybody from being lured by terrorists.

I take severe objection to the suggestion that there has been adequate consultation with Canadians about this bill and that the bill would not impact the rights and opportunities of Canadians. There are many in my riding who are deeply afraid of the implications of the bill on their rights and privileges in our country.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Frankly, Mr. Speaker, my experience is very different. I actually commend the Islamic community for its effective efforts to work together with law enforcement and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. My experience is that the community has been overwhelmingly exemplary in its conduct, overwhelmingly exemplary in communicating when it is aware of threats or have concerns about radicalization in the community, and that is good.

That is a good example to all of us and a good reassurance to many Canadians that, indeed, the kind of country we have, one that involves the diversity of people, is not one that is broken into camps, but is overwhelmingly composed of people with all kinds of backgrounds who share in common a belief in our country, the values that it holds, our democracy, keeping it safe and secure, combatting terrorist threats and preventing them from arising within their communities. This is something in which we can call take comfort.

*Government Orders*

However, the risk is very real. We have seen the occasions most recently where radicalization has occurred. A lot of it has been individual self-radicalization, a lot of it prompted by material on the Internet. That is why this bill seeks to address exactly that kind of radicalization, one that is not necessarily easy for others in the community to detect. The good news is, as we know, in both of these cases they were on the radar screen. Unfortunately, we did not have all the tools in place to prevent the terrorist attacks from occurring at the time.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of opposition to this bill.

We have seen demonstrators in the streets of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and across the country. Our online petition has been signed by 200,000 Canadians who oppose this bill because they think it goes too far and violates our rights and freedoms.

The government seems very pleased to be able to pass this bill very quickly, without allowing us to really study it or even hold a real debate. To date there has been only one day of debate at this stage, and that was a Friday. We know that Friday is usually the day when bills are expedited. Therefore, the fact that we are debating a time allocation motion is really problematic for me.

I want to know what this government has to say to the 200,000 Canadians who have signed the online petition and to the thousands of demonstrators who took to the streets to protest against this ill-conceived bill.

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, first, it is ironic that the member has twice voted today to shut down the House, twice voted to ensure there is no debate in the House of Commons today, twice voted to ensure we all go home early, and then she complains that there is not enough opportunity for debate. I see a bit of irony in that.

However, in terms of those who have concerns, we recognize their concerns. However, I have found that with those who are concerned and with my constituents when I speak with them, those concerns are largely driven by a misunderstanding or lack of information, perhaps from members of the opposition, perhaps from others. For example, many are concerned that all their information will be shared across all departments of government, notwithstanding privacy laws.

That would not be the case. What the bill says is that if, for example, a passport officer is looking at an application of somebody who has as their sponsor a person who is a known recruiter of people to participate in jihad abroad and we know the individual wants a passport to go to Syria for that purpose, should the passport officer be able to share that information with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service? This is a person who is linked to someone known to be radicalizing, who has the intention of travelling and maybe he or she should be watched.

According to the NDP, that information should not be allowed to be shared. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service should not be allowed to be informed of that. It objects to the information-sharing provisions of the proposed legislation that would allow, in a case like that, information of a person who is identified as a threat to national

security to be shared. The information to be shared is only for that person, not for everybody, identified as a threat to national security. Canadians understand that. They realize they are not a threat to national security, that it will not affect them.

That is why I say there are many people who demonstrate with legitimate concerns because they think the bill will do something that it will not. However, the bill is quite narrow, quite focused and focused on national security in the way it should be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before I go to questions and comments, I want to remind all members that when the question is being answered, popping up before the answer is delivered will not get them to the top of the list. If that behaviour were rewarded, we would have 50 members on their feet all the time. Therefore, if members stand earlier, they in fact will not be recognized, as opposed to be recognized.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that the bill was rushed through the committee process, the witnesses were piled on and pushed through in a week in which there was not adequate time to even learn what the witnesses before committee had to say, much less to hear from people who were not called, like the Privacy commissioner, or a very important witness who then appeared at the Senate. I refer to Joe Fogarty who was a U.K. espionage security expert. He had worked with MI5 and the British Police, and also as a liaison officer to Canada.

This is the key point on why we must not shut down debate on the bill in the House. The bill would not protect us from terrorism. The bill, due to the recklessness of the Conservatives, would put us at greater risk of terrorist attack. That is the advice from experts. The bill, according to Joe Fogarty, would lead us down a disaster waiting to happen with no oversight, none, because the Conservative administration eliminated the inspector general for CSIS, has put in no judicial oversight or parliamentary oversight. This bill must be stopped.

• (1255)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, the legislation was introduced January 30. It is now April 30. The bill has been before Parliament and a parliamentary committee and debated for some quarter year right now, a quarter of a year and we do not even have report stage approval yet. In that context, one can see this has been out in the public realm.

Our government's commitment is to ensure that this becomes law before we rise in June. Remember, it still has to go through a whole parallel series of steps in the other chamber. Therefore, if we want to do that, it is important that we ensure members get a chance to vote and decide on this matter.

*Government Orders*

However, the hon. member is quite mistaken. She said that there was no judicial oversight. I really would encourage her to read the bill. Expanded powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service require judicial oversight, a warrant from a judge, in order to exercise its expanded powers of disruption. That is significant oversight. It is judicial oversight. It is exactly that kind of ill-informed and incorrect statement that causes alarm among the public.

We want to have a debate, but there is no point having years of debate if people will not take the time to read the legislation and learn the facts on which we are debating. Judicial oversight is there, it is significant and it is powerful to protect human rights.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to correct the government House leader, there is not judicial oversight. There is judicial authorization for CSIS folks to do certain things. That is a different thing entirely from oversight as our Five Eyes partners have. I cannot understand why the government is so reluctant to have proper parliamentary oversight, as does our Five Eyes partners. That is what is really required with this bill and what is missing.

The government House leader went on at great length to talk about how long this bill has been debated. I would in fact agree with his arguments where he was arguing the point about the sharing of information. That is the kind of information he gave in that response that Canadians need to have. We agree with the sharing of information with limitations. However, his argument there shows that there needs to be more time given for the debate of this bill, a bill which a lot of Canadians have concerns about. It needs to be explained in a way that Canadians understand all the aspects of the bill.

This closure motion is another affront that is in fact undermining democracy and debate in this place. The government continues to resist accepting amendments from this side of the House. We are all MPs. We all represent people. Our amendments make sense, too. Why will the government not accept them?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a very significant person to speak to this, because he was actually solicitor general of Canada. As solicitor general of Canada, he was responsible for this legislation. If he believed that parliamentary oversight above and beyond the public safety committee was necessary, he would have introduced that when he was minister, but as minister, he did not see fit to do that. I think that speaks well to the fact that he thought, as does this government, that the after-the-fact review that is provided by the Security Intelligence Review Committee is a significant form of review. In fact, we are seeking to make it even more effective, and not by politicizing it. The opposition would like to have politicians doing the review. We actually believe it is better to have independent experts do the review.

That is the direction in which we are taking the Security Intelligence Review Committee. When I talk to my constituents and ask them who they would prefer to have providing oversight, judges beforehand and experts after the fact or a bunch of politicians, they say that politicians have their role, and it is important, they can pass the legislation, they have a committee, but that their real confidence

in objective oversight is in that expert committee and in the judicial warrants.

• (1300)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the House what we are debating right now. It is actually a move by the Conservative government to shut down debate on Bill C-51.

I remember being in this House and being told that time allocation had to be moved at second reading so that we could go to committee where in-depth discussions would be had. Lo and behold when we got to the committee stage, there were very restrictive time allocations. We as the opposition had to fight for more time, and only a little bit more was granted.

Now here we are, when we, as parliamentarians, have an opportunity to stand up and present our constituents' perspectives, to take part in that debate, and once again I am being denied that opportunity because the government is using the bullying tactics of the power of the majority to tyrannize and silence the voices of those who oppose this legislation.

What does the government have to hide?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted the hon. member had an opportunity to get up to speak to Bill C-51 today. She just got a chance to participate in the debate on Bill C-51. The reason I like that is that twice today she voted to keep us from debating. Twice today she voted to shut down this House. Twice today already she has voted to go home, turn on the TV, kick up her feet and relax, to shut down the House of Commons. Instead, because the government wanted to proceed, we are here debating Bill C-51 right now. I am glad she has that opportunity to do that.

Of course, I will point the member once again to the statistics. Our government's approach has been one of using time allocation as a scheduling device. The result, compared with other parliaments, compared with the United Kingdom, for example, is held out time and time again as the best example of robust debate. We debate at every stage on bills, on average, much longer than they do in the United Kingdom Parliament. That is because our approach is one that facilitates debate, but also one that prevents the gridlock we see south of the border where decisions never get made because of overly partisan filibusters.

We want to give members of Parliament a chance to actually vote on the questions that are important to Canadians, to pass judgment on them. That is particularly important on a question as central as combatting terrorism and keeping Canadians safe, something which Canadians expect their members of Parliament to work on and make decisions on.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to what the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons just said.

*Government Orders*

Perhaps we debate for so long because the government ignores all the amendments we propose. Obviously, the role of the government in the House of Commons is to propose legislation. However, the role of the opposition is to critique it and propose ways to improve it. That is part of the opposition's duty, but this government almost never takes our proposals into account.

It is no wonder that debates drag on, because the government does not want to listen to reason. Our goal is not necessarily to prevent a bill from passing, but rather to improve it. In this case, as the Leader of the Opposition clearly stated, our goal is to have a safer environment while still protecting our rights.

Does the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons recognize that if his government accepted more of the opposition's amendments, debates would be more harmonious and our work here would be more effective?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, the legislation has been improved through amendments that were made at committee. If we can ever get to the report stage debate, all members of the House will have an opportunity to debate them and vote on them. That is what we would like to see on the legislation improved, as he said, by the amendments that were made. However, make no mistake. We are not going to allow opposition to be manifested in a form that is simply lengthy filibustering debate and by keeping the bill from passing, because we know the NDP opposes the bill.

We think it is important because we need to have measures that, for example, criminalize for the first time the advocacy of terrorism. That is incredibly important. Right now people can go out, declare jihad and encourage people to go out and kill non-believers. That should be a criminal offence. We will, for the first time, allow with judicial warrant removal of terrorist propaganda online that has been a factor in radicalization time and time again of people who have committed acts in this country and people who have travelled abroad to participate in jihad.

We are going to, for the first time, give the Canadian Security Intelligence Service the opportunity to disrupt plots while they are under way in such a fashion that will allow them to unfold while keeping the public safe and thereby enhancing the prospects of prosecution, which I think all of us agree is a preferable approach to dealing with terrorism.

Of course, we are improving the passenger protect program, the so-called no-fly list. Right now, we cannot prevent someone who we know is planning to participate in a terrorist act abroad from boarding a plane as long as the person is not a risk to the plane or aviation itself. That is unduly limited. We need to expand the passenger protect program to allow a refusal of boarding for anyone who plans to participate in a terrorist act or to join a terrorist organization anywhere.

● (1305)

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of 9/11, many things were determined. One of them was that the agencies were not speaking to each other and there was a very real opportunity beforehand to have stopped 9/11 in its tracks if only they had been sharing information.

I would like to ask the hon. government House leader, what would it be like in Canada if we looked back on an incident like 9/11 and realized if only we had talked to each other we could have stopped it?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, this has been one of the most frustrating things. One would have thought after the 9/11 commission identified the many intelligence failures by the siloed approach, by the inability of departments to communicate with each other and provide intelligence to each other, we would recognize here in Canada the importance of that. Our government has. It is long overdue. That is why this legislation will permit information sharing between departments of individuals who represent a threat to national security. I used the very good and very real example of an individual who applies for a passport and has as a reference someone who is a radicalist recruiter. Should the passport office be allowed to share that information with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service so the person is watched? The NDP oppose that. We support that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The 30 minutes having expired, the question is on the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Call in the members.

● (1345)

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

*(Division No. 389)*

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen

*Government Orders*

Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Crockatt	Daniel
Dechert	Dreeshen
Dykstra	Eglinski
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Gourde	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Leaf
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 134

**NAYS****Members**

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Brahmi
Brisson	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau

Easter	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Gameau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hughes
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Latendresse	Laverdière
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
Michaud	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	Stewart
Sullivan	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau — 104

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

**CITIZEN VOTING ACT****BILL C-50—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker: I move:

That, in relation to Bill C-50, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before we proceed with the 30-minute question and comment period, pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), I would like to provide a brief explanation as to how we will proceed today.

The situation the House finds itself in at this point appears to be unprecedented. That is, the time stipulated in the Standing Orders for the start of statements by members, which today is 2 p.m., will arrive before the time for the 30-minute questions and comments period for the time allocation motion will have expired. Having not encountered this before, the Chair has had to consider how best to proceed in the interest of the House while, of course, respecting the rules and practices of the House.



*Government Orders*

What has made this difficult in this instance is that the committee that created the procedure, the modernization committee, does not seem to have envisaged this and so provides us no guidance, and in addition, no specific reason or justification for not interrupting to proceed with the statements by members, a procedure the Standing Orders clearly stipulate will start at 2 p.m.

Thus, this is what we will do in this instance.

There are, of course, opportunities for the House to resume and finish the procedure at a time determined by the government. Since, as I have said, we are in uncharted waters, the way we will proceed this time is not necessarily to be looked upon as a precedent. As always, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which is responsible for reviews of the rules of the House, may want to look at this very question, and if it desires, provide the House with recommendations on how to proceed in such situations in the future.

In short, we shall begin the question and comment period now. It will be interrupted at 2 o'clock, when we will proceed with statements and following that with question period. When question period ends, we will resume the 30-minute debate and subsequent bell and subsequent vote.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

• (1350)

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the minister. I would also like to thank the House leader for giving us the opportunity to have more people in the House to listen to exactly why the government is shutting down debate again, for the 95th time in this Parliament.

It is very clear that Bill C-50 is a bill the Conservative government does not want Canadians to know about. It has only received one day of debate so far. The Conservatives have had six months to push it through, and now, on a Thursday, with debate on the bill scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, they want to slip through the fact that, following Bill C-23, Bill C-50 is a deliberate attempt to suppress the votes of citizens abroad.

There is a nonsensical creation of a barrier in the bill that would make it very difficult for many Canadians abroad to register in time to vote. The minister knows that. There is also a stripping of powers from the Chief Electoral Officer to determine what ID is sufficient for citizens abroad.

There are all sorts of things that have actually not registered yet on the radar screen of the media or citizens, and one of the reasons the Conservative government does not want the bill fully debated is exactly that. When Canadians come to realize that it is step two after the former unfair elections act, they will resist, along with the official opposition.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, to push back on some of my colleague's false assumptions, I think it is worth noting that it was the NDP today that tried to shut down debate and adjourn the House. Therefore, in terms of wanting debate today, I think that is a little rich.

Talking to the form and substance of the bill here today, this bill speaks, of course, to the Frank ruling that came out in May 2014, which has material impacts on the upcoming election. That is why it is prudent for the House to move forward and consider this bill, as it deals with material changes that will impact the voting process, because of this ruling, in the upcoming election.

I will point out that I did read my colleague's speech from a previous round of debate, and he actually agreed with some of the content of this bill, including the need to ensure that the 40,000 non-citizens who are on the registry be removed, which this bill would provide for.

• (1355)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, back to the substance of the bill once more, one of the issues brought up by the Chief Electoral Officer was the fact that time is not on Election Canada's side for this. That was several months ago, so we should have a thorough debate about this to realize that the time impact is going to be great. Getting over Bill C-23 was bad enough. Now we have this one.

In addition, there are several questions that need to be asked. For instance, Armed Forces personnel would not be involved, but what about the spouses or partners of these individuals? They would also have to go through this routine. As my colleague pointed out, debate is of the essence, because they would have to register each and every time internationally. Why not maintain the international list of electors?

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question had two components.

With regard to time for coming into force, I believe that Elections Canada would have time to prepare for this. Many of the new rules that would be put in place by this bill would actually be extensions of existing rules, so there is precedent that could be applied. Of course, having us proceed to the committee stage of this review and having us proceed with debate would allow officials to have as much time as possible, which is why it would be prudent for the opposition to vote to send this to committee stage.

With regard to the components on diplomats and special forces officers and how they would apply, again, this would align our rules for international voting with how people can vote here in Canada, so there would be a similar set of rules. I would note, as the member correctly pointed out, that there are special rules in place for Armed Forces members who are serving overseas, and those rules would continue to apply.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it makes me laugh every time a government member claims to be a victim of the procedural war that is going on right now.

The minister of state could never criticize the opposition for defending itself against this cheap gamesmanship we have to endure. This is the second time allocation motion today. The minister is following in the footsteps of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and claiming to be a victim of the big bad NDP.

*Statements by Members*

Really, she is the one who is betraying the very spirit of the work of this House. She is betraying her role as a member of Parliament by preventing us, the representatives of the people, from expressing ourselves.

How is she going to face her voters and explain this denial of democracy?

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that my colleague opposite used the term “victim” to talk about legislation that goes through this House, because it has been our government in this Parliament that has actually put forward substantive laws to protect victims of crime, many of which the NDP did not oppose. Of course, we did that by ensuring that bills received timely debate and timely passage through the House of Commons.

Some of those bills include the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, the tougher penalties for child predators act, and the Victims Bill of Rights Act.

All of these are legacies of our government. I find it very rich that my colleague opposite is portraying himself as a victim, when in fact, he did not stand up for these pieces of legislation.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is in regard to the issue I have consistently brought up, which is the use of time allocation. It shows the government's lack of respect for democratic process.

Why does the government House leader feel that the only way the Conservatives can get legislation through the House of Commons is through time allocation? By doing that, they are really saying that they do not have the ability to negotiate in good faith with opposition parties, which is not healthy for democracy inside the House. Would the government House leader not agree?

• (1400)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I find myself explaining recent history to my colleague opposite. When we came into government in 2006, we had more than a decade of bad policy and steering the country in the wrong direction that we had to come back and legislate through.

I am very proud of the fact that our government, since it came into office, has done things like create over 1.2 million net new jobs for Canadians since the depths of the economic downturn. I am proud that small businesses would now pay 44% less in taxes, thanks to this new budget that we have put forward.

When we came into office in 2006, Canadians were paying \$6,600 more in taxes and benefits that they were not receiving. Our government has gotten things done for Canadians, it has put through some substantive legislation, and we have had meaningful debate in committee and all of these sorts of things.

My question for my colleague is why would he not support us, but I guess I have my answer, because he is part of the Liberal Party of Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The Chair must interrupt at this time. I remind hon. members that there will be 21 minutes remaining in this period after question period.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

[*English*]

**PUTTING ON THE GLITZ**

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, high school graduation marks an important milestone in the life of a student, yet there are some who find it difficult to participate fully in the celebration, often due to the cost.

“Putting on the Glitz” is a grassroots initiative in my riding that provides underprivileged students with formal attire so that they can take part in their graduation with pride. Most of these students would not be able to join in without this assistance.

A committee of volunteers from local community service agencies, School District 42 and other generous partners put together an evening where students can choose their formal wear and accessories for their upcoming graduation, have their hair styled and makeup done by local professionals, and have their pictures taken by a graduation photographer.

Please join me in thanking the “Putting on the Glitz” volunteers for their great work for the third year in a row and congratulating the students of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission who will be graduating in the coming weeks.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**MORELLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SAINT-UBALDE**

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, April 22 was Earth Day, and one of the elementary schools in my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier celebrated that event in a very special way.

For nearly five years now, the students and teachers at the Morelle elementary school in Saint-Ubalde have been actively involved in a concerted effort to learn more about the environment and sustainable development. Over the years, they have carried out many projects to help protect the environment and preserve the shorelines of Portneuf's many waterways. In order to demonstrate their commitment to this cause, the Morelle elementary school became the first elementary school in the Portneuf school board to adopt a charter of environmental and sustainable development education.

I would like to recognize the efforts of this school's young students, the principal, Marie-Claude Gignac, and all of the teaching staff who worked together to carry out this inspiring project.

This sort of initiative not only helps children become engaged and responsible citizens in the future, but it also sets a good example for all of us to follow.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I recently applied for a credit card from a major financial institution I do banking with. I am appalled at the depth and scope of the questions I was asked by one of the country's leading banks. Particularly, I was told my information could be shared with any of its other business operations. The banks are simply asking and, obviously, collecting too much information from Canadians, right down to the amount I pay for rent, my building fee, and even the liquidation value of my 2007 F-150.

Respect is a two-way street and Canadians are entitled to it when dealing with our banks. If my treatment is typical, and I certainly hope it is not, then we are not getting that respect. We all have credit trouble at some point in our lives, so what was equally egregious is being told the card's interest rate at 20% rises to 25% if a payment is missed by the due date. When the prime lending rate is at 3%, this is near extortion on working families and makes payday loans look like a giveaway.

\* \* \*

**HERBERT H. CARNEGIE FUTURE ACES FOUNDATION**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate the winners of the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation scholarships and awards for 2015. Karissa Hufnagel, Tamara Twumwah-Ofori and Lillian Grant are just another example of three extraordinary women from the Jane-Finch community who received these prestigious awards last Friday night.

I had the opportunity to meet with the three young winners and their families, and I was truly impressed. The Future Aces award is given each year to students who endeavour to respect others regardless of race, language, creed or colour, and it seeks to recognize those who work each day to make a difference for others and for Canada. Karissa, Tamara and Lillian have set a powerful example for all of us by demonstrating the importance of embracing diversity as a strength and a societal asset.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus and all members of the House, I congratulate and thank the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation and all of the recipients for their sacrifices and encouragement. They make us all proud.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[Translation]

**RICHARD DESROCHERS**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to Richard Desrochers, the state deputy of the Quebec Knights of Columbus, who lives in my riding. He has helped the Knights of Columbus movement thrive across Quebec.

He joined the Knights of Columbus in 1991 and quickly rose through the ranks in his council, taking on many responsibilities where he was able to act on his values of friendship and service, most notably with the Fondation Maison de la Famille, Aide

Alimentaire Lotbinière, FADOQ and the choir. As a knight, father and husband, he is a true ambassador for family values and charity.

Richard Desrochers has been married since 1976 to Suzanne Mercier, who supports him in all of his initiatives with the Knights of Columbus. He has three children and eight grandchildren.

I congratulate Richard Desrochers for all of his work with the Knights of Columbus and for his humanitarian service to all Quebecers.

\* \* \*

[English]

**OFFICERS OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR SCOTTISH REGIMENT AND GARRISON OFFICERS' MESS**

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, it was my distinct honour to be invited to the 69th military ball hosted by the Officers of the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment and Garrison Officers' Mess. Let me offer a special thanks to Major David Ratz and the entire 2015 ball planning committee for organizing a wonderful evening, with a special mention to the incomparable MacGillivray Pipe Band.

Canadians might not know that Thunder Bay is known as the "City of the Poppy". On July 5, 1921, the Great War Veterans' Association, a forerunner of the Royal Canadian Legion, held their national organizational meeting in Port Arthur, Ontario. There, they approved the poppy to be worn on the anniversary of Armistice Day. Within a year, all Legion branches across the country wore the poppy as a means of remembrance.

Thousands of men and women from northwestern Ontario have served in the defence of Canada. Let us not forget.

\* \* \*

**4-H**

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, growing up, I was part of 4-H and have some great memories of that time. Today, young 4-H representatives from across Canada have come to visit Parliament Hill and observe question period. They are the future of Canadian agriculture.

Earlier this year, our agriculture committee had the opportunity to hear from representatives of the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum, many of whom have had past involvement with 4-H. The knowledge and experience that these young farmers bring to the table is quite incredible. Farmers and the agriculture industry are the backbone of our country. As a government we will continue to do what we can to help make sure that industry sector remains strong and viable.

I would like to recognize the 4-H youth for their commitment and dedication to our industry and to Canada, and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

*Statements by Members***MARVEN MCCARTHY**

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the memory of a dear friend, a great Irishman and a true Miramichier. Marven McCarthy passed away suddenly, surrounded by his loving family.

Marven has been described as a travel agent, a tour guide, a fund raising expert, guardian of Middle Island and a champion of all things Irish-Canadian. Most important, he was a generous Christian, an amazing husband, father, grandfather, son and brother. Born and raised in Miramichi, Marven spent his entire life on the river. He fulfilled his life's journey by teaching high school math to countless young people at James M. Hill High School. His spirit and passion for community was shown as he gave tours of Middle Island, and imparted many life lessons to the hundreds of athletes he coached and managed.

Marven is remembered by his loving wife Mary Ann, their children and grandchildren. He will be missed by all who had the pleasure to know him and who have been affected by his generous and passionate spirit.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CHAMBLY SEIGNEURY 350TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 2015 is the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the very first French regiment, the Carignan-Salières regiment, in New France.

When Captain Jacques de Chambly and his soldiers built a wooden fort in 1665, they laid the foundations of our great story. Some months later, Henri Chastelard de Salières built Fort Sainte-Thérèse on the banks of the Richelieu River where the town of Carignan now sits.

Paul-Henri Hudon, president of the historical society of the seigneurie of Chambly, described it like this:

The seigneurie of Chambly was born 350 years ago, and along with two parishes, it would become what we now know as the municipalities of Carignan, Chambly, Richelieu, Saint-Basile-le-Grand and Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu.

We have a duty to remember. I invite all of my colleagues and constituents to join me this summer at the festivities celebrating this 350th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the town of Carignan.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week the Leader of the NDP called our tax cuts, “giveaways”. On this side of the House, we will never make any apologies for allowing Canadians to keep more of their hard-earned money in their own pockets. That is why we are cutting taxes for middle-class Canadian families through the family tax cut and the enhanced universal child care benefit.

These measures will benefit 100% of Canadian families with kids, leaving every family with more money in their own pockets to spend as they choose.

Sadly, the Liberals and the NDP have a different plan. They want higher taxes on Canadian families. They want higher taxes on middle-class seniors. They want higher taxes on middle-class consumers.

That is not the right plan and that is why we will continue to cut taxes for Canadian families.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GATINEAU PARK**

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for the past nine years, the Conservatives have done nothing but turn their backs on the people of the Outaouais. With their savage cuts to the public service, they have deprived thousands of workers of a steady income and poisoned the work environment for thousands more.

Refusing to back down, they even went as far as blocking the bill to protect Gatineau Park that was sponsored by my colleague, the member for Hull—Aylmer. That was one year ago today. The purpose of the bill was to provide legal protection to one of the most visited parks in Canada, a park that is truly at the heart of the identity and the economy of the Outaouais. There is a reason this bill was supported by experts and thousands of Canadians.

During the debate, the Conservatives and their Liberal friends told us that they had a better plan for our park—and we are still waiting.

\* \* \*

[English]

**VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY**

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today marks 40 years since the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam fell to the communist invaders from the north.

An iron curtain of totalitarianism fell upon the democratic south. Many were sent to political re-education camps, tortured, beaten, and killed. More than two million people from the south fled by any means possible. Many escaped on makeshift rafts. They set out to sea in search of freedom. Some 250,000 of these boat people, as they became known, died at sea from drowning, starvation, thirst, and hunger.

For more than 60,000, a safe haven was found in Canada. In 1979-1980, the Conservative government of the time, with the help of churches, synagogues, communities, and just plain old folks, offered them a home in Canada.

The Vietnamese community now numbers more than 300,000 strong. They are fearlessly proud Canadians. Many are here in Ottawa today to mark the 40th anniversary of the start of their journey. As a country, we are marking the passage of the Journey to Freedom Day Act, now enshrined in Canadian law.

All Canadians of Vietnamese descent, and all those who came to this country in search of hope and opportunity, have made Canada the best country in the world.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**JOURNEY TO FREEDOM DAY**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, under legislation unanimously passed by Parliament, every year on April 30, Canadians will now celebrate their fellow citizens of Vietnamese origin. Our country will commemorate the boat people and other Vietnamese refugees who came here and became a part of our country, reminding us that Canada always comes out stronger when it is welcoming, confident and generous.

[English]

All together, without excluding anyone, every year we will commemorate the Vietnamese Canadian community's personal and collective sacrifices and celebrate the promising opportunities made theirs, and ours, in a Canada made stronger by their welcome presence and outstanding contributions.

Every year, we will celebrate together the uplifting symbiosis that arose between the Canadian and Vietnamese identities. What a great opportunity to remember where we come from, to better understand where we want to go together.

\* \* \*

●(1415)

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, now that the Prime Minister has balanced the federal budget, our government is working to help hard-working families balance theirs.

That is why we are expanding the universal child care benefit to make it available to every single Canadian family with a child. However, there are up to 200,000 families who may not get the money that is owed to them if they do not apply. Across Canada, this represents millions of dollars in unclaimed benefits.

Families who are not currently receiving the universal child care benefit, who have never received the benefit, or who have never applied for the Canada child tax benefit and still have children under 18 in their care must apply.

It is important that they do so quickly because the deadline is tomorrow to apply and receive the benefit in July. To sign up, please go to [Canada.ca/taxsavings](http://Canada.ca/taxsavings). This money is owed to 200,000 families, and our Conservative government is working very hard to make sure that they get it.

\* \* \*

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, stop the press.

The Liberal Party finally has a policy of sorts. It is their outrage about the Conservatives using taxpayers' dollars on partisan advertising. Now, I agree that is unacceptable.

I remember a time when the last Liberal government shamelessly raided the treasury for its own partisan ads. The Liberal brand has not changed much.

Let us just look at the Auditor General of Ontario, who is warning that the Liberal gang there is stripping the rules so it can flood the airways with partisan advertising.

What do these Liberals here have to say about it? They say not a peep, not from the likes of Gerald Butts who wrote the Ontario Liberal playbook. The Liberal position is really clear: they are against partisan advertising, unless they get to do it; they support labour rights, unless they are trashing collective bargaining rights on Parliament Hill; they claim to be defenders of the Charter, except when they are supporting Bill C-51. It is Tweedledee and Tweedledum, two tired old parties cut from the same cloth.

Canadians know the difference, and they are going to show both parties the door come this election.

\* \* \*

**LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA**

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberal Party, we have been very clear. We have no intention of legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana. The chiefs of police have also been very clear that they do not support legalizing marijuana.

Now that he has joined the Liberal Party, Bill Blair has flip-flopped and now wants to legalize marijuana, which would make it easier for children to smoke pot. Already he puts it on equal footing with alcohol and is already planning to, as he says "tax the thing" and "control the price".

Unlike Mr. Blair and the Liberal Party, we do not intend to compromise on the safety of our youth. These drugs are illegal because of the harmful effects they have on users and on our society. One can only wonder how Mr. Blair can feel comfortable now that he belongs in the same basket as Liberal supporters such as drug-pushing Marc and Jodie Emery.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting for the Prime Minister to respond to the disturbing allegations that Mike Duffy himself raised concerns about being appointed as a senator for Prince Edward Island when he was a resident of Ontario.

The Constitution is clear: a senator must reside in the province for which he or she is appointed.

The Prime Minister has to answer sooner or later. What did the Prime Minister do when Mike Duffy told him he was not a resident of Prince Edward Island?

[English]

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question on a number of occasions.

### Oral Questions

How disappointed Canadians must be this morning. They work hard, they play by the rules, and yet again they find out that the New Democrats are using their money callously. There are 68 of them who are accused of illegally using taxpayer resources for illegal offices, and 23 of them for inappropriate mailings. They were forced to pay back \$350,000 worth of illegal union donations. They were charged \$40,000 for illegal robocalls. Now we find out that working in the office of the Leader of the Opposition, using taxpayer resources, is a union member who is using taxpayer money for partisan attack.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives say, “Let’s change the subject. We don’t know any Mike Duffy”, except that 74 Conservative MPs invited Mike Duffy to their ridings on the taxpayers’ dime. They know him all right; he is really at the heart of Conservative scandals and entitlement.

The Prime Minister appointed former senator Mike Duffy. Now we have sources saying that the Prime Minister insisted Duffy represent Prince Edward Island, when he knew he was not a resident there. Did the Prime Minister’s Office go to such great lengths to try to bury Duffy’s expense scandal because it was trying to protect the Prime Minister? Is that why there is this cover-up?

• (1420)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the constitutional practice on this has been clear for almost 150 years.

It is also very clear that the NDP members, yet again, are caught using taxpayer resources inappropriately. To have a member of the union working inside the office of the Leader of the Opposition, doing partisan political work at the expense of the taxpayers, is completely inappropriate. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will do the right thing—take a step back and pay the taxpayers back the millions of dollars he owes them. He should do the right thing.

\* \* \*

### THE BUDGET

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** The member is confused, Mr. Speaker. We are not talking about fake Conservative kangaroo courts; we are talking about real courts with real judges. They should know the difference, because so many Conservatives are before real courts right now.

Here is a question for the finance minister. It would be nice to have an answer. The Conservative budget would give billions to the wealthy while making the middle class and future generations foot the bill. Today, GM announced it will cut another 1,000 positions in Oshawa. That is 1,000 more people looking for work and 1,000 more families struggling harder to make ends meet. With all these job losses, why are the Conservatives failing to take real action to protect good Canadian jobs? Will the finance minister maybe answer that question?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, things are looking good for October, I can say.

We, of course, are very concerned about the actions taken by the company, and our hearts go out to the people affected by it. We have

invested heavily in the automotive industry. We have saved 50,000 jobs. Of course we are providing, through our capital cost allowance, to manufacturers a significant tax break, and we will continue to invest in job-creating companies.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has become an expert at creating illusions.

The Minister of Finance likes to boast that he balanced his budget, but it is a smokescreen that poorly masks the real state of the Canadian economy, which has been crippled by the Conservatives’ poor decisions.

According to the most recent data, there has been a decline in manufacturing production for the second month in a row. That is worrisome because it indicates a continuing economic slowdown.

Does the minister have a plan to address the decline of Canadian manufacturers?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have brought forward policies to help manufacturers, and we will help all businesses, large and small, by giving them a tax regime that is more competitive than that of other countries.

In fact, it is already more competitive than the U.S. regime, because the tax rate is 46% lower than that of the U.S.

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the decline in manufacturing production translates into the loss of good jobs for Canadian families. There are no measures in the Conservatives’ budget to protect jobs in the manufacturing sector, and they did nothing to save the 400,000 jobs that have already disappeared since they came to power.

Why is the minister not protecting manufacturing jobs that provide an adequate standard of living for many families in the middle class?

[English]

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we have advanced job-creating businesses large and small. We have a lower tax regime than those of the other countries in the G7, some 46% lower than that of the United States. We have advanced for big companies the accelerated capital cost allowance. For small companies, which are responsible for 50% of the jobs in the private sector, we are moving the tax rate, which we already brought down to 11%, to 9% over the next several years.

This is the most significant tax reduction in 25 years.

*Oral Questions*

•(1425)

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Deschamps report on sexual misconduct paints a picture of wilful incompetence and complete disregard for our Armed Forces members. The report speaks of a hostile, sexualized environment, a pervasive culture of misogyny, and ongoing instances of abuse and harassment, particularly against women and LGBTQ members.

Clearly, the Conservatives have been more focused on budget cuts than on protecting the men and women who serve our country. Why on earth have they been ignoring this national disgrace?

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we thank Madam Deschamps for her report. We are deeply concerned by the findings of this report. There is absolutely no place for sexual abuse and misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces and we support its goal to eliminate this kind of behaviour.

We commend the Canadian Armed Forces for undertaking this review and accepting all 10 of its recommendations. We support the Canadian Armed Forces in undertaking a comprehensive action plan to have stronger support for victims, respond more effectively to incidents of inappropriate sexual behaviour, and prevent future occurrences.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to the report, Canadian Armed Forces members routinely suffer from abuse and assault, including rape.

The military left victims of sexual assaults and harassments to fend for themselves. Those who speak up are stigmatized as weak. They are called troublemakers. They face retaliation from peers and supervisors, or they are labelled unfit for work.

The government had the report for months, yet the budget had not a penny in it to fix this nightmare.

The Conservatives claim they are concerned. Why have they not done anything about it, nor put it in their budget?

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member and all members of the House of Commons that all allegations that are reported are investigated, and where appropriate, charges are laid and individuals are prosecuted.

In response to Madam Deschamps' findings that some individuals do not report crimes, the Canadian Armed Forces is now actively looking at all of these and are changing how complaints are handled and are received.

The Canadian Armed Forces are going to implement best practices, such as a sexual assault prevention office, as they have in the United States, which has seen considerable success in addressing these issues.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the report found that members of the Canadian Forces routinely suffer from sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape, and that the military is leaving these victims to fend for themselves.

Those who speak up are stigmatized as weak. They are called troublemakers. They face retaliation or are labelled unfit for work.

Why has the government allowed this situation to develop and continue? Our troops never abandon us, so why has the government abandoned them?

[*English*]

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Chief of the Defence Staff just acknowledged that this sexual behaviour is inappropriate and has set up a strategic response team under the leadership of Major-General Christine Whitecross. The team is going to start looking at detailed plans on how to address this problem, changing the culture and making sure that this problem is addressed effectively, and where there are problems, that there are proper ways to address them and file those complaints outside of the normal processes that are used now.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today's report shows a shocking level of sexual misconduct, harassment and assault in the Canadian Armed Forces. Military leadership turned a blind eye to an environment that was rampant with inappropriate and criminal behaviour and failed to support victims when they came forward. This is a matter of fundamental justice for women in our society, a flagrant disregard for women's rights and repeated denial of a systemic problem in the military.

Why is the government not recognizing that profound changes are required and that the military is not capable and has not shown itself to be capable of dealing with sexual assault in its midst?

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear. The Department of National Defence has been clear. The Chief of the Defence Staff and the Canadian Armed Forces have been clear that what has happened is completely unacceptable, that these findings are deeply concerning and that we will continue to move forward to ensure that all 10 recommendations made by Madam Deschamps, a retired Supreme Court justice, are implemented. They are doing that under the leadership of Major-General Christine Whitecross to ensure that all the necessary steps are taken and that these sexual complaints can be brought forward, as well as charges laid when appropriate.

•(1430)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Éloïse Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an action plan is only a first step. We need to get to the bottom of things to understand this systemic failure when it comes to the investigation and prosecution of sexual crimes in the military. Canada's military justice system has completely failed the women and men who have tried to speak out about sexual misconduct, harassment and abuse.

*Oral Questions*

Will the minister apologize to victims for this shameful behaviour and accept all of the recommendations in the report?

[*English*]

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, the Canadian Armed Forces and the Chief of the Defence Staff have accepted all the recommendations. They have set up a strategic response team under the leadership of Major-General Christine Whitecross. They will be bringing forward an entire program on how to deal with this, such as having a sexual assault prevention office, similar to what they have done in the United States and other allied countries.

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**CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the government buckled to NDP pressure to end pay-to-pay fees, they made sure that their bank buddies were exempted and it seems that they have used that as a green light to start charging hard-working, middle-class Canadians extra fees to pay their mortgage, to make a payment on their credit card, even to pay student loans. This is pay-to-pay fees on steroids.

When will the government stop sheltering big banks and their billions in profits and finally ban all pay-to-pay fees?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are the only government that has stood up for consumers by lowering taxes and putting more money back in their pockets. We have taken action to improve low-cost bank accounts and to expand no-cost banking options for more than seven million Canadians. We have introduced a debit card and credit card code of conduct. Our government believes that with better information, Canadian consumers can make informed choices which will be in their interests.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to set the record straight. Under the Conservatives, Canadians are working more, but a majority of them are living from paycheque to paycheque and are not in a position to save.

Although Canadian banks are earning record profits in the billions of dollars, they are not satisfied and always want more. Now, customers will be charged fees to pay their mortgage, and transactions are costing all Canadians more and more. Enough is enough.

Will the Conservatives finally stand up for the middle class and hold their banker friends accountable?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. This is the second demonstration. We are going to run short on time.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. We are going to run out of time. We are just about of time now, actually.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have provided more protections than ever for bank customers and we have done more than any other government. We will continue to help consumers in the future, thanks to our credit rating. What is very important is that we have lowered taxes to the levels they were at 50 years ago. That is what benefits families the most.

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we just learned that 1,000 GM workers in Oshawa will be losing their jobs. We know that manufacturing sector output slowed in February for the second consecutive month. Instead of taking action to support the manufacturing sector, the Conservatives are authorizing a \$500 million-plus loan to help Volkswagen create jobs in Mexico.

Why are the Conservatives not helping Canadian manufacturers create jobs here?

● (1435)

[*English*]

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are with the workers and their families in Oshawa during this very difficult time.

However, the member has it all wrong. This support is about creating new jobs and export opportunities within Canada. This is an interest-bearing loan, not a grant or subsidy. In fact, this loan will actually open the door for Canadian manufacturers to export their products to global companies.

Sadly, the opposition parties want to raise taxes. They want to abandon manufacturing. That is something this government will not do.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, the Conservatives have failed to build a balanced economy. Manufacturing output has slipped for the second month in a row, and workers are paying the price.

We have lost more than 400,000 good manufacturing jobs under the Conservatives' watch. Now GM has just announced that 1,000 jobs will be lost this year in Oshawa. What is the Conservatives' response? Give money to a German company to build cars in Mexico

Just where is their auto manufacturing strategy, and when will the Conservatives help the workers and families hit by massive job losses in manufacturing?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no government that has done more for the manufacturing sector than this Conservative government. The results speak for themselves. The programs that she refers to, since 2003, financing agreements like this one have generated almost \$49 billion of business and sales for more than 5,000 Canadian companies.



Unlike the opposition parties, we will not abandon our manufacturers and we will certainly not tax them to death like the NDP wants to.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, more than 1,000 aerospace jobs have been lost in my riding in the past few years, and now, in Mirabel, we have learned that another 300 Bell Helicopter workers are being laid off.

When will the Conservatives realize that there needs to be stable investment in the aerospace sector in order to create well-paying jobs in Mirabel and Montreal?

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are dismayed by this terrible news for the employees and their families. We know that this decision affects the international operations of Bell Helicopter, not just its operations in Canada. We do not comment on private sector decisions. The Canadian aerospace sector remains solid and is still one of the most innovative in the world.

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#### TAXATION

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to Quebec's finance minister, Quebec will lose at least \$65 million a year because of the increase in the TFSA limit. The minister was clear about this Conservative measure: "I would not have done that."

Does the minister realize that his measure will benefit the wealthy and hurt Quebec? Will he help the middle class and withdraw this measure that helps only the wealthiest Canadians?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the tax-free savings account, or TFSA, is an excellent way for Canadians to save money to buy a house, educate their children or build a nest egg for retirement.

That is why 11 million Canadians have a TFSA. The vast majority of those Canadians have a low or average income. Fully 60% of the people who contribute the maximum amount to their TFSA earn less than \$60,000 a year. It is incredible to think that the Liberals and the NDP would cancel the increased TFSA contribution limit and deny the middle class and seniors this opportunity to save money.

[*English*]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I guess we know why the Minister of Finance could not answer the question on how many jobs the budget would create. It was the wrong question. The better one is this. How many jobs would this budget destroy in Canada?

The Quebec government is now speaking out against the Conservatives' plan to give billions to the wealthy through a major expansion of the TFSA. It has warned that this scheme will drain provincial budgets by hundreds of millions of dollars and grow to billions as the wealthy hide more and more of their money. Meanwhile, middle-class and working-class Canadians work hard just to get by and will have to work even harder to pay for these giveaways to the wealthy.

#### Oral Questions

Why are Conservatives forcing working and middle-class Canadians to pay for their trickle-up economics?

• (1440)

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite remarkable that the opposition does not understand that if the private sector keeps the money, the money is not lost. The money goes to investment and savings, savings for education, retirement and for a first home.

Here is a little more information, if the facts mean anything to the opposition. Half of TFSA holders earn less than \$42,000 a year and 600,000 seniors with income below \$60,000 are currently maximizing their TFSAs.

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#### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, new GDP numbers confirm what the Bank of Canada was saying, that Canadian economic growth is atrocious. The fact is that it has not grown at all in 2015. In fact, it has shrunk. The manufacturing sector has been hit particularly hard, with its output declining by almost a percentage point in February, following a decline in January.

When Canadians needed a plan, the Conservatives delayed presenting a budget. With all the extra time to prepare the budget, why did the minister not present us with a plan for jobs and growth?

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few facts for the member opposite and for the House.

Both the International Monetary Fund and the OECD are projecting that Canada will have the strongest economic growth in the G7 in the years ahead. In addition to that, for the seventh straight year, the World Economic Forum has ranked Canada's banking system as the soundest in the world. Our net debt to GDP ratio remains among the lowest, and organizations like Bloomberg ranked Canada as one of the most attractive places in the world to do business.

Maybe those members should factor that in their questions.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to be clear for the record, that question was for the Minister of Finance to answer.

Today, GM has cut 1,000 jobs in Oshawa. Today, there are 160,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than in 2008. The percentage of people unemployed for over a year has doubled since 2008. CIBC says that the quality of Canadian jobs is at its lowest in 25 years.

With Canada's job market so weak, how can the Conservatives pretend everything is fine, and why do they refuse to present a real plan for jobs and growth?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a real plan: tax cuts, trade and training, which has created 1.2 million net new jobs in Canada. One of those job-creating tax cuts is the reduction in the small business tax rate.

We all know that small businesses are the major drivers of job creation, but the Liberal leader announced that he would raise taxes on small businesses if he ever got the chance. This is the same leader who thinks that budgets balance themselves. Small businesses know better and that is why they support our government, our tax cuts, and ultimately they will support us in the next election.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the budget notwithstanding, the Canadian economy is in obvious trouble.

It shrank in January, worse than first reported. February was flat. Oil and gas have tumbled. Manufacturing was supposed to pick up the slack, but it is dropping too. U.S. growth was supposed to pull Canada along, but that is not happening either. A thousand more jobs are gone today at GM. Thirty-five per cent of Canadian families are carrying debt ratios over 200%.

Why did we waste two months for a pointless budget with no plan for growth and not even a basic job creation target?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have a one-point plan for the economy, and that is to raise taxes on the middle class. We learned last week from the Liberal leader that they propose to raise taxes on small businesses.

Canadians know that budgets do not balance themselves. Hard work and discipline balanced our budget, and now we will help families balance their budgets by reducing their taxes with a total of \$6,000 in tax savings for the average family of four. We have reduced taxes; the Liberals would raise them.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

**SENIORS**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a new report from HSBC shows that 60% of Canadian seniors will only semi-retire or never retire at all.

The reality is that more and more Canadians cannot afford to retire. They have faced decades of income inequality and are consequently saddled with record levels of debt.

When will the Conservatives listen to our calls for a national seniors strategy and adopt the NDP's plan so all seniors, the people who built our country, can retire with dignity?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me share one idea that would help seniors with their retirement.

A Tax-Free Savings Account...can help you while you work towards your short and long-term financial goals. A TSFA is a flexible registered savings account: investment income, including capital gains, earned within the account is not taxed; and withdrawals are tax-free.

Who said that? It is the NDP member for Ottawa Centre advocating the tax-free savings accounts. Now the New Democrats say they want to get rid of it. Which is it?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative techniques are not working at all. The HSBC report is clear: half of all Canadians expect to continue working after they retire because they will need income. By raising the eligibility age for the guaranteed income supplement and OAS to 67, the Conservatives have made the situation even more difficult.

Why is the government not implementing measures to help Canadians retire with dignity?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is a quote:

A Tax-Free Savings Account...can help you while you work towards your short- and long-term financial goals. A TFSA is a flexible registered savings account; investment income, including capital gains, earned within the account is not taxed, and withdrawals are tax-free.

That is the member for Ottawa Centre championing our TFSAs as a good way for our seniors to save for the future. We agree.

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**FOOD SAFETY**

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, TFSAs are giveaways for the rich, but there is nothing to help seniors.

Now let us talk about food safety. After the XL Foods plant closed in 2012 for E. coli contamination, new cases were identified. Last year, American inspectors found the bacteria in beef exported by that company, and reports have shown that testing for E. coli is not done consistently.

Will the Conservatives finally recognize the consequences of their cuts to food safety?

[*English*]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been absolutely no cuts to food safety. It is quite the opposite. There are nearly 40 Canadian Food Inspection Agency inspection staff on the ground in this facility alone every day.

Corrective action was taken to deal with some of the issues that happened in 2014 and before. Inspectors have resolved all the issues and there are none outstanding. In fact, we have even created a team of inspectors to inspect the inspectors to ensure they are doing their jobs. I am going to send them in to ensure everything is okay.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is reassuring. We have inspectors, but now we do not trust the inspectors so we will get inspectors to inspect the inspectors, just in case.

However, it did not work because we know that Brooks continued to ship from that plant. After 2012, there were still problems. We know that tainted meat went to the United States four times last year.

As much as the minister protests that there are no cuts, she should check her own budget document to see that, courtesy of the Minister of Finance, the Conservatives have cut the budget to the CFIA. That is black and white.

There is no mention in this budget about doing anything. Why is the Conservative government abandoning families to the prospect of being ill because of tainted meat?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me read what Dr. Keith Warriner, from the University of Guelph, said. He is a food safety expert in Canada. He said that the suggestion that meat sold in Canada was unsafe was “scaremongering”. I would ask the member to stop doing exactly that.

In this plant alone we have 40 CFIA inspection staff on the ground every day. They have a rigorous system. The Conference Board of Canada rates our food safety system number one against all OECD countries, including the United States. They are doing an excellent job.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to see the 10 men accused of attacking Malala Yousafzai, back in 2012, were recently arrested in Pakistan for their barbaric acts.

Could the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration please update the House on the situation and Canada's response?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hard-working member for Mississauga South for her work on legislation to protect women in Canada and around the world.

I am sure all members will be pleased with the news that the perpetrators of these brutal acts against Malala Yousafzai have been arrested. We hope they will face the full force of Pakistan's law and that justice will be done.

It is precisely because Malala Yousafzai was not silenced by these terrorists that she has become an inspiration to all Canadians. She has become an advocate for girls' education. She has been an advocate for human rights and for freedom.

On this side of the House, we are particularly proud to be bestowing upon her honorary Canadian citizenship. We hope this process will bring the terrorists to justice.

[*Translation*]

**TOURISM**

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Tourism shocked francophone communities outside Quebec when he said that they want unlimited amounts of money to meet their needs.

Instead of scorning francophones outside Quebec, he should listen to them. He would learn that his government's cuts are preventing them from providing adequate services. There is no mention whatsoever of francophones in the budget.

Will the minister ever understand that francophone communities need support, not scorn?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of the concrete actions it has taken to support Canada's tourism industry. I might mention that the tourism industry in Canada and in Quebec is booming, and 2014 was a record year for destinations across Canada, including Quebec. In 2015, we are very confident that will continue to grow.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, many aboriginal communities, including Akwesasne in my riding, are worried about the impact Bill C-51 will have, and with good reason.

As we already know, although aboriginal people make up only 4.3% of Canada's population, they make up 23% of federal inmates. Bill C-51, which is overly broad, will only increase this disproportionate representation in our prisons. Furthermore, public safety infrastructure on reserves is underfunded.

Why is the minister so determined to ram Bill C-51 through when it threatens the rights of aboriginal peoples?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary. This is a bill that is very focused. It brings forward practical, pragmatic measures that many of our law enforcement community, and, in fact, many Canadians and communities have been calling for to protect them.

This is a very serious issue. This is not some hypothetical scenario happening around the world or happening in Canada. These are measures designed specifically to protect Canadians in their communities and give law enforcement and our investigative services the ability to protect Canadians in practical ways.

It is clearly stated in the bill that this is not intended to target lawful advocacy protest, dissent or artistic expression. This is a bill that goes after terrorists, and Canadians support it.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**COPYRIGHT**

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in their budget, the Conservatives want to amend the Copyright Act to finally conform to international standards by extending the term of protection of sound recordings and performances from 50 to 70 years.

Is this too good to be true? Yes, because songwriters will not be included in this measure. Our artists and songwriters are the very source of our music, culture and heritage.

Will the minister stand up and protect our composers and songwriters in the changes to the Copyright Act?

**Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of what we have done for artists in our 2015 budget.

We have had all sorts of feedback, and with the indulgence of the House, I would like to quote some of it.

[English]

To start with, Graham Henderson from Music Canada said the following:

By proposing to extend the term of copyright in recorded music, [the] Prime Minister...and the Government of Canada have demonstrated a real understanding of music's importance to the Canadian economy.

Randy Bachman said that the Prime Minister was "taking care of business". We will take no advice from the NDP—

• (1455)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

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**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, mayors and councillors across this country are furious with the government's imposition of community mailboxes in the neighbourhoods they represent. Hamilton is taking Canada Post to court over the unilateral seizure of municipal property. In cities like Ottawa and Toronto, councillors are demanding to know how Canada Post can possibly fit superboxes into dense urban neighbourhoods without destroying green space, without causing traffic problems, without making the streets less safe for kids.

Why are the Conservatives forging ahead with a plan that is going to fail our cities?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that, in 68% of Canadian households, there will be no change through moving to community mailboxes. Secondly, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities recognized this, too, when it overwhelmingly defeated a motion that called on us to reverse Canada Post's direction in moving to community mailboxes.

Canada Post has an obligation to be self-sufficient. This is its plan, it is implementing it, and we expect it to do it in a sensitive way, taking into consideration communities' needs.

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in December 2008, the Prime Minister named 18 people to the Senate. Mike Duffy was appointed from P.E.I. despite the fact that he had lived in Ontario for more than 40 years. The Prime Minister could have appointed Duffy from Ontario, the province where he resided, but instead, appointed none other than Conservative bagman and now apparently PMO coverup artist Irving Gerstein to represent Ontario.

Why do the partisan interests of the Conservative Party trump the Canadian Constitution, and why does the Prime Minister think he is above the law?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question with respect to constitutional practice.

Having said that, of course, this is a party that fought tooth and nail when we were trying to bring accountability to the Senate. The Liberal Party tried to make victims out of these senators. We are doing just the opposite. Of course, it was the Liberal Party that appointed someone like disgraced senator Mac Harb, who owes the Canadian taxpayers \$250,000. It was prime minister Trudeau who I believe appointed the senator from Puerto Vallarta who never sat in the Senate but was happy to collect his things. I do not recall him doing anything about that. Of course, there was Senator Lavigne.

We are bringing accountability to it—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Malpeque.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government knows absolutely nothing about accountability.

Is the parliamentary secretary just afraid to answer the question? Even Nigel Wright told the Prime Minister's lawyer that he "will not communicate the [Prime Minister]'s view that ownership of property equates to residence...". Was Wright hiding this information for good reason: because it goes against the Constitution? Is it not true that the Prime Minister wanted Duffy as a senator because he was the golden goose of Conservative fundraising?

Why did the Prime Minister violate the Constitution for a Conservative fundraiser, and doing so wrongly?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Again, Mr. Speaker, the constitutional practice on this has been clear for almost 150 years, but it is awkward when that member asks a question about ethics when, of course, he was one of the members who was identified as having to return living expenses. I am not sure why they would have him ask this question. There are other people in the caucus who could ask it.

The member for Vancouver Centre—but she has campaign debts outstanding, so she could not ask it. Maybe the leader could have asked it, but of course, he accepted speaking fees when he was a member of Parliament, so he could not ask that question. When we go down that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Surrey North.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, gang violence in Surrey has reached crisis levels. My community needs urgent action now from the government, but instead, yesterday Conservatives stood in the House and patted themselves on the back for a job well done. Last night, the minister was backpedalling, doing damage control, but he has still refused to make any concrete commitments. It is unacceptable to me. Surrey needs more resources, including youth gang prevention programs.

Will the government start immediately approving the 100 RCMP officers the city of Surrey has requested?

• (1500)

**Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to gang violence, I think the member was here yesterday when I brought forward the good news that the government had invested \$2.8 million in crime prevention in Surrey alone.

Having said that, I am very proud of our government's actions in tackling crime. We have actually passed more than 30 tough-on-crime policies. It is only this government that stands for the protection of all Canadians.

I would like to ask that member how many of those policies that we passed he actually voted for.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there should be no more excuses and no more empty promises.

The city and the province are waiting for the government's approval for 100 new RCMP officers. The people of Surrey need more police on the streets now. They need more gang prevention and drug crime prevention funding.

Conservatives' self-congratulation for their failures is not going to fix the problem. The violence on our streets is real, and the government needs to take real action.

Will the minister commit, here and now, to approve the new officers and resources, and provide clear timelines for when they will arrive?

**Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course our Conservative government has taken strong action to keep British Columbians and all Canadians safe.

It is very interesting that they are standing here in the House asking for more resources when in fact this government has increased resources for the RCMP seven times, and seven times the member who asked that question voted against it.

### Oral Questions

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to thousands of hard-working parents in my riding about their child care choices and the cost of raising a family.

They have expressed their strong support for our new family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit that will make every single family, including single parents, better off. However, they are deeply concerned that the NDP and the Liberals would take that away from them.

Can the Minister of State for Social Development please outline how our balanced budget is providing real, tangible support to middle-class families?

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Wild Rose is correct. His constituents need to be worried about the NDP and the Liberals and what they would do given the chance.

We are giving benefits to every family with children in this country. What the NDP does is insult families when they do not use licensed daycare, and 90% of them do not. We respect what families decide to do in terms of looking after their children.

That is why we are giving every family with kids \$160 for each child under the age of six, \$60 for every child over the age seven, because we believe that money belongs to Canadian families, not to bureaucracies, not to unions, not to government coffers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### EMPLOYMENT

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' inconsistent management approach has made a terrible mess of the temporary foreign worker program.

After leaving this program wide open to abuse, the Conservatives are now going to the other extreme and closing the floodgates to the point where employers are being denied workers they legitimately need to keep our economy going. The Quebec government and the Chambre de commerce du Québec are condemning this mess and have every right to seek to negotiate terms.

When will the Conservatives stop hurting the economy with their incompetence and arrogance?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec has known about these changes since June 2014, and we have spoken with the Government of Quebec about them since that announcement was made.

However, 143,000 Quebecers have been receiving employment insurance benefits this year and they need jobs. Jobs in Quebec should be going to Quebecers. It is shameful that the Liberal Party wants to take jobs away from Quebecers and give them to temporary foreign workers. That is completely shameful.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**NOTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's two-year reign over the Arctic Council has been labelled a failure by the international community.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to the north, and the Conservatives chose to ignore it. The United States have taken charge and declared that the Arctic Council will return to critical issues, like the impact of Arctic climate change, the development of renewable energy, public education, monitoring ocean acidification.

Why did the government waste two years of Arctic Council time and spoil its efforts on the international stage?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where this member has been on this file, but we have championed a program of economic development and environmental sustainability.

This hon. member said something about a failure. I was at that conference. Every single permanent member there praised our government and the Minister of the Environment for her chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

He is the only one, and they are the only ones, who are questioning this. Nobody else is.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government, under the leadership of this Prime Minister, has been unequivocal in our support for Ukraine.

Whether it takes 5 months or 50 years, we will never, ever recognize the illegal annexation and occupation of Crimea, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs please update the House on the most recent measures our government has taken to support Ukraine and its territorial integrity?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada strongly condemns the actions of the combined Russian separatist forces, and we remain concerned about what appears to be Vladimir Putin's command and control of militants in occupied Ukraine.

Today, I was pleased to announce, along with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Pavlo Klimkin, Canadian funding for a series of projects to strengthen human rights and improve Ukraine's business environment.

This is in addition to Canada's significant military contribution, NATO's assurance packages, and the world's strongest sanctions.

We should make no mistake: under the leadership of this Prime Minister, Canada stands with Ukraine.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, let me parenthetically agree entirely with the member for Northwest Territories. Canada's performance as chair of the Arctic Council was a disgrace.

My question is related to Bill C-51 and the 94th application of time allocation. Earlier today, the government House leader made the absurd claim that I had not read Bill C-51, which I assure the House I have studied assiduously, and I doubt that the hon. member has.

I would like to know if the government House leader knows the difference between oversight, review, and issuing a warrant. They are three entirely different concepts. Bill C-51 does not contain any judicial oversight.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when we introduced this legislation and drafted it, we had a choice. We could ask politicians after the fact to examine the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service with regard to its new powers, or we could give that power to judges to examine, in advance before acts were undertaken, whether they were appropriate, and if they thought so, to grant a warrant.

That is the choice we made. We chose to have judges review these matters rather than politicians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment should look outside and see that summer is just around the corner. It is a crucial time for many businesses that will need many workers, including temporary foreign workers, to operate.

This morning, Quebec minister Kathleen Weil criticized Ottawa's refusal to understand Quebec's needs and to modify the current criteria of the temporary foreign worker program, which will penalize many employers and sectors of activity.

Does the minister realize that his refusal to fix the program will hurt the economy and inevitably the workers he claims he is protecting?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 143,000 Quebecers received employment insurance in 2013. Employers should hire those Quebecers instead of hiring temporary foreign workers. Quebecers are entitled to work in their own province.

We will protect this right by ensuring that employers look to hire Quebecers and not just temporary foreign workers.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** That will bring question period to an end for today.

*Business of the House*

However, I would like to draw the attention of all hon. members to the upcoming centenary, on May 3, 2015, of Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae's iconic poem *In Flanders Fields*.

McCrae, a surgeon in the Canadian Field Artillery, was in charge of a field hospital during the second battle of Ypres in 1915. His friend and former student, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was killed in the battle. It was his burial among the poppies that in part inspired the poem, first published anonymously in the magazine *Punch*.

● (1510)

[Translation]

Over time, the poem has come to symbolize the collective mourning of all Canadians in remembrance of those who, in service of their country, have made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us.

[English]

Hon. members may have noticed that the words of McCrae's well-known poem are engraved in English and in French on two of the marble panels that line the walls of the Memorial Chamber.

[Translation]

This room is a reflection of the country's profound sense of loss following the First World War and, like the poem, it has come to represent our nation's immeasurable gratitude for all those who have died in service to Canada.

[English]

I am pleased to inform all hon. members that the Department of Veterans Affairs has given permission to modify the page-turning schedule of the First World War Book of Remembrance so that the page that bears the name of Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae will be displayed today, April 30.

\* \* \*

#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge members of the clan McCrae, who are present today in the gallery.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have bad news and good news.

The bad news is that today, the government sadly used a closure and time allocation motion for the 94th time to shut down debate on Bill C-51, which is a threat to our rights and freedoms.

The government even seems to want to move a 95th closure motion after question period. Unbelievable. This government will not allow debate.

[English]

The good news is that tomorrow is May 1. That means that there are only 170 days left in the life of the Conservative government. There are only 30 sitting days. What that means is that the damage

the Conservative government is doing is going to start being repaired as of Oct 19, when an NDP government comes in and starts repairing all that the government has broken over the course of the last few years. That is good news for Canadians.

That being said, I would like to ask my hon. colleague, the government House leader, what will be on the government's agenda in the coming week.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I admire the quality of optimism, and I know that hope springs eternal in my colleague's breast.

After this statement, we will complete the motion, pursuant to Standing Order 78, in relation to Bill C-51. After that, we will consider Bill C-46, the pipeline safety act at report stage, and then proceed to debate it at third reading. This bill would ensure that Canada's pipeline safety regime remains world class. That debate will continue next week, on Wednesday.

Tomorrow we will wrap up the second reading debate on Bill C-50, the citizen voting act. The House will have an opportunity later today, I hope, to deliberate on how that will proceed.

[Translation]

Monday, we will conclude the report stage debate of Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015. Our Conservative government takes all threats to the security of Canada and Canadians very seriously.

That is why we are moving forward with Bill C-51 and the crucial provisions contained in it to protect our national security. Third reading of this important bill will take place Tuesday.

[English]

Thursday, before question period, we will consider Bill S-3, the port state measures agreement implementation act at report stage, and hopefully, third reading. This bill passed at second reading with widespread support, and I am optimistic that third reading will be no different.

[Translation]

I understand that the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is meeting this afternoon to give clause-by-clause consideration to Bill C-52, the Safe and Accountable Rail Act. This bill would further strengthen Canada's rail safety regime and ensure that adequate compensation is available. If the committee finishes that work today, we will consider the bill at report stage and third reading after question period next Thursday.

At second reading, New Democrats spoke about the importance of passing this bill urgently and therefore I hope that they will see to letting this legislation pass next week, so that the Senate will have plenty of time to complete its consideration of the bill before the summer adjournment.

● (1515)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The Chair has notice of a question of privilege. We will proceed with that now.

*Privilege***PRIVILEGE**

## PHYSICAL OBSTRUCTION

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege related to an event that took place a little earlier this afternoon as a number of my colleagues and I were returning to the House of Commons for a vote.

Allow me to preface my comments by saying that as of the events of October last year, and the constant reminders, our admiration and respect for the security forces that govern and protect us on Parliament Hill is consistent for me and my colleagues on the New Democrat benches and all members of the House. We commend them for their work and for their constant courage. They have a difficult task. They maintain access for the public to this institution, this House of Commons, and to all of the parliamentary buildings. They have to maintain an incredibly high level of security, given the world we live in. They also must maintain, as is ordered by this House and our constitution, access for all members of Parliament to the House of Commons in order for us to fulfill our duties on behalf of Canadians.

Today, however, I, and others, was blocked from accessing the parliamentary precinct by an officer of the RCMP. The physical obstruction impeded me from performing my parliamentary duties, which I believe constitutes a *prima facie* breach of my privilege as a member of this House.

I will remind the House that this a matter that concerns all members of Parliament, and there were, in fact, Conservative members of Parliament on the bus who shared my concern about the actions that took place and our inability to return to the House, because as members will know, today we had a number of votes. The votes we were returning to were taking place a few short minutes from the moment we were stopped from entering the gate onto Parliament Hill.

Erskine May's *Treatise on The Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament* defines "privilege" in the following way, on page 75:

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively...and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions....

We take this, of course, very seriously. It is the foundation of our democratic principles in this place.

Let me explain what happened. I think that will set the ground for a ruling perhaps later today or in the future.

Earlier today I was denied reasonable, timely access to the parliamentary precinct by an officer of the force. At the time, I was coming to the House of Commons to attend a vote to adjourn the House of Commons.

When the bells started ringing for the vote, I was in the Valour Building for a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance. I was chairing the meeting at the time. We had remained with a number of MPs to entertain the witnesses we had who were discussing the important issue of terror financing. Once the committee adjourned its meeting, with sufficient time to return to the House so that all members could make it in a reasonable time, I went outside onto

Wellington Street and took one of the official shuttles of Parliament to get back to the House immediately for the vote. There were some, I want to approximate, seven or eight minutes until we were voting, which is certainly sufficient time.

As the shuttle approached the East Block entrance to the parliamentary precinct on Wellington Street, an officer refused to allow the shuttle to turn into the security area, leaving us in the middle of Wellington, in the left-hand turn lane. I am sure members are familiar with it.

MPs from both sides of the House, Conservatives and New Democrats, particularly my Conservative colleagues, I should say, from my recollection, raised their concern about the need to proceed to the House immediately. The time was approaching perhaps five minutes before the vote was to take place. They raised their concern and asked the driver to allow us, if we could not turn into the parliamentary precinct, to at least disembark from the bus.

Not surprisingly, though, the driver of the bus was unable to do so, because we were in the middle of Wellington Street, and that would have been entirely unsafe for all members, and we were denied that permission, which was of course right.

We then asked the driver, some of my Conservative colleagues, to drive onto the sidewalk portion. For those who are familiar with the parliamentary precinct, there is a small buttress before one hits the gate where the RCMP member was standing and denying access. The driver also indicated that this was not possible. It was not permitted by the security conditions of the House, and the RCMP was not allowing that option either. We were literally not stuck in traffic but stuck in the middle of the road, unable to proceed onto Parliament Hill.

This is, I presume, part of some security protocol that was going on at the time, but that was not explained to us when we eventually were able to pass through.

The RCMP officer signalled to our driver, and then through him to us, that it would be another three to five minutes before he would allow us to proceed in the shuttle.

● (1520)

As members can imagine, this caused a certain amount of consternation among me and my colleagues, more so from my Conservative friends because every minute as the bells are ringing and time is ticking down is a precious one. When the votes commence they are not done again if someone is unable to attend, once a vote is taken.

We were not told what reason led to the officer denying us access to the parliamentary precinct, but many other MPs were on the shuttle with me. The member for London—Fanshawe, whose office is in the Valour Building, was also on that shuttle, trying to make every effort to get to the vote and perform her duties. Members can check this against their own memories, but I am almost certain that the member for North Vancouver and the member for South Shore—St. Margaret's were also on the bus, as well as one other colleague, whose name I am misplacing right now, from the Conservative caucus. I am sure if they seek it, they would have an opportunity to intervene in this debate because, as I have said a few times, they showed a certain amount of consternation.



*Privilege*

At one point, one of my Conservative colleagues said that if this were a confidence vote the government could fall and this is unacceptable. While it was not a vote of confidence, we have had confidence votes in this place that have been decided by one or two votes on one side of the House. We all remember our dear departed friend, Mr. Cadman, who cast a vote in this House on a motion of confidence and that night in the House of Commons the government was to fall or continue based on that one singular vote.

There are a number of precedents for this. As members know, the second edition of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* says on page 110:

In circumstances where Members claim to be physically obstructed, impeded, interfered with or intimidated in the performance of their parliamentary functions, the Speaker is apt to find a *prima facie* breach of privilege has occurred.

Incidents involving physical obstruction—such as traffic barriers, security cordons and union picket lines either impeding Members' access to the Parliamentary Precinct or blocking their free movement within the precinct—as well as occurrences of physical assault or molestation have been found to be *prima facie* cases of privilege.

To reiterate, security cordons, traffic barriers or any kind of picket line would all qualify as reasons why we would find a *prima facie* case of a breach of privilege.

The second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* by Joseph Maingot states on page 230, “Members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed”.

Members have experienced this on the grounds typically as they approach a security cordon or any of the entrances to the House of Commons that many conduct ourselves with our parliamentary pins or a ring or some indication. However, that of course is not the rule. The security precinct is also required to be able to identify us as we come in. As I look around the House today, I see that members on both sides, including me, do not carry our pins at all times. Identification is paramount to allow us to enter. I notice the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons missed his pin today, but he of course has free and unobstructed access to the House and is granted that permission every time he comes in.

In fact, this is not the first time we have raised this matter. Every time, we are told again and again by the establishment that the matter will be looked into, yet we see little or no improvement. Examples of *prima facie* cases of breach of privilege abound. I will remind the House of Speaker's rulings in similar instances.

The first occurred on March 15, 2012 when, during the visit of a head of state, members who were not carrying their identification with them—not just the pin but some form of picture ID—were barred from accessing Parliament Hill by the security forces.

The second happened again basically two years later on September 25, 2014 when the member for Acadie—Bathurst was delayed in accessing Parliament Hill by a similar roadblock set up to allow the motorcade of the then president of Germany to pass. The obstruction again occurred while bells were ringing for a vote on time allocation presented by the Conservative government of the time, and the member was nearly denied his right to vote.

In both of these previous cases, Mr. Speaker, you ruled that these instances were *prima facie* breaches of privilege. The House was returned with the message that those things, in both cases, would not

happen again, that things would improve and certain measures were made, but clearly not enough.

We must remind the House that some people will ask what it matters if an MP is unable to return back to vote. We on this side believe that right and privilege is the central tenet of how a democracy functions, that members must absolutely be able to return and vote at the earliest possible convenience and cannot be barred from entering the House to vote.

● (1525)

Let us again remember the scenarios. It may not mean much to members today because many votes are decided not beforehand, but there is a majority in the government right now and the Conservatives are able to cast ballots and win the vast majority of those votes. However, it was not that long ago that we were in minority parliaments, and we may return to them again in the future, in which every single vote that is cast has a contributing factor to the outcome, either on the passage or the denial of a bill, or in the very sustaining of a government or having that government fall and have Canadians return to an election.

I raise this question in the context of the larger issue that has previously been raised in the House of Commons, which is becoming increasingly relevant following the adoption of a motion that the Conservatives pushed through, under closure I might add, related to the general security of the parliamentary precinct. This motion instructed both Speakers of Parliament to invite the RCMP to lead all operational security throughout the parliamentary precinct and the grounds around Parliament Hill.

Mr. Speaker, jurisdiction is no longer clear. I refer to the fact that although the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the Senate are in fact masters of the parliamentary precinct, you will then be forced to delegate the authority for all operations, maintenance and security to the RCMP, to PWGSC and other agencies. Let me remind you that in the case of our security forces, we have been put in the situation, not by negotiations reached by all parties, which has been the tradition of the House of Commons here, the House of Commons in England, and virtually every parliamentary precinct that has a functioning democracy, that when speaking of issues of security the best and really the only good solution is arrived at by all members of the House because there is no partisan interest, there is no vote to be gained, there is no advantage to be taken by having one security version over another. However, that was not done here. A motion was pushed through the House under closure to come to the situation that we are in right now.

I believe this contradicts the second edition of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on page 323, which states:

One of the fundamental privileges of the House is to regulate its own internal affairs, exercising exclusive jurisdiction over its premises and the people within.

*Privilege*

Let me remind us of that statement, that our own guidelines, the instructions that we have to follow as parliamentarians, instruct us that the masters of our fate must be guided here. That includes issues regarding security. They cannot be outsourced or given over to another. The function of Parliament is unique, as are the functions of any other part of government. The free and fair access to voting, and the security systems that are informed by the members who are here are exclusive to here. The government has chosen a different path that we think is a precarious one.

I also refer the House to page 170 of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* by Mr. Maingot, which states:

...the House of Commons is not a department of the government of Canada but exists as a constituent element of Parliament.

He goes on further to say:

Each House of Parliament is entitled to the administration of affairs within its own precincts free from interference.... Control of the accommodation and services within the Parliament Buildings is therefore vested in the Speakers—

You, the Speaker of the House:

...on behalf of their respective Houses. Thus Public Works and Government Services and other government departments act only on the advice of officials of each House.

Therefore, in our rules and guidelines around parliamentary function it clearly states that the design of security and the function of this House is guided by who we elect to the Speaker's office, both here and in the Senate. It cannot be sourced out. This is not some department and it cannot be controlled by the government of the day, regardless of what the Conservatives are trying to do.

Mr. Speaker, I think you would be the first to agree that all members of Parliament are equal in their privileges in this House and no member should be interfered with or disadvantaged in any way in accessing the Hill to conduct his or her duties as a member of Parliament. I could only imagine that, if a group of government members were denied access to a vote that they sought to win and they lost that vote because a certain number of members were kept at a security cordon, this exact same privilege being raised by my friends would cut across all partisan interests because our central interest is to allow us to do our democratic duties.

• (1530)

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to consider my question of privilege and the facts I just related. I believe you will find that my privilege was breached and that I was prevented from carrying out my functions as an elected member of the House of Commons. If you find that there was a prima facie breach of my privileges as a member, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's words very carefully and I must say that, being a member of the procedure and House affairs committee, if you find that there is a prima facie case of privilege in this instance, it will be the third time that our committee has dealt with this very issue about access to the Hill.

I do not in any way, shape or form want to try and suggest that this is not an important issue, because it is. However, I note with great interest that while the member very eloquently pointed out that he was almost prevented from attending a very important vote, we have

votes yet to come this afternoon. I am sure that my colleague would not want to miss those by unduly delaying the process that is currently under way to allow such a vote to occur.

I will not make additional comment at this point in time, but I believe that it needs further comment. We have heard from the RCMP on two occasions already in the procedures and House affairs committee. We have expressed our dissatisfaction with the operation of the RCMP from time to time. We have met with the Assistant Commissioner who is responsible for security and the last time we met with the Commissioner of the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that, with your guidance and permission, the government will come back with a more detailed assessment of exactly what occurred this afternoon and present our position at that time. However, I do want to encourage all members to observe brevity this afternoon so that we can continue with the votes that the member opposite so graphically pointed out are important to all members of this House.

I will be making further submissions in due course.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very troubled by the events related by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, but I must say that I am not at all surprised. The level of interference around the House of Commons in the Parliamentary Precinct by RCMP officers has markedly increased to my direct observation.

I have actually had RCMP officers tell me as I go through security clearance that even though they recognize me, they demand to see a pass. Now this is rather unusual. As the member mentioned, the parliamentary pin was supposed to be accessed.

The House of Commons security guards inside this place, as we all know, are extraordinary and know us all on sight. The RCMP appear to go through a rapid cycling through new people all the time. I suppose they recognize the Prime Minister, I would hope so, but I do not think they know anyone else on sight. As I was told by an RCMP officer, even if they do, they think they have to see a pass.

There is a real problem around this place. I know we have important votes. Of course, on the subject matter of votes being time allocation, I do not think that these matters of time allocation should be coming before us at all.

However, I do agree that we want to be able to be present for all important votes, and every vote is important. Impeding access to this place by being encircled by RCMP who have now, in an unconstitutional fashion, been placed in charge of Hill security is a real problem.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to the concerns expressed by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

*Privilege*

I was indeed on the same parliamentary bus trying to make my way to the House of Commons for a very important vote. I am sure you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, how upsetting it was to be stranded in the middle of Wellington Street, unable to disembark, prevented from moving to the security area and denied access to the House of Commons.

I wish to remind the members present that I, like every member here, have an obligation to my constituents, the people of London—Fanshawe, to uphold their right to expression through my vote. My parliamentary privileges were jeopardized, because my access to the House was denied, and consequently the rights of my constituents were not respected. This obstruction is absolutely unacceptable.

I wish to underscore the concerns of my colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley in reminding you, Mr. Speaker, that we in this Parliament have been put in this situation, not by negotiations agreed to by all parties, but by a simple motion written by the government, without consultation with other parties, and rammed through by a vote of the Conservative majority.

This is clearly yet another example of the tyranny of the current Conservative majority. It is not democratic. It is not acceptable.

Therefore, I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you ensure the free movement of members of Parliament within the Parliamentary Precinct. It is absolutely essential if we are to have any semblance of democracy in this place again.

• (1535)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I sit on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the issue of access to the parliamentary precinct is of the utmost importance. We all represent constituents and we all have a mandate to serve. The importance of being able to have that accessibility to the parliamentary precinct as a whole, which goes beyond the chamber itself, is of critical importance. Being able to be present for votes is also very important.

I would like to highlight that if we are going to err, it is better that we err on the side of caution and recognize that we have had a couple of members stand in their place this afternoon to indicate that they felt their privilege was breached. To that extent, I would suggest that there is merit for this matter to go to the procedure and House affairs committee. I know that PROC is busy nowadays with the windup of other issues in this session, but the seriousness of the issue at hand indicates that it does merit review. This is no reflection whatsoever on the professionalism of the RCMP, our security staff, or even the green shuttle bus driver, who I suspect is just following instructions. It is not safe for all those on the bus and others to just let people out in the middle of a street.

We recognize the high sense of professionalism and would suggest to the chair that if we are going to err, let us err on the right side of this issue and allow it to go to PROC where it can be properly looked at.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am also a member of PROC and was part of the deliberations in the previous two cases. I have to say, and there is an opportunity for correction, that I was disappointed to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the

House of Commons suggest that somehow there was going to be games played with this in terms of the vote, notwithstanding that the vote is on something that we consider to be very important and we are trying to do everything we can to stop it from passing or being introduced. We are fighting back as hard as we can, but it only takes 50 minutes to conclude the balance of the discussion and have a vote. There is no way this is going to go longer, so I am disappointed the member would suggest that.

Mr. Speaker, I realize you have an opportunity to deliberate and decide whether or not you are going to send this matter to PROC. We would hope you would do it right away. I would hope that given the fact that there is nothing more important than voting and that we have to get here to do it, that anything that impedes any member from getting here is treated as a priority.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that you would consider standing and immediately sending this matter to PROC. It is a crucial issue. It is complex. There are security issues beyond that affect a member's ability to move around in terms of guests and other such things. However, the notion that we do not have a system that works is not acceptable. I do not like the idea, and the chair of PROC is probably thinking “here we go again”, but the fact of the matter is, here we go again and we are going to stay on this until we get it resolved, because it is a priority.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I hope you will send it immediately to PROC. Let us deal with this. We cannot continue to have this problem coming up over and over again. It needs to be treated as the priority that it is.

• (1540)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to indicate my support for the recommendation that you just received, that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be asked to deal with this matter.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, when the motion to make the RCMP the lead agency to take care of security both inside and outside the House and on Parliament Hill was made, I raised an issue and made a suggestion in writing to the government that it should follow a model we have in British Columbia, where if it is the RCMP that does this, they still have to go through the provincial authorities. Also, in the model in London, England, the city police do it, but they still have to go through parliamentary authorities. Even the government whip who was proposing the motion agreed with that.

Given what has happened today, it would be important that parliamentarians deal with this issue so that the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the Senate could have the input of parliamentarians in dealing with a very important matter. I totally agree that the most significant thing we have to do here is cast a vote and if we are prohibited from coming here, for reasons that may be valid, we still need to figure out a solution, and parliamentarians should be involved in reaching that solution.

*Privilege*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we take further interventions on this question of privilege, it occurs to me that the points raised by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley and other hon. members have covered the impediment to access to the House in a very detailed and concerted way. I am mindful that these types of exchanges on questions of privilege can sometimes give rise to an expanded commentary pulling in other issues. I am sure that is not intended, but it can sometimes occur.

I see there are two other hon. members rising on this question of privilege. If they have anything additional to say to help our consideration of this particular question, that would be helpful. However, if it is something that has already been essentially presented here in the House by other hon. members, we do have other business in front of the House this afternoon that we will need to get to. Therefore, I would encourage hon. members if they have additional comments, by all means we will hear those, but if it is something that has been covered already, perhaps they could look to the expediency of the work of the House here this afternoon so we can get on with the work ahead.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the issue of impeding the vote, obstruction, is a slam dunk in terms of the issue of privilege. There is no doubt there. There is also the question of debate, which is equally important in the life of a parliamentarian. We saw today the government imposing closure for a 94th and now 95th time, shutting down debate. These are two issues that are linked to a certain extent.

The reality is we have what is a very clear breach of privilege. There is no doubt. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley cited *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 108, certain members claiming to be physically obstructed. There is a clear case of breach of privilege.

What we have from the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is an offer to bring forward the appropriate motion to the House. You have said, Mr. Speaker, that there are other issues that are related to that, but we would submit that you can rule immediately on this, that this is very clearly a case of breach of privilege. It very clearly should lead to a motion in the House and then referral to PROC. You have the ability to make that ruling now. The member can then move that motion and there may be a little further discussion, but it would allow, after the appropriate motion, referral to PROC.

This is a growing problem. As a couple of other members have touched on, it had been aggravated by the government unilaterally pushing aside the Speaker's authority and House of Commons privilege a few weeks ago with the motion it dumped on the House. I think all of us were willing to see what the results were. We are seeing increasingly that breaching of privilege of members on both sides of the House.

This is a growing problem. It is not a problem that is going away, not a problem that is being dealt with. It is a growing problem. That is why I would like to suggest that you make an immediate ruling, Mr. Speaker, and have the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley move the motion immediately.

• (1545)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** On the question that the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster raises and others have mentioned as well, at least one other hon. member who has participated in this question of privilege has indicated the wish to address the House at a later time. I do not expect we are going to be getting to an immediate decision this afternoon, but of course we will be taking these matters under advisement.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let me bring something new to this debate. I will not raise the same issue. In my case, this is the second time my right of access to the House was violated. This did not happen today, but on Wednesday.

Some temporary barriers were set up where we enter the House when we take the bus from the Valour Building. These barriers are rusty and the piping is broken, so we no longer go up and down the way we are supposed to. On Wednesday, when we were not going to the House, but to our caucus meeting, we had the same problem and the bus was full. The RCMP refused to let us enter after the bus did the whole tour and came back to try to enter. We had to go back through the official barriers, which made everyone late, and we were pressed for time.

The time before that, it happened to the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster on an additional point.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, you spoke after I finished speaking and I would just like to come back to your point.

You said that there is a member who wants to be heard on this issue. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has said that this is a breach of privilege. He agrees with us on this.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, you could allow the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley to move the appropriate motion and members who want to contribute at that time, including the one member that you were speaking of, and I am not sure who it is, would have the ability to intervene in the House of Commons and speak to the motion.

That in no way reduces what we think is the imperative, obviously agreed to by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, that now is the time to move that motion on breach of privilege. That would allow us to have those discussions and subsequent to that, if the House is in agreement, move it to the procedure and House affairs committee.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, very briefly, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader indicated that the government would return having assessed facts.

We have had a previous occasion where an identical question of privilege has been raised. When the facts were provided, the member withdrew those facts. For that reason, it makes sense for the House to have an opportunity to hear those facts before deliberating on this.

*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I thank all hon. members for their interventions on this question. Of course, it is important to the House to ensure these matters are taken up in due course.

We acknowledge the fact that the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader noted, as is the customary practice with questions of privilege, they would have the opportunity to come back and address the House at a later time. Of course, we will take this matter under advisement and get back to the House in due course.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### CITIZEN VOTING ACT

BILL C-50—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** There are 21 minutes remaining in the question period on the motion before the House.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

• (1550)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, we are now looking at the 95th occasion of time allocation, and this time on Bill C-50, which would amend the Canada Elections Act particularly to deal with Canadians who are overseas.

I appeal to the minister that this is a bill that we have not had any opportunity to debate before this House. We have not had an opportunity for members of Parliament such as me who represent a smaller party to participate. The Green Party has two members in this place and it takes a great deal of time in debate for the debate slots to come around to an opportunity to allow members such as me to debate the bill.

I acknowledge the bill was tabled some time ago, but nothing has happened for some months and now we are being told we must have time allocation to limit debate. I find this egregious. I regret that it is a particular minister who must defend this. It is obviously the government House leader and decisions made in the PMO that have decided to break all historical precedent with the number of times we have had time allocation. However, it does particularly prejudice members of Parliament in my situation, and I would urge the minister to step back from this time allocation and allow us to have full debate on this important piece of legislation.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague opposite for her interest in this important bill and her desire to take part in the debate, which can certainly happen at committee where we hear testimony from witnesses.

This bill was propagated in part by the Frank ruling that took place in May 2014, which has a significant impact on who is eligible to vote, when and in what situations with regard to overseas voting. Due to that, it is incumbent upon the House to take forward legislation prior to the next election so these rules can be clear and

there is no ambiguity. Certainly, there are some good measures in the bill.

If the member checks the blues, I believe she will see that she said that there had not been any debate, which is not the fact. I was looking at what my colleague from Toronto—Danforth said. He said, “The new mechanism that would allow the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to allow Elections Canada access to the non-citizen database that CIC has would be great”.

Therefore, we have already seen some agreement from the opposition that there are elements of the bill that are positive. I hope that debate can happen at committee in due course so we can ensure that this bill and its provisions comes into force prior to the next election.

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with respect, the fact that a member of Parliament agrees with part of a bill, while at the same time taking care to outline a number of serious problems with the bill that need more exposure, including through debate, is hardly an argument for shutting down debate.

The second thing I would like to reference, and ask my colleague to comment on, is that all of this started in December when the minister tabled the bill and presented media and press release materials that gave the impression this was in response to the Frank judgment in the court system, which prohibited preventing any Canadian abroad from voting. The current rule in the Canada Elections Act says that if one has been away for more than five years, one cannot vote, but that rule was struck down on the basis of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The only action the government had to take on that was simply to eliminate the rule. Nothing had to change.

There are already a bunch of rules in the act for how those who have been away for less than five years to vote from abroad. There is no nexus whatsoever between this bill and respecting the Frank judgment. Rather, it is the exact opposite, because the Frank judgment opens up the field of voting for citizens abroad to far more people than had been the case before. The government, obviously, suddenly became worried and created much more onerous rules for voting from abroad for everybody, including for those who have always had the right—who have been away for less than five years.

I would kindly ask my colleague across the way not to buy into the minister's spin that the bill would implement the Frank judgment. It does not at all.

• (1555)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, it actually addresses some of the questions that are raised by the Frank judgment, which is what we do as legislators. We look at the results of rulings, our different policy opinions and we come forward with legislative solutions to deal with such things.

In this case, there are some issues that are raised by the ruling. For example, how do we deal with electors living abroad in terms of which riding they would vote in? In Canada, one has to show proof of residency in a certain riding, if one is a resident of Canada and living in Canada, in order to vote there. That is a connection with the local MP.

*Government Orders*

We have had so many chats in this place, especially through the Reform Act, with regard to how we strengthen democracy. That connection with one's local MP is a very important part of that. One of the things the bill addresses is how we would ensure that those living overseas, those people who are caught under the Frank ruling, would have a proven link to their riding. Therefore, there are measures in the bill which deal with that.

We also have measures in the bill which deal with things such as could a ballot be sent to the wrong address? If somebody is getting registered in perpetuity, can we change that so we ensure ballots are not sent in the wrong direction? The bill deals with those sorts of practical things.

It is really a question of what the Frank ruling means. To us it means that, while this decision has been made, we certainly have to address the realities that it has presented to us, and there are several very good measures in the bill that would do that.

I also think the committee will hear some good witness testimony. My colleague will have an opportunity to continue this line of debate in that forum.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have just arrived in the House, I hope I do not sound too repetitive after my colleague from Toronto—Danforth.

From Bill C-23 to this bill, Bill C-50, there has been an overall theme. The overarching theme here concentrates on issues and problems that are overblown. We have used this expression before with the prior legislation, and now with this legislation as well, which is that in many cases the Conservatives are cruising for a solution to a problem that does not exist.

The Conservatives do not want people to be shopping ridings when they are living internationally, choosing any riding they wish. To a certain degree, I understand that concept. However, by doing this, it is making it very hard on individuals to go back to the prior addresses. In many cases, some of them are students and unable to do that. Not only that, but the vouching process or the attestations have to be done in that prior riding, which may be impossible. That could be many years prior.

These problems created by the Conservatives are fundamentally keeping people from their charter right to vote. It is their right. That is why my colleague was correct in saying that this did not address the judgment from the court and therefore has to be remedied.

In addition, there are the time constraints on this, time constraints within the legislation itself and time constraints regarding the enactment of the legislation. This is a strange 30-minute debate, because we are talking about time allocation as well. I will not get into that too much.

I am getting into the bona fides of the bill, because I will not have that opportunity too much longer. Therefore, we should look at that. I know the debate will continue soon.

Is there not a great concern about the timeliness of this, about the full debate, as to allow people, even if they live internationally, that fundamental right to vote, as given to them under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, there were so many things in that intervention. I fundamentally disagree with my colleague opposite that it is unreasonable for someone who has been living abroad for five years to provide proof of residency in a certain riding. Again, going back to that fundamental concept of a connection to the MP and the riding, when people cast their ballots, they cast them for a candidate. This is something my colleagues rose in debate and supported with the Reform Act, which the Ottawa media has talked about and celebrated quite a bit.

If we are to debate and enshrine that principle, then it would make sense that a potentially large group of people, who have lived abroad for numerous years, would also fall under that same umbrella.

As outlined in this bill, requiring those folks to show proof of residency, which could be done through an attestation, is entirely reasonable. The bill would do that.

When we have had other democratic reform measures come before the House, we have looked at ways to ensure that we can show proof of residence, show proof of identity, have all of those good things enshrined, while also ensuring the voter is made aware of how to do that. That, of course, is the role of Elections Canada, that education on how to vote.

Should these provisions come into force, I would assume that Elections Canada officials would work to ensure there would be appropriate education materials in terms of timing and how attestations could be made, how proof of residence could be shown.

It is a bit of a false argument to say that somehow this is a disenfranchisement, because there is a very clear procedure with broad forms of identification, as well as a clear process for attestations, I really do not think this is a disenfranchisement at all.

However, we do want to ensure that these provisions, should they come into force do so quickly. I would urge my colleague to push this bill to committee for review.

• (1600)

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns I continue to have is the false impression being left by the government in general, with the current minister having to carry the can, apparently. I will not go further than to say that she is responding to questions and others are not.

The first thing is that a distinct impression was intended to be left. That is a very awkward way of putting it, but back in December, for two weeks we were all under the impression that the government had decided not to appeal the Frank case. The whole presentation of Bill C-50 was that we needed this to implement the Frank decision as if we were complying. It was a constitutional judgment, the government realized it did not stand any hope of winning an appeal, so it would no longer fight against enfranchising all these Canadians who had, before now, been disenfranchised, and it would not appeal. That turned out to be totally false. Once we started probing, the government case continued.

*Government Orders*

There is no actual interest on the part of the government in enfranchising Canadians, and that should inform how we understand what it is trying to do with this bill. When it is forced by the courts to abide by the Frank judgment, this is how it is going to do it, and it is going to do it in a way that makes it exceedingly difficult when compared to what the process used to be for citizens abroad.

It has to be put on the record that the government is appealing the Frank decision. That is part and parcel of why it is seeking to make it more difficult for Canadians to vote through this new bill, and why the government does not want a lot of debate or awareness about the bill at all.

The second thing is that our colleague has made a very good effort to present it in a way that suggests that some streamlining is going on here. The presentation is that a bunch of rules are being cleaned up and the Frank judgment has kind of spurred that analysis of how to make the process of citizens voting from abroad more efficient, secure, fair and everything else. The fact is that of the three or four major changes, the single biggest change in the bill is that those who are abroad cannot begin the process of voting until after the writ drops. Only at that point are they allowed to register. Then there is a whole series of steps involving the mail across the globe, which creates the huge risk that they will never get the vote at all. Therefore, the streamlining subtext of this is absolutely inaccurate.

It is really important to know that both of the points I have made about the Frank judgment, and what is going on with the judgment with respect to my last point, speak to why the government delayed so long in bringing it back for debate: because of the attention it would continue to generate. It now wants almost no attention, which is tied to the fact that the bill is set down for debate tomorrow, Friday, the day when the least attention is paid to bills in the House.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, to set the context for my response to this question, I want to make it clear for people watching this debate that when my colleague says Canadians cannot vote, I want to really ensure they understand what the context of the Frank ruling is.

In May, 2014, this decision through the Ontario Superior Court struck down the law preventing citizens from voting if they had been out of the country for more than five consecutive years and had no intention of returning. That is the group of folks we are dealing with in this ruling. I want to make that perfectly clear for those who are listening.

In terms of the appeal of that decision, yes, our government has said that we will continue with the appeal, but we have also been very clear about that all along in this debate. Therefore, I disagree with my colleague's assertion that somehow this fact has been hidden.

Part of the role of government is to take positions on certain policies, which we have in the appeal of this decision, and deal with the reality that court decisions provide. Because of this decision, there are certain ambiguities that need to be tightened up in our legislation, which is why this bill was presented. There is no reason why both of these things cannot happen at the same time.

With regard to the member's particular point about the time to register, I would note that right now in Canada, we have a process

for special balloting. I have friends and colleagues who live outside the country for a greater period of time. They are the snowbird type folks who we all know. When they go abroad and an election is called, they can register for a special ballot, which comes to them. There is already a procedure to deal with folks who are living abroad. Therefore, it is reasonable, since there are Canadian residents who perhaps have not been gone for that long a period and who already prescribe to a process like this, that it could certainly work for folks who fall under the category outlined in the Frank ruling.

When we talk about streamlining, this is not reinventing the wheel. This is about saying that we have a precedent on how to deal with this special balloting, so why would we not make that consistent for those who fall under this ruling?

The form and substance of the bill is to provide clarity and consistency in how we deal with voters who are abroad during a federal election.

• (1605)

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, it is also a question of practicality in this particular case. Uniformity across this country, yes, I get that, but for example, the international list worked really well. Many people, once they go abroad, are able to use their past addresses, if they so chose, and get on that international list, which made it functional for them to be involved in elections. The reason, of course, is what she just mentioned. It takes long enough in this country to request a special ballot, receive a special ballot, vote, and send back the special ballot. For a snowbird who is in Greece, it is a little much.

The practicality of it is something that is not being addressed. I think all of the concerns brought up by the Chief Electoral Officer will certainly be addressed over the next little while. The other concern is about the respect of the courts. If that were the case, we would not have been discussing all of these court challenges for the past little while. The term "court tested" has now become a national term that everyone knows about. Is it Supreme Court tested? We do not know. As well, the government does not seem to know beforehand, and then we get into the courts and go through this again.

Then, of course, as my colleague pointed out, we expect legislation and compliance, which is not particularly the case. It is in line with the system that exists in this country, but is not practical for people outside of the country.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** First, Mr. Speaker, in my speech last time on this bill, I noted that I went to the Canada Post website, which stated that it takes four to seven business days for international ballots to reach their destinations. If we look at the ways people can register to vote, especially in a special ballot situation—and this would be a similar procedure—we see they can register by mail, online, at embassies, by fax. There are numerous ways in which people can register and get this information back and forth. Because there are folks who take advantage of the system that is in place already, it is reasonable to suggest that we could apply it to a group of people who are potentially in the exact same situation.

I think this is reasonable. Again, if we can ensure we have the right processes in place to advertise that process and to teach voters how to vote, we are probably in a good situation to ensure that takes place.

I will say this in closing. My colleague brings up “court tested”, and certainly the courts have a very important role in our government system, but the legislature also has the ability and responsibility to put forward legislation, and I do not believe in the assertion, which I think is a very dangerous thing to say, that everything we do and say has to first be put forward by a court, because our responsibility as legislators is to put forward policy and legislate upon that.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

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 yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1650)

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

(*Division No. 390*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy

Adler

Aglukkaq  
Albrecht  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambler  
Anders  
Armstrong  
Barlow  
Bergen  
Block  
Braid  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Butt  
Calkins  
Carmichael  
Chisu  
Clarke  
Daniel  
Devolin  
Dykstra  
Falk  
Fast  
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Galipeau  
Gill  
Goguen  
Gourde  
Hawn  
Hillyer  
Holder  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kent  
Komarnicki  
Lake  
Leef  
Leung  
Lobb  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Miller  
Nicholson  
Obhrai  
O'Neill Gordon  
O'Toole  
Payne  
Poilievre  
Raiitt  
Rempel  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Seeback  
Shiple  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Sweet  
Toet  
Trottier  
Uppal  
Van Loan  
Watson  
Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Wong  
Yelich  
Yurdiga

Albas  
Alexander  
Allison  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Aspin  
Bateman  
Bezan  
Boughen  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Calandra  
Cannan  
Carrie  
Chong  
Crockatt  
Dechert  
Dreeshen  
Eglinski  
Fantino  
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)  
Fletcher  
Gallant  
Glover  
Goldring  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hayes  
Hoback  
James  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kerr  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lauzon  
Lemieux  
Lizon  
Lukiwski  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Maguire  
McColeman  
Menegakis  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Norlock  
Oliver  
Opitz  
Paradis  
Perkins  
Preston  
Reid  
Richards  
Ritz  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Shory  
Sorenson  
Strahl  
Tilson  
Trost  
Truppe  
Van Kesteren  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Williamson  
Woodworth  
Young (Vancouver South)  
Zimmer— 132

## NAYS

Members

Angus  
Ayala  
Benskin  
Blanchette-Lamothe  
Brisson  
Casey  
Charlton  
Chisholm  
Cleary  
Crowder  
Cuzner  
Dion  
Doré Lefebvre



*Government Orders*

Dubé	Dubourg
Easter	Freeman
Fry	Garrison
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hughes	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Latendresse
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Rankin	Raynault
Regan	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaesan	Stewart
Trudeau— 75	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

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**PIPELINE SAFETY ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Motion agreed to)

**The Deputy Speaker:** When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Greg Rickford** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on behalf of our government to open debate on the pipeline safety act at third reading. Canadians can proudly look at this legislation as another significant step our government has taken in advancing responsible resource development. That is because we stand on the threshold of a generational opportunity to harness our vast energy wealth. We have a unique opportunity to cement Canada's place in the world as a secure, reliable, and responsible producer and supplier of energy. However, we can only take advantage of these

opportunities if we choose to make them happen and if we are willing to think big and act accordingly. The stakes could not be higher.

Despite lower world oil and gas prices, we know that the long-term outlook for Canada's energy sector is bright. According to the International Energy Agency, global demand for energy will increase by one-third by 2040. Again, according to the IEA, 74% of this demand will still be met through fossil fuels. Countries such as China, India, and other emerging nations are fuelling this thirst for energy. Even developed countries, like those in the European Union, are eager to diversify both the types of energy they use and who supplies it to them.

Canada is perfectly positioned to seize this moment in time to create the quality jobs, the economic growth, and the long-term prosperity Canadians want for themselves and for their children. We have some of the largest known reserves of oil and gas in the world, the blue chip companies with the wherewithal to bring these reserves to market, the clean technologies and exciting new innovations to do so in ever more sustainable ways, and the world-class pipelines to transport our oil and gas safely and reliably. In fact, as I have proudly noted many times, between 2008 and 2013, 99.999% of the oil, gas, and other petroleum products transported through the federally regulated pipelines in Canada arrived safely. This is an extraordinary record, and most countries would be satisfied that it was enough. However, our government always strives to do even better. Our target is zero events. That is why our focus is on maintaining a world-class and even world-leading pipeline safety system.

As many members know, the National Energy Board was established back in 1959, with a very clear mandate to regulate international and interprovincial pipelines, power lines, and energy trade. Now, some 56 years later, the board is overseeing approximately 73,000 kilometres of pipelines that transport over \$100 billion worth of natural gas, oil, and petroleum products every year.

It is important to note that the independent National Energy Board is responsible for the review of new pipeline proposals. The NEB's work is based on an exhaustive study of the science and on extensive public consultations to determine if a project is in the overall Canadian public interest. Furthermore, the board can impose enforceable conditions and has important powers to ensure that pipelines are built and operated in a safe manner. For example, it can issue administrative penalties to pipeline companies and reduce the amount of product allowed through its pipelines, or even shut them down entirely.

However, the board's role does not end with reviewing applications and setting conditions. It also oversees the entire life cycle of a pipeline, from concept to construction, from operation to eventual abandonment. To perform these duties and responsibilities, the NEB conducts ongoing audits, inspections, and emergency exercises. Some 300 such compliance actions were conducted in 2013 alone.

*Government Orders*

At the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, we heard from a variety of witnesses who support our legislation. For example, the members of Canada's Building Trades Unions take immense pride in their work to ensure construction of the safest pipelines ever built. Other experts, lawyers, and members of the National Energy Board also appeared before the committee and voiced their own support for our goals. There is widespread agreement that the pipeline safety act is an important step in our efforts to maintain the most rigorous pipeline safety regime in the world.

• (1655)

The result is a bill that would inspire even greater confidence in our existing national network of pipelines and that would ensure broader public assurance for new ones coming on stream.

All Canadians from coast to coast to coast should find comfort in this proposed bill. They can rest assured that the energy that fuels their cars, heats their homes, and goes into producing their home electronics and household products will continue to be delivered through the safest energy transportation system possible. Anything less would be unacceptable to Canadians and to our government, period.

This is why the pipeline safety act is built on three key pillars: incident prevention, preparedness and response, and liability and compensation.

Looking first at prevention, our government understands that responsible resource development demands that we take every measure and precaution we can to prevent incidents from ever occurring, and we do. That is why we have proposed amendments to the National Energy Board Act that would build on the steps we have already taken over the past two years. Our goal: to further improve the transparency and operation of the board under its enabling legislation.

We have already increased the number of inspections and audits the board conducts each year, and we have given the board the authority to levy administrative monetary penalties. Our new legislation would add to the current preventive measures.

In addition to clarifying the board's audit and inspection powers, the legislation would also provide greater clarity on when to seek the board's permission before disturbing the ground near a pipeline. This added clarity would help to prevent potentially life-threatening accidents and avoid damage to both property and the environment.

Prevention also depends heavily on the design and construction of our pipelines. That is why the minister has recently asked the National Energy Board to provide guidance on the use of the best available technology in pipeline projects. This includes materials, construction methods, and emergency response techniques.

Second, the pipeline safety act would ensure a robust response in the event of an incident. The legislation would require pipeline operators to have a minimum level of financial resources and to keep a portion of these resources readily accessible for rapid response.

The bill would also allow the Governor in Council to give authority and resources to the NEB to take control of an incident response or cleanup. The NEB would take control if, in exceptional circumstances, the company was unable or unwilling to do so. This

means that the government would provide an initial financial backstop to ensure that the NEB had the resources it needed, when it needed them, to complete the cleanup.

In addition, and in the unlikely event that the NEB had to take control of an incident response, the government would also be able to establish a pipeline claims tribunal. Setting up this tribunal would streamline the claims process. In either case, the legislation would provide that all costs and expenses would be recovered from the industry should the board ever have to step in and take charge.

This leads me to the third pillar: enshrining the polluter pays principle in law. We fundamentally believe that polluters, and not Canadian taxpayers, should be held financially responsible for any costs associated with an incident, responsible whether the polluters are at fault or not. For companies operating major oil pipelines, this absolute, no-fault liability would be \$1 billion. However, let us be clear. The liability would remain unlimited in instances where they were at fault. It is a new standard that would leave no doubt or wiggle room, no doubt for Canadian taxpayers and no wiggle room for pipeline operators.

The pipeline safety act would also allow the government to go after operators for damage to the environment over the entire lifecycle of a pipeline. This would include even after a pipeline had been abandoned.

The absolute or no-fault liability regime created under the bill would be one of the most robust and comprehensive in the world. In addition to actual losses, all types of damage to the environment resulting from oil spills would be covered by the enhanced regime.

• (1700)

Under Bill C-46, three broad categories of damage could be claimed. The first would cover claims for loss or damage incurred by any person as a result of a spill, including loss of income and future income. In the case of aboriginal peoples, for example, it would include the loss of hunting, fishing, and gathering opportunities.

The second category would cover the cost and expenses incurred by the federal government, a provincial government, aboriginal governing bodies, or any other person in taking action in response to a spill. This would include recouping the costs incurred in responding to or mitigating the damage from an oil spill.

The third category would cover claims by the federal or provincial governments for the loss of what is referred to as the non-use value relating to a public resource that is damaged by a spill. Non-use value means that the federal government or a provincial government could bring a claim for damage to environmental assets that are valuable to Canadians and future generations.

*Government Orders*

The concept of non-use value was first introduced for environmental offences by our government in 2009, and Bill C-46 is consistent with those measures. It is also consistent with the amendments we have introduced to Bill C-22, the energy safety and security act, for the offshore oil and gas regime, which also would allow governments to claim for the loss of the non-use value of public resources.

In many ways, these provisions mirror similar steps our government has already taken to strengthen marine, rail, and offshore safety. As part of our plan for responsible resource development, we have been strengthening environmental protection, enhancing aboriginal engagement, and modernizing our regulatory review of major resource projects. Our overriding goal has been to eliminate duplication and to provide investors with predictable beginning-to-end timelines for projects, all the while creating jobs and growing the economy.

This is an ongoing process. It demands constant attention and continued diligence, which is why our economic action plan 2015 contains new measures and investments to build on this momentum.

There are many items I could highlight from our balanced budget, but let me start by saying what is not in it. I know that what the opposition was hoping to see in our budget was a carbon tax. Both the Liberals and the NDP have been clear that they intend to put a tax on everything Canadians buy, from gas to groceries to electricity. We have been clear. We will not introduce a carbon tax.

We are very proud of the targeted investments proposed in economic action plan 2015 that are particularly noteworthy for today's debate. The first is \$135 million over five years to support project approvals through the major projects management office initiative. We are proposing to make this investment because the development of our natural resources deserves both scrutiny and careful stewardship. Our processes and systems need to be modern and nimble, reflecting the views and needs of citizens and industry alike.

The second item is a commitment of \$34 million over the same period of time to continue consultations with Canadians on projects assessed under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Third, we are proposing to provide \$80 million over five years to the National Energy Board to support greater engagement with Canadians and enhanced safety and environmental protection.

Through these investments, we will continue to deliver the kind of responsible resource development Canadians have come to expect from their government, development that is critical to our government's economic plan to create jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

The fact is, Canada's natural resource sector represents 19% of our economy. It accounts for more than half of our merchandise exports and supports 1.8 million jobs directly and indirectly. Canada's natural resource sector is also one of the leading private employers of aboriginal people, and let us not forget that natural resource firms have contributed approximately \$30 billion per year in revenue to governments, revenue that builds hospitals and highways, schools and subways.

● (1705)

In short, our resource industries are critical to the strength of our economy, the quality of our lives and our aspirations for the future.

As recent geopolitical events have shown, energy is also playing a critical role in national, continental and indeed global security. Our government recognizes that Canada is in a unique position to meet the world's energy needs, but just importantly we also have a responsibility to contribute to global energy security.

That is why, between 2005 and 2014, Canada's crude oil exports grew by 81%. That is almost 1.3 million barrels per day. Our exports expanded beyond North America to reach new markets around the world. Indeed, since 2013, Canada has been shipping oil into markets from Spain and Ireland to Chile and Hong Kong. In Italy, for example, our exports accounted for 3.4% of that country's total crude oil imports in 2014, as measured by volume.

With the European Parliament's fuel quality directive confirming that oil sands crude is as environmentally responsible as other sources, we expect exports to continue to grow. Canadian exports help nations diversify their sources of energy. They help reduce their dependence on unreliable suppliers and help bolster their energy security.

To continue to play that important role in global energy security, Canada must expand its ability to get its products to market. Pipelines are the safest, most secure and most reliable way of doing so.

As we expand our ability to export, this legislation will set the standard for pipeline safety, charting a new path to good-paying jobs and sustainable growth across the country for generations to come. I urge all members of this House to join our government in continuing to support this legislation.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here is my question for my hon. colleague: Why do this bill's provisions cover only pipelines that transport at least 250,000 barrels of oil a day?

In the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, a smaller company unfortunately caused unimaginable damage. I do not see why this bill excludes pipelines that transport 150,000 or 200,000 barrels a day. If an accident or a spill happens, they could cause as much damage as a pipeline transporting 250,000 or 300,000 barrels a day.

*Government Orders*

Why does the government think that communities that would be affected by a spill from a smaller pipeline do not deserve the same protection as a community that would be affected by a spill from a pipeline transporting 250,000 barrels a day? I would like my hon. colleague to explain why that is not covered in the bill.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier in my remarks, there is widespread agreement that Bill C-46 is an important step in our efforts to maintain the most rigorous regime in the world, the most safe regime, a regime that already has a safety record of 99.99%. Bill C-46 will bring even greater confidence to our network of pipelines and ensure public assurance for new pipelines being built. The provisions in Bill C-46 mirror steps our government has taken to strengthen marine, rail and offshore safety.

The provisions that the member has been asking for, in terms of pipelines that will see less than 250,000 barrels flowing through them, will be captured in regulations.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party critic had the opportunity to speak on the legislation and expressed just how important it is that we get this job done right. At the end of the day, Canada's economy and environment are potentially of great benefit if, in fact, we get it right.

The question I have for the minister is this. If we look at the last number of years, the government has not been successful in building consensus, whether it is the social contract with Canadians dealing with the environment and pipelines, or dealing with the provincial governments, in particular, the Alberta and B.C. and other jurisdictions, to bring people together. The pipeline issue and the security of it is of critical importance, but it also seems that the government has not been effective in being able to pull it all together.

Can the member provide some feedback as to why she believes we have had to wait as long as we have to get this legislation and the impact that has had on discussions with the potential expansion of our pipelines?

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, again I will reiterate that there is widespread agreement that Bill C-46 is an important step in our efforts to maintain the most rigorous pipeline safety regime in the world.

The government has worked closely with provinces and territories, aboriginal communities, environmental groups, insurance companies and industry in the development of this legislation. I am very confident that this legislation appropriately addresses the concerns raised during these consultations.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke a bit in her speech about the opportunities that this legislation would provide for the people of our aboriginal communities. I wonder if she would like to expand on that just a little more for the House.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, our government's priority is to continue to create jobs, grow the economy and create long-term prosperity for all Canadians, which includes our first nations peoples. First nations have made and will continue to make important contributions as a full partner in the development of our natural resources. Our plan would provide training for aboriginal

communities specifically, for example, when it comes to monitoring and response. As I mentioned, we asked to hear from aboriginal communities on this very important piece of legislation and there has been widespread support.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to my distinguished colleague that one of the serious problems in Canada and the world is that the companies doing business in Canada are the same companies that are responsible for the *Exxon Valdez* spill and for destroying a river in the United States.

When people who have been consistently polluting other places say that they will be careful not to cause pollution in Canada, there is a credibility problem. It is all a matter of credibility and we do not trust those companies.

Moreover, safe transportation is all well and good, but there is also the matter of jobs. If I, Mr. Giguère, was told that 15,000 jobs were going to be created in my province's refineries, I would be on board with that. However, what we are being told is that we are going to have to assume 100% of the transportation risk, that there will be no contingency fund and that no jobs will be created. In Quebec, only 15 jobs were created to build the pipeline across the province. We are assuming all of the risks but seeing very little of the profit.

As a result, the government does not have any credibility. I am asking it to do something other than pass a law that imposes a 250,000-barrel limit on companies and simply requires them to be careful. That is not enough. A contingency fund must be created.

I am therefore asking my colleague to tell us something that will really assuage Canadians' fears.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before I recognize the parliamentary secretary, I must inform the member that it is not appropriate to use proper names, as he just did, when addressing the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best way to answer that question is to go back and restate that the absolute or no-fault liability regime created under this bill would be one of the most robust and comprehensive in the world. All types of damage to the environment resulting from an oil spill would be covered in this legislation.

Three broad categories could be claimed. These are claims for loss or damage incurred by any person as a result of a spill; costs and expenses incurred by the federal government, provincial government, aboriginal governing body, or any other person taking action in response to a spill; and claims by the federal or provincial governments for the loss of what is referred to as the non-use value relating to a public resource that is damaged by a spill.

*Government Orders*

I did speak to what we mean by “non-use value”. This means that the federal government or provincial government can bring a claim for damage to environmental assets that are valuable to Canadians and future generations.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as the critic for natural resources, I am pleased to rise in the House at third reading to debate Bill C-46.

This bill moved to report stage very quickly, because clearly, the parties did not really have a chance to properly present their case, especially the independent members in the House.

At the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, the Conservatives imposed a motion similar to the ones it imposed on all committees, since it has a majority on all committees of the House of Commons, whereby, and I am paraphrasing, when the committee clerk receives an order of reference from the House in relation to a bill, the clerk must write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite the member to send a letter to the chair of the committee, in both official languages, stating any proposed amendments to the bill subject to the order of reference. During the clause-by-clause, the chair of the committee will allow a member who proposed an amendment to make brief comments in support of it, although the member cannot join in the debate or vote.

That is how the committees always operate, and the Standing Committee on Natural Resources is no exception.

We essentially believe that these manoeuvres violate the rights of independent parliamentarians or members who belong to a parliamentary group and who are nonetheless elected just like any other member.

The big book of procedure tells us that it is the House, and only the House, that designates members and associate members of these committees as well as the members that represent the House on joint committees.

The Chair has already established that that is a fundamental right of the House. As for the committees, they have no power in that regard, especially since the rules specifically state that an MP who is not a committee member may not vote or move motions.

Report stage was usually the opportunity for these members to have their amendments heard, to debate them and to participate in the vote. Instead, practically everything is now managed, debated and voted in committee, sometimes even in camera.

This is a very important change in the functioning of the House and it greatly affects the rights of members and their ability to properly carry out their duties of representing their constituents and holding the government to account.

However, despite everything, I must highlight the work done by my colleague, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who had two amendments passed despite this unfair and undemocratic government tactic.

Bill C-46 establishes a liability regime for federally regulated pipelines in Canada, and although this regime leaves many questions unanswered, the existing legislation does not provide for much of a regime.

The NDP proposed some 20 amendments at report stage, many of which were virtually the same as those proposed by my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands. That is why I am pleased that these requests were heard. We must understand that she was not able to propose her amendments at report stage. She was asked to present her amendments in committee, which is what generally happens. She came to do so and she got just one minute for each of her amendments.

This is a systematic problem at committee stage. Committees should be a place for debate, so that we can identify the strengths and, especially, the flaws of each bill. However, this Conservative government's method is something completely new to Parliament, and it is undermining our ability to properly debate bills.

In the case of the amendments that passed, the government tried to make first nations members believe that the addition of a definition about them to the bill was a show of good faith and openness on its part.

Like other levels of government, aboriginal governing bodies will be able to sue companies connected to pipelines for recovery of reasonable costs incurred in managing a spill on their land.

I think this is a major collective victory. It shows not only that aboriginals are full-fledged nations, but also that there is a will to treat them as such. As I said, the parties were on the same wavelength and proposed many similar amendments that targeted the same flaws in Bill C-46.

In short, Bill C-46 is a first step toward integrating a real polluter-pays principle into federal pipeline regulations.

However, entrenching that in law is not the end of it. We also have to make sure that the provisions of the law respect its principles.

The NDP voted in favour of the principle underlying Bill C-46 because that step forward was better than the status quo.

● (1720)

I must nevertheless point out that at least one witness gave very engaging testimony during the committee's study of Bill C-46. Ian Miron of Ecojustice described this bill as a step forward, just as we have done. He also said that it was more of a “polluter might pay” principle than a polluter pays principle. The reason is that Bill C-46 is highly discretionary. It makes a number of tools available to the National Energy Board and the government, but they have complete discretion when it comes to using those tools. The lack of absolute regulations, if I can put it that way, means that this legislation does not fully respect the polluter pays principle. It means that the principle will apply if the National Energy Board and the government want it to.

*Private Members' Business*

These regulations and this liability regime will now be governed by the National Energy Board, which has an especially important role to play given that Canadians' trust and their sense of safety with respect to infrastructure and the regulations in place will depend on how well the board fulfills its mandate.

The report published in 2013 following a comprehensive study by the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources clearly states that those two concepts go hand in hand:

If an accident occurs, there must be trust that the "polluter pays" principle, a principle applied to all modes of transport, is backed by concrete action. Social license is earned when citizens have trust in emergency and spill response capabilities, based on clear plans for well-organized recovery and rehabilitation of the environment, as well as a means for compensating for damages.

Even the president and CEO of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association at the time, Brenda Kenny, suggested in the study that, "it is not enough in today's climate to obtain a regulatory license or permit in order to proceed with energy projects".

This illustrates how important it is for businesses and the industry to have public confidence. This was corroborated by the testimony in committee of a representative of Canada's Building Trades Unions, who said he agrees with the polluter pays principle, which indicates to us that the unions and workers truly understand that environmental protection and robust protection, prevention and accountability standards are ironically the things that are going to help them keep their jobs.

For a culture of safety to take hold, there needs to be interaction between common values and beliefs on one hand, and the structures and oversight mechanisms of an organization on the other hand, with the aim of producing standards of behaviour. Unfortunately, we are way off the mark. With its bills and regulations, the government has done nothing but cause the public to lose confidence not only in the industry, but also in the key regulators. If the oil companies want public approval for the pipelines, then Canadians need assurance that these projects are sustainable and that approval processes are open, rigorous and fair. That is clearly still not the case, and this bill will not change much, unfortunately.

In fact, only 27% of Canadians believe that the Government of Canada can respond effectively to an oil spill at sea, and only 32% share the same view for spills on land. The English Bay oil spill in Vancouver in early April should serve as an example of the government's readiness to respond. Civil society groups and environmentalists have been saying for years that Canada is not prepared for a major oil spill. The 2010 Kalamazoo spill in Michigan was a turning point for the oil sector. New standards were established and discoveries were made about how oil from the oil sands behaves, which requires new standards for research, prevention and response.

The problem is that instead of working with the utmost transparency, the board encourages corporations to be secretive. According to the 2013 Senate report:

By regulation, every pipeline company is required to submit Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) on a facility-by-facility basis and the ERPs must be approved by the NEB. These plans require companies to assess the risk of a spill and outline the details of a response. They must be up-to-date with corresponding emergency manuals and must be reviewed regularly. On June 26, 2013, the federal government announced that it would require ERPs to be more accessible to the...

• (1725)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order.

The member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques will have nine minutes when the House resumes consideration of this bill.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

**SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES**

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP)** moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, small- and medium-sized business owners are the driving force of job creation in Canada, and Canadian retailers and merchants pay credit card merchant fees that are among the highest in the world, and therefore the government should take immediate steps to make the cost of living more affordable for the middle class by: (a) lowering costs for businesses and consumers by reducing transaction fees charged to merchants; and (b) allowing merchants to disclose to the consumer the transaction costs relating to the payment method chosen at the point of sale.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion has to do with credit card fees. Unfortunately, Canada has the highest fees in the world. Countries around the world have made attempts to address this problem.

More and more Canadians are making payments with credit cards, which really end up being payment cards in many cases. The problem is that the fees can vary considerably and that some new credit cards being issued—loyalty cards in particular—offer travel points.

However, credit card companies do not pay for these plane tickets. They send the bill to merchants, which means that some credit cards carry fees of 4% or higher. The problem is that many small businesses have a profit margin that varies between 2.25% and 2.75%, especially in the retail food sector. This means that when a customer pays with this new credit card, the small business owner actually loses money.

The goal is to limit this type of abuse, but it is important to do so without destroying a payment system that must be preserved. Canada needs to be able to use credit cards in small businesses. However, small businesses want to remain profitable, which is only natural. The problem is that credit cards often do not let them do that, particularly the new credit cards with really high rates, which are becoming more popular.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you would not mind taking a little trip down south for two weeks in the dead of winter. If you have a credit card that offers that sort of opportunity, you would be quite happy to use it. The problem is that small businesses are the ones that are paying for the plane tickets. When small business have to pay fees of 4% while their profit margin is only 2.5%, it is clear that they are headed for bankruptcy.

*Private Members' Business*

Small business owners have it tough these days. They are asking us to do the same thing that is being done in many other countries. As far as I know, Australia's Conservative government would certainly never be accused of having socialist sympathies. Similarly, in England, under Mr. Cameron's government, these rates were greatly limited to 0.5% and they have even been limited to 0.3% elsewhere in Europe. That is one-eighth of what is charged in Canada. It is a discrepancy that ranges between 300% and 800%. As for the infamous credit cards with a rate of 4% or higher, they turn out to be 12 times more expensive. This nonsense has to stop. People cannot pay such high credit card fees.

Let us also note that credit card terminals alone often cost \$30 a month. That is an added cost.

What we are proposing is that we work together to figure out a rate that allows small businesses to survive while maintaining a payment system that works. This is not a threat to credit card companies, as we know from precedents set in Europe, Australia and England.

Even the U.S. Senate, which had the same problem, wanted to see if regulating credit card fees had had a negative impact on the economies of those countries. It concluded that there was no negative impact and that credit card companies are still doing very well in those countries.

• (1735)

People still use credit cards; in fact, they are using them more than ever.

However, small businesses do not want to pay 4% to 4.25% for the so-called privilege credit cards. That is unreasonable. By comparison, a debit card costs five cents to use whether the transaction is for \$3, \$4 or \$3,000. The fee is not a percentage. It is a fixed amount. Considering that 1.5% of \$1,000 is \$15, that shows how much more one costs than the other. This is not a new problem. Many businesses have been asking for this for many years.

The 90,000 small and medium-sized businesses that belong to the Small Business Matters Coalition would like to have a chance to breathe one of these days, as would members of the Canadian Convenience Stores Association, the Association des marchands dépanneurs et épiciers du Québec, the Retail Council of Canada and Restaurants Canada. All of these people have been telling us that they can no longer survive. People in my riding tell me that the fees cost them \$15,000 to \$25,000 for a small business with six or seven employees. They say it is not working anymore. Small and medium-sized businesses have no choice but to refuse credit card payments. That is how serious the problem is.

Not only do we risk losing SMEs, but the entire credit card system as a payment method could be in jeopardy.

In a 2013 ruling, the Competition Tribunal called on the government to take action, because it found that there was a non-competitive situation. The government responded by saying that it hoped that credit card companies would limit the rate to 1.5%, but on a voluntary basis. Even that percentage is 500% higher than in Europe. I do not want to hear anyone say that in Europe countries are too consumer friendly and they want to destroy private enterprise. A

500% disparity is huge, and that is on a voluntary basis. That pertains only to standard credit cards.

If you have to deal with a premium credit card, this becomes totally unmanageable. However, those kinds of cards are becoming increasingly popular. Everyone loves to travel and book flights using a credit card, except that the plane ticket does nothing for the merchant. When he goes to the bank to ask for a loan guarantee to pay for new inventory, he is told that his operating costs are too high. He can only reduce wages so much.

One merchant I know, Mr. Bélisle, who owns a pub called Bière au menu in Bois-des-Filion, told me that he cannot automatically pass the cost on to consumers because he cannot sell hamburgers for \$25. There comes a point when the cost simply cannot be passed on to consumers, because they just will not buy a \$25 hamburger. His problem is that he also owns a sausage shop. He said that at that business, he does not even accept credit cards. There is also Mr. Gaudreau from Laval, who told me that he thought he could start a small business with three or four employees, but with the extra costs of 1.6% for Visa, 2.6% for AMEX and 1.55% for Mastercard, he could not do it.

• (1740)

His profit margin is about 2%. Three-quarters of his profit will basically go to a company that will do nothing for him. It will not do any marketing or advertising, and it will not attract customers. For this business owner it is simply a bill he must pay, and for that reason he is asking for regulations.

For our part, we are going to get together to analyze the situation and what happens in other countries. We are going to drastically reduce the interest rate, although we will exercise caution.

We are not going to jeopardize the credit card system. It will continue to exist. As demonstrated by the U.S. Senate, regulations will not destroy this payment method. We will keep it. When we sit around the table to establish the interest rate, the credit card companies will be there as well and they will have to justify what they charge.

It goes without saying that some payment methods, like high interest rate cards, will disappear. We cannot ask a business owner to go bankrupt because he sells things to people with specific credit cards.

Transparency is another important aspect. When we get a bill, the taxes, the GST and the QST, are listed on it. What people are asking for is that the cost of the credit card also be included on the bill. There is currently a clause in the contract we sign to use a credit card that prohibits that very thing. Transparency is not allowed.

If we have the right to review the GST and QST amounts, then I think people should also have the right to review what it costs them to use a credit card. This is especially important because some of the costs have gone down in the past few years. For better or worse, the sales tax has been reduced.

*Private Members' Business*

The problem is that these tax cuts were clawed back because credit card margins went up. They increased from 1.5% to 4% and any economic benefit that consumers might have derived from the tax cuts voted in by this government was absorbed by the credit card companies. This needs to stop.

For retailers alone, the credit card fees amount to more than \$850 million, and that is just for the retail sales sector. Obviously this has to stop sooner or later. Enough is enough.

As I said earlier, and it bears repeating, we have to be competitive internationally. If the tourists who travel through Europe pay less there for goods and services than they would pay in Canada, then there is a good chance that we are losing business. We must remain competitive, and a 500% difference is obviously unreasonable.

I am therefore pleased to say that this resolution is supported by the small business community, a very important community in Canada that accounts for 40% of our GDP.

One day we will have to think of them and return the favour.

• (1745)

[English]

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member is confusing the interchange fee with the merchant rate. I think he is lumping them both together.

The interchange fee is the amount that is carved off from the transaction to make the credit card system work. The merchant fee is typically about 1.5%. Our government has negotiated with financial institutions and credit card companies on the merchant rate to come up with a voluntary code of conduct, which the credit card companies have agreed to.

I would like to pose the following questions.

The member spoke about Europe, that we should adopt more of a European model. Since he did not mention any countries in particular, let us assume he is talking about Greece. Would the member propose that we adopt a Greek model to follow in terms of credit card and credit and financial institutions?

If we look back at the Regina Manifesto, when the CCF was founded, it called for the nationalization of banks. In 1962, when the NDP was founded, it also called for the nationalization of banks. Is the NDP now calling for the nationalization of banks? How would he enforce this proposed scheme that he has cooked up?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the European regulations do not pertain to just one country. They affect all of Europe. That law was introduced Europe-wide. Every member of the European Union is affected by it.

Second, what my colleague is forgetting and what is very important is that credit card companies do business with banks, but banks do not own credit cards. The member might be confused about that.

The nationalization of banks is an old ghost from the 60s. It would cost Canada hundreds of billions of dollars or more. Ironically, these

banks often own pension funds, including the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan.

How can I say this? Why nationalize something that already belongs to us?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will not necessarily question that logic at this point, but what I would say is that, whether it is interchange, merchants' fees, or rates, at the end of the day what we really need to look at is the fact that Canada's economic reality and potential of growth into the future is going to be tied in to small businesses.

Whether it is the tourism industry or the manufacturing industry, there are so many industries that are very dependent on consumer spending. These small businesses do not have the option, per se, to opt out of having those consumer-friendly purchasing machines. It is not really an option for them.

It is important for us to recognize that the government does have a role to play. My question for the member is related to that. Given the importance of our small businesses to our nation—and we see that in the form of the motion, which I applaud—would he not agree it is imperative that we come to grips and deal with this issue, the sooner the better?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, 40% of the GDP generated by our country depends on small and medium-sized businesses, businesses with fewer than 100 employees. With regard to the retail sector, credit card fees, commonly referred to as credit card processing fees, vary between 1.5% and 4%. We need to act quickly to remedy that.

Other countries have done so without destroying this payment system, which must be preserved. Obviously, I am surprised that the Conservatives did not introduce this bill themselves.

• (1750)

[English]

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to discuss Motion No. 574, a motion which focuses on lower costs for businesses and consumers by reducing transaction fees.

Let me reassure the hon. member that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, our government is standing up for consumers and saving Canadians money.

We know that Canadian families work hard to make ends meet and every dollar certainly does count. While companies will look out for their bottom line, our government is looking out for all Canadians. When Canadians make decisions about how to spend their money, they must be assured of a voice, a choice and fair treatment.



*Private Members' Business*

In the October 2013 Speech from the Throne, our government committed to take additional action to protect Canadian consumers. We understand that Canadians are tired of hidden fees. That is why we have secured voluntary commitments from Canada's eight major banks to enhance low-cost bank accounts and offer no-cost accounts. Banks also committed to provide free monthly printed credit card statements. We have also worked with the provinces to maintain the integrity of the framework for payday lending-type products and to support provincial efforts to regulate appropriately all payday lending-type high interest rate products.

However, our initiatives go beyond lawmaking and regulation, and include public outreach and education.

In April 2014, we announced the appointment of Jane Rooney as Canada's first ever Financial Literacy Leader. Her mandate is to collaborate and coordinate activities with stakeholders to contribute to and support initiatives that strengthen the financial literacy of all Canadians. This initiative will allow our government to broaden its efforts to help Canadians make more informed choices for themselves and for their families.

Accordingly, our government believes that the best consumer protection framework is one in which there is competition, fees are disclosed and consumers can exercise choice.

For example, we have introduced regulations relating to credit agreements, including lines of credit and credit cards, which came into force in 2010. These regulations limit business practices that are not beneficial to consumers. They require the provision of clear and timely information to Canadians about credit products with a particular emphasis on credit cards. Specifically, our government has taken steps to update the existing financial consumer protection framework with several key measures. These include, for example, mandating an effective minimum 21-day interest-free grace period on all new credit card purchases when a customer pays the outstanding balance in full, and introducing a fee summary box.

In November 2014, the Minister of Finance welcomed proposals submitted by Visa and MasterCard to reduce their credit card fees for merchants, which should ultimately result in lower prices for consumers.

Specifically, the proposals from Visa and MasterCard will: voluntarily reduce their respective credit card fees for consumer cards to an average effective rate of 1.5% for a period of five years; ensure that all merchants receive a reduction in credit card fees; provide a greater reduction for small and medium-size enterprises and charities which have the least amount of bargaining power; and require annual verification by an independent third party to ensure compliance.

Last month, our government announced the enhanced code of conduct for the debit and credit card industry. These new changes will make the code even stronger by addressing unfair business practices and improving transparency for merchants and consumers, including new provisions that apply specifically to mobile payments.

The revised code contains several enhancements to address unfair business practices and improve transparency for merchants and consumers, including: extending the application of the code to mobile payments, including new consumer protections for mobile

payment users; measures to facilitate the pass-through of credit card fee reductions to merchants; a new complaints handling process available to merchants with code-related complaints; enhanced disclosure requirements that will require plain language disclosure of key contract terms and conditions and merchant fees in information summary boxes on merchant contracts; providing greater flexibility for merchants to exit their contracts without penalty and limiting the automatic renewal of contracts; new branding requirements for premium credit cards to make these cards more easily identifiable to merchants at the point-of-sale; and new disclosure requirements for credit card issuers to inform consumers that apply for premium credit cards that use of these cards may result in higher merchant fees.

• (1755)

Most elements of the code will come into force within nine months of the date on which the networks adopt the code. Some elements, such as the measures to facilitate the passthrough of interchange rate reductions to merchants and the new rights for merchants regarding acceptance of contactless payments, took effect in April.

There will be a slightly longer implementation period for the new enhanced disclosure requirements on account of the significant systems changes that acquirers will need to make.

Let me assure the hon. member that the updates to the code were developed in close consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including members representing the credit and debit card networks, small business retailers and consumers. Bilateral consultations were also conducted with acquirers and small merchant associations. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said at the time that the code "has served merchants extremely well.... [It] has done an excellent job in ensuring some fair ground rules and maintaining Canada's low-cost debit system."

Consumers will also benefit from a new requirement that credit card issuers disclose to consumers who apply for premium credit cards that use of these cards will result in higher merchant fees. This will help to empower consumers in selecting their payment method by disclosing the actual cost to merchants of accepting payments with a premium credit card.

This of course is not new. Throughout our time in office, our government has been focused on helping Canadian consumers identify and take advantage of the best possible financial products and services for their needs.

*Private Members' Business*

As we announced in economic action plan 2013, we are working to develop a comprehensive financial consumer code to better protect consumers of financial products and ensure that they have the necessary tools to make responsible financial decisions. Such measures empower and protect Canadian consumers and they increase their financial literacy by providing them with the right information at the right time so they can make financial decisions that best suit their needs.

As our actions have clearly demonstrated, our government clearly understands the importance of monitoring the credit card and debit card industry in Canada. In this regard, the motion's recommendations are well intentioned, but not required.

I therefore urge hon. members to vote against the motion and instead support our government's ongoing measures to protect businesses and consumers in a competitive marketplace.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take a few minutes tonight to comment on Motion No. 574. I would like to read the motion for anyone who happens to be following the discussion:

That, in the opinion of the House, small- and medium-sized business owners are the driving force of job creation in Canada, and Canadian retailers and merchants pay credit card merchant fees that are among the highest in the world, and therefore the government should take immediate steps to make the cost of living more affordable for the middle class by: (a) lowering costs for businesses and consumers by reducing transaction fees charged to merchants; and (b) allowing merchants to disclose to the consumer the transaction costs relating to the payment method chosen at the point of sale.

I also want to speak about the need for measures like this, the need to support more small and medium-sized businesses, and the consumers and the communities who rely on them.

To thousands of Canadians, the need to support small and medium-sized businesses is obvious. I only wish the Conservative government was of the same mind.

Small businesses account for about 30% of Canada's GDP, while medium-sized businesses account for an additional 9%. Combined, small and medium-sized business owners account for 50% of all net job creation. With numbers like these, one is left to wonder why budget 2015/17 is silent on these issues. Budget 2015/17 fails to offer even a glimpse of a plan for job growth and it ignores the fact that unemployment is still higher than it was before the recession began, all of this while remaining oblivious to the government's rhetoric on its so-called red tape reduction. As with all things Conservative, taxpayer-funded ads always trump real action.

In contrast, Liberals know a strong economy ensures that every Canadian has a real and fair chance at success. That means growing incomes and real job opportunities by supporting and promoting the success of small and medium-sized businesses. Protecting and promoting the interests and advancement of small and medium-sized businesses and consumers has long been a cornerstone objective of the Liberal Party of Canada and the Liberal caucus.

While this specific motion is sponsored by an NDP MP, the Liberal caucus has a history of working to lower the fees and interest rates paid by small and medium-sized businesses and their customers, and we are glad to have NDP support as we move toward this goal.

As just one example, in 2009, worries over merchant fees and billing practices prompted members of the Liberal caucus to call for more protection than would be provided by any voluntary or industry-imposed code of conduct. The Liberal caucus sought regulatory and legislative interventions similar, but far more comprehensive and in focus, to Motion No. 574.

Our plan included measures to end double-cycle billing, to allow consumers to opt out of credit card contracts if interest rates are increased by providers, and a full range of measures aimed at helping small and medium-sized businesses provide goods and services to consumers at a fair and reasonable price. However, the Conservatives refused to be swayed.

A voluntary code, authored by the Conservatives, was an inadequate attempt to ease concerns sparked by the entry of Visa and MasterCard into the debit and credit market. The Liberal caucus rightly feared that without enforcement tools, any code of conduct for debit and credit card companies would miss the mark.

The fact is small and medium-sized businesses exist at the bottom of the financial food chain. This means their ability to effectively negotiate terms and arrangements with banks and other lenders is very limited.

I believed then and I believe now that we need balanced but serious measures to deal with these issues on behalf of small and medium-sized businesses, not voluntary measures.

Now, to some, particularly those sitting on the other side of the room, these matters should be sorted out by the markets. Proponents of an unregulated market often suggest that government intervention will ultimately hurt consumers. They often cite Australia's credit card fees, card benefit reductions, and the introduction of surcharging as consequences of interchange fee regulation.

● (1800)

This narrow thinking has long been a cornerstone, of course, of Conservative fiscal philosophy, despite pleas to the contrary as well as evidence to the contrary from the small business community. This hands-off approach to the problems faced by small and medium-sized businesses is plain wrong, and it allows large lenders to run the table on small businesses.

Let us look at real-world evidence. As recently as yesterday, national media reports verified that starting on June 1, Canada's major banks are introducing new or higher fees for a variety of accounts and transactions, including debit purchases, mortgage and loan payments, and children's accounts.

These changes are hitting everyone, from children trying to save for their future education to seniors and small business owners trying to manage their already limited resources. The market is regulating the price of these things, but not to the benefit of small and medium-sized businesses and those who rely on them.

*Private Members' Business*

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada looked into the issue of bank fees and whether the sector has the best interests of consumers in mind. While the report avoided any solid conclusions, it did find that the average monthly fee on chequing accounts increased by 13.6% between 2005 and 2013. More troubling still, during the same period, it was found that there was a 46% increase in so-called variable fees, that is, one-off transactions that are not covered by the regular monthly banking plans. All this happened while the banking sector was enjoying record profits.

Of course, these examples are consumer based, and Motion No. 574 primarily focuses on the business end of the discussion, but there are clearly crossover implications.

My husband and I owned and operated a small business for many years, so I know very well what it is like to worry about making payroll or settling accounts or simply running out of money at the end of the month.

Higher bank fees, whether merchant fees or any other form of variable cost, hit small businesses right in the wallet and hinder their prospects of success. I am tired of throwing small business owners to the whims of the market. It is time to reset the balance and give those who are really driving the economy a chance at success.

• (1805)

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud support of Motion No. 574, introduced by my New Democrat colleague, the member of Parliament for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

Across Canada and in Scarborough—Rouge River, small and medium-sized businesses employ the vast majority of residents and are important job creators. They are the engines that drive the economic development and vitality of our communities. They have been asking the government to reduce the merchant fees charged by credit card companies for years, and I am proud that the official opposition, the New Democrats, are actually hearing their call.

Small and medium-sized enterprises have a large impact on the Canadian economy. Data from Industry Canada's 2013 key small business statistics show that together, small and medium-sized businesses represent 99.8% of Canada's employer businesses. They employ over 80% of the people working in the private sector in Canada.

These companies are faced with rising costs and razor-thin margins. Therefore, the fact that Canadian small and medium-sized businesses pay some of the highest transaction fees in the world is both unfair and unsustainable. These businesses need our support.

We are speaking of merchant fees. What are they, one might ask? Every time a customer makes a credit card purchase, the merchant must pay the credit card company a premium on that purchase. The interchange fee comprises the majority of the fee or the charge the merchant pays to the credit card company. The Retail Council of Canada estimates that interchange fees averaged 1.7% in 2014 for MasterCard and 1.61% for Visa.

We can look at some of the sister countries we compare our country to, such as Australia. The interchange fees there have been capped at 0.5%, and in Europe, many of the countries' interchange

fees will be capped at 0.3% as of September 2015. That is a significant difference.

Furthermore, under the terms of their service agreements with credit card companies, merchants are not allowed to pass these fees on to their customers, as this would increase the price overall of the merchandise.

In 2012, retailers paid \$832 million in credit card fees. Eventually, as the retailers' costs remain high in a highly competitive industry and demand continues for lower prices, these costs will inevitably be passed on to consumers, whether intentional or not.

Hence, consumers should know about these fees. Therefore, New Democrats want more transparency from the credit card companies. We are asking them to always disclose to the customer the transaction cost related to the payment method chosen.

The government has been consistently supporting its friends. We know who they are: their wealthy insider friends. Small businesses have watched their tax rate drop 1% since the Conservatives took office, from 12% to 11%. While they worked so hard and created the jobs in our communities, they saw corporate income tax rates drop seven percentage points, from 22% all the way down to 15%, which included a now defunct surtax, over that same period. Following an NDP proposal, the recent budget proposes to drop the small business tax rate by 2% by 2019, but we will have to see if that actually happens and if the changes materialize.

We want to extend a helping hand to small businesses, the real job creators in Canada, and stimulate investment and innovation in manufacturing.

This is not a new issue. Since 2008, several retail associations, such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Retail Council of Canada, and the Small Business Matters Coalition, have lobbied against these exorbitant merchant fees. In fact, in July 2013, the Competition Tribunal said that the conditions imposed on Canadian businesses by Visa and MasterCard were anti-competitive and that the fees they charged were excessive. The tribunal called on the government to regulate the industry. Clearly, the Conservative government has not regulated the industry effectively, since the credit card merchant fees in Canada remain among the highest in the world.

*Private Members' Business*

The government's form of regulation was that in November 2014, MasterCard and Visa submitted a voluntary proposal to the federal finance minister to reduce their interchange fees to an average rate of 1.5% for five years, as of April 2015. That is the government's way of taking action: just accepting the credit card company's voluntary proposal and calling it a day. Remember that in Australia, the interchange fees are capped at 0.5%, and in Europe, they will be capped at 0.3% later this year.

● (1810)

Instead of taking on the task of regulating the industry, the Minister of Finance issued a news release stating:

As a result of the voluntary proposals, there is no need for the Government to regulate the interchange rates set by the credit card networks. That is not really government action.

The minister did indicate that the government could take action if MasterCard and Visa did not comply with their public commitments. However, the Minister of Finance did not ensure that the credit card companies needed to make the merchant fees significantly lower.

When the announcement was made by the credit card companies, Yves Servais from the Association des marchands dépanneurs et épiciers du Québec said, "We are skeptical about the voluntary agreement between the government and Visa and MasterCard. There is no information on how to ensure compliance with the agreement, and no government agency has been mandated to handle the follow-up and annual evaluation."

The fact that the fee reduction is not significant enough and the fact that there is no one charged with enforcing this reduction are both big problems.

The NDP has proposed the creation of an ombudsman responsible for working with private sector partners to reduce credit card fees. Clearly, the government is not paying attention, and small businesses deserve to have a person committed to working with them.

This is an important middle-class issue. Too many Canadian families are struggling and cannot continue to pay higher fees on all of the merchandise they are purchasing.

The Conservatives have abandoned small businesses in favour of more profitable and prosperous corporations, like the credit card companies, who they support.

Gary Sands, chair of the Small Business Matters Coalition, wrote to the government in November 2014 saying:

Members of the Small Business Matters Coalition, representing thousands of businesses across Canada, urge the Government of Canada to reduce credit card swipe fees and to bring fairness and transparency to the Canadian Payments Industry.

In turn, our members pledge that the reduction in credit card fees will be to the benefit of consumers and communities across Canada, through improved competitiveness, increased investment, job creation and reduced consumer prices.

Are those not all things that we do want to see in this country?

Nevertheless, the Retail Council of Canada is committed to continue to press for deeper cuts to bring interchange in line with the fees charged elsewhere. The NDP has joined this commitment, and we will continue until we have a more fair and just system that respects the economic engines of our communities, the small and medium-sized businesses.

When credit card interchange regulations were introduced in Australia in November 2003, both Visa and MasterCard predicted that the card payment system in Australia would suffer badly from this reform. MasterCard stated that the setting of interchange fees is such a delicate balance that to interfere with it could lead to a death spiral process.

However, evidence shows that, contrary to these predictions, credit card usage has continued to increase strongly since Australia's reforms of credit interchange. Card issuer profitability has not been harmed by the reforms. Issuers have reduced costs and increased efficiency. The Reserve Bank of Australia has concluded that the lower costs for merchants are flowing through into lower prices for the consumer due to the competitive environment in which most merchants operate.

What the Australian experience demonstrates to us is that, despite significant reductions in the interchange fees, credit card usage has continued its strong growth. Card payment systems can operate healthily and grow strongly despite regulated reductions in interchange income for issuers.

At a time when Canadian small businesses are facing increasing pressures from the weak Canadian dollar, rising inflation, and other increasing costs, it is integral that the government acts to support small and medium enterprises.

I strongly support Motion No. 574, and I am pleased to stand with the official opposition New Democrats in support of small and medium-sized businesses in Canada.

● (1815)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be here tonight to have the opportunity to showcase our government's work to reduce credit card acceptance fees and ensure that consumers and businesses are treated fairly.

I also find myself speaking to another mind-boggling motion where the NDP has no ground to stand on when it comes to supporting small business and consumers. After all, it voted against every single one of our consumer protection measures.

Our government understands it is no secret that small businesses are the lifeblood of the Canadian economy. However, what separates us from the opposition parties is that we have taken clear action to support them, rather than rhetoric and deathbed conversions. Small businesses account for over 90% of all businesses in Canada and employ half of the working men and women in the Canadian private sector. Our government believes that small businesses should spend their time growing their businesses and creating jobs, not choking on high taxes and red tape.

*Private Members' Business*

What does the member opposite propose? He proposes that we lower costs for businesses and consumers by reducing transaction fees charged to merchants and allow merchants to disclose to the consumer the transaction costs relating to the payment method chosen at the point of sale. I was surprised to hear that the NDP even recognizes the importance of small and medium-sized businesses at all. As for the middle class, with a clear plan to raise taxes on the middle class, I find it hard to believe they want to help the middle-class Canadian.

Allow me to talk about our record on supporting small business. We have already cut taxes significantly for small businesses and their owners. We cut the small business tax rate to 11% in 2008. In economic action plan 2015 we have gone further by proposing a new plan to reduce small business taxes to 9% by 2019. That is the largest small business tax cut in 25 years. We increased the lifetime capital gains exemption on qualified small business shares to \$750,000 from \$500,000 in 2007. In economic action plan 2015 we further enhanced the exemption for farmers and fishers to \$1 million, recognizing the importance of these assets for the retirement plans of Canadians.

We also reduced small businesses' EI premiums by introducing the small business job credit. This credit is expected to save small businesses more than \$550 million over 2015-16. It is estimated that this measure will reduce taxes for small businesses and their owners by \$2.7 billion over the 2015-16 to 2019-20 period. Almost 700,000 small businesses from coast to coast to coast will benefit from this rate reduction. It will enable them to retain more earnings that can be used to reinvest and create jobs.

When it comes to promoting job creation and economic growth, our government continues to make responsive and responsible decisions. We are also continuously cutting red tape and reducing the tax compliance requirements faced by businesses.

The NDP and the member voted against all of our past measures to support small businesses and they will continue to do so in the future.

Allow me to move on to merchant fees and credit and debit card use. Our government is implementing policies focused on raising Canada's economic potential and creating stable, well-paying jobs. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. These are uncertain economic times at home and abroad. Small businesses are stretching dollars as far as they can go. They need more support so our economy can continue to grow. That is why our government took timely action to address credit card fees. Every time a merchant accepts a credit card payment, the merchant pays fees and like any other cost, fees mean higher prices for consumers.

Last fall, we accepted voluntary commitments by Visa Canada and MasterCard Canada to cut credit card fees by close to 10%. Specifically, the proposals from Visa and MasterCard will voluntarily reduce their respective credit card fees for consumer cards to an average effective rate of 1.5% for a period of five years. They will ensure that all merchants receive a reduction in credit card fees. They will provide a greater reduction for small and medium-sized enterprises and charities, which have the least amount of bargaining power. They will require annual verification by an independent third party to ensure compliance. More importantly,

Visa and MasterCard already started to implement the reductions in April 2015.

• (1820)

The purpose of these voluntary commitments is simple. It is to reduce the cost of credit card acceptance for merchants in order to keep prices low for consumers. I am not sure if the member opposite missed this, but this agreement will help consumers and merchants alike.

Let me reassure the hon. member that if the reductions in interchange fees are not passed along to merchants or the overall cost of accepting credit cards increases at any time during the period covered by these commitments due to actions by Visa or MasterCard, the government reserves the right to rescind its acceptance of the voluntary commitments.

Now let me turn our attention to the enhanced code of conduct for the debit and credit card industry that was announced last month. It aims to promote fairness in the credit card markets and addresses the issues that businesses told us about. We worked hard to fix the problems. Merchants will now have a new, more user-friendly complaints process for code-related complaints. We are improving disclosure requirements within contracts so that information summary boxes outlining terms and conditions and merchant fees are in plain language. Businesses will have more flexibility to exit their contracts without penalty. As well, the code will now apply to mobile payments.

This stronger code also offers new protection for consumers. Credit card issuers will have to inform consumers that using premium cards may mean higher fees. There will be new branding requirements for premium cards to make them easily identifiable. We are introducing new protections with mobile devices so that consumers have choice, not the big banks and credit card networks.

Taking together all that we have done since 2006, and what is to come, I can say with confidence that protecting consumers and supporting small business remain a central focus of our government, and small businesses have noticed. I will name a few.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business stated:

—the Code of Conduct for the Credit and Debit Card Industry...has served merchants extremely well...[It] has done an excellent job in ensuring some fair ground rules and maintaining Canada's low-cost debit system.

The president of the Retail Council of Canada stated, "I am delighted that merchants will have full choice in which networks and payment methods to accept".

*Private Members' Business*

Members do not have to take my word for it. Given all of the aforementioned consideration, we do not need to make amendments to the motion. Nor is it a necessary one. It is only our government that has a real track record for supporting the middle class, small businesses and Canadian consumers. For that reason, I encourage all members to vote against the motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak today. My colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin moved a motion today that makes a lot of sense. This motion would support our small and medium-sized businesses and our local economies. That is why I ask all my colleagues to support this motion and set partisanship aside.

Canada has a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, and instead of promoting this culture, the government has raised taxes for small and medium-sized businesses since it came to power. The Canadian Convenience Stores Association acknowledges that the credit card swipe fees charged to Canadian retailers are among the highest in the world, ranging from 1.5% to 4% of the purchase price. In 2012, retailers paid \$832 million in credit card fees. That is a huge amount.

Overall, 98% of all Canadian businesses are small and medium-sized businesses with fewer than 100 employees. They are the backbone of our country's economy. They created 70% of all new private sector jobs between 2002 and 2012. In spite of these compelling figures, nothing is being done to help them. As these businesses struggle with increasing expenses and very slim margins, many of them will have to shut down if they do not get the support they need during difficult times.

The NDP wants to help small and medium-sized businesses, which are Canada's real job creators. We want to invest in innovation and the manufacturing sector, which has lost 400,000 jobs since the Conservatives came to power. The Conservative strategy—letting credit card companies do as they please—is not working.

In July 2013, Canada's Competition Tribunal stated that the conditions imposed on Canadian businesses by Visa and MasterCard

were anti-competitive and that the fees they charged were too high. The tribunal asked the government to fix these problems. The government merely reviewed its voluntary code of conduct—yes, voluntary—and did nothing else.

This Conservative government is abandoning small businesses in favour of more profitable and prosperous companies. In its 2015 budget, the government promises to reduce the small business tax rate, but that tax cut, like most of the measures in this budget, will not take effect until 2016.

The NDP wants concrete, effective measures. Promises that will not be kept until 2016 do not belong in a 2015 budget. The member for Saint-Lambert's Motion No. 585 will force the Conservatives to vote on this issue.

Ever since the Conservatives came to power, they have constantly been giving tax breaks worth tens of billions of dollars to large corporations. They can always find money to give tax breaks to wealthy corporations, but when it comes time to support small businesses that create jobs, they say there is no money.

I am confident that Canadians will remember this over the summer. They are fed up with this government favouring wealthy families and large corporations. They are tired of having a government that does not listen to them.

● (1825)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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.

It being 6:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.)







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