



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, June 5, 2014**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 5, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[English]

### OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER OF CANADA

**The Speaker:** I have the honour, pursuant to section 38 of the Access to Information Act, to lay upon the table the report of the information commissioner for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108 (3)(h), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### OFFICE OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Act for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108 (3)(h), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(a) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the Annual Report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the conflict of interest code for members of the House of Commons for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

## INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation concerning its visit to Turkey on March 10-14, 2014.

\* \* \*

## CERTIFICATES OF NOMINATION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 81(3) of the Parliament of Canada Act, chapter P-1 of the revised statutes of Canada 1985, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a certificate of nomination and biographical notes for Mary Elizabeth Dawson, who the government is proposing to be reappointed to the position of Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(1), this matter is to be referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

\* \* \*

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 13 petitions.

\* \* \*

## INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in a joint meeting of the defence and security, economics and security, and political committees and officers of the committee on the civil dimension of security and the science and technology committee, held in Brussels, Belgium, February 16-18, 2014.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been the usual discussions among parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, the remainder of the debate, pursuant to Standing Order 66(2), on the motion to concur in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, presented on Monday, December 9, 2013, be deemed to have taken place and all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed adopted on division.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**PRIVACY COMMISSIONER**

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

That, in accordance with subsection 53(1) of the Privacy Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. P-21, and pursuant to Standing Order 111.1, the House approve the appointment of Daniel Therrien as Privacy Commissioner, for a term of seven years.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

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

• (1045)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 167)

**YEAS**

## Members

Ablonczy  
Adler  
Albas  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)

Adams  
Aglukkaq  
Albrecht  
Ambler

Ambrose  
Andrews  
Ashfield  
Bateman  
Bennett  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Braid  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Cannan  
Casey  
Chong  
Clement  
Cuzner  
Davidson  
Dreeshen  
Dykstra  
Falk  
Fletcher  
Freeland  
Gallant  
Goldring  
Gosal  
Grewal  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
Hsu  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kerr  
Lake  
Lauzon  
Leef  
Leung  
Lukiwski  
MacAulay  
Maguire  
Mayes  
McGuinity  
McLeod  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Murray  
Obhrai  
Oliver  
Opitz  
Paradis  
Preston  
Rajotte  
Reid  
Richards  
Ritz  
Scarpaleggia  
Seeback  
Shea  
Shory  
sor)  
Smith  
Sorenson  
St-Denis  
Strahl  
Tilson  
Trost  
Truppe  
Valcourt  
Van Kesteren  
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Chisu  
Clarke  
Crockatt  
Daniel  
Dechert  
Dubourg  
Easter  
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)  
Foote  
Galipeau  
Garneau  
Goodyear  
Gourde  
Hayes  
Hillyer  
Holder  
James  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Komaricki  
Lamoureux  
Lebel  
Lemieux  
Lobb  
Lunney  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
May  
McColeman  
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
Menegakis  
Miller  
Norlock  
O'Connor  
O'Neill Gordon  
Pacetti  
Payne  
Raiitt  
Regan  
Rempel  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Schellenberger  
Sgro  
Shiple  
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Storseth  
Sweet  
Toet  
Trottier  
Uppal  
Valeriotte  
Van Loan  
Warawa  
Watson  
Williamson  
Woodworth  
Young (Oakville)

**NAYS**

## Members

Ashton  
Benskin  
Blanchette-Lamothe

Aubin  
Blanchette  
Boivin

*Routine Proceedings*

Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brousseau	Chicoine
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Côté
Crowder	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dusseault
Fortin	Freeman
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Gravelle
Grogulé	Hassainia
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Mathysen	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Saganash	Scott
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## PAIRED

Nil

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

**Ms. Nicole Turmel:** Mr. Speaker, I want to be sure that the Minister of Justice's vote is not counted because, in my opinion, he arrived after you began to call the vote.

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, it is of course to your discretion, but I heard the question being put, as I was here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** This is the second day that this issue has arisen. Perhaps it is time to review what the Standing Orders actually say and what the expectations of members are.

When the bells for the vote started ringing, there were 30 minutes. It is an obligation of the members to be in the chamber when the 30-minute bell has expired.

I think it is obvious to all members that over the past months, or possibly years, members have slipped into the habit of starting to enter the House or getting ready to enter the House when the clock hits zero. In fact, it is the responsibility of members who want to participate in the vote to actually be in the chamber and to be ready for the vote when the clock hits zero.

As members also know, it is standard practice that the whips for both the government and the official opposition will be out in the lobby and will come down into the chamber together and take their seats. In almost all cases, members know they need to be in their seats at that point, so the vote can proceed.

What we had happen both yesterday and today is that one of the two whips, the government whip yesterday and the opposition whip

today, waited until the bells expired and very quickly thereafter entered the chamber by themselves, addressed the Chair, and then took their seat. It is, in fact, not necessary for either of the whips to enter the House. The Speaker can rise and call the vote as soon as the bells have expired. It has become standard practice, in the co-operation that makes this place work better for all of us, that those two whips do that together.

However, it is important to point out to all hon. members on both sides of the House that this is a practice; it is not a rule.

In terms of who is or is not eligible to vote, the issue is that the member needs to be in the chamber in order to hear the question. That is the test for whether they can vote or not. I know that in the past, as I said, it has become common practice that members have been in their seats, sitting, when the two whips take their seats, at which point the chair occupant rises to put the question.

However, it is important to point out that this is not, in fact, absolutely necessary.

It is impossible for the Speaker to keep track of where all 300 members are as the question is being put. To a certain extent, there is an onus on the members not only to be on time but, if they are not here on time, to own up to that and to either not participate in the vote or, if it is pointed out, to subsequently say that their vote ought not to be counted. As is the practice and as members will know, there are times when members rise on a point of order immediately following a vote and point out that another member arrived late, was not here on time, and in their view, did not hear the question being put.

On that basis, being in one's seat, while always a very good idea, is not an actual requirement for being able to participate in the vote. Hearing the question is the requirement.

I have a suggestion for all hon. members. We can avoid this unfortunate circumstance in the future if members pay closer attention to the clock and actually arrive in the House, ready for the vote to be taken, when the clock hits zero, rather than be standing in the lobby.

The Chair is pleased to hear so many members applauding that, knowing that they will all be doing that in the future.

This month is, for many of us, our 10th anniversary of being elected to this place. We all know that there are rules and that there are Standing Orders. However, to a certain extent, this place only works with the good will and co-operation of all members.

After 10 years, the Chair is also aware that toward the end of session, particularly in June when the days get longer, the weather gets warmer, and thoughts of returning to our constituents grow fonder in our hearts, it gets a little crazy around here. I would say that we have had ample evidence of that in the past two days.

I will close with this. If the Minister of Justice says he was in the chamber and he heard the question being put, the Chair will accept that on the word of the minister. I will point out to all hon. members that in the future, the way to avoid this is to actually be in their seats, where they can hear the question being put clearly.

*Routine Proceedings*

●(1050)

The chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for that explanation, but I would like to explain my actions yesterday when I walked in by myself.

We had an agreement with the official opposition that we would have the vote right after question period, with no bells. When that was changed, right after question period, I was waiting down at the other end to enter the chamber for the vote. Then we had to go through a 15-minute unnecessary wait when we were all here. That is why, when 15 minutes expired, I walked up the aisle.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** While the Chair appreciates the comments made by the chief government whip, nothing that he said in any way detracts from or contradicts anything I just said, which is that all hon. members should be here on time in the future.

We will continue with routine proceedings.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of farmers in my riding who save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds, and they are concerned with the current newly proposed restriction on farmers' traditional practices.

The petitioners ask that the government refrain from making any changes to the Seeds Act or the Plant Breeders' Rights Act though Bill C-18, which is an act to amend certain acts relating to agriculture and agri-food, that would further restrict farmers' rights or add to farmers' costs.

●(1055)

[*Translation*]

## CANADA POST

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions asking the government to put a stop to Canada Post service cuts, particularly the ones that will affect seniors and persons with disabilities. The petitioners are also wondering who will pay the bill when people fall going to get their mail in the winter. Will it be the municipality, the province or the federal government? I am presenting two petitions.

[*English*]

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of constituents in my community, I would like to present this petition in which they call for mandatory minimum sentences for those convicted of impaired driving causing death and the redefinition in the Criminal Code of an offence of impaired driving causing death to vehicular manslaughter.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of

several constituents from and around the Bonavista north area as well as Change Islands, Fogo Island, and Twillingate Island.

The petitioners are deeply concerned about a freighter that sank off their coast back in 1985. About a year ago, or a little more, the freighter started to leak oil at the bottom of the ocean, which is now affecting seabirds and could eventually be a major disaster to the entire ecosystem.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to take immediate action to help clean up this potential disaster.

## SHARK FINNING

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from thousands of Canadians who want the government to take measures to stop the global practice of shark finning and to ensure responsible conservation and management of sharks.

The petitioners call upon the government to immediately legislate a ban on the importation of shark fin to Canada.

## SEX SELECTION

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today from citizens mostly of the Vancouver area.

The petitioners call upon members of the House to condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians from Guelph and across Canada are calling upon the Government of Canada to require all producers and manufacturers of prepackaged foods to include potassium on the nutritional facts table on all food labels.

The petitioners are seriously concerned that many prepackaged foods are not required to list potassium additives in the best interest of those who must keep an eye on intake, such as people suffering from heart and kidney disease, hypertension, and many other similar conditions.

The petitioners call upon the government for assistance and to take a proper, more active role in the promotion of health by requiring potassium to be included on the list of all nutritional facts.

## BLOOD AND ORGAN DONATION

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today, which I will do quickly.

The first petition is signed by residents who ask that the sexual preferences of people not be an instant refusal of the right to donate blood, bone marrow, and organs.

The petitioners request the Government of Canada to return the rights of any healthy Canadian to give the gift of blood, bone marrow, and organs to those in need.

*Routine Proceedings*

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by residents who want to draw to our attention that Canadians support their public health care system and want to ensure every Canadian has the same access to high-quality health care services wherever they live.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have many petitions here respecting the banning of cat and dog fur. I have introduced thousands of these petitions over the last couple of years.

The petitioners point out that we should join the U.S.A., Australia, and the EU in banning the importation of cat and dog fur and that we are the only country without such a ban.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to support legislation to bring this into effect.

## EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDER

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today.

The first petition is with regard to the emergency order for protection of the greater sage grouse in Canada. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to rescind the emergency protection order.

This petition is from citizens of my riding of Medicine Hat.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is also from residents of Medicine Hat.

The petitioners are asking that the House of Commons rescind the Species at Risk Act and replace it with an act that would encourage voluntary implementation.

## FIREARMS RECLASSIFICATION

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition is also from citizens of Medicine Hat.

The petitioners point out that law-abiding Canadian citizens should be free to use firearms for recreational use. They call upon the House of Commons to fix legislation so that unelected bureaucrats no longer have control over weapons classifications.

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents who live in the west coast part of my riding, in the Stephenville area, who are opposed to the cuts announced by Canada Post.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to have Canada Post reinstate door-to-door delivery, because a lot of the individuals who live in this part of my riding are seniors or are disabled.

The petitioners are asking the government to work with Canada Post to reinstate these services.

● (1100)

## HOUSING

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first petition calls for a national housing strategy. The petition recognizes that one and a half million households, almost 13% of the Canadian population, is in core housing need. Canada is the only industrialized country that does not have a national housing strategy.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to develop a housing strategy that would ensure secure, accessible, and affordable housing for all Canadians.

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for an end to the cuts at Canada Post.

In my community, people rely on door-to-door delivery, whether it is individual homes or small businesses. They believe that cuts to home delivery will have a tremendously negative effect on our communities.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to stop these devastating cuts to our postal service.

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition today signed by thousands of Canadians.

The petitioners say that current impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They are asking that there be mandatory minimum sentencing for those persons who have been convicted of impaired driving causing death.

The petitioners also want the Criminal Code of Canada to be changed to redefine an offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to present two petitions.

Appropriately enough, today is World Environment Day.

The first petition is from more than 1,200 petitioners from British Columbia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to put forward a meaningful climate plan that would reduce greenhouse gases to those levels that will avoid a 2° Celsius average global temperature increase. Those levels were once adopted by the 40th Parliament of Canada, 25% below 1990 levels by 2020, 80% reductions by 2050.

## 41ST GENERAL ELECTION

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents primarily in the Victoria area of my riding and that of the member for Victoria.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada for a full investigation of what occurred in the 2011 election, generally referred to as robocalls, although some of them were live calls. All of the calls appear to have been motivated by a desire to confuse electors and deny them their right to vote. The petitioners believe there should be an inquiry.

[Translation]

## ZAMUDIO FAMILY

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of urgency that I am presenting this petition, which is calling on the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to allow the Zamudio family to stay in Canada on humanitarian grounds. One thousand people in my riding have signed this petition. It is with some concern that I am presenting it. The Zamudio family is to be deported on June 25, and we are hoping that the minister will listen to what the community is saying.

[English]

## SEX SELECTION

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first petition is on gender selection abortion. It was determined that ultrasounds are being used in Canada to determine the gender of an unborn child, and if the child is a girl, the girl is often aborted. The petitioners are calling on Parliament to condemn this practice of discrimination against girls through gender selection abortion.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from petitioners who recognize that farmers have the right to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seed. The petitioners are encouraging Parliament to do nothing to restrict that practice.

[Translation]

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions, signed mainly by people in the riding of Hamilton Mountain. The petitions are about cuts to Canada Post and are calling on the government to reverse its decision regarding these cuts. I am pleased to present these petitions on behalf of my colleague from Hamilton Mountain.

[English]

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition calling on the government to establish an ombudsman for responsible mining. The petition was submitted by Development and Peace, a very worthwhile organization that promotes alternatives to unfair social, political, and economic structures, educates the Canadian population about the causes of poverty, and mobilizes Canadians toward action for change.

I am very pleased to table this petition. I look forward to the government's response.

●(1105)

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a couple of petitions today. Two of them are with respect to funding for the Algoma Central Railway. Most of the petitioners are from the riding of Sault Ste. Marie, who want to ensure that their voices are heard here in the House of Commons. They are from Sault Ste. Marie, Bruce Mines, Searchmont, and Prince Township, and some are from Hawk Junction, Wawa, and Burk's Falls, in my riding, and some are from Toronto as well. Some of the petitioners are actually from the United States. This shows how critical this is. It is with respect to funding for the Algoma Central Railway.

The government has actually put in some additional funding for at least one more year while a working group works on this. However, the petitioners remain concerned with respect to the lack of consultation by the government and about the impact this will have on their economy and their businesses.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition is with respect to unfair extra fees and consumer rip-offs. The petitioners are from Spanish, Webbwood, Walford, Massey, Kapuskasing, Moonbeam, Cochrane, and Harty. The petitioners are calling on the government to take significant and concrete steps to make life more affordable. They are concerned about payday loans, pay-to-pay fees, ATM fees, access to low-interest credit cards, and price gouging.

I am pleased to table these petitions.

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present two petitions, both with respect to Canada Post. The petitioners would like to draw the attention of this House to the fact that in 2014, the federal government will perform a review of the Canadian postal service charter. The petitioners have put forward that because Canada Post is a publicly owned post office, Canadians have every right to have input on matters involving the post office. Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the government to ensure that the Canadian postal service charter review this year is open to the public.

In the second petition, the petitioners would like to draw the attention of this House to the fact that by supporting Canada Post's plan to cut home delivery and to hike postage prices, the government has broken its promise to better protect consumers and that the elimination of door-to-door service delivery will be a particular hardship for seniors and the disabled. The petitioners are calling on the government to reject Canada Post's plan to cut mail service and increase prices.



*Routine Proceedings*

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions. One is from the town of Postville and one from the town of Black Tickle. They are both related to the downgrading of services by Canada Post Corporation. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to instruct Canada Post to maintain, expand, and improve postal services and to cease any proposals to reduce hours and diminish service to the residents in those areas.

I support the petitioners in their request to the government. We would certainly encourage the government to intervene here to ensure that postal services to all rural Canadians are maintained, and maintained at levels that are acceptable in a country of our stature.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, parishioners of St. Thomas à Becket in Pierrefonds are presenting this petition, which asks for the creation of a legislated ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining. This petition calls for the creation of a legislated extractive sector ombudsman mechanism in Canada that would have the capacity to receive and investigate complaints and assess compliance with corporate accountability standards that are based on international labour, environmental, and human rights norms; make public its findings; recommend remedial actions; and recommend sanctions to the Government of Canada.

## EGYPT

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition is signed by a lot of people. They are calling upon the Canadian government to condemn the abuse of human rights in Egypt. The people who signed this petition are concerned about the freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Egypt.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 471 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 471—**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to Canada Post equipment renewal for community mailboxes and the new call for expressions of interest for specialized companies that responded to the first call for interest launched on July 24, 2013: (a) what company was awarded this contract; (b) what was the cost of the purchase; (c) what companies were invited to submit bids for this contract; and (d) why did Canada Post officials have information about the awarding of this contract removed from the MERX tendering website?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Florence Manufacturing, a wholly owned subsidiary of Gibraltar Industries Inc., has been awarded a contract for the short-term supply of community mailbox equipment to Canada Post.

With regard to (b), the requested information is financial and commercial in nature and has always been treated as confidential.

With regard to (c), on July 26, 2013, Canada Post issued a request for information, or RFI, to identify existing and available community

mailbox equipment that would meet Canada Post's short-term requirements. The RFI was issued in accordance with NAFTA obligations and was made publicly available to all potential suppliers through MERX. The names of the unsuccessful suppliers are considered confidential.

Following the finalization of the new equipment design for the long-term requirement due later this year, Canada Post will issue a request for proposal, an RFP, on MERX under NAFTA for the manufacture of the new equipment design.

With regard to (d), Canada Post did not remove information about the awarding of the contract from the MERX tendering website.

\* \* \*

• (1110)

[English]

## QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if a supplementary response to Question No. 425, originally tabled on May 14, 2014, as well as Question No. 472 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 425—**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:**

With regard to full-time equivalent (FTE) federal civil service and Crown corporation positions eliminated since January 1, 2012: what is the number of positions eliminated, broken down by the location of the former position, namely (i) the National Capital Region, (ii) each province or territory, including figures for Quebec and Ontario outside of the National Capital Region, (iii) outside of Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 475—**Mr. Peter Stoffer:**

With regard to homeless veterans: (a) what programs from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) are in place to assist homeless veterans; (b) what programs are in place by other government departments, if applicable, to assist homeless veterans; (c) what organizations are working in partnership with VAC to provide support to homeless veterans, broken down by province; (d) what is the annual breakdown of contributions issued to organizations working in partnership with VAC on veterans homelessness from 2009 to 2013 inclusively, broken down by province; (e) how much did VAC spend on veterans homelessness annually from 2009 to 2013 inclusively; (f) what are the details of VAC's evaluation of the effectiveness of their financial contribution and program delivery for the partnership defined in (c); (g) is VAC considering a plan for a national coordinated effort to support homeless veterans and, if so, what are the details; (h) how many homeless veterans have been identified annually by VAC, from 2009 to 2013 inclusively; (i) how many homeless veterans have been identified by organizations working in partnership with VAC annually from 2009 to 2013 inclusively, broken down by province; (j) how many homeless veterans identified in (h) and (i) are now in receipt of departmental benefits or services; (k) what is the breakdown of the type of departmental benefits or services the homeless veterans received from 2009 to 2013; (l) what are the planned expenditures by VAC for homeless veterans for the next five years; and (m) what are the planned expenditures by VAC for organizations working in partnership with VAC to provide support to homeless veterans?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

*Government Orders*

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 1

BILL C-31—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-31, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration at report stage of the bill and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

that, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at report stage and the five hours provided for the consideration at 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 said stages 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. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has an idea of how many members wish to participate.

Questions and comments, the hon. opposition House leader.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, words fail me.

Let us not forget that in the 35th and 36th Parliaments the Conservatives were criticizing the corrupt Liberals at the time. The Conservatives said that the Liberals moved 67 time allocation motions. The Conservatives were clear. They said they would be different from the Liberals: they would be a transparent government, with a fresh new approach and they would not be corrupt.

However, the Conservatives have a rather sorry record these days, with the number of time allocation motions and closure motions they have used. The Liberals moved 67 such motions at the time. The Conservatives are currently at 70. This is the 70th time they are limiting members' speaking time and muzzling Parliament.

It is not as though the Conservatives were introducing good bills. They have introduced bills that the Supreme Court has rejected. Others were so botched that the Conservatives ended up having to waste taxpayers' money to introduce new bills to fix the ones that were botched. They introduce bad bills and then they want to muzzle MPs. Last night, 49 Conservative MPs refused to show up when it was their turn to speak. This is unacceptable.

[*English*]

The worst part of this closure motion, this time allocation motion, is the provisions of the bill. We are talking about FATCA, whereby a million Canadians of American origin would simply be flushed away by the current government. They would have no constitutional

protections, no privacy protections. Even though we pushed for them at committee, the government refused to adopt them.

We have also seen, in this particular bill, that railway safety and transparency would be blown away, because in secret, the government could reduce the railway safety provisions that are already inadequate.

After the tragedy last year of Lac-Mégantic, one would think the government would be a little wiser and just a little more attuned to public opinion.

My question is very simple. Why is the government trying to hide from the public these horrible provisions in the bill by ramming the bill through without proper debate in the House of Commons?

• (1115)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, it is a pleasure to appear in the House to speak back on the scope of the bill and to talk a bit about the budget, budget implementation, the economic action plan, and the reasons we have moved into time allocation.

The member from across the way started by saying that he was almost speechless. I can tell members one thing. I am not a doctor, but I would never diagnose that member, ever, since I have been here, as being almost speechless. It seems that he always has something to say. I appreciate the questions he asked today. I appreciate the fact that he did stand and question it.

Even though the opposition likes to suggest otherwise, it has been common practice in this place to include various measures in budgets. He seemed concerned that there were a number of different measures, or a lot of different measures, put into an overwhelming budget. He talked about the scope of the budget. Certainly it is nothing new. This is nothing new. This is nothing groundbreaking. I think Canadians expect a budget to deal with all departments of government. They expect a budget to lay out the direction a government intends to go over the next number of years.

Our budget is full of very good measures that would continue to move our government on its low-tax plan, a plan that would put Canadians in a very good position to find a job in this country, a plan that would enhance skill development, a plan that would take someone who says, "I want to move to a next level of employment" and would provide the opportunities to do that through many different measures that would be brought forward in this budget toward skill development.

What the opposition is not talking about is the fact that Canada is in one of the best positions of all countries around the world. We see growth. We see a low level of debt comparative with other G7 countries. We are well-positioned in Canada. We are well-positioned because of bills like this. That is why we look forward to continuing to debate and to continuing to look at the various measures the member brought forward.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question on Part 5 of Bill C-31, specifically on the issue of FATCA and its application to registered savings plans, RRSPs, registered education savings plans, and registered disability savings plans. Those plans have matching grants provided by the Government of Canada, funded by the taxpayers of Canada, that are intended to go to people with disabilities or to young people to save for their educations. Under FATCA, earnings from those deposits made by the Canadian government would be taxable by the IRS.

Does the Minister of State for Finance believe that this would be consistent with the intentions of those programs and that it would be appropriate for the Canadian taxpayer to be funnelling money to the IRS and the U.S. treasury?

Second, has the government calculated how much money would be going to the IRS from the Canadian treasury as a result of FATCA and the provisions of this bill?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, during question period and at other times FATCA has come up a number of times. I feel, though, that the member's question was somewhat misleading, because as Canadians listened to that question, they believed that all Canadian taxpayers would now be forced to reveal their savings and their income to the IRS or to the United States. That is untrue.

The member should know, and he does know, that the FATCA legislation was created and imposed in the U.S.A. It was enacted unilaterally to target American citizens living abroad in other countries, many of whom were Canadian citizens as well, many of whom have dual citizenship. As long as they continue to be American citizens, the United States legislation dictates that Canada must comply.

Let me say this. Our former finance minister, Mr. Flaherty, was troubled by the original legislation brought forward by the Americans, and I know a lot of Canadians had concerns with it as well. That is why this government negotiated a better deal through an IGA, an intergovernmental agreement, that would prevent certain things from being revealed to the Americans. Those would be things like RRSPs, tax-free savings accounts, or disability savings plans. All those were not included because of Canada's strong intergovernmental agreement with the U.S. on FATCA.

• (1120)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before we continue, when I asked initially, only two or three members expressed an interest in asking a question. The first couple of questions and answers have been quite long, so I would urge all hon. members to make their questions and answers a little shorter. In that way, more members will have the opportunity to participate.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the parliamentary secretary and I feel like telling him that the government needs to stop shoving things down Canadians' throats. Again, we are talking not only about the 70th time allocation motion, but also, and most importantly, about an omnibus bill that the government is shamefully trying to put a lid on.

Yesterday, I talked about how the government must earn the respect of all members of the House. I also discussed a problem that concerns me directly in Beauport—Limoilou, namely rail safety, for which the government is imposing measures that will keep cabinet decisions shrouded in secrecy.

How can the parliamentary secretary boast about these so-called accomplishments when he is imposing the will of the government without really knowing whether the public approves of the multitude of amendments? Somewhere around 60 to 70 laws will be amended by this one single bill. This is outrageous.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, I know a number of things that Canadians expect. Certainly in the last election we saw that Canadians gave our government a very strong mandate to focus on creating jobs and economic growth. We were in the greatest recession since the Great Depression, and Canadians knew that there was one party, one government, that they trusted with their finances and their taxes and revenues. That was the Conservative Party of Canada.

Canadians expect that our government will make decisions. Canadians expect that we will table overwhelming budgets that give the complete picture of the direction that this government is going to go. Then not only would we table the budget and not only would the finance minister stand and speak to the theme of the budget, but we would also make the proper decisions and take action and fulfill the commitments that we put forward in the budget. That is what our government is doing.

We are moving forward on that. Our government has faced continued attempts by the opposition to delay and to obstruct these bills.

Especially in times of economic uncertainty, Canadians would expect a government to take proper action to put this country on a solid foundation. That is where we are.

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, history shows us that the greatest leaders shine when they are faced with adversity. When the global economic crisis hit, the world's greatest finance minister, Jim Flaherty, took immediate and decisive action. In the midst of the worst global recession since the Great Depression, he introduced the economic action plan to protect Canadian businesses and safeguard Canadian jobs. He crafted and delivered one of the world's largest stimulus packages at a time when Canada needed it most.

Today, despite an uncertain world, the leadership of minister Flaherty has helped ensure that Canada will have a balanced budget well ahead of others, with low debt and low taxes. Economic action plan 2014 was the last in a series of many successful budgets that he delivered.

Could the Minister of State for Finance please tell the House a little about what the former finance minister was specifically focused on when he crafted that budget?

*Government Orders*

●(1125)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, I had an absolute honour and privilege to have worked with Jim Flaherty, known by all as one of the greatest finance ministers in the world. I had the privilege of working with him on budgets in the finance office. Certainly I have seen him at his finest.

One of his great passions was for disabled Canadians, and that is why he created the registered disability savings plan. I like the way he phrased it. We had the privilege of seeing him shine. When it came to working for the disabled, when it came to more finances for the Special Olympics, Minister Flaherty shone.

Jim worked tirelessly on economic action plan 2014. He wanted to put Canadians and the federal government in a position to pay down our federal debt. Minister Flaherty shone. He wanted to lower taxes for families, and again Minister Flaherty shone. That is what this budget does. That is what this economic action plan does. He wanted to bring forward more opportunities for job creators and for those looking for work. He shone.

He believed in financial prudence and in its ability to lead to financial prosperity. Again, it was a privilege to work with him and to see his budget implemented. That is why it is important that we move on this quickly.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member stands and boasts so much about this wonderful budget, this omnibus bill that is filled with so many things. There could have been another 30 different bills, and Conservatives could have stood for hours and talked about how great they were to try to convince people, rather than rolling everything into one great big bill. It will be years before we find out all the impacts of the various things that are in the bill.

To suggest that everything the government has done has brought us to the point where we are talking about surpluses certainly has to go right back to the point where we took over in 1993 from a previous Conservative government that was at the point of bankruptcy.

Why do you not make the tax credits that you brag so much about fully refundable, instead of what they are in the current system? It would very much benefit the very people that you keep saying you want to help.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before I go to the minister, I would remind all hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair rather than directly to their colleagues.

The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, any time the Liberals stand and ask questions, it is a walk down memory lane. It is how they recall history. We know that when they began to move into balanced budgets, they did it by cutting health care to the provinces. They cut transfers in education. They took the very institutions that are most precious to Canadians, health care and education, and they started slashing and cutting transfers to the provinces. Now they stand back and say they did it. Well, they did it on the backs of taxpayers. They did it on the backs of the provinces. That is why they are sitting here today as the third party.

Liberals talk about the bill. In 2005, the previous Liberal government's last budget implementation bill amended dozens of different pieces of legislation. Let us be clear: it is not the size of the budget legislation that the opposition members really care about, because we have had larger bills. It is that they want to stop the necessary and vital economic reforms found in the bill. Those reforms, the hiring credits the special dollars for apprentices and loan guarantees, are the things that Canadians knew about in the platform and the things they have asked to be implemented.

The walk down memory lane is history that has been reconstructed by a Liberal Party. Canadians now are very pleased that they have the solid leadership of our Prime Minister and our current Minister of Finance to lead us through these difficult times.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an issue that is of great concern to my constituents is rail safety. Our riding is crisscrossed by several railway lines, and we have many residential areas where the houses literally back onto the railway tracks. My residents are concerned about the growing length of commercial trains that have hundreds of tanker cars rolling through these residential neighbourhoods.

In the government's budget implementation act, a budget bill, are transportation measures. They would allow the government to change the rules around railway safety to undermine railway safety and make life potentially more hazardous for people across this country, including in my riding of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto, without ever communicating those changes to the public, without ever having to explain or reveal the changes it is making.

My question is this: why is the government making these changes behind closed doors and reducing transparency? Why will it not communicate these changes to the public? Why is it endangering public safety and rail safety and doing all of it in secret?

●(1130)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of all Canadians is paramount. It is the top priority for our country and our government. Any government's role is first of all the protection of its citizens, both at home and abroad, and we look at many different measures.

The member mentioned a number of things in that question, such as the number of cars and the length of the trains as they move products through this great and large country of ours. I invite the member from the New Democratic Party to join us. Rather than fighting against the Keystone pipeline, she should join us in getting the oil off the rail and into a pipeline where it belongs. Let us move the oil in the most economic way possible. Let us move it back into a pipeline.

Instead, what does her party do? It shows up in Washington and at protests all through the United States to argue against Keystone, against pipeline safety, against safety for Canadians.

*Government Orders*

We want to align our regulations and promote international competitiveness and we want to streamline our regulatory process, but every measure we put forward is in consideration of the security and safety of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening very carefully to the Minister of State for Finance. I also often listen to him during question period, which is called that because we never get answers, except to be told that our economy is fragile.

With this 70th time allocation motion, it is Canada's democracy that is becoming fragile, just like the economy.

I would like to ask the Minister of State for Finance how it is that the Conservatives have adopted the same bad omnibus bill practices as the Liberal Party. Not only do these bad practices weaken our democracy, but they also weaken our economy. In fact, the Conservatives have been in power for some time. How is our economy doing? They keep saying that it is fragile and that the recession was serious. They have been here since 2006 and what have they done? They have created precarious jobs, part-time jobs and low-paying jobs. The manufacturing industry has gone from 60% to 40%. We have an economic deficit.

Therefore, I would like to know how a 475-page budget implementation bill that affects all kinds of different areas can improve our fragile economy. It has been proven pretty much everywhere, particularly in Europe and Great Britain, that austerity budgets do not create economic growth, but stifle the economy.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is concerned about the budget, the implementation bill and the measures we have brought forward. Let me quote from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the ones who are executives of businesses across our country. It says:

Balancing the federal budget and maintaining discipline to pay down the debt are not only the right things to do, they are essential for Canada's global competitiveness...

The hon. member questioned why I would dare quote from the Chief Executives of Canada. Let me quote from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Maybe she does not like this group either. It says:

Rural businesses, communities and residents need sufficient bandwidth to participate in today's global economy and today's announcement is good news for Canadians in those regions.

They are looking at what is inside the budget, not the facts like the New Democrats, who do not analyze what is in the budget, but only look at the size of the budget and are overwhelmed. Those who looked at this budget say it is a good one.

I could go on. There is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Small business owners know that today's deficits are tomorrow's taxes, so they are pleased with the government's commitment to balance the budget in 2015, and that it remains solid.

All around her there are those who are overwhelming singing the praises of this budget, and the New Democrats are again trying to stifle the implementation of this.

•(1135)

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised, with all the talk we have had this morning, there has been no talk about jobs. It is a fact that Canada has had the strongest job record of the G7. In fact, a million jobs have been created.

People in my riding of Chatham-Kent—Essex are concerned about well-paying jobs in the private sector.

Could parliamentary, I mean the Minister of State for Finance please inform the House how Bill C-31 would affect jobs and create quality jobs for my constituents and other Canadians as well?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, the Freudian slip of the hon. member is all right. There is nothing wrong. The parliamentary secretaries are solid people with whom I would love to be recognized at any time. When the opposition tries to throw that out, I take it as a compliment.

Economic action plan 2014 would implement a number of measures that would be very positive in helping create jobs and opportunities for Canadians.

Let me just go through a number of them. It includes things like creating the Canada apprenticeship loan. It provides apprentices who have registered in the Red Seal trades the same opportunity that those who have accessed student loans for university or college education have been able to get. That is \$100 million in interest-free loans each year to those young men and young women who believe that the future in Canada is in the trades. Never before have they been able to have an interest-free loan through a student loan. The NDP and the opposition parties will vote against that. They will vote for the status quo.

What else does it do? It would cut the red tape burden by eliminating over 800,000 payroll deduction remittances to Canada Revenue Agency by over 50,000 businesses. When we made this announcement, I was at a business table in Edmonton, and the small business owners there applauded it. They appreciated the fact that this measure would cut red tape in over 800,000 remittances back to Ottawa.

It implements trademark treaties to reduce red tape.

It is a good budget. It would help create those jobs about which the hon. member talked. Again, we will stay the course, keep our taxes low and help create jobs.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, recently the May 3 *Economist* magazine had an article, Canada's "post-crisis glow is fading", and, in fact, it was a profile of the Canadian economy. In the article it says:

In the government's retelling of the crisis, it alone stood between Canadians and doom. Yet luck played a large, unacknowledged part...The government was lucky that steps had been taken [by the previous Liberal government] to strengthen the banking system...lucky that a previous Liberal government had eliminated the deficit [and paid down debt]; and lucky that resource-producing western provinces could take up the slack when the manufacturing heartland slowed dramatically.

*Government Orders*

We know the Conservatives cannot take credit for the strong banking system. We know they cannot take credit for the strong fiscal situation they inherited. Are the Conservatives telling Canadians that they put the oil and gas and potash under the ground as well?

• (1140)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, no, we are thankful that God put that under the ground. We are pleased for all our resources in our country. We are pleased for the things that we appreciate in our great country.

Again, the Liberals have asked a question and have taken us down memory lane. They have taken us down this walk through history of the times, 20 years ago, when they came in and did some things.

We have had a global recession. The downturn in Canada was not because of the Liberals. It was not because of our government. The global downturn was worldwide. It perhaps began in the United States and moved to Europe. The whole world was in recession. Canada was the last to enter it and the first to come out of the recession.

Thanks to the economic action plan, Canada has enjoyed the strongest economic performance during both the recession and the recovery. It is the truth that over a million jobs have been created, over 85% full-time jobs, 80% in the private sector, since July 2009.

The member talked about the world. The IMF and the OECD both project that Canada will have the strongest growth among the G7. That is because of our government.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister wants to quote Claude Dauphin of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, so let us quote him. In talking about the Building Canada fund, he said, “We are also concerned by rule changes.”

[English]

“We’re still in the dark. None of our members can apply because we don’t know how to apply.”

[Translation]

How does the minister respond to that? He did not provide the full quote from Claude Dauphin.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, during the global downturn, the government invested in Canada. We have invested in infrastructure, with an investment that Canada has never seen before from the federal government. We decided it was important to invest in long-term infrastructure that would help build prosperity and create jobs. Indeed, that is what we have seen.

We are investing in things like bridges in Montreal. Would the member for Hochelaga be opposed to that? We are seeing a huge investment into her province of Quebec. Is she going to vote against that?

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 11:42 a.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the

proceedings and put forthwith every 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 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.

• (1220)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 168)

## YEAS

## Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Block	Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galpeau	Gallant
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Leaf	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney

MacKay (Central Nova)  
Maguire  
McColeman  
Menegakis  
Miller  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Obhrai  
Oliver  
Opitz  
Payne  
Preston  
Rajotte  
Rempel  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Seeback  
Shipley  
Smith  
Sorenson  
Strahl  
Tilson  
Trost  
Truppe  
Valcourt  
Van Loan  
Warawa  
Watson  
Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Williamson  
Woodworth  
Young (Oakville)  
Zimmer— 137

MacKenzie  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Norlock  
O'Connor  
O'Neill Gordon  
Paradis  
Poilievre  
Raitt  
Reid  
Richards  
Ritz  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Shory  
Sopuck  
Storseth  
Sweet  
Toet  
Trottier  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Wilks  
Wong  
Yelich  
Young (Vancouver South)

Scott  
Sgro  
Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
St-Denis  
Sullivan  
Tremblay  
Valeriotte— 105

### Government Orders

Sellah  
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor)  
Sitsabaiesan  
Stewart  
Thibeault  
Turnel

### PAIRED

Nil

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I declare the motion carried.

[English]

### REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of Bill C-31, Economic Action Plan 2014 Act, No. 1, as reported (with amendment) from committee.

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to speak to the budget, to be able to speak to the fundamental document that this place produces on a yearly basis. Even though we have other pieces of legislation, it is a summary of everything else that we are ultimately involved in because almost everything in this place, one way or the other, takes money and it takes finances. I would say that for most Canadians, the issue that most concerns them when it comes to politics is how it would affect them and their financial livelihood. We debate many important issues, involving defence and involving justice, but I would argue that for many Canadians this is the fundamental issue that they want the government to address: How does the government deal with the items that affect their personal financial livelihood?

I have gotten in the habit in a couple of my last speeches of starting with an inspirational quote, which I hope sets the tone or frames the backdrop for where I am coming from, and provides a benchmark on whether the piece of legislation, the agenda item we are debating, is appropriate. Let me start with what Milton Friedman said:

A major source of objection to a free economy is precisely that it...gives people what they want instead of what a particular group thinks they ought to want. Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself.

With that as a backdrop, we need to start on the budget. Does the budget support an increased freedom? Does the budget allow the free market to grow? Does the budget actually allow Canadians to decide what they want for themselves? Or, does the budget guide them to do what a particular interest group thinks they should do? No document is perfect, but let us start to review what we know here, on where the economy is going and the history of what this government has done.

If we look at some of the fundamental markers of this budget and where it is going, we should feel fairly pleased. The deficit is projected to be approximately \$5.5 billion, but when we begin to factor in things like the contingency fund and various other possible adjustments, we are effectively at a balanced budget. Whether it technically comes out to that, plus or minus a couple of billion dollars, may not be all that important in the grander scheme, but that is effectively where we are.

### NAYS

#### Members

Andrews  
Aubin  
Bennett  
Blanchette  
Boivin  
Boulerice  
Brisson  
Casey  
Choquette  
Cleary  
Cuzner  
Davies (Vancouver East)  
Dewar  
Dionne Labelle  
Doré Lefebvre  
Dubourg  
Easter  
Fortin  
Freeman  
Garrison  
Giguère  
Groguhé  
Hsu  
Hyer  
Jones  
Kellway  
Lapointe  
Latendresse  
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
Liu  
Mai  
Martin  
Mathysen  
McGuinty  
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)  
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)  
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)  
Murray  
Nash  
Nunez-Melo  
Papillon  
Pécllet  
Quach  
Ravignat  
Regan  
Saganash

Ashton  
Bélanger  
Benskin  
Blanchette-Lamothe  
Borg  
Boutin-Sweet  
Brosseau  
Chicoine  
Christopherson  
Côté  
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
Day  
Dion  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Dusseau  
Foote  
Freeland  
Garneau  
Genest-Jourdain  
Gravelle  
Hassainia  
Hughes  
Jacob  
Julian  
Lamoureux  
Larose  
Laverdière  
Leslie  
MacAulay  
Marston  
Masse  
May  
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)  
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)  
Mourani  
Nantel  
Nicholls  
Pacetti  
Patry  
Pilon  
Rafferty  
Raynault  
Rousseau  
Scarpaleggia

*Government Orders*

When we look at where many of the provinces are and other nations that we compare ourselves to around the world are, we can feel proud of ourselves as Canadians. We have taken the fiscal discipline and the fiscal steps necessary to ensure that our bills are paid. We do not ever want to end up like some of the other countries we have seen in the world, some of the unfortunate European nations, that have essentially had their finances monitored by external bodies to ensure their economy and their finances did not completely collapse the country into complete bankruptcy. Let me give credit to the late minister of finance, and to the current Minister of Finance, for what they have done and how they are projecting us to go forward.

We look at growth in employment, something that many Canadians view as the most important statistic because it very much impacts their life. It is the fundamental economic question: Do I have a job? Is my business succeeding? We look at the period of 2006 to 2012, and we look through the G7. The management of the government is not the only thing that controls employment growth, but we should note that among the G7 countries during that period, Canada's employment growth rose by just under 9%, the best of the G7. Japan unfortunately actually lost jobs during that period, which is sad for Japan. However, Canada, among the countries we often measure ourselves against, was the best performer in a period of economic crisis around the world.

We also look at real per capita GDP. This is not GDP that has been inflated due to some inflationary growth or GDP that has been inflated due purely to population growth, because we know those two things can skew the numbers, but real per capita GDP from 2006 to 2012. Again, among the G7 countries, Canada is up 12%. That means the real economic value of what Canadians take home and of what Canadians create is growing; not just the total because we have more people, not just the notional amounts because we have changed the numbers due to inflation, but the actual wealth of Canadians has grown in the last six years. That is how it should be.

• (1225)

As technology advances, as new efficiencies come into the market, as new and better ways are learned to create growth, that is what should happen. However, none of our G7 competitors performed that well. One of our competitors in that same period due to fiscal issues, economic issues, and so on, had an 11% drop in its real per capita GDP. While we think these things are automatic and we think these things should be normative, we see throughout the world that they are not that way.

The Great Depression is something we read about in history books. I was just beginning to really understand the broader world around me when the Trudeau recession of the early eighties hit Canada. Those things are part of our history and they are aspects of our economic history that impact on Canadians' livelihoods that we do not want to repeat.

What are some of the best and most positive things that the government has done, particularly in light of the quote I gave about increasing freedom, increasing Canadians' ability to make their own decisions rather than having special interest groups dictate to people how they should live? Let us look first of all at what this government has done as far as business taxes are concerned.

Frequently, people who are not in favour of cutting business taxes criticize them because they view business taxes as a benefit to the rich, a group that they are implicitly criticizing. Business taxes are often just the first step in a tax system that goes forward, because ultimately all taxes are paid by individuals.

One of the reasons why governments have pushed to decrease business taxes is because business taxes discourage jobs and job growth. If we look at the Nordic countries, which opposition members sometimes refer to because of their perceived social democratic history, business taxes are often very low. Personal income taxes may be high in those jurisdictions but these countries have done it, along with their free trade orientation and their history of international trade, to promote business growth and job growth.

The marginal effect of rate of taxation is not just the nominal rate, but what we get when we factor in what really gets there, because there are deductions and various other ways to calculate it. Over the same 2006 to 2012 period, this government has brought that down from 33% to 17%. It is very interesting when we read the budget documents to look at it that way.

There is one other area I want to note that really helps to promote freedom and economic growth, because the two are tied together, and that is lessening the regulatory burdens.

I am sure all members of Parliament have had many constituents come into their offices, businessmen, individuals, who have had difficulties dealing with the Canada Revenue Agency. It is one of the interesting things when we start to go through the budget streamlining various aspects of dealing with the GST, HST, and other reporting requirements. These are things that are put together in this budget to help Canadians run their businesses, to have more freedom, and ultimately to have more prosperity.

I want to congratulate both the late minister of finance and the current one for taking an agenda forward that increases prosperity and freedom. Ultimately the two are linked. While no budget document is perfect, just as no member of Parliament or no government is perfect, this budget brings that forward in a positive way. It is the reason why Canada has outperformed other countries. It is the reason why we are in a period of economic growth. It is one of the things we can see that differentiates parts of the country one from another. Areas that have followed similar policies to those of this government are doing, in general, better than those that have not.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I heard another Conservative member praise this budget implementation bill. The title is rather narrowly focused as many other laws will be amended by this 475-page bill on which a guillotine has just been brought down.



I have a question for the member, who is once again praising this budget as well as previous Conservative budgets. Why has Canadians' debt continued to rise and reached a record 167% since this government came to power? How does he explain that? At the same time, the Conservatives are making ill-considered cuts to many public services to which Canadians are entitled.

In fact, they are offloading the national debt onto Canadians. Canadians have a debt level of 167%. How will this budget tackle Canadians' record debt of 167%?

[English]

**Mr. Brad Trost:** Mr. Speaker, I think I will just state the obvious. When interest rates are low and the cost to borrow money is low, things that people want to buy tend to increase. With low interest rates, people tend to take on greater debt burdens because the cost of repayment is lower.

That answers the member's questions.

What this government has been doing, giving more freedom to people by cutting taxes, by increasing their income, by attempting to eliminate unnecessary regulatory burden, has no connection to the fact that Canadians can even get a 1.99% mortgage now. Whether or not it is wise for the individual Canadian to actually take that mortgage is for him or her to decide.

However, with those types of rates, I can see why many Canadians are increasing their leverage to try to go out there and to make decisions that would help their own personal financial futures.

•(1235)

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that Canadians will have listened with interest to the remarks from the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

However, just to accompany those remarks, I think Canadians also should know that I think the member's view of history is a bit coloured. He referred to the “Trudeau recession” in the early 1980s, but I think he will know that what happened was that in the United States the federal reserve chairman, Paul Volcker, decided to deal with inflation by targeting the total amount of money in the economy instead of targeting interest rates. That resulted in a sharp rise in interest rates. The prime rate got up to something like 21% in the United States, and in other countries as well, because the currencies are linked, and there was a very sharp contraction in the economy in the United States. That was the cause of the recession.

I know the member is trying to pin it on the Liberal Party. The Conservatives might as well pin all of Canada on the Liberal Party because they go back in history so often to do that, instead of looking forward and trying to decide what to do.

I just want Canadians to be aware that the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, as sincere as he is, is making partisan remarks and his speech should be looked at carefully and analyzed with that in mind.

**Mr. Brad Trost:** Mr. Speaker, as someone who has endorsed policies of the Laurier Liberals, I can hardly be considered purely partisan in my interpretation of history.

I will note, for the hon. member's benefit, that calculations of what the Pierre Trudeau government did in that era include the national energy program, which from some calculations I have seen, cost

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Alberta \$100 billion and my province of Saskatchewan approximately \$10 billion.

While it is true the interest rates spike in the United States had impacts, there were other things that were done, which devastated the economy in other parts of the country; in particular, western Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is the second time that I have had the opportunity to speak to another omnibus bill. What most concerned me the first time was the famous Champlain Bridge, an issue on which little progress has been made.

Believe it or not, this bill contains some provisions that are very important to the greater Montreal area, especially to the people in my riding of Chambly—Borduas.

Having said that, the last time I spoke to Bill C-31, we focused on the fact that the bill was eliminating the government's responsibility to comply with the User Fees Act, consult Canadians and ensure that a future toll follows the guidelines in order not to create problems or put further pressure on the economy. At present, this is the problem we see: people living on the south shore and in Montreal are being asked to pay for infrastructure that already exists.

At the end of the day, the major issue with the bridge in this bill and in the changes made is the toll being imposed, as my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie often says. All the elected officials, business people and residents feel that the Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs was either unable to consult the public or simply did not want to do so. This still has not been done.

Since I last spoke to Bill C-31, we have been able to mobilize hundreds of volunteers on the south shore and collect thousands of signatures from people who are against this toll. A day of action was held on May 3. That was really an opportunity for us to see the extent to which people in the region, like many Quebeckers in fact, feel that they are being treated with contempt by the Conservative government. This is a very good example of the government's contempt.

The Prime Minister rises in the House to say that it is a local bridge and it is too bad if there are no consultations. In reality, I believe that over 14% of Quebec's GDP is based on the ability to cross the Champlain Bridge. Billions of dollars of economic activity are at stake. This bridge is by no means a local bridge. When we consider the economic issue and the importance of the greater Montreal area, I think it is very important to show respect to the public, the elected officials and the business community.

It is no coincidence that the mayor of Montreal, Denis Coderre, the mayor of Longueuil, Caroline St-Hilaire, and the mayor of Chambly, in my riding, Denis Lavoie, have spoken out against this bill, together with chambers of commerce and the public.

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We feel that this problem is symptomatic of the Conservative government's contempt for Quebec, but often also for various jurisdictions, in its discussions with the provinces and its dealings with the municipalities.

That being said, the government is demonstrating a clear lack of vision when it comes to the Champlain Bridge. I had the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. When we heard from witnesses from Transport Canada, namely those responsible for the project, we asked them questions about the terms and conditions set out in Bill C-31 because that was the topic on the agenda that day. They told us that the terms and conditions served to speed up the process. They did not want the Champlain Bridge to be subject to the User Fees Act because they wanted to speed up the process.

As we know the minister postponed the deadline, which is somewhat problematic given that the government does not seem to have done much and seems incapable of proposing a real business plan.

I have family friends and constituents who use the bridge every day. Given the safety issues at play here, everyone in the House would agree that a new bridge is needed ASAP, as we say.

● (1240)

The government is neglecting its obligation to consult in order to speed up the process, but it is unable to say how much time that will buy and what difference it will make. The government claims to be eliminating legal uncertainty in order to make the process faster, but how much faster? Will this buy us days, weeks, months? The government cannot tell us. This shows once again the government's lack of transparency, rigour and consultation in this matter.

The government's lack of consultation or failure to do its homework is another problem. Take for example, the regional impact study that was conducted by the Government of Quebec's department of transport. It is extremely important to determine what impact the new bridge will have on the other bridges, which do not fall under federal jurisdiction, and on traffic in the greater Montreal area, whether it be on the island itself or on the south shore. After all, if there is a toll on one bridge but not on the others, it is safe to assume that this will have an impact on which bridges people use. The report published by the Government of Quebec makes that very clear.

In committee, we asked the witnesses whether the federal government had carried out such a study. The federal government has been talking about this issue and working on it for a long time, since before the 2011 election. After all, this bridge is under federal jurisdiction. However, the federal government does not seem to be as aware as the Government of Quebec about the repercussions of a toll on the region. Once again, that says a lot about the government's failings and sloppiness. We will continue to oppose a toll, and we will do so in an accountable and transparent way by consulting the people, of course.

I would like to touch on another important aspect of Bill C-31. This is yet another issue that does not really belong in a budget implementation bill, but it is very important to my constituents. I am talking about rail safety. Bill C-31 contains provisions relating to rail

safety that give even more discretionary power to the Governor in Council, the cabinet, and the minister. That really worries me.

In the wake of tragedies such as the one at Lac-Mégantic, people have been demanding more transparency and more information about the dangerous goods being transported through their regions. What regulations is the government making, and how will they affect our communities? A railway goes right through the heart of my riding, through residential neighbourhoods, and past several schools, including Otterburn Park, where my mother teaches. We know how important transparency is to reassuring people. People want to feel safe. That should be the government's primary concern. Giving cabinet, the Governor in Council, and the minister more discretionary powers and letting them make decisions without informing the public in a transparent way goes against that principle and does little to reassure people.

There is much more I could say. This budget implementation bill includes two transportation files, and that speaks volumes about the shortcomings in the process. The government has used this bogus process many times since it came to power. There are many other components that will affect the people of Chambly—Borduas, but those are two key concerns for my constituents. We will continue with our demands on these issues.

That is why we are opposing omnibus Bill C-31, which is also known as an “omnibrick” bill. As the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard said, it is 400 pages long. We are wondering how many hundreds of pages it will be next year and the year after that. We hope that this will be the last time but, unfortunately, the government is not giving us many reasons to trust its approach. We will continue to oppose the way this government does business.

● (1245)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the member's comments on the size of the budget bill.

Since the government has achieved its majority status, it has used budget implementation bills as a mechanism to pass a series of other pieces of legislation that should have been, for all intents and purposes, stand-alone legislation.

We are talking about hundreds and hundreds of pages over the years. Literally dozens of different laws have all been passed through a budget implementation bill when they should have been separate pieces of legislation. In its entirety, it is almost a session's worth of legislation that could have been brought forward as stand-alone pieces.

To compound it that much more, in terms of making it worse, the government then invoked time allocation. It is time allocation on a budget implementation bill that has many other pieces of legislation within it.

I wonder if the member might provide further comment in regard to time allocation on a budget implementation bill that already factors in numerous pieces of what should be stand-alone pieces of legislation.

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[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and his question.

True, it is not just the size of the bill that is problematic. In 2012, the government introduced Bill C-38 and a number of other omnibus bills totalling thousands of pages. The following year, the government was practically boasting about how the omnibus bill was smaller and contained only a few hundred pages.

It is not so much the size of the bill that we are concerned about, but rather its content. It is absurd that I should be making a 10-minute speech about transportation in my riding as part of our consideration of a budget implementation bill. There is a major problem here.

The members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities discussed the Champlain Bridge, among other issues. Even though the various elements of the bill are considered by the committees responsible for them, the process will not be as comprehensive as it would be if they were studied as separate bills. This is very unfortunate.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with my colleague from Chambly—Borduas that railway safety has nothing to do with a budget implementation bill.

However, because it is in the bill, I would like to ask his opinion about trains carrying hazardous materials in municipalities. Municipalities will not be able to find out whether a train was carrying hazardous materials until three months after it has passed through the area. Municipalities cannot therefore be prepared for any eventuality.

What does my colleague think about this?

• (1250)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

As I mentioned in my speech, this shows the extent to which the lack of transparency is at the heart of the demands of Canadians, municipal officials and the people who live in municipalities like mine where there is a railway.

With regard to information provided to the municipalities, the fact that there is such a long delay before they can receive up-to-date information really does nothing to help them properly prepare in terms of their emergency plans and their prevention plans.

Beyond this, however, and at the heart of this issue, we are dealing with the residents' feeling of security. The primary duty of the government is to ensure the safety of its people. If people do not feel they are safe, the government is not really doing its job.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech. He mentioned the Champlain Bridge and railway safety, two very important subjects.

He also highlighted the government's lack of transparency. It is exactly this kind of budget that illustrates this lack of transparency, especially with issues such as the Champlain Bridge. The government wants to make Canadians pay not only for the cost of using the Champlain Bridge, but also the cost of our airports, by

imposing all kinds of taxes and hidden costs. Ultimately, Canadians will be hit twice to use the airports or the bridges to which they are entitled.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

The government is trying to hide different measures in its omnibus bills in all sorts of ways. The last time, it tried to change the judicial appointment process, because of the fiasco with the appointment of Justice Nadon. This time, it is trying to change the rules of the game regarding public consultation about tolls on the Champlain Bridge. There is also the issue of railway safety, that we have just been talking about. There are all kinds of other things that are hidden.

This is really a shame, because it could be said that the government is using the bill to hide measures that are not consistent with the pretty picture of the perfect manager that it is trying to build for itself or with the spirit of good governance that it boasts about and that obviously does not exist. This bill is a good example of that.

[English]

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my absolute pleasure to speak to Bill C-31, the budget implementation bill.

A solid middle class is the foundation of Canada's economy. Middle-class Canadians are the glue that binds our society together, and we recognize that our country can only be as strong as its middle class.

Fortunately, Canada's middle class has seen increases of about 30% in their take-home income since 1976, and the share of Canadians living in lower-income families is now at its lowest level in the past three decades.

A recent Statistics Canada study has revealed that since our Conservative government has taken office, the middle class has flourished significantly. I quote:

The median net worth of Canadian family units was \$243,800 in 2012, up 44.5% from 2005 and almost 80% more than the 1999 median of \$137,000, adjusted for inflation.

Another study, this one from *The New York Times* indicated that Canada's middle class is better off financially than that of the U.S. I quote:

After-tax middle-class incomes in Canada—substantially behind in 2000—now appear to be higher than in the United States.

Further, since 2006, Canadian families in all major income groups have seen increases of about 10% or more in their take-home incomes.

It may be hard for the opposition to believe, but even the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirms that our government has put \$30 billion of tax relief back into Canadian pockets annually, benefiting low-income and middle-income families the most.

This is great news for Canada, and it reflects our government's careful navigation through the worst global economic downturn since the start of the Second World War.

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Since the beginning of the recovery, Canada's economy has posted one of the strongest job creation records in the G7, with more than one million net new jobs created since the depths of July 2009.

At a time when other countries' financial systems were brought to the brink of bankruptcy, Canada's banks remained the soundest in the world. When other countries increased taxes, we kept taxes at record lows, and the federal tax burden is the lowest it has been in over 50 years, thanks to our tax plan.

Since 2006, Canadians have benefited from significant broad-based tax cuts introduced by our government. These tax cuts, which the opposition voted against time and time again, have given individuals and families the flexibility to make the choices that are right for them and have built solid foundations for our future economic growth, more jobs, and a higher living standard for Canadians.

Canadians at all income levels are benefiting from tax relief, with the low- and middle-income Canadians receiving proportionately greater relief.

In 2014, an average family of four is saving close to \$3,400 in taxes, while one million Canadians have been removed from the tax rolls altogether. Unlike the high-tax NDP and Liberals, our government believes in keeping more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families.

That is why we cut the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%. It is why we increased the amount Canadians can earn tax-free. It is why we reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, putting more than \$1,000 back in the pockets of an average family of four in 2014. We established the landmark tax-free savings account, the most significant advance in the tax treatment of personal savings since the introduction of RRSPs in 1957.

In addition, we introduced a variety of tax credits that recognize the costs borne by hard-working Canadian families. These credits include the child tax credit, the children's fitness tax credit, the children's arts tax credit, the family caregiver tax credit, and the first-time homebuyers' tax credit.

• (1255)

As a parent, I believe there is no higher calling than that of raising a child, and no reward is its equal. Canadians who have children deserve the government's full support, particularly when it comes to recognizing some of the additional costs borne by adoptive parents.

We heard parents' concerns that the adoption expense tax credit was not sufficient. That is why in economic action plan 2014 our government acted by enhancing the tax credit to support these parents even more. By better recognizing the costs of adoption through increased tax relief, we are making it easier for middle-class families to grow and to make Canada stronger.

At the same time, our government is committed to ensuring that the tax system reflects the evolving nature of the health care system and the health care needs of Canadians. We all use the health care system and we all want it to remain strong and sustainable so that it will be there for Canadians when they need it. Under our government, health care transfers are at an all time high, going from over \$20 billion when we formed government to over \$32

billion this year, and growing. Unlike the old Liberal government, we have not cut funding to provinces for health care and education.

I find it comical when we hear that the Liberals cut the deficit. Well, we are doing that too, but they did it on the backs of education and health care. We are doing it in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Similarly, health care transfers will also grow under our funding formula, and in a sensible and sustainable way. We will keep growing health care funding to ensure Canadian families can depend on our health care system today and in the future.

Moreover, we recognize there are external health care costs that Canadians have been paying for out of pocket, such as service animals. For example, in the case of severe diabetes, alerts can be raised by diabetes alert dogs. That is why Bill C-31 has proposed an expansion of the list of eligible medical expenses. These important measures are just a handful of examples illustrating how we have responded to the needs of Canadian families and helped Canadians keep more of their hard-earned money.

Perhaps one of the most profound ways we are helping middle-class Canadians is by making sure future generations will not be paying for the past obligations of their parents and grandparents. We are doing so by returning to balanced budgets in 2015. In fact, that was one of my key motivations when I decided to run for the Conservative Party of Canada: I do not want our children's futures mortgaged.

Unlike the Liberal leader, who believes that the budget will magically balance itself, our government has made tough decisions to return to balance, and we have never wavered from our objective. In fact, I am reminded of how my husband and I sat down and talked about the importance of paying off our mortgage when we were younger. We needed to make tough choices. In the same way the government is doing now, we made responsible choices. The result is that we have no mortgage. The Government of Canada is doing that for future generations right now, and I am so proud of the work that is being done. By eliminating the deficit, we will ensure solid, stable prosperity for all Canadians well into the future.

Indeed, balancing the budget and reducing debt would ensure taxpayer dollars are used to support important social services, such as health care, rather than to pay to reduce the debt with interest costs. It would preserve Canada's low-tax plan and allow for further tax reductions, fostering growth and the creation of jobs for the benefit of all Canadians. It would also strengthen the country's ability to respond to longer-term challenges, such as population aging and unexpected global economic shocks of the kind our government so successfully withstood in the recent economic crisis.

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Our government understands the importance of middle-class Canadians. As our actions have shown, we listened. We have ensured a middle class for our country that will continue to lead the world.

I am very proud of Bill C-31. I am very proud of our government's responsible approach to deficit reduction. It is a measured and responsible approach. I sincerely hope that we can engage the opposition to support this very important budget implementation bill.

• (1300)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the implementation of FATCA would have serious implications on children in the member's riding.

The implementation of FATCA, according to James Jatras, who was a former U.S. diplomat, would have the purpose of nullifying Canadian protections under the Bank Act, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, otherwise known as PIPEDA, the Canadian human rights code and, especially, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

These people are not just resident Americans. At least a million of them are Canadian citizens. Many of them live in her riding.

Claims that the personal data of Canadians would not be forwarded to the NSA and other intelligence agencies are laughable. Some of those persons are children.

What would the member opposite like to suggest? The bill somehow does not protect the safety, security and personal information of these people, including children.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate that the member understands that our budget implementation bill is there to protect all Canadians, including children.

The best way to ensure we have a prosperous tomorrow is to ensure we pay the debt down today. That is the number one priority in this budget implementation bill.

As a mother of two children, a 22-year-old and a 16-year-old, I am very grateful that the Conservative government is contributing to ensuring their futures are not mortgaged.

• (1305)

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting response to the last comment.

It is not always the case that if people need to get a post-secondary education, they should delay it. Sometimes the right thing for people to do is to borrow some money and get that education so they can have that earning potential and quality of life.

My colleague from the Conservative Party said that there was no higher calling than raising children. I agree with that, but the problem is that many Canadians are struggling to raise their children because of their income level. The tax credits that my Conservative colleague mentioned are just that, tax credits. They are not refundable. People have to be making a good amount of taxable income to benefit from those tax credits.

If raising children is so important, and even more important for people at the lower end of the income scale who are aspiring to reach

the middle class, why can we not make some of those tax credits refundable?

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, as the mother of two children. I will confirm that there is no higher calling than helping the next generation.

I happen to have a son who is in university. He knows that he is investing in his future. He does not expect it to be handed to him on a silver platter with a spoon to match. He expects to work hard every summer. He expects to work and volunteer in the community during the winter. He also expects to have a bit of a debt load when he comes out of university.

He also expects that there will not be magic to balance the budget. He expects that he will be working hard to pay his debt load down as he becomes employable and gets good jobs. It is important for us to impart on our children that they are needed as a part of solving the problems of the future.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre. I have the honour of serving in the Manitoba caucus with her, and I consider her one of the brightest and most talented MPs in the entire House.

I, too, am very proud to be a Conservative member of Parliament. We are the only party that talks about the need to create wealth. As for the two parties on the other side, the left and the far left, their economic policies can be summed up in three words: spend, spend, spend. We need to have something to spend.

Could my hon. colleague please comment on the measures in our budget that would help to grow our Canadian economy?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, a short response, please.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, a short response?

[*Translation*]

This is unfortunate, because there are a lot of things in our budget.

[*English*]

I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments and particularly for his kind remarks. We are kindred spirits. I believe that we want to invest in a future so we will enable people to assist Canada in creating wealth and being the country of the 21st century.

That is my hope for my children. That is my hope for all children coming up.

The member's comments are so important. It is not about a handout; it is about a hand up. We are helping the next generation so it can prosper long into the future through jobs and economic growth.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last February, I gave a speech after the tabling of the 2014-15 Conservative budget. I told my colleagues in this House about my concerns with regard to the issues of housing for the homeless and infrastructures. Now I think I am going to be repeating myself.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-31 contains no proposals about community access to the Building Canada fund, and this is a huge flaw in a budget implementation bill. However, rather than repeating exactly the same thing that I have been saying about all the Conservative budgets, I would like to quote the people who are the most deeply affected by the government's poor decisions.

First I would like to put things in context. In the 2013-14 budget, \$14 billion over 10 years was announced for the creation of the new Building Canada fund. When the 2014-15 budget was tabled, one year later, we still did not know how to submit projects for the fund. It is always the same thing with the Conservatives: they pat themselves on the back when telling us about new programs, but always wait until the last minute before telling us any details about them.

Meanwhile, groups, other levels of government and the people who should be using these programs are worried about the possibility of breaks in funding, potential layoffs or construction seasons that are being threatened.

That being said, almost a year after the announcement of the new Building Canada fund, on February 13, 2014, the details were finally announced. However, when you look into what is happening at the municipal level and the positions taken by a number of mayors, it seems that the government failed to consult the municipalities before announcing the details of the new program.

I do not understand this. Every time he is asked a question, the Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs spends his time giving us the same talking points: the municipalities have been consulted at every step in the design of the new Building Canada fund.

The Canadian Federation of Municipalities has in fact had an opportunity to make submissions on the broad lines of the new infrastructure program, but has the federation really been consulted on the details? The answer is no, and those are the facts.

The Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs is always quoting the same statement by the immediate past president of the FCM, Claude Dauphin, to show that the municipalities were pleased with the announcement the government made on February 13, 2014. Clearly, they were pleased. They had been waiting for a year to get more details. The problem is that the minister did not read to the end of Mayor Dauphin's statement.

He went on to say:

However, important questions remain about how the rest of the New Building Canada Fund will be used to meet local needs.

Municipalities own a significant majority of public infrastructure [about 60%] and, for a fund that will span the next decade, we must be sure that it is used accordingly. This is the only way to ensure that local governments can address infrastructure challenges in their communities. We are also concerned by rule changes that could force municipalities to carry a larger share of infrastructure costs in the future, the eligibility rules for local roads, the screening process for projects structured as public/private partnerships (P3s).

There are 45 days before April 1 when the municipal construction season begins. The federal government needs to work with FCM on details of the New Building Canada Fund...to [ensure that] it delivers the best value for Canadians.

It is rather strange that the minister is telling us that he consulted the FCM, when the very day the details of the new program were announced, the president of the FCM asked the government to work with the organization to review the criteria. Did the minister hear that plea from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities? Once again, the answer is no, and the evidence is mounting.

**An hon. member:** He does not listen.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** No, Mr. Speaker, he does not listen.

Less than two weeks later, on February 26, 2014, the mayors of 22 of the biggest cities in Canada met in Ottawa. These cities alone represent 65% of the population of Canada.

As he left the meeting, Régis Labeaume, the mayor of Quebec City, stated:

My colleagues, not just those from Quebec, but everyone around the table, support us in calling on the federal government to make recreational and sports infrastructure once again eligible for the program. [Both the UMQ and the FCM agree.] We are asking the government to listen to us a little bit...

The day before, the president of the Union des municipalités du Québec and mayor of Rimouski, Éric Forest, was very direct in his comments about the new Building Canada fund. He believed, in good faith, that the new fund would continue to provide one-third of the funding for recreational and sports infrastructure, as the previous program did. However, that is not the case.

● (1310)

I quote:

When they got down to work in 2008 [when he says "they", he means the Conservative government], we delivered infrastructure projects to help with the economic recovery. It is crystal clear that we spent money in anticipation of receiving funding. We went deeper into debt. If we were not there, who was going to do the work? We are currently out of breath, and we need that oxygen. However, they are slamming the door in our faces.

A few hours later, Richard Lehoux, the president of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités, said:

The federal government fanned the flames by refusing to allow the municipalities to use the amounts provided for in the building Canada fund for sports facilities. The municipalities need flexibility. We know our needs, and so we are in the best position to know how the investments should be used.

I would not dare suggest in the House that the minister was not telling the truth, but perhaps he twisted the facts.

The new Building Canada plan is supposed to be the biggest infrastructure program in Canada's history.

When the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the mayors of Canada's 22 largest cities, the Union des municipalités du Québec and the Fédération québécoise des municipalités say that they are unhappy and are surprised by the announced details of the program, which is supposed to address an infrastructure deficit in the country, I think there is something that is not working.

The municipalities hold more than 60% of the public infrastructure in Canada. However, did this outcry wake up the minister? The answer is still no.

*Government Orders*

I just came back from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' annual conference in Niagara Falls, which ended last Monday. Do you know what the delegates wanted to talk to me and my colleagues about? The criteria for the new Building Canada fund. They also came to talk to me at length about the issue of housing, but I will keep that for another discussion and another minister.

I would like to bring my colleagues up to speed on municipal news from the past few days. Just to provide a bit of context, when we asked him when he would unveil the details of the new infrastructure program and about municipalities' fears of losing the construction season if they did not know how to apply, the minister told us that negotiations were proceeding well and that the details would be available by April 1.

However, on May 9, more than one month after the start of the construction season and the implementation of the new infrastructure program, the past president of the FCM, Claude Dauphin, said:

● (1315)

[English]

We're still in the dark. None of our members can apply because we don't know how to apply...To tell the truth, we're a little bit worried. We cannot afford to lose an entire construction season...

[Translation]

In other words, the money is there, but they still do not know how to access it. It was expected that construction work would be under way already, but that does not seem to be the case.

This is the last quote I would like to share, because if I were to quote every elected official who has weighed in with the media in recent weeks, we could miss question period.

This time I will quote someone from this area, the mayor of Gatineau, Maxime Pedneaud-Jobin, who was attending the FCM annual conference. This quote is from the June 2, 2014, issue of *Le Droit*:

He pointed out that the City of Gatineau must make significant investments in many infrastructure projects such as roads, water filtration plants, libraries and arenas.

[According to him,] a city cannot manage all this with just property taxes...The Maison du citoyen renovations alone will cost \$12 million....Ottawa and Quebec City have to be part of the solution.

Those are the facts, and I have spoken only about infrastructure today. I heard the same story at the FCM convention about the funding for social housing.

We will strongly oppose this bill because it fails our communities.

Our leader, the member for Outremont, was actually warmly received at this convention with his credible partnership offer for Canadian municipalities. The municipalities are now even more aware of which party they must turn to in 2015 to advance their priorities.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekends, most of us return to our home constituencies and are often afforded the opportunity to take a little time to drive or walk around our constituencies. Quite often when we do that, we get a good sense of the infrastructure, whether it is the condition of the sidewalks, roads or community centres. There is a list of things that

one could easily come up with to improve our social and structural infrastructure.

We have seen infrastructure expenditures to the degree where the federal government does get involved, such as Forks development, North Portage Place, Kenaston underpass and so many other projects. The member made reference to this. For many of these communities to get the infrastructure, or to get some of these larger projects off the ground they need Ottawa to participate.

Would the member like to take the opportunity to reaffirm how important it is that Ottawa get involved on this file?

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, of course Ottawa needs to be involved in this file. Municipalities cannot afford to raise taxes. Let me give one example.

● (1320)

[Translation]

The maximum federal contribution has been set at 30% under the Building Canada fund. In the past, municipalities could draw one-third of their infrastructure costs from the Building Canada fund, one-third from the gas tax and one-third from the provincial government. That is no longer the case. Now, the maximum federal contribution for a project will be one-third. As a result, municipalities, which have 60% of the infrastructure in Canada, will have to raise taxes or get the money from somewhere.

I am also very concerned about the fact that much of our infrastructure is crumbling. We have an infrastructure maintenance deficit. Despite that, \$6 billion from the previous Building Canada fund has not been spent. Why is that?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said that local governments cannot raise taxes. Where is the money going to come from?

We have also heard that the NDP supports a carbon tax, which would dramatically increase the cost of heating fuel and fuel to drive cars and whatnot. Is that where this extra money is going to come from?

She said she wants the federal government to participate. For 14 years I was in local government. I remember in the 1990s when the NDP cut billions of dollars in transfers for social programs and education, all the programs. There was no one-third, one-third, one-third. It was zero from the federal government. Under this government, there is the permanent gas tax, which we have never cut in that respect. We are also participating.

Where is the money going to come from? Is it going to come from natural resource royalties? Where is the money going to come from? Other than the carbon tax, which we do not support, where is the money going to come from?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, the money is already there. Municipalities used to be able to use the gas tax in addition to the Building Canada fund. Why can they no longer do so now?

*Government Orders*

Since we are talking about a lack of investment, I will talk a bit about housing. The end of the social housing agreements means that the federal government is cutting \$1.7 billion at the expense of the people who need it most, the people living in social housing units.

How does my colleague explain those cuts?

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague just spoke to the issue of social housing.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities studied some aspects of this bill during a meeting. However, it was unable to hear from anyone other than people from the department.

Could my colleague talk about how beneficial it would have been to hear what people with varying expertise had to say about certain aspects of this bill?

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that is what we get with omnibus bills. The government changes 60 laws and gives us only one hour to talk about housing, which is the foundation of so many things, including people's health. Only one witness was called. This is absolutely ridiculous.

If the government was asked to vote on a bill that brought back the gun registry, something it opposes, but that also included harsher sentences for criminals, something it supports, would it vote in favour of that bill? That is exactly what the government is asking us to do. What is more, it is reducing our speaking time and we hardly have any time to speak in committee. This is not democracy.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to represent beautiful Langley, British Columbia, and to have the opportunity to speak briefly to the many strengths of Canada's new economic action plan 2014.

I would like to begin my comments by reflecting on what I have heard from the NDP. I was shocked, maybe I should not have been, that it does not want us to balance our budget. It wants us to continue all the different programs that have reached the end of their lives. They want to continue deficit spending. That is not what Canadians want.

We will continue to work hard creating jobs and an environment where the economy can grow and we can balance the priorities of Canadians.

I would like to highlight the important contribution that our natural resources, forestry, and agriculture make to the Canadian economy, which is a pillar of our government's economic action plan. These sectors create jobs and prosperity, particularly in rural communities across Canada.

For example, consider Canada's natural resources sector. This sector represents 18% of the economy and over half of our exports. It supports 1.8 million jobs directly and indirectly. That is where a large percentage of the money for programs is coming from. Furthermore, it generates over \$30 billion annually in revenues to governments, which is equal to approximately half of all spending in hospitals in Canada in 2013.

There are hundreds of natural resources projects under way or planned in Canada over the next 10 years, representing a total potential investment of \$650 billion. That is huge.

A significant element of this economic boost is represented by Canada's unique oil sands industry. This sector is an asset that will increasingly contribute to the prosperity of all Canadians, including the programs that the opposition NDP and Liberal parties want but do not want to pay for.

The oil sands is among the world's largest technological projects, contributing about 275,000 jobs across Canada and \$48 billion in GDP, numbers that could grow to an average of 630,000 jobs and a contribution of \$113 billion in GDP per year by 2035. That is huge. This is due to an increasing global demand for resources, particularly from the emerging economies.

Increasing global demand for resources like our oil, particularly from emerging economies, will create new economic and job opportunities from which all Canadians will benefit. However, Canadians will only reap the benefits that come from our natural resources once investments are made by the private sector to bring these much-needed resources to market.

Approval processes can be long and unpredictable. Delays and red tape often plague projects that pose few environmental risks. That is why our government has worked hard since 2006 to streamline and improve the regulatory process while safeguarding and protecting the environment.

A modern regulatory system should support progress on economically viable major economic projects and should sustain Canada's reputation as an attractive place to invest. That is why, as part of Canada's economic action plan, we are modernizing the federal regulatory system by establishing clear timelines, reducing duplication and regulatory burdens, and focusing resources on large projects where the potential environmental impacts are the greatest. That makes sense.

For example, we are implementing system-wide improvements to achieve the goal of one project, one review within clearly defined time periods.

In addition, we have invested \$54 million over two years to support more effective project approvals through the major projects management office initiative. In our most recent budget, we announced \$28 million over two years for the National Energy Board for comprehensive and timely reviews of applications and to support the participant funding program. We have also eliminated tariffs on mobile offshore drilling units used in offshore oil and gas exploration and development.



*Government Orders*

• (1325)

We also announced an extension of the mineral exploration tax credit to March 31, 2015. This credit helps the junior exploration companies raise capital by providing an incentive to individuals who invest in flow-through shares issued to finance mineral exploration. The credit is in addition to the regular deduction provided for the exploration expenses flowed through from the issuing company. Since 2006, this measure has helped junior mining companies raise over \$5 billion for exploration. Promoting the exploration of Canada's rich mineral resources by junior mining companies offers important benefits in terms of job creation and economic development across Canada, including in rural and northern communities.

Our government has also amended the Coasting Trade Act to improve access to modern, reliable seismic data for offshore resource development. Since 2004, mobile offshore drilling units used in oil and gas exploration and development have been permitted to be temporarily imported into Canada on a duty-free basis under the Mobile Offshore Drilling Limits Remission Order. This remission order was extended in 2009 for another five years and was set to expire in May 2014.

Economic action plan 2014 proposes to eliminate the 20% most-favoured-nation rate of duty on imported mobile offshore drilling units. This measure would permanently eliminate the disincentive for exploration leading to oil and gas discoveries in offshore Atlantic and Arctic regions and would create a level playing field with other major oil and gas countries competing for offshore petroleum industry investment.

Offshore oil and gas developments create jobs and support economic growth in Canadian communities. Continued exploration activity is required to bring new projects to communities and to sustain these economic benefits over a long term. However, it depends on modern, reliable seismic technology and data. That is why amending the act would ensure that companies have the information they need to identify potential resource development opportunities.

In addition to supporting responsible resource development, we must not forget the important contribution our forestry sector makes to our country. Canada's forestry sector directly employs over 200,000 workers in all regions of the country, including in 200 communities that rely on the sector for at least 50% of their economic base. Our government has helped keep this vital industry strong. The investments in the forestry industry transformation program, introduced in budget 2010, has been successful in enabling Canadian forestry companies to lead the world in demonstrating the viability of innovative technologies that improve efficiencies, reduce environmental impacts, and create high-value products for Canada's world-class forestry resources. Through programs like the IFIT, we have seen an over 1,000% increase in exports to China, which has helped the sector weather the economic downturn in the U.S. Economic action plan 2014 would build on this success by providing \$90.1 million over four years, starting in 2014-15, to renew the IFIT program. Our government will continue to work with the forestry sector as it invests in innovative new products and pursues new markets for Canadian forest products.

Finally, the last topic I would like to highlight is our support for the agriculture and agri-food sector. The agricultural and agri-food sector in Canada accounts for over \$100 billion in economic activity and provides employment for over 2.1 million Canadians.

Langley is an environmentally friendly community, but agriculture is also very important. I invite all members during the upcoming summer to spend some time out in beautiful Langley, British Columbia. Also, I encourage all members in this House to support Canada's economic plan. It creates jobs, it creates prosperity, and it is the right thing to do.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during second reading of this bill, I asked a very simple question about something my constituents of Beauport—Limoilou are concerned about.

There is a palpable sense of insecurity among parents of primary, secondary and college students. There are four schools along the railway. It is a very busy line that is used to transport potentially dangerous materials from the Port of Québec to the rest of Canada and even the United States.

Bill C-31 provides for certain amendments that will allow cabinet to make decisions on rail safety in total secrecy, and I do not accept that.

How can my colleague accept this secrecy?

• (1335)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic rail disaster in Quebec. This government and the minister are doing an incredible job in dealing with those important issues.

I am really shocked again that the NDP is using its delay tactics. Our government wants to take action because we are a government that gets things done. We make sure that the rails are safe for Canadians.

I would ask the member across the way to work with our government and that his party not to attack and delay. Delay means putting off what Canada needs in terms of safety in our rail system. The NDP is trying to delay that, and that is not what Canadians want.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I hope to be following the member with my speech. I do have a question for him with respect to the process, because I plan on spending a bit of time on it in my speech.

*Government Orders*

The government is trying to sneak through, via the back door of a budget implementation bill, serious changes to a wide spectrum of other pieces of legislation that should have been and could have been stand-alone pieces of legislation. The government has invoked time allocation on this important budget bill, thereby limiting the amount of time members of Parliament will have to speak to it.

I am wondering if my colleague could explain why the majority Conservative government is using such mechanisms to pass laws, mechanisms that not only abuse the rules but are not in the best interests of Canadians.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Speaker, the former Liberal government had a reputation of not getting things done because it would do too much studying, and I think of the Sydney tar ponds, formerly the dirtiest, most contaminated site in Canada. It was studied many times. Within months of our becoming government in 2006, I had the honour of going there and announcing that we were going to clean it up. Now it is a beautiful park. It is a beautiful site.

This is a government that gets things done. We do not delay as the former Liberal government did or as the opposition wants us to do. We get things done.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the key items that has been discussed little in this Parliament with respect to Bill C-31 is the increase in the cap of the adoption expenses tax credit. In our last budget we recognized that some 30,000 Canadian children are adoptable but are not being adopted.

I wonder if the member could comment briefly on the importance of not only the last budget wherein we increased the number of eligible expenses but also this budget in which we have increased the tax credit itself to cover more of those expenses.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank that member for his work in raising this issue. For many Canadians he is a role model for adoption, with his love for children and his big heart.

This government values family. As I said before, we get things done. We do not just talk the talk; we walk the walk.

This is another example, showing in tangible ways how we support families, including adoption.

I would like to thank that member for all the work he has done on that file.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was not digging for a compliment, but I appreciate it. I was simply looking to increase the visibility of adoption as an issue in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on Bill C-31, our government's budget implementation act, to speak about the importance of the budget that we put forward for Canadians. Obviously, we are focused, as a government, on the economy, creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians. We do have the strongest job creation record of any country in the G7, with over a million net new jobs, with over 85% of those being full time and in the private sector. I am proud of our government's record.

We have been able to keep taxes low while we are growing the economy, maintaining or increasing transfers to our provinces on an ongoing basis. That was not the Liberal record back in the 1990s, where the taxes went up and the transfers went down. We have been able to do both and grow the economy.

We have also made difficult decisions. Budgets do not balance themselves. They do take time, especially post-recession. To bring the government's budget back into balance, it takes some tough decisions. We have been making them. We are on track to balance the budget. That is good news for Canadians because ongoing structural deficits, like those they have in Ontario, lead to tomorrow's taxes. We do not want to see that situation. That is bad for the economy. In fact, our tax increases save the average Canadian family about \$3,400 a year, and that is very good.

Obviously, we recognize that for economic recovery the outlook remains fragile, when we are looking globally at the G20 and beyond. Growth among these countries continues to be uneven, as it is here in Canada. We must continue to do more. That is why this budget and the implementation act become very important to us.

I do want to highlight a few of the items that I think were really critical, with respect to what the government is doing on its budget, including the significant investments in a new international crossing between Windsor and Detroit. We put \$631 million down over the next two years as cash to begin to really accelerate projects to bring that into reality.

We heard recently that the Coast Guard in the United States, only yesterday or the day before, gave the final permit for that bridge to move ahead.

Obviously, we would have a binational authority to oversee the project, which would be populated with important Canadians and Americans, to move that project forward. We look forward to that development.

That initiative, though, would build upon the tremendous record of this government, beginning back in 2006, with the gateways and border crossings fund, with a significant down payment in 2007 on what is now the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway. That was a \$400-million down payment. There were investments to begin purchasing land on the Canadian side of the border for a plaza, a customs inspection plaza, connecting to that Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway. There was the Bridge to Strengthen Trade Act, which came in a prior budget in this House, to insulate the DRIC from further lawsuit on the Canadian side. We have done our best to move that forward. This will be a P3 project that would be very significant for our region, not only in terms of construction jobs when it comes, but for the long-term business investment that Windsor-Essex county needs, not only for the auto industry, but for every other industry in the region to continue.

That was also fulfilling an important component of our national auto strategy that we announced in 2008.

Both Bill C-31 and our budget, also, would take important next steps with respect to the Regulatory Cooperation Council and our beyond the border action plan, another part of our auto action plan strategy in 2008, where we could see greater harmonization of standards particularly important for the auto industry, where they now produce a North American car, so to speak, instead of cars for various balkanized regulations across North America. That is important, in terms of the productivity and the forward-looking projections for that industry. This is an important component that we had to have, and we would make further progress on that in Bill C-31.

Our budget also included significant investments for rural broadband. I know that, just since the announcement, our Essex County Council has already been working hard to update its strategy for not only extending broadband to its last remaining regions but for upgrading the speed on that.

There is nothing more important, in my humble estimation, if I want to speak to an issue of real passion for me in Bill C-31, than the adoption expenses tax credit.

● (1340)

In 2008, I brought forward Motion No. 386. It was calling for a study at the human resources committee, where we would take a look at the supports that were available on the federal side for adoptive parents and adopted children. That laid the groundwork, with its ultimate hearings and report, and a solid foundation for us to begin to look at it in a systematic way, to see what we can do from the federal side to improve adoption outcomes across Canada.

Anybody who has been paying attention to the adoption issue will know there are some important things that need to be done. One is baselining the actual number of children we have and what forms of temporary care they are in across Canada. The provincial and territorial systems report very differently on these matters, but we know that there is an emerging crisis in child welfare across the country, if we look cumulatively at what is happening.

From that, we know that there are an estimated 30,000 Canadian children who are at the stage where they are ready for adoption permanence, but there is no plan for adoption permanence for them.

When we looked further, in our study, we looked at areas where maybe the federal government could help. One of those is financial supports. The process for adoption, unless one goes through a public agency, can be very expensive.

I remember my interventions with then-minister Jim Flaherty in pre-budget consultations for budget 2013. He asked what we could do, and I suggested that the first thing we needed to do was expand the eligible criteria to more accurately reflect the range of costs that parents would face if they were choosing adoption.

Prior to that, the adoption expenses tax credit only covered the post-placement costs, those costs that are incurred once a child is placed and going forward. We note, for those who have to incur a home study, for example, that they can be very costly. In Ontario, people have to undergo what is called “PRIDE training”, important courses to understand the types of transitions that parents and children are going to go through in the situation of an adoption or a foster-to-adopt. Those can be very expensive as well.

### *Government Orders*

That was the first thing we did with economic action plan 2013. Our government, to its credit, knew that there was more to be done. It did make a commitment in the last throne speech that it would do more to help with respect to adoption. That is why, in our economic action plan 2014, we would raise the adoption expenses tax credit from just a little over \$11,700, where it has currently risen by way of index. Now we would raise that to \$15,000, and it would remain indexed over time, as well.

That would apply to adoptions that are finalized, beginning in 2014 and going forward. That should be encouraging news. We do know that the cost of adoption is one of the two major financial obstacles.

The other, of course, is the environment that happens in the provincial and territorial systems, which we cannot touch from the federal side, and that is the process of adoption and how the child welfare systems work. I certainly would hope that at some point the Council of the Federation will speak of this issue in a structural, ongoing way that they need to have more adoption outcomes as a result of their system.

Currently, they only conclude cumulatively about 2,000 domestic adoptions a year. Meanwhile children are continuing to go in the front end in alarming numbers in crisis intervention, so they would do well to encourage themselves to target an increase in the number of adoptions that they finalize over time, and to monitor their improvement over time, as well. I certainly hope they do that.

These are some of the aspects I spoke of last spring in my national adoption action plan in this House. There is so much to do on this particular issue, and I am proud to say that our government is doing its particular part. Those financial obstacles are a very fundamental key, one of the two keys that parents will face in a decision about whether to adopt.

The more we can bring that a lot closer to affordability for them, the more chance that these children are going to get into permanent, loving, adoptive families. It is critical they do. What we know from kids who age out of the system is that they are more likely to end up in poverty, more likely to end up homeless, more likely to have poorer educational outcomes and poorer relational outcomes over time, including intergenerationally. We know that they are more likely to end up either in the mental health stream or the criminal justice stream. Society is paying for this on the back end. We are looking at ways, obviously, over here where we can pay a little bit on the front end to help get them into situations that are a whole lot better.

● (1345)

I think that is worthy, and I think it is something all members of this House can support.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I asked this question of the member for Winnipeg South Centre and it was ducked, so I am hoping the member opposite will not duck it.

On the FATCA portion of the budget implementation bill, a former U.S. diplomat, James Jatras, has said:

### Government Orders

The primary purpose of the agreement is to nullify protections under the Bank Act, the Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act (PIPEDA), the Canadian Human Rights Code, and especially the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The people affected are not just resident Americans but at least a million Canadian citizens.

This includes, I suspect, a significant number of citizens who live in the riding of the member opposite, because his riding is very close to the Detroit-Windsor border. Therefore, those protections that Canadians used to enjoy will not be enjoyed by a number of individuals, including children of those individuals, because the U.S. has decided that those children are now subject to FATCA.

How on earth can the government claim to be protecting the privacy and the personal information of Canadians when they are ordering banks to just give it away, including that of children in his riding?

• (1350)

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member did not pay attention to my intervention, but I will try to answer his question on FATCA nonetheless.

I will not speak to what the U.S. motives are in all of this. It is its own sovereign decision as to whether it wants to start looking at dual citizens abroad, for example, but I will say that if the government did not act, the U.S. rules would still be in place. In fact, they would be far more stringent than what is coming out as a result of an agreement we made on that particular issue.

I think we have done some amount of service to dual citizens on this side of the border by doing the best we could to obtain an agreement, for example, that would exempt certain classes of investments altogether from consideration, so this is a marked improvement relative to what would have been in place had there been no agreement.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, major municipalities are convening in Canada to try to get a better understanding of how Ottawa could play a more significant role in building infrastructure.

We in the Liberal Party have been advocating that the government has done a massive disservice by cutting in excess of 80% monies that should have been spent in this fiscal year.

The reason why it is doing it, on the surface would appear, is because next year is the election year. Instead of spending the money this year when our communities are in need of that money, the government is holding off and choosing to spend it next year.

Can the member tell us why it is the Prime Minister has put politics ahead of the needs of our communities in Canada?

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that is actually in the budget implementation act. Having said that, our government has announced the longest and largest infrastructure program, and because we have participated with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, for example, in over a dozen round tables and because we work closely with them, the way this plan is structured responds to some of the very things that the FCM members have been asking for. For example, they wanted to have greater flexibility with respect to the gas tax plan. They wanted it indexed. That is something we did, something members on the other side opposed. I

cannot help it if they did that, but we have done the right thing to put more money out there for municipalities.

I know the member wants to play a cute trick with respect to the difference between main estimates and public accounts and budgets and all that, but the point is, we put more money down on the table. We have given greater flexibility to municipalities, which would build more and better things that would matter to our economy and shaping our economy going forward. We have done it without the help of the opposition members. They keep voting against that and that is a shameful record. Ours is a good one.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member says the government has put more money on the table. The “more money” that Conservatives have put on the table does not actually become realized until after the next federal election.

The Liberal Party is saying that the need is today. Municipalities across Canada need infrastructure dollars to be spent this year. How does the government respond? It turns off the tap in favour of spending the money in the next year, which happens to coincide with an election year. Members of the Liberal Party believe that the government is playing politics with infrastructure dollars as opposed to servicing the needs of our communities across the country.

Having said that, I would like to focus attention on what we are doing today. We are talking about the supplementary budget bill. This is a bill in which the government is attempting to pass through numerous other pieces of legislation. We are dealing with issues from the Supreme Court, to rail transportation, to food safety. It is all being bundled up and put into a budget implementation bill.

Conservatives do that so that they do not have to bring in separate pieces of independent legislation that would have allowed members the opportunity to debate and most importantly, allowed Canadians the opportunity to get a better understanding of exactly what the majority Conservative government is up to.

To make matters even worse, Conservatives are also invoking time allocation and by invoking time allocation—

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

• (1355)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It is awfully noisy in the chamber, and I am finding it quite difficult to hear the hon. member for Winnipeg North. It may be the same case for other hon. members. I cannot be certain of that, but I would ask hon. members to recognize the member for Winnipeg North has the floor and will have for the next several minutes.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I know quite often that the truth does hurt.

It was interesting the other day that the member from Calgary was standing and saying what the number one priority for people in Calgary was. The number one priority is balanced budgets.

**An hon. member:** Right on.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** They say “right on”, Mr. Speaker, absolutely.

Let me point out something else. The majority Conservative government, even when it was in a minority, has never, ever achieved a balanced budget. Conservatives have never achieved a balance budget. If we want a balanced budget, we have to go back to prime minister—

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. I am not sure that we are gaining any ground on the quieting down here. We have another minute or so left.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, time is a scarcity inside the chamber as it passes so quickly, and there are so many points that I would love to make.

I know the Conservatives are very sensitive on this because they understand that it is important to Canadians. They have failed on all accounts. They have never delivered a balanced budget, yet they proclaim that this is something important to them.

We could even expand upon it by saying that they were given a multi-billion-dollar balanced budget when they took office and before the recession even took place. They not only squandered that, they turned it into a multi-billion-dollar deficit. This is the Conservative Party that does not understand the concept of balancing the books.

If we want balanced books, what we have learned from history is we need the Liberal Party taking governance of this country. That is the way to deliver a—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. The hon. member for Winnipeg North will have six minutes remaining when the House next takes up the question on the matter that is before the House and of course he will have the usual five minutes for questions and comments.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago tomorrow, the greatest seaborne invasion in history took place along the beaches of Normandy.

Under intense fire from German infantry, thousands of Canadian soldiers braved intense combat and turbulent waters to seize and secure Juno Beach. Over the span of two bloody hours, they achieved their objective before moving inland to begin the process of crushing Hitler's war machine.

Several years ago, I visited Juno Beach. What struck me as I looked down on the beaches was the bravery of these Canadian soldiers. These young men charged into a wall of enemy fire. Each and every one of them made a conscious decision to risk their lives for the lives of others.

It has been 70 years since D-Day, and Canadian flags still fly proudly on the soil liberated by these young men and women. On

### Statements by Members

this solemn anniversary, may we continue to keep the faith with those who came before us, may we dutifully pass the torch to those who follow, and may we always fly the Canadian flag proudly.

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● (1400)

[*Translation*]

### WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in honour of World Environment Day.

Future generations are counting on us right now. Canadians cannot ignore global warming, greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental challenges. Tackling climate change means implementing incentives for individuals and strict standards for industries and demanding leadership from the federal government.

We need mandatory targets and clear greenhouse gas emissions reduction standards. We need strict standards for gas emissions and energy efficiency. We need strategic infrastructure spending that focuses on public transportation and better energy efficiency for housing so that our communities can be more energy efficient.

These things need to be done, and the NDP will do them.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### FITNESS

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend in Niagara Falls, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, representing 2,000 members, came together at its AGM, where they overwhelmingly passed a motion supporting National Health and Fitness Day, which is this Saturday, June 7. It has already been proclaimed by 141 cities, with more on board each day.

This great news comes as Canadians face cresting rates of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, along with mounting health care costs.

MPs, mayors, individual Canadians, and whole communities are saying yes to healthy physical activity on National Health and Fitness Day and year round. I would like to congratulate my colleagues from all parties in the House who have acted as role models for all Canadians and acknowledge the efforts of our government, through our dynamic Minister of Health and Minister of State for Sport, who are rallying private and public sectors to higher levels of physical activity.

June is also Parks and Recreation Month, a great reminder for Canadians to take advantage of our parks, mountains, forests, paths, and streams. I invite all Canadians to show up this Saturday with our MPs, mayors, and councillors to make Canada the fittest nation on Earth.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**SAINT-RENÉ-GOUPIL CHURCH**

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on February 15, I attended a multilingual mass that opened the celebrations of Saint-René-Goupil Church's 50th anniversary.

I am looking forward to the closing celebration on June 15, 2014, which will be presided over by His Excellency Msgr. Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montreal, along with the church's current and previous pastors. Given the amount of love shown during the opening celebration, this closing mass promises to be a truly special occasion.

Being a pillar of our community is a great accomplishment. That is why I would like to recognize the exceptional work of Pastor Raul Garcia and the entire church family, which includes dedicated volunteers, such as Gilberte Tremblay, who do exceptional work bringing together people from different generations and cultural communities to build a socially conscious parish that strives to make life better for all of us.

Congratulations to the members of Saint-René-Goupil Church on 50 wonderful years, and my best wishes for many more to come.

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[English]

**SHOOTINGS IN MONCTON**

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians were saddened to learn this morning of the tragic deaths of three RCMP officers and the wounding of two others in a shooting last night in Moncton, New Brunswick.

I would like to express my heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families, friends, and colleagues of the victims, and we pray that the killer is quickly brought to justice without further violence.

The deaths of these officers remind us again of dangers faced every day by our law enforcement officers. The death of an officer shakes the entire community. It is a heartbreaking reminder of the sacrifices made by these brave men and women every day to protect our lives with their own.

Our first responders are heroes, too, and we should not let a day go by without praying for their safety and thanking them for their valued service to Canada.

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●(1405)

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, like many of my fellow Canadians, I am worried to see that the Conservatives are refusing to shoulder their responsibilities to ensure that a fragile ecosystem in the St. Lawrence River is protected, especially in light of the potential development of the Gros-Cacouna oil terminal.

Our riding has the tremendous privilege of bordering on some incredibly magnificent and biologically diverse areas. We have the Charlevoix World Biosphere Reserve, the Saguenay-Saint-Laurent Marine Park and the Group for Research and Education on Marine Mammals. Those world-renowned organizations in our region are a huge asset for the environment and a key component in developing our tourism industry.

I am prepared to fight on behalf of future generations so that any development is accompanied by an open, public, and thorough environmental assessment.

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[English]

**ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE CATHOLIQUE SAINT-MICHEL**

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a historic event that took place in the riding of Pickering—Scarborough East.

May 23, 2014, the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud marked the opening of the l'École élémentaire catholique Saint-Michel at 29 Meadowvale Road, a picturesque location a short distance from the Rouge Park that will accommodate up to 250 students from kindergarten to grade 6 in the east Toronto region.

[Translation]

The students in the French Catholic schools of the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud participate fully in their community and are able to express their faith, language, and culture with pride.

[English]

At the opening ceremonies, we were blessed by the presence of His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins of Toronto.

[Translation]

I would like to thank Réjean Sirois, director of education, and Ms. Dufour-Séguin, the school board's president, for their work. I would also like to congratulate the francophone community in Pickering—Scarborough-Est for this great achievement.

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[English]

**DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA**

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today volunteers from Ducks Unlimited are meeting with members of Parliament.

For those who do not know, Ducks Unlimited Canada is national non-profit organization committed to conserving and restoring Canada's wetlands.

For 76 years, Ducks Unlimited Canada has conducted research, educated the public, informed public policy, and preserved 6.4 million acres of wetlands. As a farmer who understands the value of these wetlands, I would like to take this opportunity to thank it for its work.

*Statements by Members*

We lose up to 80 acres of wetland every day in Canada. Aside from their recreational value, wetlands filter water, provide essential habitat for species at risk, reduce drought and erosion, and are essential in flood prevention.

Ducks Unlimited has a long history of working with the federal government, and I ask all honourable members to join me in thanking Ducks Unlimited Canada and their 6,200 volunteers for their work to preserve Canada's natural spaces.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### SUMMER IN VERCHÈRES—LES PATRIOTES

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the summer season is already upon us, and the riding of Verchères-Les Patriotes has some wonderful local products to try.

Today I hope to encourage my constituents to buy local products. This is not some dream. We can be green and prosperous. It is not true that we have to choose between the economy and the environment.

This summer the people of my riding will be able to visit a number of public markets, including those in Sainte-Julie and Boucherville as well as a new one in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu. Let us discover our local bounty, support our local producers, and reduce our environmental footprint, all while enjoying delicious products.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Suzanne Roy on her election to the prestigious position of president of the Union des municipalités du Québec. Knowing how effective she is and her determination to successfully complete all of the projects she undertakes, I can only commend the UMQ board of directors for putting its trust in her.

I am certain that Ms. Roy, who has been the mayor of Sainte-Julie for nearly nine years and who is also the warden of the Marguerite-D'Youville RCM, will do a wonderful job and bring the same dedication and attentiveness to this position as she does to the residents of the towns she serves.

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[*English*]

#### ETHICS

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to learn that the RCMP is investigating the chief of staff to former Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien for receiving a \$1.5 million bribe. Allegedly, this money was wired to a Swiss bank account after he awarded a contract worth \$110 million in taxpayers' money to a company.

These allegations against a senior Liberal Party adviser are extremely troubling. This is the same party that misappropriated \$40 million of taxpayers' money that it has yet to pay back.

We look forward to the RCMP getting to the bottom of this sleazy affair, and we expect, Canadians expect, that the leader of the Liberal Party will ensure that his advisers fully co-operate with the authorities on this matter.

● (1410)

[*Translation*]

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week is Canadian Environment Week, and today is World Environment Day.

Many environmental groups have taken this opportunity to meet with members of the House of Commons and to organize events on Parliament Hill.

On Monday, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society released its report, entitled "Dare to be Deep", which demonstrates the need for immediate action to protect our oceans. Just 1% of Canada's ocean territory is currently protected, but we have made an international commitment to protect 10% of our ocean by 2020.

Today is also Ducks Unlimited Canada's Day on the Hill. Ducks Unlimited Canada has an impressive success rate of over 75% in protecting Canada's wetlands. Ducks Unlimited Canada is doing important work across the country to protect and restore habitat with a view to supporting Canada's ecological, economic and social integrity.

I would like to wish everyone a happy World Environment Day.

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[*English*]

#### 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to salute the tens of thousands of Canadians who served on land, at sea, and in the skies over northern France. The significance of this day cannot be overstated. Just 11 months after the D-Day landings, Canadians and our Allies celebrated victory in Europe. Remarkably, Canadians progressed further inland than any of the Allies during the course of the Battle of Normandy.

While we remember this proud accomplishment, we also pay tribute to the almost 1,000 Canadians who sacrificed in the landings at Juno Beach on D-Day, including the 340 brave Canadians who gave their lives.

Our greatest generation laid the foundations of our freedom and our democracy and inspired generations of veterans who followed their example. God bless our greatest generation and our D-Day veterans.

Lest we forget.

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#### SHOOTINGS IN MONCTON

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, sorrow, fear, and disbelief are just some of the emotions being felt by residents of Moncton and all Canadians. We must not let this incident shatter the confidence we have in our safe and caring communities. We will indeed struggle through the coming days and months, but it is important that we strongly support the residents of Moncton and the RCMP as this incident continues to unfold.

### Oral Questions

Every day we know the challenges and dangers every single RCMP officer puts himself or herself in to protect our families. However, it is incidents of the kind that happened in Moncton that make us realize their tremendous sacrifices. We all have friends and relatives who are members of the RCMP, and today we must support them and their families as they struggle with the burdens and realizations of incredible danger.

Today we offer our sincere condolences to the members of the RCMP, especially the families of the three officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in their line of duty. We also pray for a full recovery for the two officers who were injured.

I would like to thank every single RCMP officer and all their families. May God bless each of them.

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### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Status of Women is in Paris participating in the Global Summit of Women, a meeting of women leaders from around the world. While meeting with her international counterparts, the minister will highlight Canada's efforts to promote gender equality, women in our economy, and an end to violence against women and girls.

For example, budget 2014 included specific measures to get more women involved in the economy, and we have helped ensure that aboriginal women enjoy the same rights as women across Canada. We have implemented over 30 laws that crack down on those who commit violent crimes against Canadians, including women and girls. It is a shame that the opposition opposes our efforts at every opportunity.

Canadians can be proud of our Conservative government. Thanks to our leadership, Canada is a world leader when it comes to defending women's rights and promoting their economic prosperity.

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•(1415)

[Translation]

### SHOOTINGS IN MONCTON

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the entire Atlantic region is in shock because of the horrific murders of the RCMP officers in Moncton. On behalf of all New Democrats, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the victims.

Our thoughts are also with the people of Moncton, whose sense of security has been shaken during this manhunt.

Be strong, Moncton. Our hearts go out to you.

[English]

Our thoughts and prayers are with a close-knit community facing a situation that one hopes would never happen in Canada. We extend our sympathy to families now huddled inside their homes wondering if danger is just outside their doors. We stand here in tribute to police officers killed and wounded in this horrible tragedy.

For all members of the New Brunswick RCMP and their families, they are not alone. We are thinking of them, and a whole nation stands with them.

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### SHOOTINGS IN MONCTON

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Moncton, New Brunswick, five RCMP members were senselessly shot by a dangerous person who seems to have no regard for human life. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the three RCMP members who gave their lives serving their country and protecting their fellow Canadians. We wish a speedy recovery to the two RCMP officers who remain in hospital.

Tragedies like this are a stark reminder of the dangers faced every day by front-line police officers. Dangerous criminals like this must be stopped to ensure communities like Moncton remain safe and secure places. We look forward to the police bringing the individual responsible for these crimes to justice.

As we mourn the loss of the three members of the RCMP, for all of our front-line police officers, I would like to say a heartfelt thanks for the work that they do.

I would also ask that all members and Canadians please keep the people of Moncton in their thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.

**The Speaker:** I understand there have been discussions among representatives of all parties in the House and that there is agreement to observe a moment of silence in honour of the three fallen RCMP officers in Moncton, New Brunswick.

[A moment of silence observed]

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Justice told us that the government would follow up on the committee's modest recommendations to improve veterans' quality of life. This requires more funding.

In concrete terms, how many more millions of dollars will be added to the department's budget to improve the quality of life of veterans and their family members and friends who support them?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, I reference the unanimous report that came from the veterans affairs committee, which speaks directly to the level of support and co-operation that exists to continue to support our veterans, their families, those who have served our country in uniform.



*Oral Questions*

We have established a record over the last eight years of having been very committed to the needs and the support of veterans: the \$4.7 billion in additional funding that has been made available to them, the efforts that have been made to support those suffering from post-traumatic stress.

• (1420)

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Thanks for closing my office. They love it.

**Hon. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I hear the member opposite chirping.

This is an issue that we have taken very seriously from the moment we took office, and we continue to support veterans.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives love to boast, but they are the ones who have a record of closing offices and refusing to meet with veterans.

Closing offices have left those in need seeing staff at Service Canada that have little experience on these issues. They are calling a 1-800 number or they are travelling long distances to one of the few remaining offices that is open. The Conservatives keep claiming that they are ready to act on committee recommendations, but how—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I want to remind members that any parliamentary secretary or minister can answer the question, but they have to wait until the question has been put. I would ask them to hold off on any kind of comments until the question has been asked. Then, if they absolutely cannot refrain from speaking, perhaps they can seek the floor for me to recognize them to answer the question, but not until the question is finished being put.

The hon. member for Halifax.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives keep claiming that they are ready to act on committee recommendations, but how can they expect Canadians and veterans to trust them to help our most vulnerable vets when the minister keeps cutting basic services?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, sadly, that is factually incorrect. We have, in fact, expanded services as recently as this week, with more services available for those who are using service animals. In terms of direct services, we now have available across the country 600 points of contact for veterans and their families. We have invested, as I mentioned before, \$4.7 billion in additional funding to ensure that veterans have the in-home care and the most direct services that go to their needs. We have extended numerous compassionate efforts to see that veterans' cares are being looked after in every way.

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**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives keep playing photo-op politics when, really, they should be supporting our veterans.

The Conservatives have also been caught playing politics on their new crime bill. In less than 24 hours, the justice minister's new bill already has legal experts predicting long court battles over whether it respects the charter, the Constitution and the Bedford ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Will the minister skip his divisive talking points? Will he do the sensible thing and refer this bill to the Supreme Court of Canada immediately?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this legislation goes to the objectives that I hope my friend and all members of Parliament would share, and that is protecting vulnerable Canadians and communities ensuring that we are not only giving police the necessary tools to support communities and the country, but also putting in place new programs in partnership with various groups across the country, in our provinces and territories, to see that we are able to help women, predominantly vulnerable women, who are in this profession through no fault of their own to exit and find a better, safer, healthier life.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, \$20 million, a drop in the bucket, not even budgeted yet.

[*Translation*]

We cannot trust the Conservatives to protect women's rights. This issue is at the heart of the debate and the Supreme Court ruling in Bedford. With Bill C-36, pimps and prostitutes will be criminalized, but not drivers. Soliciting will be prohibited on the streets, but not on private premises. Private advertising will be allowed, but not public advertising. There is a very fine line, and the balance is precarious.

Will the government make public the legal opinions it received before introducing Bill C-36?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that of course will happen, as it always does. In all cases it will be made public.

We had a very extensive consultation, as the member knows. Some 31,000 Canadians took part in that consultation. I sat down and had a round table with a wide variety of groups expressing a wide variety of views on this issue. We have acted in response to that input, to those consultations, also in consultation with the police, and respectful of the Supreme Court decision in Bedford.

We believe this is a better path and a more productive path for those involved in prostitution, while it protects Canadians at every level.

• (1425)

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to reading the scientific survey the minister still has in his possession and is avoiding to give to everybody.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

Six months ago, the Supreme Court forced the government to review the legislation concerning prostitution in order to better protect the lives and safety of sex trade workers. Several of the provisions run counter to this objective and even seem to contravene the Supreme Court ruling. We are afraid that Bill C-36 will push prostitution further into the shadows, drive it underground and make it more violent.

Will the government refer its bill to the Supreme Court as quickly as possible to ensure that it complies with the charter and the Bedford ruling?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we believe that we have acted on the advice of many within the legal community in addition to policing and respecting the Bedford decision. We are moving forward in a way that we believe protects Canadians, communities, individuals and children.

At the same time, this is not as simple as passing laws, as the member would know. This will require extensive work with organizations to help vulnerable women and many young women, in this case under the age of 18, to exit a life of prostitution, to find a better path, to find a way forward that does not involve exposing themselves to violence and the inherent dangers that come with prostitution.

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are 260,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than before the downturn. Now it is summer job season and many students cannot find work to pay for tuition or to get the experience they need.

Since taking office, the Conservatives have actually cut the number of jobs in the Canada summer jobs program by more than half. Will the government reverse those cuts and help young Canadians get the jobs they need this summer and help their parents who are stuck paying the bills.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that Canada has one of the lowest rates of youth unemployment in the developed world. Since 2006, we have helped over 2.1 million youth obtain skills training and jobs.

Of course there is still more to do, which is why in this year's budget we announced support for internships in high-demand fields. It is why we launched the apprenticeship loan. For the first time, people in Red Seal apprenticeship programs will be able to get interest-free loans, just like university students do. We want to encourage young people to get the skills that will lead to bright futures.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is implying that young Canadians are better off than young people in Greece.

Those internships are actually funded by the youth employment strategy, which the Conservatives have cut by \$60 million since

2010. Too many Canadians are being pressured into taking unpaid internships just for the work experience. Meanwhile, parents are taking on debt and forgoing retirement in order to pick up the tab.

Will the government finally ask Statistics Canada to track unpaid internships and will it follow Ontario's lead and crack down on illegal unpaid internships, particularly in federally regulated industries?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me just make it clear for the member. One thing we will not do is kill jobs by raising taxes. One thing we will not do is ruin the economic future of young people by loading up massive increases in spending, deficit and debt, which would lead to permanent tax increases for young people.

We will not follow the example of the Government of Ontario of reckless deficits, massive and irresponsible spending, and higher taxes which end up killing jobs. We will not do that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks about leaks that have tainted the recent Supreme Court appointment process, is he looking at himself in the mirror? Does he count among those leaks the disclosure by the Prime Minister's Office of a confidential phone call from the Chief Justice? Has he launched an investigation to expose those high-ranking Conservatives who have slandered the Chief Justice?

Does he not realize that no one has done more to undermine the process than he himself and the Prime Minister have?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the member is somehow referencing the fact that I spoke about a confidential conversation with the Supreme Court justice, I did not comment until after her statement was made.

I am not exactly sure where the member is going with the question, but I will take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Justice Clément Gascon, who will be joining the Supreme Court very soon from the member's province of Quebec. He came highly recommended and has been lauded in all circles, politically and legally, across the country. He will be a fine justice and a fine addition to the Supreme Court of Canada.

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● (1430)

**PRIVACY**

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Wesley Wark, an intelligence specialist with the University of Ottawa, has called the latest spying ordered by the Conservatives "...a clear breach of our Charter rights".

*Oral Questions*

The Conservatives have repeatedly gone out of their way and beyond their mandate to collect data on Canadians. First nations and any Canadian exercising basic rights to freedom of assembly and protest will now become the most recent targets.

Why has the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness ordered all government departments to spy on Canadian demonstrators?

**Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, the member opposite knows, and all Canadians know, that all our security agencies work within the confines of Canadian law.

With respect to the topic the member mentioned, we respect the right of all Canadians to peaceful protest in this country. However, Canadians expect local law enforcement to ensure that the law is respected, and the Government Operations Centre monitors any event that may be a risk to public safety.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, no defence from the parliamentary secretary can justify this warrantless spying on Canadians. The government is clearly misusing the Government Operations Centre. This was a department set up to coordinate national responses to things like fires, floods, and other natural disasters. A few folks gathering to protest fracking or a pipeline or to demand a public inquiry are clearly not threats to national security.

Why is the government so afraid of people who do not agree with it, so afraid that it feels the need to break the law and to spy on Canadians?

**Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thank goodness the Conservative government does not take any lead from the NDP with regard to public safety.

Canadians expect that public safety will be respected in all regards within Canada and expects the government to ensure that that happens. I am proud to be part of a Conservative government that makes sure it does.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Public Safety, the Government Operations Centre is supposed to provide an integrated emergency response in case of events of national significance; the only thing is that the government is now using it to spy on demonstrators.

This diversion of resources is dangerous for Canadians, because while the Conservatives are using this centre to spy on demonstrators, it is not fulfilling its main mission.

How do the Conservatives justify transforming the Government Operations Centre into a super spy agency?

[*English*]

**Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if a peaceful protest became unpeaceful, the NDP would be the first people in this House calling on the government to take more action.

Instead, we respect the privacy of all Canadians and ensure that the Government Operations Centre monitors any event that may be a risk to public safety, and I am proud of that, to ensure the safety of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives talk about this as if it were no big deal.

Meanwhile, an expert from the University of Ottawa tells us that this is a clear violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Demonstrators are not events and the Government Operations Centre has absolutely no business in a protest.

Can the minister tell us the scope of the data that the Government Operations Centre will be collecting about the demonstrators? How long will the data be kept and what are they for?

[*English*]

**Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been approximately, I do not know, 30 seconds since the last time they asked that question. It is going to be the exact same answer.

The Government Operations Centre monitors any event that may be of risk to public safety. I think that most Canadians in this country would expect nothing less.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is World Environment Day.

Every June 5 since 1973, the United Nations has created a theme to raise global awareness about environmental issues, such as climate change. This year's theme is "Raise your voice, not the sea level". The most effective way to stop rising sea levels is to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Will the government finally commit to regulating greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector?

[*English*]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, building on our record we will continue to work with the United States on reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the oil and gas sector. Our countries should be working together and taking action together, not alone.

This is consistent with what we are already doing by aligning with the United States on the greenhouse gas emissions regulations in the transportation sector. For example, 2025 passenger vehicles and light trucks will emit about half as much greenhouse gas in Canada compared to the 2008 models.

*Oral Questions*

●(1435)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if things keep going the way they are now, we will not have standards for the oil and gas sector until after the flood.

In 2012, the Conservatives drafted questions and answers in response to a study on contaminants that accumulate in the snow near oil sands operations. They claimed that the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons that accumulate are no worse than what is found on a barbecued steak. However, a new study has found that mercury levels in the water and ground are 13 times higher in those areas than elsewhere.

Will they stop ignoring pollution, which has serious implications for the health of Albertans?

*[English]*

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada accounts for less than 2% of global greenhouse gases, and for this reason, Canada is pursuing an international agreement on climate change that includes real action by all emitters.

In the meantime, our government is doing its part domestically by taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. We have already taken action on the two largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in our country, and that is in the transportation sector and the electricity generation sector. Thanks to our actions, we will see a reduction in—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, at least the minister spared us the “grilled steak” line that she has been forcing her staff to parrot on this issue.

The question still remains. A government study confirms raised mercury levels surrounding the oil sands. It actually calls it a bull's eye around the oil sands. The scientist who wrote the report is mysteriously unavailable for comment.

Will the minister spare us the rhetoric and instead unmuzzle our scientists so Canadians can hear the truth?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Environment Canada scientists are part of the committee that conducted that study and that report.

Our government has made responsible resource development a priority. We have worked with the Province of Alberta to launch a world-class scientific monitoring system on the oil sands. This is transparent. It is a public process. We have some of Canada's top scientists involved.

The report shows our plan is working. We will continue to be transparent and promote independent scientific assessment and evaluation, demonstrated again by—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Victoria.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first nations, municipalities, and British Columbians have overwhelmingly said no to northern gateway. Now we have 300 scientists from around the world saying that the joint review panel has so many errors and omissions it cannot be used to make decisions about the pipeline. In fact, they have urged the Prime Minister, and I quote, “...in the strongest possible terms to reject this report”.

What is it going to take for the government to finally say no to northern gateway?

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the joint review panel has submitted its report with 209 conditions. Projects will only be approved if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. We are carefully reviewing this report, and a decision will be forthcoming.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives told us that they stubbornly refuse to listen to B.C. municipalities, refuse to listen to virtually every single first nation across B.C. and Alberta, and refuse to listen to the two-thirds of British Columbians who consistently say no to Enbridge northern gateway.

Fully one in five of those who are rejecting this pipeline voted Conservative in the last election. We know the Conservatives refuse to listen to the economics, refuse to listen to environmental concerns, but we know they love their politics, so maybe they will pay attention to the politics.

When are they going to stand up, listen to British Columbians, and say no to this bad idea?

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government will thoroughly review the joint panel report with its 209 conditions. We will continue to consult with first nations communities prior to making any decisions.

We are proud of the action we have taken to ensure that Canada has a world-class regulatory framework and a means for the safest form of transportation of our energy products. We have been clear that projects will only proceed if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

*Oral Questions*

● (1440)

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister flew to Brussels amid great fanfare last October to sign an agreement in principle on the European trade deal, but that deal has now stalled, and when we requested the documents signed in public by the Prime Minister, the Privy Council Office replied that, quote, “no records relevant to the request were found”.

Did the Prime Minister sign anything at all in October, or was it merely an expensive photo op with no substance behind it?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that question. She knows, and the reality is, that we have released the details of this agreement. They were tabled in the House. The minister has them, or at least I think she should have them. However, if she does not, I will happily send her a copy.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can only dream of having the credibility of my colleague.

The Liberals are firmly opposed to the northern gateway pipeline project. As our leader said, while governments may grant permits, only communities can grant permission, but instead of listening to the people, the Conservative government demonized them. It tried to paint schoolchildren, tourism operators, first nations, and B.C. citizens as radicals.

Now hundreds of leading scientists have spoken out against this pipeline. Will the government do what is right and reject this ill-conceived project? When will the Conservative members speak up for their communities?

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the joint review panel has submitted its report with 209 conditions. Projects will only be approved if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. We are carefully reviewing this report, and a decision will be forthcoming.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, President Obama led on GHG regulations for the transportation industry. The Prime Minister followed.

Similarly, Ontario led on coal-fired electricity generated emissions, and similarly, the Prime Minister has been taking credit ever since—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood still had a few seconds left to finish his question before some ministers tried to answer it. Once again, I will ask them to wait until the question has been asked.

The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, similarly, this week, President Obama initiated regulations with respect to the coal industry. Taking credit where credit is not due, and following, not leading, is not leadership.

Will the Minister of the Environment tell us when she last initiated a meeting with the leaders of the oil and gas industry?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we welcome the move of the United States. We took action on this sector two years ago, which means that our regulations came into effect sooner than the United States'.

We also estimate that we will achieve a 46% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in this sector by 2030, compared to 30% in the United States. We also have one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with 77% of our electricity supply emitting no greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 33% in the United States.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a young MP once asked about the Liberals' infamous appointment of Privacy Commissioner George Radwanski. The question was:

...will the government at least...commit to a full parliamentary review for all appointees?

Who was that? It was the Prime Minister.

Now we have had barely 45 minutes of committee questions before the Liberals and Conservatives stood together and wilfully ignored the concerns of experts and advocates. Was that 45 minutes really the full parliamentary review the Prime Minister once promised?

● (1445)

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Privacy Commissioner is a person with over 30 years' experience in legal and privacy matters. He comes from a field of highly qualified candidates, and he was the best candidate.

It will be interesting to see, as question period progresses, whether NDP members will repeat what they did yesterday when they had one round of questions decrying the selection of the Privacy Commissioner and another round of questions asking why we did not listen to the Privacy Commissioner. I would like to see what sort of mail-outs they are going to have on that one.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between the Daniel Therrien who seems to have developed a sudden passion for human rights and the one who defended security certificates, deporting people to countries that practise torture and sharing information with the NSA.

This is another example of the Prime Minister's amateur approach. Why have the Conservatives, old Reformers, lost all respect for individual freedoms?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, Mr. Therrien is the best candidate for this position. Yesterday, the NDP said that the Privacy Commissioner is not the best candidate, and then they turned around and said that we have to listen to the commissioner. That is a hypocritical position.

\* \* \*

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today the Information Commissioner released a damning new report on the Conservatives' transparency. Complaints are up 30% because of processing delays. Some consultation delays are just ridiculous. For example, the Department of Natural Resources asked for a whole year to consult another department before releasing a document. It takes them a whole year to consult each other. Let us stop pretending that the Conservatives are good managers. What specific plans do they have to shorten these delays and comply with the law?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can say that this government has been responsible for processing over 50% of all access to information requests submitted since the law was enacted in 1983. Every year since we have been in power, the number of access to information requests has gone up.

[English]

We are acting. We have over 200,000 datasets online for complete information for the Canadian public as well. Our record is second to none when it comes to access to information.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it was the culture of secrecy that allowed corruption to flourish in the Liberal years, but these Conservatives are even worse. Today, another damning report from the Information Commissioner confirms that the black shroud of secrecy is destined to become the single most defining hallmark of the Conservative government.

The public has a right to know what their government is doing with their money. Conservatives used to believe that. In fact, I took six of their promises made to Canadians and put them into a bill to reform the Access to Information Act and they voted against it.

I want to know just when they decided to break faith with Canadians and break their promises about—

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

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I already said, of the total number of access to information requests that have been replied to since 1983, 50% of them have been replied to by this government. We have replied to more access to information requests than the Trudeau, Mulroney,

Turner, Campbell, Chrétien, and Martin governments combined. That is our record on access to information and we are darn proud of it.

\* \* \*

**INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, British Columbia is home to more than 650,000 kilometres of off-highway roads. These roads are not only used by commercial industries, such as the oil, gas, mining, and forestry sectors, but also by the public to access rural and remote areas. In recent years, high demand for radio space across all industries has put a strain on the system.

Can the Minister of Industry update this House on what our government is doing to improve the communications and safety of roads in rural B.C.?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question. He represents one of the largest electoral districts in Canada and understands what none of us should ever forget, which is that Canada's resource industries and people who live in rural and remote communities in this country must have reliable access to communication networks as it is essential to create jobs and have access to tourism and opportunities in those parts of this country.

Today I was very pleased to announce that we will be dedicating 40 new radio channels across British Columbia to ensure that this access to information and communication will be a fact all across British Columbia: the Okanagan, across the island—all across British Columbia. It is essential for us to move forward on this, which we are. We are working with the Province of British Columbia and we will continue to stand up for B.C.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

**TRANSPORT**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the auto industry is vital to Canada, but it has taken another hit. An internal report released today by GM finds that "Incompetence and neglect led to the failure to recall unsafe vehicles for over a decade". This has been linked to at least 13 deaths, including a tragic accident here in Canada.

Why is the minister refusing to appear at the committee to answer questions, and will she now rethink her silence, or is she satisfied with this culture of incompetence and neglect?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appeared before a committee of the whole on May 7 of this year to answer just these questions with respect to GM and I am happy to answer questions here in question period every single day.

*Oral Questions*

We know that GM Canada issued the recall as soon as they told us they had received that information to do so. If that is not the case, we will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is responsible for transportation safety, but she is not stepping up to that responsibility.

In the U.S., Congress is getting ready for a new series of hearings on GM's manufacturing defects. Here in Canada, the minister is refusing to answer the committee's questions and seems to be taking a back seat while the Americans are getting answers.

Does the minister believe that Canadians should rely on the U.S. Congress to find out more about these defects that have already caused at least one death in Quebec?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, there have been nine complaints in Canada regarding this faulty ignition switch. Two of them have ended in tragedy, and those two are being investigated by Transport Canada.

The member opposite is referring to whether or not GM Canada was given the information in a timely fashion that they should issue a recall. We understand from GM that they issued the recall as soon as they found out from their partner in the United States.

We have no information to the contrary. We have asked them repeatedly. If information comes to light through our current investigation that such is not the case, we will prosecute under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### CANADA POST

**Ms. Nicole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, by attacking Canada Post as they have, the Conservatives have driven a stake into the economic heart of the regions. The Conservatives claim that there is a moratorium on closing rural post offices, but since 2006, 164 of them have closed their doors. Residents are talking about the negative impact on their communities and are unhappy with the quality of service, which is plummeting.

Why are the Conservatives attacking services for people who live in the regions?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct, there is a rural moratorium with respect to Canada Post offices that was put in place by this government, because we wanted to protect the service in those areas.

Canada Post also has developed a five-point plan. One of them is to remove the door-to-door service for one-third of Canadian households, which the member opposite has been talking about a lot in recent days.

I think it is important for the House to know and understand that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities defeated a resolution

calling on the government to reverse the decision on door-to-door service. Two-thirds of Canadian municipalities support us on this.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if there is a moratorium, the minister is responsible for honouring it.

You do not need to be a rocket scientist to understand that when you put prices up and reduce services, you are going to hit the wall. Mr. Speaker, imagine that the 23 geniuses who run Canada Post could think of nothing better than to transform post offices into closed counters. Everything is kept behind a locked door. Customers receive no service until they find the bell to ring for the employee. Unbelievable. The results are clear: a 50% decrease in revenue. It is obvious that Canada Post management is messing everything up.

When are the Conservatives going to learn that they need to find solutions to maintain service and not shrink Canada's public postal service?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada Post was faced with the reality that one billion fewer letters are being delivered in this country. As a result of that, it is seeing a decrease in its revenues, and increase in its expenses and it had to have a plan.

Canada Post developed a five-point plan. That plan is being implemented, and that is in place to ensure that in the future, all Canadians can receive timely mail and packages at the places they wish to have them.

\* \* \*

● (1455)

#### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** My question is to the President of the Treasury Board. This morning in committee, the Clerk of the Privy Council presented his report on the state of the public service. He rightly said that Canada has one of the best public services in the world. A large measure of that is due to its fundamental values of being non-partisan and its appointments being merit-based.

How important does the minister himself feel those values are in upholding the integrity and reputation of Canada's public service?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think those are very important values.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** My golly, Mr. Speaker, we got an answer.

Those values, though, were not respected at ACOA in 2012, when the Public Service Commissioner had to revoke two rigged appointments, friends of the Minister of Justice.

Now it seems those values will be violated again with two more tainted political ECBC appointments slated to get rolled into the public service, also friends of the Minister of Justice.

*Oral Questions*

Would the minister respect the Integrity Commissioner's finding and assure Canadians that tainted ECBC appointments would not get a free pass into the public service? Would he assure us that those values will be respected?

**Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. The Public Service Commission and the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner in both cases found no ministerial interference with these hirings. That is a fact the hon. member should acknowledge.

However, in 2006, the Public Service Commission reported that the Liberals gave ministerial aides free rides into the public service.

On this side of the House, we take accountability seriously. That is exactly why we had to pass the Federal Accountability Act and eliminate the revolving door the Liberals had into—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-23, the electoral “deform”, has been criticized far and wide. Just today, at the electoral fraud trial in Guelph, we learned that Andrew Prescott—

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

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

As much as I love the Cape Breton accent, I am going to ask those members who want to continue on with the previous question to maybe find a seat outside, in the lobby, but not in the chamber where they seem to be disturbing, certainly, the Chair.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Just today, at the electoral fraud trial in Guelph, we learned that Andrew Prescott, who was involved in the Conservatives' 2011 campaign, said that these fraudulent robocalls were organized at the national level. However, the Conservatives' electoral “deform” does not address this problem.

Why leave the door wide open to more electoral fraud like this?

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, nothing could be further from the truth.

What Elections Canada found was that, after listening to two years' worth of false allegations from the NDP, this government and this party actually ran a clean and ethical campaign. We actually won the last campaign because we had better policies, we provided good government, and we cut taxes for all Canadians, who have more money in their pocket.

At the same time, what we see is that the NDP has used money illegally to fund partisan political offices across this country. As opposed to living up to it and repaying taxpayers, it continues to try to run and hide to avoid accountability—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Now, the information is coming out, Mr. Speaker.

The Conservatives' deeply flawed Bill C-23 failed to effectively target deceptive phone calls. Now we can see why.

At the trial of a former Conservative staffer, one of the witnesses has just stated:

This scheme was clearly wide-spread, national and well organized. It required access, and ultimately complicity from someone higher up in the campaign....

Given these troubling allegations, would the government agree to finally introduce a bill that would actually go after these kinds of national voter suppression crimes, yes or no?

● (1500)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, Elections Canada found no evidence of this.

The only scheme that we have before us right now is the scheme perpetrated by, I think, about 23 members of the NDP caucus to defraud Canadian taxpayers of millions of dollars in using parliamentary resources, taxpayer resources, to fund partisan political offices across this country.

It is up to the NDP, now, to apologize to Canadians, return all of these millions of dollars that it took from Canadians, and think about honesty and accountability for once.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I was pleased to take part in the beginning of the health committee study of Bill C-17, Vanessa's law.

I was pleased that we could get the study under way and would like to thank the NDP members for finally conceding to allow the bill to be referred for study after their initial attempts to slow its progress through this House.

To ensure that the official opposition remains mindful of the importance of this legislation, I would ask the Minister of Health to please inform the House, once again, about the important measures that it contains to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Oakville for that important question and for the incredible work he has done on this file for many years.



As I explained at the Standing Committee on Health earlier this morning, I am very proud of our government's historic legislation, Vanessa's law. This is the first major update to Canada's drug safety laws in decades, and it will help identify potentially dangerous drugs, ensure the quick recall of unsafe drugs, and require mandatory reporting of adverse drug reactions.

I am very pleased that the committee's work is now under way and I look forward to reviewing any amendments that it may recommend. Our government will continue to work hard to ensure that we have the strongest possible safety systems in place so that we can keep Canadians safe.

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#### CANADA POST

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year Canada Post has shamefully reduced services to 114 postal offices in Newfoundland and Labrador and hundreds more right across Canada, yet we know that Canada Post earned a profit of \$94 million in 2012 and we also know that over the last decade, it has paid back to the federal government more than \$41 billion.

To the Conservative government today, have you mandated Canada Post to reduce those services, and if not, will you finally stand up, step in, and support rural—

**The Speaker:** I would remind the hon. member to address her questions through the Chair and not directly at her colleagues.

The hon. Minister of Transport.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is an arm's-length crown corporation. As such, it has developed a five-point plan in order to deal with the reality it is facing, which is that fewer people are sending mail through its system. It has less revenue to deal with in order to pay for increasing expenses. Therefore, it has developed a way forward. We support it in its path.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### HOUSING

**Ms. H el ene LeBlanc (LaSalle— mard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, co-operative housing is more than housing; it is a community. Roughly 52,000 people across Canada might end up homeless because of this government's choices. However, having a roof over one's head is a right.

When will this government renew funding for co-operative housing?

[*English*]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, we actually are providing funding to the provinces. The provinces in turn are giving that funding to, for example, co-operative housing projects, or in some cases rent subsidies and in other cases seniors housing. Right across this country, provinces are making decisions on where to invest this money.

I did meet with some of the opposition members recently to talk about Housing First. They were not all there at the meeting with me.

#### Oral Questions

I am wondering if some of them were working on that office scheme that they arranged in order to take taxpayers' dollars.

\* \* \*

#### FINANCE

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my constituents know the importance of living within their means, and they expect the government to do the same. That is why our Conservative government is working hard to balance the budget by controlling government spending and by ensuring that each and every tax dollar is spent efficiently and effectively, and only when necessary. Unlike the Liberal leader, we know that budgets just do not balance themselves.

Would the Minister of State for Finance please explain why it is crucial that all levels of government follow our lead and take responsible action to balance their budgets?

● (1505)

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, sound finances are the best contribution that any government can make to promote strong economic growth. Balanced budgets keep taxes low, ensure and inspire investor confidence, and ensure that essential services remain strong for all Canadians.

Yesterday I was very pleased to see that the Quebec government has committed to eliminating its deficit. We encourage all provinces and territories to follow our government's leadership and take the necessary steps to keep or to put their finances on a sustainable—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

\* \* \*

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, hundreds of fishermen have been without income since mid-April because of severe ice conditions, and the government keeps putting them off. The minister told me yesterday that she was misquoted in the media and she is not willing to compensate fishermen and their families. Instead, she is prepared to extend the crab season so fishermen can catch their quotas.

That does nothing to address the lack of income right now. Food has to be put on the table. Bills must be paid.

Cutting to the chase, will the minister agree to clear up the confusion? Will there be ice compensation, yes or no?

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the confusion is on that side of the House. I regret that ice and weather conditions have affected fishers in some areas of Atlantic Canada, but if conditions remain as predicted, the one remaining closed area will open at 6:00 a.m. tomorrow. However, weather and ice conditions are unpredictable, so I do urge fishers to exercise caution.

*Business of the House*

I must say it is surprising to hear this new-found concern for fishers coming from this member, who once referred to fish processing plants as stamp factories and said that dependency on the federal government “has slowly rotted outport life to the core”.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good to have a new government—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Next question. The hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good to have a new government in Quebec that just tabled a new budget, but the fact remains that Ottawa's unilateral decisions have major repercussions for Quebec's finances. In the section of the budget on transfers, Quebec's new government demonstrates in black and white that, effective this year, the federal government will deprive Quebecers of more than \$1.5 billion. That is just the start. We are in the midst of a full-blown fiscal imbalance.

Does the Minister of Finance, who just a few weeks ago said he was concerned about the state of Quebec's finances, understand that the federal government's unilateral decisions are jeopardizing Quebec's finances?

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, federal support to Quebec is at an all-time high. Quebec will receive over \$19.6 billion in federal transfers this year, an increase of nearly 64% from under the old Liberal government. These transfers include nearly \$9.3 billion in equalization payments, an increase of \$4.4 billion, or 94%, since 2006, and over \$7.4 billion through the Canada health transfer, an increase of \$2.3 billion from the Liberal days.

Clearly, nothing has been cut. We are protecting social transfers. We are protecting the—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. That concludes question period for today.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** To commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-Day, I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Mr. Germain Nault, a veteran who was in Normandy on June 6, 1944.

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

• (1510)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Thursday, I will assume that the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster would like to ask the Thursday question.

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** I have two numbers for this week's Thursday statement.

The first number is 70, which is the number of times this government has moved time allocation or closure motions since the beginning of this Parliament.

That is the worst record of any government in the history of Canada. Never has there been a worse government when it comes to opting out of or not wanting to engage in a rigorous legislative process. As we know, this is causing serious problems.

For example, half a dozen bills have been rejected by the courts since this government came to power. Almost another half-dozen had to be redone because the government botched them the first time around when it refused to follow a rigorous legislative process. It was forced to introduce other bills to fix the problems that were in the first versions. That is it for the first number.

[English]

The second figure they were mentioning today, the figure of the week, is 49. Forty-nine is the number of missed speaking shifts by Conservative MPs since we began evening sessions.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that last week Conservatives were saying they were going to work hard they were going to work in the evening, but it is now 49 times that they have not shown up for their speaking spots. They missed their speaking shifts.

Nurses and doctors show up for their shifts in the hospital. Construction workers and labourers show up on the job site. Servers and hotel workers show up for their shifts. Canadians are very hard-working. Canadians show up for their shifts, and Conservatives should show up for theirs. That is what we feel.

My question is very simple. Will Conservative MPs finally show up this evening for their speaking spots?

Second, will they actually allow the official opposition to help correct the many problems that their legislation has and subject their legislation to rigorous legislative tests, which means that instead of putting in closure and time allocation, they actually allow for healthy debate in the House of Commons? Will they allow for healthy debate?

*Business of the House*

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will start with the concept of the very strange proposition put forward by my friend. He uses this concept of shifts and believes there is some perverse obligation on the part of the government that, if the opposition wishes to filibuster the production of new laws and delay their production, we somehow have an obligation to match them step for step in extending that process. His comparison is with ordinary Canadians. He said that ordinary Canadians should not produce a product at the end of the day at work; they should take two, three, or four days to get the same thing made. That is his idea of getting things done. That is his idea of how ordinary Canadians can work. I think that says something about the culture of the NDP and the hon. member. I will let members guess what culture that is. It is a culture that does say we should take two or three times longer to get something done or to get to our destination than we possibly can.

We on this side are happy to make decisions to get things done for Canadians. In fact, that is exactly what we have been doing. Since I last rose in response to a Thursday question, the House has accomplished a lot, thanks to our government's plan to work a little overtime this spring.

I know the House leader of the official opposition boasts that the New Democrats are happy to work hard, but let us take a look at what his party's deputy leader had to say on CTV last night. The hon. member for Halifax was asked why the NDP agreed to work until midnight. She confessed, "We didn't agree to do it." She then lamented, "We are going from topic to topic. We are doing votes. We are at committees. They are really intense days. We're sitting until midnight."

On that part, I could not agree more with the deputy leader of the NDP, believe it or not, but with much more cheer in my voice when I say those words, because we think it is a good thing. These are intense days. We are actually getting things done. We are actually voting on things. We are actually getting things through committee. For once, we are going from topic to topic in the run of the day.

Let me review for the House just how many topics, votes, and committee accomplishments we have addressed since the government asked the House to roll up its sleeves.

Bill C-24, the strengthening Canadian citizenship act, was passed at second reading and has even been reported back from the citizenship committee.

Bill C-10, the tackling contraband tobacco act, was concurred in at report stage and later passed at third reading.

Bill C-31, the economic action plan 2014 act, no. 1, was reported back from the finance committee.

Bill C-27, the veterans hiring act, was passed at second reading.

Bill C-20, the Canada-Honduras economic growth and prosperity act, was concurred in at report stage.

On the private members' business front we saw:

Bill C-555, from the hon. members for West Nova in support of the seal hunt, was passed at second reading.

Bill C-483, from my hon. colleague, the member for Oxford, cracking down on prisoners' escorted temporary absences was passed at third reading.

Bill C-479, from the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, on improving the place of victims in our justice system was passed at third reading last night.

Progress is not limited to Conservative initiatives. The Green Party leader's Bill C-442, respecting a Lyme disease strategy, was reported back from committee yesterday.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay saw a motion on palliative care pass.

We have also seen countless reports from committees reviewing the government's spending plans, as well as topics of importance to those committees.

This morning we even ratified the appointment of an officer of Parliament.

Finally, I do want to reflect on the accomplishment of Bill C-17, the protecting Canadians from unsafe drugs act (Vanessa's law), which members may recall me discussing in last week's Thursday statement. It finally passed at second reading. However, this did not happen until the NDP relented and changed its tune to allow the bill to go to committee. It was the first time ever that we had an expression from the New Democrats when we gave notice of intention to allocate time in which they said, "We don't need that time; we're actually prepared to allow a bill to advance to the next stage". I think, by reflecting on the fact that those dozens of other times the NDP did not take that step, we could understand that they did not want to see a bill advance; they did not want to see progress made. That lets Canadians understand quite clearly why it is we need to use scheduling and time allocation as a device to get things done in the face of a group that thinks the objective is to fill up all possible time available with words rather than actual votes and getting things done.

● (1515)

It is clear that our approach is working. We are getting things done in the House of Commons and delivering results for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Perhaps I might be overly inspired by the example of Vanessa's Law, but I do want to draw the attention of the House to Bill C-32, the Victims Bill of Rights Act.

So far, we have seen three days of debate on second reading of the bill, but "debate" is actually not accurate. What we have witnessed is speech, after speech, after speech—most of them from New Democrats—offering platitudes of support for the idea of getting that bill to a committee where it could be studied. What I want to know is, why will they not just let it happen? Victims of crime want to see meaningful action, not just kind words.

*Government Orders*

Suffice it to say that I will need to schedule additional time for discussion of this bill. Perhaps the NDP will let it pass after a fourth day of talk.

This afternoon, we will continue with the report stage debate on Bill C-31, our budget implementation bill. When that concludes, we will turn to Bill C-20, to implement our free trade agreement with Honduras, at third reading. If time permits, we will continue the third reading debate on Bill C-3, the Safeguarding Canada's Seas and Skies Act.

Tomorrow morning, we will start the report stage debate on Bill C-24, which makes the first modernization of the Citizenship Act in 35 years. After question period, I will call Bill C-32, the Victims Bill of Rights Act, to see if the NDP is ready to deliver results, not talk.

Monday morning, we will continue the third reading debate on Bill C-20, if more time is needed, and then resume the second reading debate on Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act. After question period, we will get back to the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act.

Tuesday shall be the eighth allotted day when the NDP will have a chance to talk, and talk, about a topic of their own choosing. At the end of the night, we will have a number of important votes on approving the funds required for government programs and services and pass two bills to that end.

On Wednesday, we will debate our budget bill at third reading, and then we will start the second reading debate on Bill C-36, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, which my seatmate, the Minister of Justice, tabled yesterday.

We will continue the debates on Bill C-36 and Bill C-24, if extra time is needed, on Thursday. After those have finished, and on Friday, we will resume the uncompleted debates on Bill C-3, the Safeguarding Canada's Seas and Skies Act, at third reading; Bill C-6, the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act, at report stage; Bill C-8, the Combating Counterfeit Products Act, at third reading; Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act, at second reading; Bill C-26, the Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act, at second reading; Bill C-32, the Victims Bill of Rights Act, at second reading; and Bill C-35, the Justice for Animals in Service Act (Quanto's Law), at second reading.

• (1520)

[*English*]

To make a long story short, we have accomplished much in the House over the last week, but we still have much left to do, which inspires me to note that in the week ahead I have to take my automobile in for maintenance. At that time, when I take it to the dealership, I hope one person will work on it for an hour, get the job done, and then return it to me at a reasonable cost. I do hope I am not told, "There are still many more employees who have not had a chance to have a shift working on your car as well, so we are going to keep it here another three days and give everybody a turn to work on your car." I hope the dealership will do as Conservatives do: get the job done and then deliver me the product.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I would just mention to the leader on the government side that if nobody showed up for the shift to repair his car, his car would not be repaired.

Very briefly, I want to come to the issue of Standing Order 56.1 and the point of order that was raised, with comments from both sides. I would like to get a sense as to when you will be replying to that particular point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Many people are working many shifts on the ruling. I can assure the House that it will be delivered as soon as it is ready. I understand there is a great deal of interest in it, and of course we will do so as quickly as possible.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, you will recall, of course, that traditionally the Thursday question and the answer to the Thursday question was a rather brief affair and not a debate.

I would appeal to you, sir, to bring us back to that time.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the hon. member for Halifax West bringing this up. Perhaps this is a good opportunity to remind both the opposition and government House leaders that there are other people in the chamber waiting to get on to the business of the day. Although many things might be said to each other, maybe carrying over from House leaders' meetings or other things, and it might feel good to air some of these points, it is traditional to keep the question succinct and on point, which is the upcoming business of the House.

There are only a couple of Thursdays left, and I hope they will both bear that in mind for the upcoming Thursday questions.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-31, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg North has six minutes left for his speech.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, prior to question period, I was commenting on the issue of the economics of balanced budgets. We recognize that this is something on which the government has fallen short. I want to move forward on it and talk about priorities and what the government needs to focus more on.

In the last number of months, we have seen several issues come to the floor of the House. I thought it might be beneficial to provide some sort of brief comment on them.

One of the issues that has always been important to me is health care. I had the opportunity to pose a question on this issue in the debate on the budget implementation bill. I raised the fact that the health care accord had expired.

*Government Orders*

One of the things we have found with the Prime Minister is that he has not been very successful in meeting with the provinces or getting them together to look at what is important to the country as a whole. The Prime Minister has really fallen short on recognizing how important health care is to all Canadians. The government's response to that issue has been quite surprising. It has literally done nothing.

I would like to think that the government could have demonstrated a much tougher approach, trying to appease the issues of health care and looking at ways in which we could achieve another health care accord. This is very important to Canadians, and it would have been nice to see it being incorporated into a supplementary budget document and allow for some form of an agreement. I believe the government is selling short the importance of health care to Canadians.

Another issue that comes up when I am in my constituency is crime and safety. I have had the opportunity to raise this issue in the past. The government is very good at taking certain aspects of legislation, bringing them forward and trying to give the impression that it wants to get tough on crime when, in fact, it would be far better off coming up with bold initiatives under the budget that would prevent crimes from being committed in the first place.

I would ultimately argue that when we look at the budget, it is an issue of priorities. If the government wanted to have more of a profound impact on dealing with the issue of crime, it would need to invest in issues that would allow for more youth engagement in our communities in a more positive fashion.

This, again, is one of the deficiencies of this budget and, therefore, the budget implementation bill. The bill does nothing that is really creative or, using my previous example, that allows more youth being positively engaged in the communities we represent. That is important not only to my constituents, but to constituents as a whole.

We have talked a great deal within the Liberal Party. Since the leader of the Liberal Party was elected, one of the priority issues has been the middle class and what the government has done for its betterment.

I cannot help but notice that since the leader of the Liberal Party was elected, the term "middle class" has been used a great deal more inside the House. Whether it is the Conservatives or the New Democrats, they are talking about the middle class a whole lot more. I acknowledge that it is a positive thing. Prior to becoming the leader of the Liberal Party, far less attention was being given to the middle class.

• (1525)

It is interesting and encouraging to hear more talk about it from the government, but we would really like to see more tangible action that would make a positive difference for our middle class.

The leader of the Liberal Party has talked about this when we go forward. This is an issue on which the Liberal Party will continue to challenge the government, such as how it delivers on economic and social policies for Canada's middle class, which is of great importance.

I have also highlighted another deficiency of the government in regard to the infrastructure. Municipalities and communities across our country are in need of infrastructure dollars, and those infrastructure dollars need to be spent today. The government's focus has been to try to work on spin, saying that it is spending more on infrastructure and that it is a huge commitment. What it does not tell Canadians is that the bulk of that money will not be spent until well after the next federal election. The next real batch of any large amounts of money will not occur until the election year.

At a time when our municipalities and communities are in need, and there is a wonderful opportunity for the government to invest in our infrastructure today, sadly, the government has chosen not to do so. That is at great cost to the many different communities we all represent.

With those few words, I look forward to any questions there might be. I wish we did not need to have a time limit on this bill.

• (1530)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member referenced the middle class several times in his speech today, and to some extent I would hope we would be here for all Canadians, not necessarily just one segment. However, given he made that the focus of his speech, I would like to ask the member his thoughts on the recent Parliamentary Budget Officer's report with regard to \$30 billion less taxes predominantly going toward low to middle income Canadians, which helps put money in people's jeans, helps our local economies and supports our country.

I would also like to ask the member for his thoughts on the recent report in *The New York Times* saying that Canada's middle class is doing very well.

I find it interesting that he is talking about things and raising criticisms when our country has never been stronger on so many of these points.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, this is a bit of a problem. The Conservatives, whether it is that minister, or the Prime Minister or the people in short pants in the Prime Minister's Office, are very selective in the quotes and the stats they want to look at. Why not reflect on what their constituents might be telling them, which is that they have higher credit card debt, more and more consumer loans, mortgage rates, in terms of the amount of money borrowed, that are not going down. There is more debt out there. More and more youth and young adults are staying at home because they cannot afford to leave their parents' homes. More and more parents are having to cover the cost of our youth and young adults because of their inability to get out on their own.

These issues are more prevalent today than I have ever experienced, and I have been around as a parliamentarian for over 20 years. In the last number of years, we have seen dramatic increases in the reliance on the middle class, more than I have witnessed in the past.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member may be able to draw the odd stat here or an interesting story over there, but the reality is quite different. All he needs to do is canvass his constituents and he will find that the disposable income they had before just does not seem to be there, that the costs they are incurring today are quite different from what they were before. The amount of debt today is significantly higher than what it was before.

The middle class in Canada is hurting.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in relation to the question a moment ago from our hon. Conservative colleague, if he were to go knocking on doors or go to the mall this weekend and speak to constituents in his riding, if he were to tell them that everything was fine, that the cost of living was not going up, that they should not worry about the difficulties they thought they had in making ends meet because they really did not have any trouble at all and that they were in the best situation in the world, I wonder how they would react. I would ask him to talk on that.

I would also like him to talk about the fact that infrastructure improvements are important. I had a meeting recently with folks from the St. Margaret's Centre in my riding, who are working to replace the swimming pool there. They are looking for funding for infrastructure in a year in which the government has cut the annual funding for infrastructure from \$1.3 billion last year to only \$210 million this year, which when spread across the country, is pretty darn thin and does not allow much for things like pools, roads, transit, or other needed infrastructure in our communities.

• (1535)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right on in his assessment. Let me first deal with the issue of infrastructure. If we were to do as my colleague suggested, go into the constituencies and identify within our communities, we would find a very high demand for infrastructure dollars. There is no shortage of ideas and needs to build upon our infrastructure. Some of those could be relatively small community oriented. It could be a pothole in the street. It could also be an economic underpass that is needed to help drive an economy. Investing in infrastructure does not mean it is all lost tax dollars. If we have a healthy infrastructure, it leads to more economic activity in many different ways.

In regard to the other issue, in terms of communicating what is important, I love what the leader of the Liberal Party has been saying about the members of Parliament and the need to start recognizing that they need to go and represent Ottawa inside their constituencies. This is approach the Prime Minister has taken, that MPs represent Ottawa in their constituencies. The leader of the Liberal Party is suggesting that it be the other way around. It is time we started representing our constituents in Ottawa. Therefore, if we adopt that approach, I believe we would be better able to address the real needs of Canadians.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of the budget implementation act. This act would ensure that important provisions in budget 2014 are implemented. This is especially true in the case affecting my riding of Willowdale, which has a lot of small and medium-sized businesses.

Our government has never strayed from our commitment to strengthen our economy for Canadians and the determination to see our plan through without raising taxes. Our government believes the hard-earned money of families and entrepreneurs belongs in the pockets of families and entrepreneurs. Low taxes, positive and targeted measures for economic growth and for families, and balanced budgets are the right combination and the right path for economic growth.

Our plan has been reviewed by the business community. Recently the Conference Board of Canada performed a study on how Canada performs in our economy to find out which countries around the world are prosperous and which are not. The results are that Canada ranks fifth overall in economic performance among the top 16 countries around the world. This is good news for Canada as we continue to weather the global economic slowdown.

It is also important to note the recent report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. This report has concluded that personal income taxes are \$17.1 billion lower today and that Canadian consumers are paying about \$13.3 billion less in value-added taxes on their purchases of goods and services. I am proud of our government's record in standing up for Canadian consumers and families through these tax reductions. It is also very encouraging that recently the annual "Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections" confirmed that our Conservative government is on track to balance the budget in 2015 and is expected to have a surplus of \$3.7 billion in the 2015-16 fiscal year. Our plan is working for Canadians, and I am proud to stand in support of policies that benefit the people I represent.

As the world experienced the economic downturn, our government introduced targeted spending to help protect Canadian jobs and to support the economy. Despite ongoing global economic uncertainty, Canada has the best job-creation record, the lowest net debt ratio, and the strongest business investment growth in the G7. These temporary initiatives have helped create jobs and growth. However, our government understands the importance of balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility for Canada's long-term economic success.

Our government would invest \$11 million over two years and \$3.5 million per year ongoing to strengthen the labour market opinion process to ensure that Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs. We would also provide \$14 million over two years and \$4.7 million per year ongoing toward the successful implementation of an expression of interest economic immigration system to support Canada's labour market needs.

Our government believes that families and communities are valuable in our economy. That is why we would encourage competition and lower prices in the telecommunications market by capping wholesale domestic wireless roaming rates to prevent wireless providers from charging other companies who may be their competitors more than they charge their own customers for mobile voice, data, and text services.

We have introduced a search and rescue volunteers tax credit for search and rescue volunteers who perform at least 200 hours of service in a year.

We would increase the maximum amount of the adoption expense tax credit to \$15,000 to help make adoption more affordable for Canadian families.

We would exempt acupuncturists' and naturopathic doctors' professional services from the goods and services tax and harmonized sales tax. We would also expand the list of eligible expenses under the medical expense tax credit to include costs associated with service animals that are specially trained to assist individuals with severe diabetes, such as diabetes alert dogs, as well amounts paid for the design of an eligible individualized therapy plan.

It is important to note that since the government first introduced the economic action plan to respond to the global recession, and part of that plan was to address some specific areas in the Canadian economy that were affected by the downturn, Canada has recovered more than all of the output and all of the jobs lost during the recession, the result of the sound economic policy of our government. Since July 2009, employment has increased by over one million. It is more than 600,000 above its pre-recession peak, the strongest job growth among the group of seven countries over the recovery. Almost 90% of all jobs created since July 2009 are full-time positions, close to 85% are in the private sector, and over two-thirds are in high-wage industries. Real gross domestic product is significantly above pre-recession levels, the best performance in the G7.

• (1540)

Balancing Canada's budget is essential to the long-term health and prosperity of our economy. By keeping our fiscal house in order, we can help keep taxes low, social programs affordable, and the economy growing. That is why our Conservative government remains committed to balancing the budget in 2015. We would do this by controlling spending and making government more efficient with taxpayers' dollars. What we would not do is cut provincial transfers for important social programs like health care and education.

Overall, since 2010, our actions have saved taxpayers nearly \$19 billion per year. This prudent economic leadership has helped Canada maintain its strong fiscal position, with the best job creation record and debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Returning to balance will cement Canada's status as an economic powerhouse.

We all know that balanced budgets help keep taxes low, attract investment, and ensure sustainable social programs. Despite demands by the opposition for more government spending, we will continue to make government more efficient.

### *Government Orders*

For Ontario, the federal budget confirmed that provincial transfers would total \$19.2 billion in 2014-15. This is a whopping increase of 76% from the previous government. That government radically slashed transfers to Ontario, decimating health care, education, and other important social services that families rely on. Under our Conservative government, federal support has grown to historic levels and will continue to grow in the future.

Investment in Canada's public infrastructure creates jobs, promotes economic growth, and provides a high quality of life for families in every city and community across the country. Our government has made significant investments since 2006 to build roads, bridges, subways, rail, and much more. Furthermore, in 2013, our government announced the new Building Canada plan, a \$53-billion investment in critical infrastructure funding for the next 10 years. This is the largest and longest federal investment in job-creation infrastructure in Canada's history.

Our government recognizes that Canada's seniors have helped build and make our country great. That is why since 2006, about \$2.8 billion in annual tax relief has been provided to seniors and pensioners, including introducing pension income splitting, increasing the age credit amount by \$2,000, doubling the pension income credit, increasing the amount of the guaranteed income supplements, increasing the age limit for the RRSP-to-RRIF conversion, and establishing the landmark tax-free savings account.

Our government has been keeping Canada on the right path for economic growth. This includes lowering taxes over 160 times, which will save the average Canadian family nearly \$3,400 on their tax bills in 2014. We also cut taxes for job-creating businesses, allowing them to hire more workers and open up new markets for Canadian goods and services, most recently through the historic Canada-European Union trade agreement.

To help Canadians get the skills and training they need to succeed, our plan would also move forward with the Canada job grant to connect people looking for work directly with in-demand jobs. We would also introduce the Canadian apprentice loan to give access to student loans to apprentices for the first time ever.

This bill is great news for my constituents in Willowdale and all the small and medium-sized businesses that sustain our economy. I invite all members of the House to join me in supporting jobs, growth, and long-term economic prosperity.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his speech. He addressed several issues related to the budget.

*Government Orders*

The one that really caught my attention was tax cuts. This government likes to boast about bringing taxes down. However, inequality has gone up. There are ways to calculate that, such as the Gini coefficient.

Can my colleague explain why the Conservatives' tax measures have increased inequality? What would he do to correct the situation?

[English]

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, 34 years ago, I was in public accounting. I looked at the Canadian tax act, and it is probably one of the most fair tax acts in the world. It looks at transfer payments between those who earn more versus those who earn less, and through a graduated system and through a system of looking at the capital gains one gets from capital asset appreciation, people are taxed accordingly. There is no inequality in this. It is truly a fair tax system.

By raising the basic minimum for people to not have to pay taxes, we are bringing a lot of people who are on the lower end of the middle class into a position where they can have a good standard of living. This is equally applied across the nation, regardless of which industry people are working in.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the statements in my comments on the budget implementation bill was in regard to infrastructure.

That is the question I would like to pose to the member. Given that we have communities across Canada that are in great need of infrastructure dollars this year, why has the government chosen to close the tap?

Yes, there is still money that is going to be flowing, but it is close to 80% in terms of cuts. Some say it is closer to 90%. This is at a time when we could use that infrastructure, because infrastructure spending could actually add more value to economic activity going forward, not to mention social infrastructure.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, this is another area where I have some experience. I spent 10 years of my life building subway systems around the world, which is also very important and pertinent to Canadian infrastructure building.

The fact that we have allocated \$53 billion in long-term sustainable funding gives the municipalities an idea of how to move forward with their infrastructure spending.

Infrastructure spending has many facets. There is short-term infrastructure spending, which is for basic repairs and maintenance for potholes, bridges, roads, and so on. Then, as we direct how we can grow a community in a sustainable way, we need to look at how we build roads and highways, power plants, and other social infrastructure that sustains a community.

Then there is longer-term infrastructure building that looks at the high-end, very expensive expenditures, such as for high-speed rail and subway systems. To give an example, in 1985-86, when we were building the Vancouver SkyTrain, the average cost per kilometre was \$25 million. If we were to build that today, we would be paying \$300 million. Therefore, we need to do this in a very slow, gradual, and determined way.

• (1550)

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today in the House to address the House on Bill C-31, the budget implementation act for economic action plan 2014. Today I will be focusing my remarks on the new Building Canada plan, the largest long-term federal investment in infrastructure in Canadian history.

Our government is taking concrete steps to provide for the future of infrastructure across this country, including in my home province of Ontario, the city of Toronto, and my riding of Don Valley West.

Investing in quality public infrastructure helps build stronger communities. Whether it is in roads, bridges, public transit, or water systems, these investments make life easier, cleaner, and healthier. Targeted, sound infrastructure investment helps position cities across Canada as competitive economic engines where local businesses and industry leaders thrive. This is because it allows for goods to get to market faster, for trade corridors to move smoother, and for workers to get to their jobs more easily. All of this contributes positively to the long-term economic growth and productivity of our country.

For instance, past investments in Ontario have led to projects as diverse as the Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre in Toronto and the Woodward water treatment plant in Hamilton. These projects have increased economic activity and have led to job creation in the province while also making Ontario a better place to live.

Since 2006, our government has nearly doubled the average annual federal funding for thousands of provincial, territorial, and municipal infrastructure projects across the country.

In Ontario, this translates to \$12.3 billion over the last eight years. To put this in perspective, in the 13 years prior, under the Liberal Party, federal funding for infrastructure in Ontario amounted to just \$3.4 billion.

These investments have led to real, tangible infrastructure benefits that provide jobs and help improve transportation, commerce, and business across the province. With our new Building Canada plan, we will be continuing our support infrastructure for an even longer period of time.

The plan builds on this government's unprecedented investment in infrastructure and includes over \$53 billion in new and existing funding for provincial, territorial, and municipal infrastructure over 10 years. Combined with investments in federal infrastructure and first nations infrastructure, total federal spending for infrastructure will reach \$70 billion over the next decade.

Of the \$53 billion under the new Building Canada plan, \$47 billion consists of new funding for provincial, territorial, and municipal infrastructure starting in 2014-15 through three key funds:



*Government Orders*

First, the community improvement fund will provide \$32.2 billion over 10 years. This fund consists of an indexed federal gas tax fund and the incremental GST rebate for municipalities to build roads, public transit, recreational facilities, and other community infrastructure across the country.

Second, the new Building Canada fund will provide \$14 billion over 10 years to support infrastructure projects of national, regional, and local significance.

Third, a renewed P3 Canada fund will provide \$1.25 billion over five years to continue supporting innovative ways to build infrastructure projects faster and provide better value for Canadian taxpayers through public-private partnerships.

Let me speak first on the gas tax fund.

Our government has extended, doubled, indexed, and made permanent the federal gas tax fund. In other words, we took a temporary Liberal program and passed legislation so that it became permanent. We doubled it and then this year we indexed it. That means that the annual allocation will grow over time as the economy grows. In fact, it will grow by \$1.8 billion nationally over the next decade. As well, the eligible categories under the federal gas tax fund have been expanded and will now support local priorities like disaster mitigation, culture, tourism, sport, and recreation.

• (1555)

All of this means that Ontario municipalities will receive just over \$3.8 billion in flexible and dependable funding between 2014 and 2019 to support building local priorities. This, in turn, will support increased productivity and economic growth for the long term.

The other major component of the plan is the new Building Canada fund. It was launched on March 28 by my colleague, the Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs, and is comprised of \$4 billion for projects of national significance and \$10 billion in dedicated funding for provinces and territories. The national infrastructure component does not have specific allocations for each province and territory. Instead, funding will be selected on the basis of project merit guided by federal priorities.

Under the provincial-territorial infrastructure component, each province and territory will receive a base amount, plus a per capita allocation over the 10 years of the program. For Ontario, this represents almost \$175 million in dedicated federal funding under this fund alone to address core infrastructure projects.

Keeping in mind that this is a program of partnerships and support, cost-sharing requirements under the new Building Canada fund would require that other partners such as provinces, territories, municipalities, or the private sector also contribute to the projects. It is important to note that the federal government owns very little infrastructure compared to provinces, territories, and municipalities that own over 95% of public infrastructure in Canada. As such, it is very important for the federal government to be respectful of their authority. At the same time, keeping in mind that three levels of government and the private sector have a role to play in supporting public infrastructure, our government is committed to being there with our fair share.

Federal infrastructure investments through the new Building Canada plan will be focused on projects that contribute to Canada's economic growth and prosperity. We are making the funding available for projects that have a real impact on strengthening our economy, including transit and transportation infrastructure.

The categories under the new plan are generally the same as the original plan, but there has been realignment. For instance, more categories have been added to the gas tax fund, providing even more flexibility for municipalities to use their funding for their specific local infrastructure priorities. The categories under the new Building Canada fund are more focused, supporting core economic infrastructure like transportation infrastructure and disaster mitigation. This realignment of categories means that the gas tax fund provides flexibility for community-oriented infrastructure while the new Building Canada fund is focused on infrastructure projects that enhance Canada's economic growth and prosperity.

When Torontonians speak of infrastructure, they speak of traffic congestion and public transportation. That is why our government has made it a priority to invest in infrastructure that will help alleviate traffic congestion and modernize public transportation. It is vital to the future of Toronto. These investments will not only help create jobs and growth, but will also attract the businesses and private investment necessary to obtain long-term prosperity.

One of those projects is the completion of the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension. Thanks in part to an investment by our government, this subway will link Toronto and York Region and will provide a host of other benefits to the region. Our government has also committed that if the Scarborough subway expansion project is a priority for the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario, then our government will set aside \$660 million under Ontario's funding allocation to support the Bloor-Danforth subway line into Scarborough. This extension will further alleviate traffic congestion and help provide Scarborough with high-quality public transit. This commitment is in addition to the \$333 million committed to the Metrolinx Sheppard East light rail transit project.

Our government will also provide funding to deliver 78 Toronto Rocket subway cars for the TTC. These Rocket cars are not only more accessible, more comfortable, safer and more reliable, they also carry more people and will help keep Toronto's subway line world class. Together, these investments deliver over \$1 billion in federal funding to directly support the transit priorities of Toronto.

*Government Orders*

•(1600)

No federal government has ever made as strong a commitment to supporting infrastructure. Since 2006, our government has nearly doubled the average annual funding for provincial, territorial, and municipal infrastructure. Now we have the new Building Canada fund, a key component of the Building Canada plan, a plan that provides \$53 billion of stable, predictable funding over the next decade for public infrastructure across the country.

With the new Building Canada plan, we are on track to surpass the successes we have achieved to date. We will continue to support infrastructure that encourages job creation and economic growth and that contributes to the quality of life of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Don Valley West for his speech.

Like him, I am not so much worried as keenly interested in infrastructure development, which is way behind in Canada. He listed plenty of programs and figures in his speech, each more interesting than the last.

However, one question is bothering me: how can I be sure that the funds announced in the budget will actually be spent?

Over the past few years, we have seen a growing trend. Funds are announced but never spent, and then they are put back into general revenue and probably used for something else.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question because as Canadians I think we all wonder, will the money be spent? Will it arrive in my community? Clearly, our government is on track to balance the budget in 2015-16. We have made that commitment. We are going to provide a financial framework where this country will be strong, stable, and able to meet the needs of our communities for years to come.

Clearly, we made commitments in the Building Canada plan and infrastructure spending that will meet the needs of the Canadians and ideally, create a more prosperous Canada. With stable economic foundations, as we have planned with our budgeting, we are going to have the funding necessary to meet the needs of communities right across Canada.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the fact that in 2015-16, the government's intentions are to balance the budget and then he went on to comment about the infrastructure dollars.

Do the serious cuts in infrastructure spending this fiscal year have anything to do with the government's attempt to have a balanced budget for next year?

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, we have a budget that is coming into line that is going to put our country on a strong foothold financially for decades to come. We want to ensure that future generations are not hamstrung by debt, by deficit spending, by overspending, which I see in my own province. Clearly, in Ontario right now we have spending that is out of control. The government of the day is writing cheques that it cannot afford and things have to be cut.

In our planning, we have laid down a strategy in this budget. It is all right here and I encourage my hon. colleague to read it. It talks to some of the most incredible spending in infrastructure that this country has ever seen. It is \$53 billion over 10 years, the biggest commitment that we as a government, or any government, has made to this country in the history of Canada.

•(1605)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, may I just say thank you very much for your intervention earlier today while you were in the chair, explaining the process for voting to members. I really did appreciate the wisdom you gave us from the chair.

I want to ask my hon. colleague who gave a very eloquent, very articulate, and very accurate speech on the economic action plan what he thinks about the investments in the job grant and the apprenticeship loans.

I want to ask him this specifically because in my province, particularly in my area of central Alberta, we have almost a 4% job vacancy rate. We have more jobs available than we have people to fill them. This is common in Alberta. It is common in places to the east of us like Saskatchewan.

I came here as a member of Parliament in 2006 straight from being a faculty member at Red Deer College. It completely reorganized the college for training and educating people insofar as the trades. When it comes to deadlines for applications, there are cars lined up around the entire college with people trying to get in to take advantage of these programs.

Can my colleague tell us how important it is that we train the workforce of tomorrow, to have that Red Seal certification so that Canadians from all across Canada can go to those areas where those great paying jobs are available?

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, I come from an industry where an apprenticeship is a critical element, and finding people with the appropriate skills to do the job is very challenging today.

Our government has made a commitment to youth and to education through the apprenticeship skills development and training program, through which young people would develop skills, whether in the oil field, in the mechanical business, or in construction. Whatever their trade, we would give young people opportunities that we have not had in this country for quite a period of time.

We are going to see some great things with young people. Our young Canadians are highly qualified.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today on Bill C-31. Let me make it very clear right from the beginning that I will be speaking in opposition to this bill for a number of reasons.

One of the most critical reasons is that once again the government is choosing to shut down debate and has moved time allocation on a really critical bill. We have a bill of 350 pages. It addresses over 500 clauses and impacts 60 acts, yet debate is being limited.

*Government Orders*

It is an example of how budgets have been passed ever since I have been in Parliament. The government introduces a budget bill the size of a phone book in the majority of our municipalities and then wants us to vote on it holus-bolus. It throws in some tempting stuff, but there is also a lot of negative stuff that will force us to vote against it.

I have noticed one key thing that would really impact my community. The groups of people and businesses that grow jobs are the small and medium-sized enterprises across the country. They are the engines of our economy, but in this bill there is no small business job creation tax credit.

It is not there, even though it is a proven way to grow jobs in this country. They grow jobs in our communities. Money is spent in our communities, and we collect taxes that help to feed our health care and education systems and so on.

I also do not see anything significant in this budget that would address the critical area of the huge transaction fees that small businesses are burdened with over and over again, once again eating into their profit margins and their ability to survive, and let us not forget the high cost of interest rates on many credit cards.

We are also talking about a period in our history right now when we actually have more unemployed Canadians. Despite all of the rhetoric from my colleagues across the way, and they can say it as much as they like, it will not change reality. The reality is that we have 300,000 more Canadians unemployed today than we had before the depression. That is just not acceptable.

Today I heard a minister saying that we are doing better than other places in youth unemployment. We are not. We have youth unemployment in the double digits. In B.C., there are areas where the youth unemployment rate is at 15%.

By the way, let me make it clear that we have 300,000 more unemployed people today than in the past. A huge number of people in Canada are underemployed or working two or three jobs at minimum wage in order to make ends meet.

All of this is with a budget that would do nothing to address the huge deficit in manufacturing jobs. I do not see any major stimulus or investment in that area to get that sector moving and get our economy back on the road.

I also heard a minister saying earlier that we are managing to get through a lot of legislation. We have to be careful about how quickly we rush through legislation. I am reminded of Bill C-24. Only one component was the citizenship revocation component. Here is a bill that would fundamentally change what citizenship is, yet when it went to committee stage, not one witness or expert was heard from. We went directly from a very preliminary and time-allocated debate of six and a half hours in the House to then having no witnesses or expert testimony and going straight into clause by clause. That seems to be turning into a bit of a pattern with the Conservative government.

• (1610)

We also have the government rushing to sign agreements. For example, it seems to have lost the concern it had around privacy issues when it was in opposition. Canadians care very deeply about

the privacy issue, but once again we are giving away valuable information through the IRS and FATCA. The justification is that because the government may suspect someone could be doing something, it has a right to surveillance without any kind of legal right to do so. The attitude is, "We are the government, and we now have that right".

We have seen the attacks on the veterans. We have seen the attacks on small and medium-sized businesses. We have seen the attack on the privacy of Canadians. However, we have seen no real measures that would invest in a major way to get the economy going when it comes to manufacturing or addressing high youth unemployment.

Let me get to another disturbing aspect of the bill, the component dealing with the temporary foreign worker program.

Of course we are delighted to hear that the minister will be making some changes. This is the same minister who has been making changes for the last little while. Those changes have not stopped abuse by some employers, nor has it stopped the flood of temporary foreign workers. When we have a high number of temporary foreign workers at the same time that we have high youth unemployment and high labour availability, it really is disturbing.

I had the privilege of listening to the Parliamentary Budget Officer this morning. He said that although there is no overall skills shortage in this country, we do not even have the data. I have known that for a while. What is disturbing is that the Parliamentary Budget Officer said on record that we do not have the data to help us make informed decisions, whether it comes to immigration or granting LMOs, which are labour mobility orders. We do not have the data we need to plan for the future when it comes to skills investment and apprenticeships and growing the skill sets that we need. We do not have the data to guide our young generation on where they should be investing their energy as they look to the future.

Let us take a look at the temporary foreign worker program, which has absolutely ballooned. Now we are to believe a minister that the government will increase penalties for the employer. It is in the bill, but that is cold comfort for the two waitresses in Saskatchewan who were laid off from their jobs while temporary foreign workers were brought in. It is little comfort to the young people in Victoria who had their hours reduced, were not hired, or were let go because temporary foreign workers were brought in.

We are also worried about the vulnerability of temporary foreign workers. Our country has a proud history of having immigration policies that build our nation, but in this bill we have veered away from that. These are not my words. A temporary foreign worker, a young man who was here from Belize, said that it was beginning to feel like slavery.

*Government Orders*

We have heard of all these horrendous abuses. I have talked to many employers and others who have said that they have reported abuse to the CBSA and to CIC, but the only time four names appeared on a list was when CBC broke a story. It made national news, and on a Sunday afternoon, lo and behold, there were four names, but none of the others. There is absolute evidence that there are other people who have reported abuse, but their names were not there.

Clearly, then, there are many things that need to be addressed.

I will finish by saying that this budget fails to invest in growing jobs for the future, fails our youth, and fails working people, because it does not have anything major within it for them.

• (1615)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to pick up on the member's ideas and thoughts in regard to the temporary foreign worker program.

We need to recognize that it is a program that when properly managed, actually assists Canada's economy. It builds and supports certain industries and so forth.

However, we do need to recognize the mismanagement. My colleague and I were at the immigration committee, where we have had discussions in the past. We need to emphasize that in the last couple of years we have seen skyrocketing numbers of temporary foreign workers. No doubt that has had an impact, but it is the management of the program that has created the crisis, to the degree that over the last few years, the program has been constantly surrounded by issues.

The program itself, managed properly, does wonders for our country, but not when it is mismanaged. Does the member concur with my thoughts in regard to the management of the program itself?

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me make it clear that at no time have we said that the whole program needs to be scrapped.

What we have said is that the program needs to be fixed. It got broken. With all respect to my colleague from Winnipeg North, it got broken and doors got opened wider under the Liberal government. Of course, since the Conservatives have been in power, we have seen the doors taken off, and it is more like a flood has occurred.

We are seeing a temporary foreign worker program that is not being used properly, as we can see if we just sit back and take a look at it. There is very high unemployment and the PBO and all these other bodies and experts in this area are saying that there are no major labour or skills shortages, yet a stream of temporary foreign workers is being brought in, in huge numbers, in the low-skilled category. I hate that term, but that is the term in the act and the regulations.

A huge number of temporary foreign workers are being brought in, which suppresses wages, keeps Canadians out of work, and exploits vulnerable workers.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since we are talking about the budget and my colleague is very familiar with the temporary foreign worker program, I would like to ask her a question about that.

Because of the moratorium, skilled restaurant industry workers, such as *maîtres d'hôtel*, have been refused entry at the airport. They have landed in Canada and been refused entry. In my riding, we needed these skilled restaurant industry workers, and now we do not have them.

Can she comment on the impact of the Conservatives' decisions on regional economies?

[*English*]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I would love to be able to answer this question.

We have a government that mismanaged a program so badly that the minister was, because of the public embarrassment in the media, forced to declare a moratorium. We support that moratorium, by the way.

What we need to do is address this issue and get the data that identify the real skills shortages. If the workers being brought are not being brought in for temporary work, then we should not be abusing the temporary foreign worker program in order to bring in cheap labour, thereby suppressing the wages of others.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I truly am delighted to be speaking to Bill C-31, which is the first of what will be two budget implementation bills to implement economic action plan 2014.

The bill would implement some very important parts of the economic action plan. I am going to talk about just a few. What I would like to do is talk about what I have seen at the natural resources committee over the past seven years since I started chairing that committee.

We have heard some common themes come from companies involved in developing our natural resources and creating tens of thousands of jobs. These are good, high-paying jobs right across the country. There are four different themes that I hear, and it is the fourth that relates directly to this budget implementation bill.

First, they made it very clear that they need a regulatory system that they can count on and that will work in a timely fashion.

Second, they said Canada's business taxes were too high, that they were higher than many other countries, including our neighbour to the south, the United States. That is what they said six and seven years ago.

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The third thing they said was there is a lot of work to be done yet on working co-operatively with first nations. Almost any natural resource project is in an area that affects first nations; and therefore working very co-operatively with first nations includes hiring from reserves in the area, trying to help first nations form companies, allowing the companies to develop, and then hiring them back on contract. This co-operation with neighbouring first nations is something they said is absolutely essential to develop any kind of a major natural resource project.

Fourth, they said there is a desperate shortage of skilled workers in this country.

Let us see what has happened in the past four and five years since I was hearing these problems and this direction given day after day at the natural resources committee.

First, a recession hit us. There was a worldwide recession. Canada really was drawn along. It resulted not at all from what was happening in our country, but of course we were affected, like other countries right around the world. In spite of that, since the end of that recession Canadian businesses have created over a million jobs, and they are good, well-paying jobs, the kind of jobs we would like our children and our grandchildren to have. We have seen that happen.

I am going to talk about what I have seen in terms of development in those four areas that I have talked about.

First is the regulatory process. Eight years ago when we got into government, we had a regulatory process that was completely unreliable and that could stretch on for seven or eight years, and longer for some major natural resources projects. We have seen mines for which it has taken seven or eight years to get through the process. In many cases, companies have just given up and gone off to somewhere else where they had a better system.

That has changed completely. Now Canada has one of the best, most reliable and shortest regulatory processes in the world. We refer to this as our responsible resource development process. What that means for major projects is that we have one process for each major natural resource project—one review for one project. It has made a huge difference. Whether the process is guided by the province or by the federal government, it means that the process is going to be done in a reliable time. For some projects the government portion can take six months, for others a year, for others a year and a half, but it is a set timeline and government has to meet those guidelines. It has really shortened up the time the process takes. It has made a huge difference.

Within that process is the environmental review portion, and that has been improved monumentally.

• (1625)

Instead of having environmental evaluations done by the federal government, provincial governments, local governments, and other groups separately, now all of these groups get together in the one process and we have a much better environmental review, which would include information from all parties that have an interest in the process.

The responsible resource development process really has worked. Even when the answer is no in a project—and our regulators have

said no to several projects—companies are not nearly as upset as before because they get that answer after six months, a year, or a relatively very short period of time, so they can get on to the next thing they want to work on. That means an awful lot, as well.

The second major change we have made is that we have reduced business tax by 35% since we have come into office. That is phenomenal. We have the lowest tax since 1960. That is a tremendous turnaround. Our tax regime for business is lower now than in the United States, and we have reaped the benefits. We have had head offices of companies come from the United States and other countries around the world and set up in Canada. The top jobs in any company are the head office jobs.

Of course, the example we love to point to is Tim Hortons. That great Canadian icon moved its head office from the United States to Canada because of our tax regime, our regulatory process, our reduction in red tape—all of that package.

We have made the changes needed when it comes to the tax system. We are working hard on reducing red tape. As I said already, we have put in place a reliable regulatory system.

The third component of what would allow companies to successfully develop natural resources in this country is to create a working relationship with first nations that is co-operative and that is effective. There has been, I think, great progress in that regard.

It is really sad when we see what happened with the first nations education act. Grand Chief Atleo signed onto our government's proposal for a long-term, well-funded program for first nations, and then others came in and just destroyed all of the work that had been done on this major development.

We see that kind of negative aspect of working with first nations. However, I want to tell members that I have seen a lot of really positive things happen in the relationship between first nations across this country and businesses that are developing resource projects or developing natural resources across the country. To me, that is hope, when there was very little hope 10 years ago.

I encourage companies to continue this good work of hiring people and training people from first nations. Often, companies will start training people from first nations three or five years before the project actually goes ahead; so they are training the people they know they are going to need. That is good for companies. That is good for people living on reserves across this country. It is good for first nations.

The fourth area that has been a problem—and it still is to some extent, but there has been great progress made—is the area of providing the workers needed for companies to develop natural resources across this country. We have done an awful lot of things already.

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We are putting in place a program to match workers with jobs across the country. That is very important. We have put in place the Canada job grants program to train workers actually within companies that are working. We are putting in place the internships for apprentices, again, providing important on-the-job training. We are creating the Canada apprenticeship loan program—\$100 million in interest-free loans for apprentices enrolled in the Red Seal; and that is after we had already put in place programs to give Red Seal students \$4,000 to encourage them to continue.

A lot of good work has been done. There is a lot of progress. There is still work to be done. However, I look forward to our government continuing that good work.

• (1630)

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in terms of the member's reference to temporary foreign workers, we learned today that the transportation safety system, particularly with regard to airlines, is not very healthy. In fact, Transport Canada is planning for more accidents on the airline side. It was an astounding revelation today.

One of the things we learned was that there are far fewer inspectors, far fewer inspections going on, and I notice that the budget contains \$44 million less than last time, which is about a 20% decrease, for aviation safety.

However, we also learned that there are some airlines using temporary foreign workers as pilots, and in Canada, we do not actually check their credentials. Transport Canada has no mechanism for checking the credentials of temporary foreign pilots; it trusts the airline that is bringing them in that these people are properly credentialed.

Can the member comment on the airline safety problems this country faces?

**Mr. Leon Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, one thing I cannot help but notice is how opposition members try to find negative aspects to anything we are talking about. They just look for the darkness in everything, instead of being upbeat and looking at the reality.

The reality is that Canada is doing better than most countries in the world. We are doing pretty well. Our airline system is one of the best in the world. Temporary foreign workers are brought in as pilots from time to time, because the reality is that during the heavy holiday season airlines need more pilots.

We simply do not have the Canadian pilots trained, and so we do bring in some temporary foreign workers. These pilots are credentialed. They are completely competent. Nobody would suggest that they are not some of the best in the world. The reality is that we have a great aviation system.

The problem is that, when these members make comments like that, they are looking at one little aspect of the budget and they are not tying it in with the rest of the budget. They are not tying it in with the improvements we have made to these systems.

They have to start doing that and try to be a little more upbeat and a little more positive, because we have so much to be positive about.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member goes on and on about all the good things, and I am not saying that

there are not good things in the budget, but what about all of the things that are not in there? What about the cuts for the veterans?

We have a “Rock the Hill” presentation going on, and veterans continue talking outside. Veterans comment that what is missing in their support system is enormous. I think it is terribly disappointing to hear the comments the veterans are making.

Now, in the budget, I believe you mentioned \$6 million for funerals. Well, that is only if one qualifies, and in order to qualify, one has to earn almost zero, as an individual, and so it would not apply, so with all of the wonderful things you are saying are in the budget, what happened to veterans? What happened to seniors? There is nothing in there for seniors either.

I would like to hear the member's comments on what the Conservatives plan to do for veterans.

• (1635)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. Before I go to the hon. member, I would remind this member and all others to direct their questions and comments to the Chair rather than directly at their colleagues.

The hon. member for Vegreville—Wainwright.

**Mr. Leon Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question, but her question really is based on a false premise. She said that there have been cuts for veterans, but there have not been cuts in any way. In fact, we have put billions of dollars more for veterans. That is the reality.

Are there some veterans who fall through the cracks? Yes there are, and that is really sad. We acknowledge that and are trying to stop it. One cannot get it right every time, but I will tell the member that the veterans affairs committee that has been working on that has reached an agreement on a way they can fill some of the gaps that were there.

I will tell the member that her government put in place a decade of darkness when it came to the military and when it came to veterans. We fixed that, and we are fixing things for veterans. They are much better off than they ever have been, and they are much better off than veterans in any other country around the world.

We have made good progress. Is there more to be done? Yes, of course. Is it right when a veteran falls through the cracks? Of course not. Nobody wants that, and we are going to do the best we can to stop it.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have further proof today, in the House, that absurdity never killed anyone. If it did, the members of the government party would be suffocating already.

We have here before us Bill C-31, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures. The word “certain” usually means “some”. However, this bill is 360 pages long and is amending 60 acts. If this is the Conservative government's definition of the word “certain”, I can understand why its habit of introducing mammoth, “dinosaur”, omnibus or catch-all bills—call them what you will—is increasingly upsetting not only the members of the opposition, but also all Canadians who follow the government's business and agenda and who struggle to see themselves in it and to tell the good from the bad.

In addition, the Conservatives are in such a rush to ram this other mammoth bill through, that entire clauses could not be examined properly. What is even odder is that when we take a closer look we find clauses that are amending mistakes made by the Conservative government in a previous mammoth bill, as if the Conservatives had a hard time learning from their mistakes or, worse still, as if they thought they were immune to mistakes. However, I think that we should move as quickly as possible to start studying bills for what they are and stop using these catch-all bills.

Canadians are well aware of this trickery. Amidst a flood of measures, the government is trying to quietly pass major amendments that would not be easily accepted if they were fully transparent and especially if they led to real debates.

By cooking up omnibus bills, the Conservatives are raising the expectations of Canadians but, more importantly, filling them with disappointment. The Conservatives would have us believe that they are taking care of everything, while fundamental questions are left unanswered.

Bill C-31 proposes nothing about job creation, nothing about reversing the Conservatives' cuts to infrastructure and health care, and nothing about small communities having access to the Building Canada fund.

Canadians are getting tired of these legislative tactics. However, they can count on the New Democrats to get to the bottom of things and provide constructive criticism of the Conservative budget. It is clear that, after analyzing this budget, we are opposed to the content of the bill and the undemocratic process used by the Conservatives to expedite its passage by Parliament.

Why? I am going to expand on a number of aspects that I and millions of other Canadians find unacceptable. I have a lot to say and I will need more than the 10 minutes allotted to me for this debate, which is subject to the 70th time allocation motion. That is an unparalleled number in the history of Canada and probably the only thing Canadian voters will remember in 2015, when the time comes to vote. I am counting on you, Mr. Speaker, to interrupt me when my time is up.

First, let us talk about rail safety since rail safety, transparency and tragic events are three things that we in Quebec are particularly

sensitive about. Since the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, the issue of rail safety has become a particularly sensitive subject for Canadians, especially Quebecers. However, this would not have been such a hot issue had the Conservatives done their job.

The NDP members were very active in the wake of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. We continued to criticize the Conservatives' and the Liberals' approach of deregulation, which has resulted in the industry regulating itself. We also met with people in a tour of key ridings.

Despite the disaster and the urgent need to provide satisfactory answers to Canadians, this bill allows the government to amend and repeal many rail safety regulations without having to inform the public. This could affect engineering standards, employee training, hours of work, maintenance and performance. It makes absolutely no sense. This measure alone probably warrants more time than what we have to debate the entire bill.

● (1640)

As a result of these amendments, Canadians will not be informed when the Conservatives weaken the safety measures, and experts will not be able to share their opinions with the minister before the amendments take effect. What a great system, if you can call it that.

I would be really curious to know the thoughts of all the people who live near the railroad tracks where the trains pass, both the long trains carrying hazardous materials that could cause new catastrophes and other trains carrying unknown cargo.

Since I am talking about transport, I would be remiss if I did not mention the way the Conservative government is handling the file of the new Champlain Bridge over the St. Lawrence. I would like to emphasize the words “new Champlain Bridge over the St. Lawrence” because we are actually talking about a replacement bridge, not a new bridge.

The NDP has continued to pressure the federal government on this issue, speaking out about how slow it has been to take action, its uncompromising attitude and its lack of willingness to work with the other levels of government. Any decision about a toll, for example, will affect the region's transportation system, which is why it is important to work with the partners involved.

Many Quebecers are disappointed with Bill C-31, particularly when it comes to this issue. The bill exempts the Champlain Bridge from some of the key consumer protection and safety requirements in the User Fees Act and the Bridges Act. What is more, it gives the minister responsible the power to exempt this project from all federal laws, which is a *modus operandi*, or way of doing things, we have seen over and over again. More and more power is being given to the minister so that he can secretly do what he does not have the courage to do publicly.

Take, for example, the obligations to notify and consult people, justify the tolls, create an independent advisory panel to address complaints, reduce tolls deemed to be excessive and call on the Minister of Public Works and Government Services to verify whether the project is complete and safe. All of these obligations may not apply to the Champlain Bridge.

*Government Orders*

The NDP proposed four amendments in committee to prevent a toll from being imposed. All of the partners and almost all Montrealers are opposed to this toll. Why does the government not want to work more co-operatively with the parties involved and find real solutions for all those who use the Champlain Bridge on a daily basis and who have real difficulty getting around Montreal? The question remains, and it does not seem as though we are going to get an answer today.

This is not simply about building a bridge; it is about finding solutions to a major problem for the day-to-day life of Montrealers, for Quebec businesses and, lastly, for the Quebec and Canadian economy. This problem is public transportation.

The intellectual laziness of the Conservatives in this matter is enormous. Toronto and Montreal are facing major challenges in this area, and very little, if anything at all, has been done.

The Conservatives have also made the economic situation more difficult. I said that we were keeping a critical eye on this omnibus bill, but we are maintaining a constructive attitude, as well. We work for Canadians, and our responsibility is not only to point out the Conservative government's incompetence, but also to tell the government today what we want to see in a budget.

I would like to mention a few important facts and figures to remind us what condition our country and many Canadians are in. Generally speaking, the Canadian economy is not exactly thriving, and the Conservatives' economic policy is doing nothing to revitalize it.

Our manufacturing sector continues to struggle, and 400,000 good jobs in this industry have disappeared under the Conservative watch. Sales continue to flag, and are \$14.5 billion behind what they were in 2006. There is a deficit of \$61 billion on the current commercial trade balance. I could mention many other facts.

I had hoped to have the time to talk about measures that we want to put in place, and I hope that I will be able to expand on this during questions. Since I need to wrap up, this is what we would like to see in the budget.

I hope I will be able to fit everything in. This is what Canadians expect of their government. These are proposals for tomorrow, for the day when the NDP will form the government, because we have a long list of proposals and solutions for the current situation.

• (1645)

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech, which was elegant and relevant, as always.

Since my colleague brought up the issue of the Champlain Bridge, I would just like to say that we have worked very hard. The people of my riding, myself included, are directly affected by this. For the first time in political history, the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government agreed that the bridge would not have a toll. I have said it before and I will say it again. Everyone in the area made it very clear that they did not want a toll because, as my colleague said, it is a replacement bridge and not a new piece of infrastructure, like the rest of the new highways. Given that the minister said, "no toll, no bridge", our constituents will have to use other bridges that

are already in questionable condition. Then there is the fact that traffic increases greenhouse gas emissions.

I would like to ask my colleague why the government, as usual, is not being transparent and why it does not want to work with stakeholders—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple: that is how this government operates.

I have had the opportunity to see that first-hand since 2011, and my colleagues who were elected before that have witnessed it for much longer. It really is how this government operates.

I represent the riding of Trois-Rivières. Obviously, I am not going to be using the Champlain Bridge every day. It is not part of my regular driving route. However, if I, the MP for Trois-Rivières, am perfectly aware of the problems with traffic on the Island of Montreal and its south shore, how is it possible that the government—which should be listening to all Canadians—is not aware? Is the government turning a deaf ear?

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. Given that my colleague is the chair of the NDP's Quebec caucus, I am pleased to ask him what he feels is this budget's greatest lost opportunity with Quebec.

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, as always, the greatest lost opportunity was to be clear. People are becoming more and more cynical towards politicians. The way in which our activities have been conducted in the last few days, the 70th time allocation and the umpteenth omnibus bill—there are so many of them, you will forgive me for having lost count—everything simply causes confusion and increases cynicism among all voters. There are certainly some measures that we would like to support after having discussed them more fully but, at the moment, we are completely gagged.

• (1650)

[English]

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke a lot about transportation and gridlock and how this budget would not do much to improve the infrastructure situation.

I am a representative of the greater Toronto area. Gridlock is a huge concern for many people in the city of Toronto. It takes over two hours for my constituents to get to work because they rely on public transit, or they take the 401 or the DVP, which are crumbling. It is just a horrible situation for people who commute.

Does my hon. colleague think the budget would do anything to support infrastructure improvements and improve the gridlock situation for my constituents and many others in the Toronto area?



*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. A very small part of the infrastructure program will go directly to preparing or developing major urban centres for the 21st century. The Conservatives still have the mentality that infrastructure spending, to improve public transit infrastructure, for example, is a cost rather than an investment that will pay for itself in a few years.

[*English*]

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak to the budget implementation act, the centrepiece of our Conservative government's economic agenda for Canada. There are three strong themes running through this budget: one, supporting jobs and growth; two, supporting families and communities; and, three, balancing the budget.

Jobs and opportunities for Canadians remain our government's top priorities. We have seen over a million net new jobs created since the global economic slowdown. This has reduced the unemployment rate to 6.9% and we will do even more to support job creation with this budget.

Measures we are taking include providing \$100 million in interest-free loans to apprentices in the trades, \$55 million for paid internships for recent graduates, and \$75 million for the targeted initiative for older workers program to support older workers who want to participate in the job market. We are also cutting red tape for businesses by eliminating the requirement for 800,000 payroll remittances by 50,000 small and medium-sized businesses. As well, we are launching the new Canada job grant program. Canadians will now be able to qualify for up to \$15,000 per person to get the skills and training they need for in-demand jobs.

British Columbia will also benefit directly in this budget as our government will be providing \$222 million for world-class physics research in the TRIUMF laboratory at the University of British Columbia.

We have also announced the biggest infrastructure investment in Canadian history, an amazing \$70 billion for new highways, bridges, ports and municipal utilities. Approximately \$9 billion of those funds will be spent in British Columbia. This investment will keep a lot of trades employed in my community and across the nation, as well as help modernize and improve the efficiency of our economy to help Canada compete globally.

Indeed, our outlook extends past our borders. As a member of the international trade committee, I am an enthusiastic supporter of our drive to diversify and expand our export markets. Our focus on developing our exports has been characterized by the successful conclusion of negotiations for a free trade agreement with the European Union. The benefits Canada will realize from this agreement alone are an impressive \$12 billion increase in the Canadian economy. That is equivalent to creating 80,000 new jobs or boosting the average Canadian family's income by \$1,000 annually.

As the House knows, we have also reached a free trade deal with South Korea. I know this deal will be a great boost to our agricultural

sector initially, but it will also benefit many other sectors in years to come.

However, there are other free trade agreements we are working toward that will continue to grow our economy, expand our exports and create wealth and high-paying jobs for Canadians.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations could lead to another huge trade deal for Canada and guaranteed access to many of the most populous nations of the world. Indeed, we are already trading with the TPP nations, but a free trade agreement would allow unhindered, duty-free access for Canadian exports. This deal would give a huge boost to industry in my home province.

For instance, in 2012, British Columbia exported almost \$4.9 billion in wood and related products to TPP member countries. However, currently, Canada's exports of wood and related products face tariffs of up to 10% in Japan, 31% in Vietnam and 40% in Malaysia. Australia has tariffs of up to 5% on Canadian lumber. Paper and paperboard products face tariffs of up to 27% in Vietnam and 25% in Malaysia.

Eliminating these tariff barriers would significantly support sales of British Columbia's world-class wood and related products in the lucrative TPP market of 792 million consumers, meaning more jobs for British Columbians. Our economic action plan creates jobs directly through spending on infrastructure and it will support the creation of many more through expanded trade opportunities for our exporters.

The second major theme in our budget is supporting families and communities. We are accomplishing this goal through a number of key measures. One, which does not always receive much notice but greatly impacts our quality of life, is the annual federal transfer to the provinces for health care and welfare.

● (1655)

The previous Liberal government devastated our health care system by slashing transfers to the provinces. Despite the very real fiscal challenges we have faced over the past number of years, we have not cut a penny of health care funding.

On the contrary, we have increased funding for hospitals, doctors, nurses and equipment every year since we formed government. This year, my province of British Columbia will receive a record \$5.8 billion to fund hospitals, housing and other social programs. Some of those funds will be used to support health care providers in my constituency such as the Peace Arch Hospital in White Rock.

We are also taking action in the budget to protect consumers. One action we are taking is addressing the unjustified Canada-U.S. retail price gap through new legislation. This issue is of particular concern to retailers in my border community as they lose critical business to American retailers which are just a short drive away.

*Government Orders*

We also committed to recognizing and supporting those who have risked all to defend our freedoms. Budget 2014 provides \$2 billion to enhance the new veterans charter in support of serious injured veterans.

The third theme in our budget is balancing the books. Everyone knows that the global economic downturn hit government revenues hard. Before the global recession hit, our Conservative government paid down \$37 billion in debt, bringing Canada's debt to its lowest level in 25 years.

Our fiscal responsibility and aggressive debt reduction placed Canada in the best possible position to weather the global recession. When the global recession hit, we made a deliberate decision to run a temporary deficit to protect our economy and jobs.

Many governments around the world are still struggling to tame their national finances. However, through prudent financial management, including trimming the size of our federal government departments and agencies, we are on track to be the first G7 nation to balance our budget.

Overall, since 2010, actions we have taken to make government more effective and efficient are saving taxpayers roughly \$19 billion a year.

Canada's net debt to GDP ratio is 36.5%. This is the lowest level among G7 countries, with Germany being the second lowest at 56.3% and the G7 average at 90.2%.

Economic action plan 2014 would bring the projected deficit down to \$2.9 billion by 2014-15, and forecasts a surplus of \$6.4 billion in 2015-16. That is extremely good news for Canadian taxpayers.

Despite the fact that we have already cut personal and business taxes substantially, a balanced budget will allow more room for tax cuts and debt reduction in the years to come. Already, the average family of four has seen their taxes cut close to \$3,400 annually, giving them greater flexibility to make choices that are right for them.

Likewise, seniors have also seen substantial tax relief. Pension income splitting, a \$2,000 increase in the age credit, doubling of the pension income credit, reducing the GST from 7% to 5% and other measures have reduced the taxes seniors pay by \$2.8 billion annually.

These measures are particularly important to my community, as retirees choose to relocate to South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale from all over Canada to take advantage of our temperate climate and scenic coastal beauty.

Corporate taxes have also been cut from 21% to 15%, making Canada an attractive place for international businesses to locate and invest, creating more high paying jobs for Canadians. In fact, since 2006, we have cut taxes nearly 160 times, reducing the overall tax burden to its lowest level in 50 years.

Economic action plan 2014 delivers additional tax relief by introducing the search and rescue volunteers tax credit and acknowledging the valuable contributions ground, air and marine

search and rescue volunteers provide to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1700)

A future budget surplus would allow our government to move forward with promised tax cuts, making the tax burden we carry even lighter and allowing Canadians greater freedom to make their own financial choices to save, invest and spend.

I call on all members to support this budget implementation bill.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize because I am going to have to go to the dark side again.

I appreciate the speech from my hon. colleague and although there may be some good things in the bill, I have to ask him a question.

The member mentioned the work being done for veterans. This afternoon, and yesterday, a number of veterans, some very senior individuals, were here to protest the treatment of veterans by the government because of cuts and other losses of services to these individuals who, quite frankly, made it possible for all of us to be here.

Would the hon. member say that it is right to be balancing the books on the backs of our veterans?

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Mr. Speaker, when we look at what we have done for veterans, any objective observer would realize that we have invested an enormous amount of money to support them.

In my speech I talked about the \$2 billion that is being added to the new veterans charter program for seriously injured veterans. However, overall, our government has increased spending on veterans' services by \$4.6 billion.

In addition to that, I would draw to the member's attention that the all-party committee that addresses veterans' care has also made additional recommendations to the government, which are also being considered.

There is no doubt that the care of veterans is a priority for Canadians. Certainly those veterans within my community are well aware of that.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard a number of the member's colleagues talk about the amount of money the government is investing in infrastructure. They keep on saying "record amounts" of infrastructure dollars are going into infrastructure over the next 10 years. I am looking for the member to acknowledge the facts.

The fact is that the vast majority of the money the government keeps referring to is not going to be spent until well after the next federal election. Then, when we look at the infrastructure dollars that will be spent this year, it is a substantial decrease from what it was in the previous year.

Would the member not agree with those facts?

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Mr. Speaker, again, I know my colleague was not here when the previous Liberal government had to deal with difficult spending choices. However, the choices it made were devastating for my province of British Columbia. The cuts it made to health care and social transfers were crippling at the time.

*Government Orders*

Under our government, we have invested substantially in infrastructure that benefits everyone in the community and certainly improves the efficiency within our economy. The historic 10-year agreement that we have put in place for infrastructure is approximately \$70 billion, the largest in Canadian history.

Despite the fact that it goes beyond the next election, the government should be credited for thinking in the longer term. Too often governments in this place look for the short-term hits, the short-term wins that will benefit them politically. However, our government has the foresight to look well beyond the following election to do what is best for Canadians in the long term.

• (1705)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pity that we are still having this debate under a time allocation motion. Once again, we have an omnibus bill. We have heard this tune before, it seems to me. It is still the same old story: time allocation motions and omnibus bills are imposed on us.

I do not know how this is seen elsewhere, but in my riding, my constituents are fed up with this way of doing things. I cannot condemn it strongly enough.

Let us go back to the budget itself. What is a budget for a government? As we know, one of Parliament's main functions is to vote on a budget. A budget sets specific directions for a country.

However, I am beginning to question that. What do we have in this budget? Do we have a vision for the future, structural projects, or something to get us excited about the future? No. Does it offer any hope to the unemployed, whose number has increased by more than 300,000 since 2008? No. Does it offer any hope for investments in social housing? No. Does it offer any hope of reducing inequalities between Canadians? The answer is no, seeing that Canada's Gini coefficient is increasing. Are we going to reduce tax evasion? Once again, the answer is no. Is this government working to improve Canada's brand image abroad? Not at all.

For example, the next Universal Exposition will be held from May 1 to October 31, 2015, in Milan. Italy invited all United Nations member states to attend, and 144 have confirmed their presence. Did Canada say it would be there?

**An hon. member:** I suspect not.

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** My colleague is right. The answer is no. Twenty million people are expected to attend the exposition. The theme, which is in line with Canada's reality, is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life".

Can Canada play an important role internationally in these two sectors? Yes. Are we going to be there? No, and that is a real shame.

As it happens, next week is Tourism Week in Canada. What is the government doing to promote tourism internationally? Nothing. I sometimes wonder whether the government is afraid of competition in the tourism industry. Does it want to compete in the tourism industry?

Even though we agree that private businesses should take care of various kinds of tourism in each of our ridings, we know that

governments compete to attract tourists to their country. That is how it works.

Has the Minister of State for Tourism, the member for Beauce, done anything about this recently? I do not think so, and it shows.

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada is currently lobbying MPs in an effort to attract more Americans. Imagine that. The tourism industry is pretty big, after all. It is an \$84-billion industry that accounts for 610,000 jobs. We can do better.

For a long time now, international tourism has been tapering off. Ten years ago, domestic tourism accounted for 65% of revenues, but now it is 80%.

According to the OECD, Canada's ability to attract international tourists has waned. We dropped from 7th to 16th globally, and we are still losing steam. Those numbers are from two years ago. That is unacceptable.

Across the way, they say we need to balance the budget. There are two ways to do that. They can cut and cut, and the Conservatives sure know how to do that, but they can also boost revenue. We have reason to believe that tourism can help with that. However, it does not look like the government is very interested in boosting revenue.

There are other issues to talk about too.

• (1710)

For example, is anyone talking about clean energy? Is there a vision for the future? What about transportation, housing and energy? How do we see ourselves in 10, 20 or 30 years? What type of society will our children live in? Maybe it will be a society with electric cars, and wind or solar energy. European countries such as Germany and Spain, among others, and even Asian countries such as China and the Philippines, are investing heavily in solar energy. We must diversify our energy sources and come up with a clean energy strategy. It is important.

It is not good enough to say, as the Minister of the Environment has been saying for the past few days, that given that Canada is responsible for only 2% of greenhouse gases, we really do not have to do much. Things have already been pushed to the limit and that 2% is much greater than the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

As a wealthy, leading-edge, and technologically advanced society, we have to make the most of our knowledge and capacities to show leadership on the world stage and provide technologies that produce cleaner energy. Are we working on that? Not at all.

According to economists, this budget will slow down growth in a fragile context. There is some recovery, but it is weak. Everyone says so. This is not new. Is there anything in this budget to help those who are looking for a job? Today, there are 300,000 more people looking for work than there were in 2008. There are currently six unemployed people for every available job. We can do better than that.

*Government Orders*

Is there anything in this budget to improve everyday life for average Canadians? Are we helping our constituents? We have to wonder. Are retirees well served by this budget? Not really, and they might even lose their postal services shortly. I know that Canada Post is a crown corporation, but I would like to point out that the government does get dividends from it. Perhaps we could do something to ensure that seniors get their mail delivered at home. It would be easy to do.

Will we still have quality service at the CBC in a few years? Is there something for that? No. The promise in this budget is that an essential tool for the identity of this country is being taken apart piece by piece. Let me remind you that the funding we provide to the CBC per year and per capita is one-third of the average of the funding that so-called developed countries provide to their national broadcasting corporations. Are we going in the right direction with this budget? I do not think so.

Finally, what are we doing to prepare our collective future? I am thinking of our young people here. I am thinking of research and education. In this budget, do we see any capacity or willingness to invest in basic research? The answer is no. Why is basic research important? Because it is the first step in developing innovations that make our industries, our companies and our small and medium-sized businesses competitive. We need basic research and we need to train our students.

Speaking of training students, have we actually seen an increase in funding for post-secondary education anywhere in the budget? I have not seen one. If we want the future to be better for our children, we must invest in basic research and in post-secondary education so that we can get the wheels turning and start on our way to innovation.

• (1715)

**Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent presentation.

The government is doing nothing about the closure of Electrolux in my riding; it is cutting the \$40,000 that used to go to the Marché de Noël every year, a Christmas market with economic spinoffs to the tune of millions of dollars; it is raising the price of stamps to \$1, even though it is already difficult to deliver the mail; and it is reducing services once again.

What does my colleague think about the government's logic?

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** Mr. Speaker, governing means looking ahead and making decisions.

First, however, we must anticipate the long-term consequences of each decision in order to determine whether the effects will be positive or negative. I realize that it is not a perfect system. However, abandoning our manufacturing industry and our local initiative is a very poor message to be sending to people.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on one of the member's colleague's questions in regard to the issue of postal rates and the manner in which Canada Post has made the decision, which is going to have a very profound negative impact on literally thousands of Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is also in regard to the lack of involvement, whether

it was by the House of Commons or by Canadians as a whole. We have a crown corporation that has been with us since Confederation that is taking us in a direction I believe the majority of Canadians do not want us to go.

I wonder if the member might reflect on the manner in which we are passing this bill under time allocation and how it would be passed with a number of other bills that would be brought in. It is the issue of process, which would also apply to the manner in which Canada Post is changing its services for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The reply deserves an entire speech. Actions have their consequences and they are determined by our ability to provide Canadians with the best. In some cases, that means having a real democratic debate and coming up with better legislation. It also means evaluating the consequences of our actions, especially in the case of Canada Post.

Did the management at Canada Post evaluate all the options before committing hara kiri in its own marketplace by increasing the price of stamps and cutting services? SMEs and people living in downtown areas are not happy.

Sometimes we forget community groups who occasionally send mail to their members. For example, the history societies in my riding send thousands of letters. The revenue that those thousands of stamps bring in might now be lost, and that is just the history societies in my riding. I am not even talking about the other community groups. If you multiply that by 308, the losses in revenue quickly add up to millions of dollars, all because they do not know how to make proper decisions or plan for the 21st century.

• (1720)

[*English*]

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, jobs, the economy, and helping—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I remind the hon. member she cannot refer to other members, including the Prime Minister, by their given names.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

Jobs, the economy, and helping families remain the priorities of our government.

We met the challenge of the global economic crisis head on with our economic action plan. We paid down debt, we cut taxes to stimulate job growth, and we rejected opposition demands for job-killing higher taxes.

Canada continues to enjoy a stellar economic record and to receive international recognition for our economic leadership. This is why I stand in this House today in full support of the measures contained in the 2014 budget implementation act.

*Government Orders*

This government, through our economic action plan, has created the economic environment that allows Canadian businesses to prosper and Canadian citizens to benefit from a high standard of living. That is the sentiment shared by many. Globally recognized authorities, from the OECD to the International Monetary Fund, have ranked Canada as one of the best countries in the world to do business. In fact, they expect Canada to be among the strongest-growing economies in the G7 over not just this year but the next.

[Translation]

International business press, including *Forbes Magazine* and *Bloomberg News*, is equally large in its praise for Canada's success in creating a climate conducive to job creation. Indeed, the facts speak for themselves. There are over one million more Canadians working today than during the worst part of the recession. That is the best job creation record of any G7 country during this period.

[English]

Of course, there is ongoing uncertainty in the global economic environment. That is why we must continue to encourage job creation and foster economic growth, the twin pillars of the economic action plan since its inception in 2009, while remaining on the road to a balanced federal budget in the coming year.

[Translation]

We must, and we will, continue to improve the conditions for business investment. We will keep taxes low and reduce the tax compliance and regulatory burden on businesses so they can focus on jobs and economic growth.

[English]

There are over 20 tax measures in the budget that would improve the fairness and integrity of Canada's tax system. Today I want to highlight again in this House those measures that address what our government is doing to reduce red tape.

Economic action plan 2014 announced that we would be cutting red tape for employers by reducing the maximum number of times employers need to send source deduction payments to the CRA. These are deductions companies withhold for their employees' income tax, Canada pension plan contributions, and employment insurance premiums. This would reduce the maximum number of payments businesses are required to prepare and submit to the CRA. This action would eliminate more than 800,000 payroll remittances for over 50,000 small and medium businesses. Currently, if employers withhold an average of \$15,000 to \$50,000 in deductions monthly, they are required to remit deductions up to twice each month. Larger organizations withholding monthly deductions of \$50,000 or more must remit them up to four times each month.

These changes are being made on the recommendations of small and medium independent businesses, the drivers of our economic growth, with whom we dialogue often. It would help these entrepreneurs spend more time serving their customers and growing their businesses.

In a country like ours, where 98% of our companies have fewer than 100 employees, the effect of red tape on our economy is significant.

● (1725)

[Translation]

We also intend to launch a liaison officer initiative pilot project to improve compliance within Canada's small and medium business community. Firms will be provided with information and the support they need, when they need it most, so that they meet their tax obligations right from the start.

This will help them avoid costly and time-consuming interactions with the CRA, freeing up businesses to focus on doing business.

[English]

We are reducing the paper burden for companies big and small by making improvements to CRA service delivery. For instance, authorized company tax representatives, such as accounting firms, would be able to submit an electronic authorization request to the CRA instead of filing paper forms.

This January, I announced the registration of the tax preparers program. Tax preparers play a key role in the tax system. Last year the majority of adjustments were in the \$2,200 to \$6,000 range, in other words, relatively minor adjustments due to inadvertence or simple mistakes, but from the CRA's perspective, this is significant and must be addressed. We have five million small and medium enterprises, one-third of which have simple, easy-to-correct errors in their returns.

In Canada, about 70% of individuals and business taxpayers use the services of a tax preparer to help them deal with their tax affairs. The CRA would be able to help tax preparers and taxpayers through more focused support and shift our focus from one of auditing after the fact to assisting in compliance from the beginning.

[Translation]

As of October 2014, businesses will be able to update their banking and direct deposit information online. October is also when the first free online option for paying taxes will be available for business owners registered with My Business Account. As well, a detailed payment history for all of their accounts will be available in one secure and convenient place.

[English]

Last year we introduced manage online mail for Canadian businesses. Business owners and representatives can now choose to receive notices of assessment and reassessment electronically as well as some correspondence for their corporate, payroll, and GST accounts.

*Private Members' Business*

People can also ask the CRA specific tax-related questions online through the my business account inquiry service. The CRA will not only answer the question online, but more important, it will stand by its written responses. This means that when making key business decisions, people will have the critical answers solidified in writing and the certainty that comes with that.

When people want to talk to a live person, we have improved the CRA's telephone inquiry services for the business community. All CRA business inquiry agents must now identify themselves to the caller using their first name and number and the regional suffix. This agent ID policy ensures a consistent experience for callers and makes it easier for taxpayers to provide feedback on CRA's services.

In our efforts to reduce red tape we are continually engaging Canada's business community, listening to its concerns, and acting on its recommendations.

In addition to our red tape reduction initiatives, I could go on highlighting a long list of new tax credits in this year's budget. They range from recognizing the contributions of volunteers who conduct search and rescue efforts, a very welcome initiative, to expanding the list of eligible medical expenses, and enhancing the adoption expense tax credit. These initiatives would make a meaningful difference in the lives of hard-working Canadians.

• (1730)

[Translation]

I am extremely proud to be helping to implement the 2014 economic action plan, which will help us to balance the budget and generate \$9.1 billion in additional savings over six years.

[English]

I urge my colleagues from all parties to join us in passing this important legislation so we can continue on our path toward job creation and economic growth across the country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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. The five minutes for questions and comments for the hon. minister will take place after private members' business.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC)** moved that Bill C-583, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill C-583.

However, before I do that, I would like to take one more opportunity to express my sincerest condolences to the families of the members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who lost their lives yesterday. I would also like to express, at least from my point of view and the point of view of the member for Kootenay—Columbia, who is a former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, that

our thoughts and prayers are with the members of the RCMP, their families, and the entire community of Moncton. We hope that there is a fast and safe resolution to the capture of the suspect.

Before I begin on Bill C-583, an act to amend the Criminal Code in respect to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, there are a few requisite messages of thanks that I need to put out there. First and foremost, I must thank Rod Snow and Heather MacFadgen of the Yukon division of the Canadian Bar Association. Both of them spent a great deal of time and effort, long before this crossed my radar as a member of Parliament, in diligently forwarding the cause of people with FASD, particularly as it relates to justice issues and what we can do. My gratitude goes out to them for helping it get this far and for their continued effort and support.

I would like to thank the Options for Independence Society in the Yukon, which has created a great social support network, providing affordable and available housing. It has also created the appropriate and needed social support networks in our territory for people living with FASD to make sure, in the first instance, that they do not find themselves in conflict with the law.

Of course, I must thank the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, which has done a lot of the heavy lifting on this file to make sure that people who are disadvantaged and living with FASD find the opportunities that they need and clearly deserve in our society.

There are a host of other groups and organizations nationally, internationally and here in the North American continent that have reached out to me. A total of some 1,500-plus stakeholders have reached out to me directly in my office to offer guidance and suggestions, and just to be there to support what I am trying to achieve in Bill C-583. To each and every one of them, too many to list, I give my thanks.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the legislators of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, both of which recently passed unanimous motions calling on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-583. I would say that it was done in an admirable and non-partisan manner.

In the Yukon, the motion was tabled by Liz Hanson, the leader of the opposition, and supported by Minister Nixon, the hon. minister responsible for justice in the Yukon. I appreciate their ability to come together in a non-partisan fashion and provide support and important information to the Yukon through their legislature about the challenges of people living FASD as they relate to the justice system.

Getting to Bill C-583, what does my private member's bill propose? It would do three fundamental things.

It would define FASD in the legal context. I say that not as a word of caution, but as a word of explanation. Sometimes we have social definitions and sometimes we have medical definitions of words that do not always mirror each other or connect properly. What I have tried to do in Bill C-583 is come up with a definition that would meet the test of the legal mind and the legal definition. Sometimes, there is a little bit of variance between social definitions and medical definition, but importantly, I have seen broad public support, including group and organization support, for the definition that I have arrived at.

That is an important step, because in the absence of a definition, the courts are very much limited in their judicial notice of being able to account for what I will get into as somewhat of an explanation for criminal conduct. It is not an excuse, and I will talk about that in a little more detail as I get into subsequent sections of my bill.

The first part is how the bill defines FASD. Second, it would allow the court to order assessments where they have reasonable grounds or evidence to believe that FASD may be present in an accused, and that it contributed to the offence or criminal conduct.

Finally, the bill seeks to allow the court the discretion to consider FASD to be a mitigating circumstance in the sentencing phase. I will touch on that just a little bit, to explain any confusion that might exist among the general public about what mitigation means.

● (1735)

It is important to understand that mitigation is not absolution. It is not an excuse for poor behaviour, but it is an explanation. I am going to talk about some of the symptoms of FASD that make this bill warranted and reasoned when we consider diminished responsibility and mitigation, and why mitigation could be so important for people and for the courts to have with regard to FASD.

One could ask why we would choose FASD, and so I will give some concrete facts on that.

FASD is one of the leading causes of brain disorders in our country, affecting nearly one in a hundred Canadians at birth. That is an alarming rate. Right now, we know that nearly 60% of people living with FASD will at some point run into conflict with the law, which is also an alarming figure.

I want to be clear that FASD does not instantly and immediately equate to criminality. Indeed, it does not. I was at a conference not too long ago in Vancouver where I met wonderful people who live with FASD day to day. Undoubtedly they have challenges, but they are contributing. They are working hard in our society. They are living with these challenges and they are able, through a tremendous amount of personal, family, and community support, to keep away from any conflict with the law, but they are not free from challenges.

Indeed, I heard the story of one young lady who is an intelligent, well-spoken gal. She talked at this conference immediately before me. I must say that she did a better job of addressing a huge audience of 500 people than I did. It was remarkable to watch. However, she talked about some of the challenges she faced.

She talked about going to work in the morning and forgetting her keys and then returning home to get her keys, but then forgetting why she had come home. Then, when she finally realized what she was looking for, her keys, she forgot what she needed her keys for. She had to slow down and calm herself and deal with that confusion and frustration of not being able to really grasp exactly what she needed to get done. Eventually, through trial, challenge, and tribulation, she would get back on track with what she needed to do that day.

This is just one example of the challenges of people living with the real challenges of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

### *Private Members' Business*

I am going to read something I think is relative and poignant to the debate. It came to me from a Yukoner, Chief Ray Jackson, who is the former chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, and Jenny Jackson, who wrote this book called, *Silent No More! A Poetic Voice Breaks the Silence of FASD*. It is about Crystal, who was kind enough to sign this book for me, and she gives a summary about one of the poems in the book. She writes:

This is a brief summary of how people might view their differences while longing for acceptance with FASD.

As an explanation for the poem, she says:

Everything is new each day because it is due to the lack of understanding of consequences. Every day is a new day. Yesterday is gone forever and people are living in the moment. There is an awareness of the different worlds, but people are inviting others to come and join them and they want them to accept them.

The poem reads:

We are living in our world where everything is new each day,  
Again, we'll try to find our way,  
A world that has its axis tilted to the right  
A world that has no time and needs are out of sight  
Come into our world  
Be patient and kind, forgiving and blind  
Tell us we are all right

I think the poem is saying that we need to enter this discussion. We need to understand and appreciate the challenges of people living with FASD.

I would offer that, as a government, we have been focused on a couple of things. We have been focused on making sure that perpetrators of crime are held to account; and that we have a solid, sound justice agenda to make sure our citizens are protected and public safety is paramount.

I think we have done an exceptional job of that. I think we have done a great job of making sure that people who are out to harm people in our society are held to account, that our citizens are protected in this country, and that any deviation from the law that is heinous in nature is reflected in the community's abhorrence of that behaviour.

● (1740)

At the same time, we have run an additional agenda: taking care of victims of crime, supporting our victims of crime, making sure that their voices are heard loud and clear. If we start from the position that people are indeed victims first, if they are born with a neurological development disorder because of exposure to alcohol before they were born, our government has made a clear commitment to make sure we protect victims first in our justice agenda. I would posit to the entire House, to every one of my hon. colleagues, that if we start from the position that people with FASD are victims first, then we are reaching a point where we can have a balanced discussion about this bill.

*Private Members' Business*

Undoubtedly, there is the challenge that a person then breaks the law and needs to be held to account for the breach in law. How do we deal with that? How do we make sure we balance public safety and the need for rehabilitative efforts and corrective measures to take place in a conventional world when we have a non-conventional client, when we have client who does not necessarily understand right or wrong in the same fashion as we do, or benefit from the same sentencing, sanctioning, or denunciation as we would as everyday citizens within the justice system.

I talked about it and touched on it a bit, that my bill is not absolution for misconduct; it is mitigation. It is not an excuse for bad behaviour, but rather an explanation. How does mitigation fall into this question mark and how do we maintain public safety when we do that?

My bill, in the mitigation section, talks about the very real elements, the symptoms of FASD, that could lead one down the path of criminality. Examples are the inability to understand the consequences of one's actions and the inability to control impulsive behaviour. Those things have direct and real links to criminality. In fact, those symptoms, statistically, in our justice system, account for the over 90% of administrative type justice offences that a person with FASD would find themselves in. What are those kinds of offences? They are breach of probation, breach of conditions, failing to show up for work as part of their release conditions because they cannot manage their schedule and do not necessarily understand those terms and conditions, because as is said in the poem, each day is a new day. They have to start a new day fresh and remind themselves of what they have to do. Sometimes that breaks down to not just days but hours and sometimes even minutes.

To balance public safety, I have written into my bill that the court shall consider to be a mitigating circumstance where those symptoms contribute to the offence, because as I said, FASD does not instantly equate to criminality. It is not as simple as to say people have FASD and therefore they are going to involve themselves in criminal conduct. That is absolutely not true. However, what will happen, or can happen, disproportionately, is that FASD, where those symptoms manifest themselves out at different times and at different places, can contribute to criminal behaviour, and we need to take that into account.

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is up and I could probably stand here and talk for another 20 minutes about this. I look forward to questions and comments from my colleagues on the bill, where I will be able to address some of the issues that are raised. However, I will leave members with this thought.

In our criminal justice approach, it has been a long-held defence that people who consume alcohol and behave in a particular way because they are intoxicated can offer that up as a reasoned defence. A 20-year-old who gets drunk and acts like a 15-year-old can offer up that excuse in law. However, someone who has been exposed to alcohol and has a neurological brain disorder and has an operating mind of an 8- to 15-year-old, in adulthood, cannot offer that up as a reason. That should generally just shock the consciousness of Canadians and us as members of Parliament.

● (1745)

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute my colleague for introducing his bill with great intentions. I have this question for the member.

[*Translation*]

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder affects many aboriginal communities, communities in northern Canada and those that are rather remote. I would like to know whether the member can count on the support of his government for this bill, and whether his government is prepared to make additional efforts to help the communities and the people who are most vulnerable to these disorders, since they have often been marginalized and forgotten. I would like the member to answer these two questions.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, I did not get an opportunity to talk about it in my speech, but I am very proud of the work that has been done by our federal government in investing. I speak exclusively to the north, to the Yukon territory, where recently, back in January, I was able to open a 14-unit house with federal government funding under options for independence, and that provided the necessary social support networks that keep people living with FASD out of the criminal justice system, to provide them opportunity, hope, and the necessary support they need.

I think we have done a really good job as a federal government through the health portfolio, through the housing portfolio, and through our education strategies. There has been a number of things that I have seen roll out in the territory since 2011 that our federal government has done, which I think are just tremendous.

Admittedly, that is really where the bulk of our attention and funding should be directed, prevention and social support, and not such a focus on what I see as a small piece of the bigger question mark around FASD and social support.

I am happy, and of course naturally I gravitate to a justice bill because of my background as a former police officer and a former correctional officer, where I saw first-hand the implications and impact on people with FASD in the justice system. However, truth be told, I think we still do need to focus a lot of the support on health, education, and social support. I think our government has done a fantastic job of that, and I am happy just to introduce something that I think will play a small part in a very dynamic and complex picture.

I do thank the member for that excellent question.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in reading the bill, I am pleased to note it is an issue with which I have been somewhat associated for a number of years. At one point I was the health critic for the Liberal Party in the Province of Manitoba.



*Private Members' Business*

I believe that we underestimate the cost, both social and economic, of this brutal disorder. It is sad when we try to look at the numbers. I have yet to get a tangible number that I would believe of how many people are afflicted with this particular disorder.

I am wondering if the member might be able to enlighten the House. I do not know if he has been provided some tangible numbers. Does he have any sense of the severity, and how many people would he believe are actually identified as FASD? That is just the identification portion. There are many others who do not get identified.

● (1750)

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises a good point and a great question. The most up-to-date figures we have right now and the common numbers used, and they do vary a bit, are that one in a hundred Canadians are born with FASD. That is the estimate.

He raises another good point about the misdiagnosis, because there is a tremendous amount of stigma around this, and there are a lot of reasons for it. There is no fault in this story about how it happens. There are a lot of complex issues and reasons that a person can be FASD-affected, but it does lead to diagnosis challenges in the first instance, and then because of the stigma, there is a tendency and a propensity to have it misdiagnosed as something else, ADHD for example, or just no diagnosis at all, just ignoring what we could clearly see to be the case.

The member raises a good question about the prevalence of it, and our government is actually funding prevalence studies at the provincial and territorial levels within the prison system. They are doing that in Yukon to identify at least some better handle on the numbers in the correctional system, but as a population nationwide, the numbers are alarming.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to rise in this House today to speak to Bill C-583, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder).

I think it is important to consider the vulnerability of other people and everyone's particular circumstances in determining sentences. Our society must recognize that each person has a different history and a different background and that we must take this into consideration in our legislation and in our justice system. Unfortunately, certain communities and certain people are much more vulnerable than others. My intention is not to point fingers at anyone today; I am just making an observation.

We are certainly going to support this bill and refer it to committee. However, I would very much like to express my dismay with the federal government and its virtually non-existent will to provide assistance to the communities that are unfortunately suffering from this kind of problem.

Let us talk about aboriginal communities. For the past few months, we have been asking the government to set up a commission of inquiry into murdered and kidnapped women and girls, but it has always refused to take any action on this. I think it is important to make a connection between these two issues today.

Since it came into power, this government has marginalized aboriginal communities and others in northern Canada that are more remote, abandoning them completely.

I would like to congratulate the member on introducing this bill, which is, I hope, an initiative that will reverse the direction that has been imposed by the Conservatives' repressive criminal justice agenda. All of their bills clearly show us that the notion of rehabilitating offenders rather than punishing them does not exist in their Conservative ideology.

I am convinced that a fair system punishes those who have committed an offence, but at the same time takes social factors into account in its decisions, considering the impact that these social factors may have on some people. Our society has a duty to consider that not everyone has the same chances in life and to restore that balance.

As my colleague said, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder affects 1% of the Canadian population, that is, one out of every 100 people. The spectrum disorder may have serious consequences on the people it affects. There are birth defects linked to the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. For instance, these defects may involve only physical malformations, or they may involve damage to the brain or the central nervous system, causing cognitive, behavioural and emotional deficits.

It is important to understand, and my colleague expressed it very well in his speech, that a person suffering from this spectrum disorder may not react in the same way as other people in a particular situation, or will perhaps not be able to tell the difference between right and wrong.

Our justice system proceeds from the assumption that an individual's guilt makes him understand that he has committed an offence, for instance. People with abnormalities linked to these types of disorders may not read a given situation in the same way. For our justice system to be fair and balanced, it is important to take all of these elements into consideration in sentencing.

● (1755)

The intent of Bill C-583 is to define what fetal alcohol spectrum disorder involves. This is extremely important. This principle is already recognized in certain rulings, as well as in Criminal Code section 718.2, but the recognition is implicit.

This bill defines fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. In addition, it establishes and informs the court that it may be considered a mitigating factor in sentencing.

The bill makes it possible to establish a procedure whereby a court can order the assessment of a person who it suspects may suffer from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. This will make things easier for the court in determining a sentence, assessing an offence or convicting an individual.

At the time of sentencing, it is very important that the court consider all of the criteria and all of the circumstances that may have led an individual to commit an offence. This is why the bill is a light at the end of the tunnel of the Conservatives' repressive and ideological agenda.

*Private Members' Business*

Sentencing an individual who has committed an offence is part of the initial assessment by a criminal justice system, but we must acknowledge as a society that these individuals are also part of society and that they must be reintegrated into it. We cannot merely sentence them to a term in prison; we must also enable them to return to society and even encourage them to do so. For an individual who suffers from a disorder he has no control over, it is important to ensure that the courts take this into consideration in determining his sentence, so that he is allowed to proceed with treatments.

My colleague referred to a conference in Vancouver that he attended, where he met people who suffer from this spectrum disorder. This shows that they are able to return to society. They are not necessarily criminals, as my colleague said. Even if they are, they are people who can doubtless be citizens like everyone else. As a society, it is our duty to inform the court that it must give these types of mitigating factors due consideration.

The Gladue principle comes from a landmark ruling by the Supreme Court that determines the significance and the scope of paragraph 718.2(e), which in fact says that family situation and background must be taken into consideration. Criminal Code section 718.2 places emphasis on the fact that even if an individual has committed an offence and is found guilty, the sentence that is imposed must take his family situation and background into consideration, for instance, if there is a history of violence or drugs and particularly if he suffers from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

I hope this bill will be the first in a long line of bills that will mean that the Conservatives abandon their repressive and ideological criminal justice agenda and finally understand that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. There must be an investment in our communities so that people no longer suffer from these kinds of disorders. We need to rehabilitate these people, not just take a repressive approach.

• (1800)

I certainly hope my colleague can make the Conservative government listen to reason.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is one of those issues where there needs to be a higher sense of co-operation among the different stakeholders. In particular, we need to recognize that the most significant role to be played in this is likely at the provincial level. It is an issue that I have had the opportunity to address on many occasions. The whole area of fetal alcohol syndrome disorder is one that, as I put forward in my question, causes a great deal of cost to our society both socially and economically.

Because someone is diagnosed with FASD, it does not mean that the person is a criminal. There are many wonderful, outstanding young people, young adults and others who have FASD and have gone on to have wonderful, strong, powerful lives. We need to highlight that.

This is an issue about which I am quite passionate. When I was an MLA, I introduced a private member's bill that would have had warning labels on all alcohol bottles. Much like we have warning labels on cigarette packages, there should be warning labels on

alcohol containers. I was surprised that it was not universally accepted within the Manitoba legislature. I believed I had the support of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Liberal Party at the time.

It is important that we recognize education. We need to ensure that people understand the cause of FASD. There are things we can do to better to educate the population.

When I was a teenager, I had no idea whatsoever what FASD was. I would suggest that many young ladies, teenagers and the like do not necessarily know what FASD is or the causes of it. Education was part of a promotional campaigns. This was not just coming from me; it came from many different stakeholders. We need to incorporate some sort of an educational component to combatting FASD. That goes right from our classrooms all the way to where alcohol is served.

Many might recall Sandy's law. It was brought in by the Province of Ontario. Signs were required to indicate what could happen if a woman was pregnant and drank alcohol.

There is a lot we can be doing, but we are not doing it. I can appreciate what the mover of the bill is trying to deal with, which is the consequences once it hits the courts. I applaud that. The Liberal Party supports the bill going to committee, but there is much more we could be doing prior to someone getting involved in a criminal activity and ending up in court. Some of what we could be doing it is straightforward.

A teacher who deals with FASD on a regular basis said that we should turn down the lights. We do not have to turn the lights off, but turning the brightness down in some of the classrooms could have a positive impact. We even have some schools that engage in that and whatever else they can do to assist individuals who have this disorder. There are things that can make a difference.

• (1805)

When I posed the question in terms of diagnostics or the actual numbers, it was because we do not know what the numbers are. We can speculate, and I appreciate the member's best guesstimate of one in 100 births, but it really varies.

I remember meeting with some nurses or nurse practitioners who were going out and about in our communities at a special event hosted by one of the stakeholders. A nurse told me that there are some communities where there is a very high percentage of individuals with FASD. I challenged her to tell me what she meant by "a high percentage". Were we talking about 5%, 10%? I was totally amazed in terms of the percentage. This was someone with boots on the ground in some of the communities. I suggested 50%. She said it was much higher than that.

In Canada there are communities where it is higher than 50%. This is based on information that I heard third-hand, but when I shared that information with other stakeholders, they did not contradict it. I believe that the numbers are significantly higher than we anticipated.

I was encouraged when the member said the federal government is looking at it in one area, but I think we need to broaden it. We need to get the stakeholders, in particular the provinces and possibly school divisions, around the table and have a discussion to try to identify just how large and significant an issue this is and what we can do as a society to improve the circumstances and the lives of people who are affected by fetal alcohol syndrome.

If we took that holistic approach, we would have the type of difference that would hopefully make lives a lot better for a lot more people.

Speaking strictly to the legislation, the definition it provides gives a great explanation of what we are talking about. This is the definition in the bill that is being proposed:

“fetal alcohol spectrum disorder” or “FASD” refers to any neurodevelopmental disorder that is associated with prenatal alcohol exposure, and that is characterized by permanent organic brain injury and central nervous system damage that result in a pattern of permanent birth defects, the symptoms of which may include (a) impaired mental functioning, (b) poor executive functioning, (c) memory problems, (d) impaired judgment, (e) inability to control impulse behaviour, (f) impaired ability to understand the consequences of one’s actions, and (g) impaired ability to internally modify behaviour control

The Liberal Party critic has been fairly clear in our caucus as to how the bill is a good thing and what the member is trying to achieve. It allows courts the ability to take into account the profound impact of FASD on a child and the resulting behaviour that might arise when an individual is involved with the justice system.

It is an encouraging step from the member. We look forward to the bill going to committee.

Let me conclude my remarks by saying that we could be doing Canadian society a huge favour by providing stronger leadership in a more holistic way in dealing with FASD, an issue that is facing health care, social services, justice, and other departments in many different ways.

• (1810)

Let me conclude my final comments as I started, by saying that the majority of individuals with this disorder have an totally wonderful life and are not involved—

**The Speaker:** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia.

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise on behalf of my colleague, the member for Yukon, on his private member's bill, Bill C-583, An Act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Bill C-583 seeks to accomplish three things. First, it seeks to define FASD in a legal context. Second, it would provide the court with the authority to order assessments when there is evidence and belief that an accused has FASD. Finally, it would permit the court to consider FASD to be a mitigating circumstance in the sentencing of an offender if the symptoms of the FASD contributed to the offence.

On that last point, allow me to stress that mitigation is not absolution. It is a reflection that there is diminished responsibility, not absence of responsibility, and it takes into account an explanation for a behaviour, not an excuse. That said, it does recognize the

### *Private Members' Business*

influence a neurological development disorder can have on a person's conduct.

As a retired member of the RCMP, having served for over 20 years, I myself have seen the challenges associated with effective and balanced approaches to public safety and sentencing. Having served in a number of communities across British Columbia, I can say that along with other conditions, FASD is significantly present in the population.

The member for Winnipeg North wondered whether it was one in 100 or even more. I do not know what the numbers are, but I can say from an operational standpoint that it is significant. It is a challenge for police officers across the country to be dealing with it on a daily basis, specifically in the adult community. There are outreaches for youth and young adults in Canada, but we tend to have challenges when it comes to the adult population.

With that in mind, I would like to continue on with what I believe are some of the great opportunities that the member for Yukon has brought forward in his private member's bill.

The Consensus Statement on Legal issues on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) from Edmonton, Alberta, in 2013 explores the implications for the justice system when the needs of FASD-affected individuals go unmanaged in the broader community and ultimately surface in the legal context. It does stress that the needs of the broader society need to be recognized as well, in that while FASD is a possible explanation for behaviour, it is not absolution for misconduct. It states:

At the same time, people who have FASD suffer from neurodevelopmental disorders and, in some cases, serious functional deficiencies that in all fairness must be recognized and taken into account in the administration of justice.

Elsewhere the document states:

The neurodevelopmental deficits associated with FASD present a fundamental challenge to the Canadian criminal justice system,

—especially in the adult system—

which is premised on assumptions that people act in a voluntary manner that is determined by free will and that they can make informed and voluntary choices with respect to both the exercise of their rights and the decision to commit crimes. It is presumed that a person intends the natural consequences of his or her actions, and that, for example, an individual would never make a statement against his or her interest unless it is either true or coerced.

The evidence we have heard is compelling that those with FASD are likely to have a diminished capacity to foresee consequences, make reasoned choices or learn from mistakes. Therefore, their actions are likely to clash with assumptions about human behaviour at almost every stage of the justice system.

Throughout their lives, individuals with FASD are more likely to be involved in the legal system than individuals without FASD.

One fundamental problem is that FASD represents a broad spectrum of symptoms of greatly varied severity giving rise to a range of disorders/disabilities and, consequently, varying degrees of diminished responsibility and capacity.

• (1815)

While the elements of the neurological damage associated with FASD are well established, their expression and intensity vary from one individual to another. In the absence of a simplified method of categorization, the legal system must adapt to individualized, context-specific diagnoses, and formulate manageable criteria or standards to deal with many different interactions with FASD sufferers.

About 60% of individuals with FASD come into conflict with the law.

*Private Members' Business*

The consensus statement continues:

The neurological impairments associated with FASD are likely to collide with the law, which generally assumes a level of intent, foresight and awareness. The evidence shows that, unless diagnosed, those with FASD are likely to be disadvantaged at the point of initial contact with police, in relation to the understanding of legal rights and options, as well as the ability to respond to investigative processes—particularly, interrogations—at the bail stage, the trial stage, and the sentence stage—where it is assumed, by the way of deterrence, that the risk of adverse consequences would lead to avoidance of those consequences—and then, of course, the post-sentencing stage. At each of these stages, it is assumed that offenders are capable of making choices, understanding the consequences of their action, and learning from their mistakes. These assumptions do not accord with what is known about the functional disabilities associated with FASD.

It continues:

Looking at all court cases for 2010/11, the proportion of all youth and all adult court cases involving an “administration of justice” charge as the most serious offence in the prosecution was [21%].

We heard evidence that a leading characteristic of people with FASD is an inability to organize their lives, meet deadlines, keep appointments, learn from experience and understand the consequences of failure to do any of these things. Accordingly, what are called “administration of justice” charges in effect criminalize those with FASD by setting the person up for further charges (“the revolving door”).

Elsewhere the document states:

Although courts have recognized FASD as a mental disorder, they have been reluctant to hold that it renders the FASD accused incapable of appreciating the nature and quality of the act or knowing that it is wrong.

The availability of a better-tailored defence of diminished responsibility for those with mental disabilities could provide the legal system with more flexibility in dealing with the diverse circumstances of offenders with FASD.

Criminal justice is based on the principle that people who offend should be held accountable in proportion to what was done and the offender’s responsibility for the offence. The principles are laid out more explicitly in the YCJA than they are in the Criminal Code. However, it is reasonable that this general principle holds for adults as well as youths.

That is why, as I mentioned earlier, it is recognized more quickly with youth than it is with adults, because we do not recognize the two systems cohesively.

The consensus statement continues:

Proportionality is required for sentencing both in the adult and the youth justice systems.

Proportionality is not defined explicitly. It could, however, accommodate various forms of diminished responsibility related to impulsivity and suggestibility associated with FASD. In particular, there is little judicial authority on how the “degree of responsibility of the offender” should be defined for those with disorders like FASD....

● (1820)

In closing, I believe the bill brought forward by the member for Yukon would better advance the criminal justice system and would make sure that those with FASD would be better served in the criminal justice system from here forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank my colleague from Yukon for introducing this bill. I would like to talk about an important issue regarding individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

The purpose of Bill C-583 is to protect those vulnerable individuals born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. The enactment amends the Criminal Code to add a definition of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and to establish a process for assessing individuals

who are involved in the criminal justice system and who it is suspected suffer from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

It requires the court to consider, as a mitigating factor in sentencing, a determination that the accused suffers from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and manifests certain symptoms.

[*English*]

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is an umbrella term used to describe any individual who suffers from a range of effects, including physical, mental, behavioural, and cognitive, and is caused by mothers who consume alcohol during pregnancy. Furthermore, it includes those who are diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome, partial fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol-related neurodevelopment disorder, and alcohol-related birth defects.

As Sheila Burns explained in the *Toronto Star*:

Like Alzheimer’s, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is an invisible, brain-based disability that impacts thinking. Individuals may appear capable but typically have significant limitations. They have difficulty recalling past experiences, anticipating consequences, adapting to new situations, solving problems and interacting socially.

Fifty per cent of those with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder meet the current definition of mental retardation.

The behavioural characteristics begin to develop in adolescence and can become more apparent in the adult years. These behavioural characteristics have been compared with those in autism, depression, and bipolar disease. Similarities include blaming others for one’s mistakes and being emotionally volatile. People often exhibit wide mood swings that can escalate in response to stress, and they often do not follow through on instructions. As with other brain-based disabilities, the Criminal Code must also ensure that those with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder are provided an assessment on a case-by-case basis.

Fred Headon, the president of the Canadian Bar Association, has expressed his support and has emphasized the need for this amendment. He has called on the federal government to introduce a bill to give more authority to judges when dealing with an accused suffering from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Statistics indicate that 60% of individuals with a diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder have had difficulties with the law. With this in mind, the judges require access to tools to identify fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and the authority to order an assessment if needed.

During a meeting with Yukon Justice Minister Mike Nixon and other politicians in December, Mr. Headon said:

If we can get a recognition that the tools are required, then at least... [t]hat could mean making sure that they have the proper supports while they are there, making sure there are resources available to them while they’re in custody. It can also mean things like, when the prison discipline system is being invoked, making sure their condition is accounted for when discipline is being handed out and they’re getting fairly treated at that stage as well.

•(1825)

[Translation]

Research shows that the incidence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is considerably higher among aboriginal peoples and in rural, remote and northern communities.

I have personally met with families dealing with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and heard their stories. Shelley adopted two young children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and describes how it affects their daily life.

[English]

Shelly adopted two young babies, a girl and a boy, who shared the same birth mother. At the time of the adoption, she was not aware that these two innocent lives had fallen victim to a horrible disorder caused by their mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Her children are two of 3,000 babies born each year with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Her daughter has been diagnosed with partial fetal alcohol syndrome, and her son will soon be diagnosed with an alcohol-related neurodevelopment disorder. In most cases, there are very few physical distinctions, and the impacts on their brains and overall mental development are not visible until their adolescent and teenage years.

Shelley has decided to spend countless hours to advocate for better support, education services, and understanding. She has been actively attending conferences, gaining media support, and teaching her community. Shelley's encounter with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder was unforeseen and continues to be a difficult journey. However, it was one well worth it. Her story tells us that intervention is needed yesterday.

We spoke about 60% of kids being affected by this disease. Imagine if we could prevent 60% of these kids from ending up in the justice system. If we could reduce that to 30%, we could use the money that is saved in the justice system to apply to research and to help the families that have difficulties with these children.

**The Speaker:** The time provided for private members' business has now expired. The hon. member for Nickel Belt will have three minutes to conclude his remarks the next time this bill is before the House. We will move on and this item will be dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1830)

[English]

### ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-31, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak.

I want to say to the member for Yukon, who presented the private member's bill we were just discussing on FASD, that it is great to

### Government Orders

hear us talking about things with some compassion and caring. I hope the bill gets handled quickly and gets through the process so people will have the tools necessary to help the people who very much need to be helped.

I will move on to our omnibus budget bill of 360 pages. I think many parliamentarians are still finding little gems in there that probably will give us a lot of concern as time goes by, but it is what it is. We are into the final reading now, and I want to add my comments to the record.

When I last spoke to this budget bill, I outlined that I would not be supporting the bill, but I likewise reminded the House that the Liberal caucus had offered a list of items that we really felt deserved attention from the government that would have made a much stronger budget respectful of Canadians. We wanted to be constructive, and I think the items we put forward were exactly what was needed that would have enhanced this budget bill, but unfortunately, the Conservative majority on the standing committee felt differently, and those items were voted down.

Some of the issues were about a helping hand for lower-income seniors. It does not sound too difficult, but I gather it was. They were about a helping hand for some of our students struggling with heavy tuition debt, for struggling families, and for veterans. On the Hill this week, yesterday and today, and I gather it will continue, is a group of seasoned veterans talking to all of us as we go by to talk to them, those of us who take the time to do that, about their struggles and their frustrations with how they are being treated by the government. It would have been really nice to have seen more in the budget to recognize their struggles and their need for additional attention. Like farmers and others, there is nothing in there that will make a real difference. There is some, but it is pennies compared to what the needs really are when it comes to the veterans.

We said then that the federal budget needed to focus on generating the kind of economic growth that would help struggling middle-class families. That did not happen. The government says there are all kinds of things there, but many of those will not be seen by any of the families or Canadians until some time late in 2015, remarkably just in time, probably, for the next federal election.

*Government Orders*

Despite the fact that the only personal finance element for most Canadians that is keeping pace with GDP growth is household debt, unfortunately, the Prime Minister continues to smile and say that everyone is doing just great. There are no issues out there. I would like to invite him to come down to York West, my riding in Toronto, and talk with the many people who come into my office who are, let us say, over 50, primarily. They are looking for work. There is that middle-age point where they are laid off from their factory or manufacturing jobs, and there is just no middle place for them to go to find work. Then we have the younger ones who are completing their university education. They are \$30,000 or \$35,000 in debt, and there is nowhere they can find a job. There is a lot of frustration out there for people, and I do not think the Prime Minister truly realizes just how serious it is.

If we all gauge how we are doing, we are doing just fine. We have a job until the next election for lots of us, and we do just fine, but we are not the average Canadian. I would suggest that there needs to be more consultation with the Canadians who are struggling, rather than keeping our heads in the Ottawa bubble.

Despite the fact that the Canadian middle class has not had a decent raise in over 30 years, the out-of-touch Prime Minister continues to delude himself in respect of his own bogus economic credentials. It may sound harsh when I say these things, but I really think that because we are doing well, the government seems to think that everyone is doing well.

This budget, as I said earlier, offers nothing for senior citizens, nothing for students, nothing to address spiralling consumer costs, nothing to help veterans make ends meet, and nothing to deal with the shrinking middle-class incomes. Sadly, the government's priorities come shining through, and middle-class families are being forced to pay the price.

● (1835)

The government would have us believe it has set aside money to help veterans again, but, in reality, the veterans have been attacked. There are \$6 million, which we will hear about from the government, for veterans' funerals. That is a significant increase in what was there before, but the only way that people are eligible for that funeral assistance is if they are practically earning no income at all. I know most veterans are receiving a certain amount of money. If they are getting the basic amount, they do not even qualify for that money.

There are \$2 million to improve the Veterans Affairs website. I hope that will help, but I am not so sure from what I hear from veterans. That \$2 million would be better used in helping those struggling with PTSD, physical injuries, or resettlement issues. I would invite government members to speak to them, without letting them know that they are government members or members of Parliament. They should talk to veterans outside the chamber, listen to them as individual Canadians and to the comments they are making. Yesterday we heard the comments of the previous ombudsman. It was really alarming for us in the House to hear how strong his comments were about all of us not understanding the struggles they were having.

Again, it is not just veterans who have been left out of the Conservative brand of so-called economic prosperity. We are all familiar with the government's draconian cuts to the Building

Canada fund, a fund that we know is critical for investments, infrastructure and transit for cities. They are in the newspaper every day talking about their struggles to balance budgets and still deal with the pressures of infrastructure. The other important point is not just investing in infrastructure but the job creation that comes along with it.

For many young people who are looking for work and want the opportunity to work in apprenticeship programs in the trades, investing in bridges means workers have to be hired, which again keeps the money flowing and people doing well. Under the current government, co-operation with the cities has crumbled like so many roads, and that is very disappointing.

When I first came here in the 1999 by-election, I wanted to talk about cities and was told quite clearly that cities were not the responsibility of the federal government. I kept saying how important cities were and that there should be a federal-provincial-municipal partnership in building the country. I guess I kept at it long enough that former Prime Minister Chrétien appointed me to head up a task force on what the future of our cities should be in that relationship. Two years later, I had finished the project and we started talking about cities in the House, about building a new relationship with them. When Paul Martin became prime minister, he was a big supporter of that agenda.

We can stand today and talk about funding cities and investing in infrastructure as we normally would about anything else, whereas we could not do that 15 or 16 years ago. We would have been quickly ruled out of order by the Speaker. Now we look at cities as being partners. The government has recognized that. The introduction of the gas tax was just one of the recommendations I made in the report when the Liberals were in government. The Conservative government has continued with it. I appreciate the fact that it is recognizing just how important cities are.

There is the issue of investing in infrastructure and transit. Any of us trying to go from point A to point B throughout most cities are finding ourselves stuck in traffic for an hour or an hour and a half to go a short distance, which we used to be able to do in half an hour. There are, it seems, two or three vehicles per family and they all seem to be on the road at the same time, either going to work or coming home.

We have serious problems ahead of us. I do not see enough in Bill C-31 that would help. There needs to be more investment in the areas that will help to create jobs, but I guess we will have more time to talk about that in this 360-page omnibus bill.

● (1840)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her contribution to the debate of Bill C-31, the budget implementation bill for the 2014 fiscal year.

There is a lot of things in her speech that I disagree with, but I would hope the member would take a question and hopefully relay an answer.

*Government Orders*

There are many things that are brought forward in a budget, socio-economic measures that are important to the country. In this, there are changes to regulations so we can harmonize with the United States. We have tariff reductions around certain parts of equipment so companies can get ahead with jobs, and hire people to work on projects.

There are measures that are widely supported, like allowing British Columbia craft brewers and artisan distillers to market their wares right across the country and to have the same market access to every province and territory.

I know the member has a long litany of things that she does not like in the bill, but there is a tremendous amount of things that will help our economy and will help those middle-class people who the Liberals continue to talk about, and I should also point out to the exclusion of all Canadians.

I would hope that we would all see that things need to be done so our country can move forward. I would ask the member to comment on the actual substance of this bill.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to acknowledge that the removal of interprovincial barriers throughout the country is an important thing. We can then share the benefits throughout the country.

No one has said that there is nothing good in the budget. The problem is there is 360 pages here of all kinds of things in it. Maybe if it were put properly in a 80-page or 100-page budget, there would be a chance to appreciate some of the better things in it. There could also be more emphasis on the things that were not in it.

There is enough stuff in this bill to cover all kinds of things that have nothing to do with a budget bill. Unfortunately that is the way the government chooses to do it. The government is hiding a lot of things that should be profiled in a positive way. It is also hiding a whole lot of other things.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member did bring up a lot of valid points in relation to the concerns that opposition parties have with this budget.

One of the first things is that this is the fifth time the government has brought forward an omnibus budget bill. As we just heard in the last debate between my hon. colleague and a member from the government, every once in a while the Conservatives put something good in a budget, but the problem is there are so many bad things in there that it is hard to vote in favour of it.

In looking at some of the things that the government could have done right, it could have easily put those in other pieces of legislation. We could have easily voted on them, got them to committee and then moved on. Then we could actually have a debate about creating good laws.

The Conservatives talk a lot about being tough on crime, but it has been two years since they promised to get tough on employers who broke the rules of the temporary foreign worker program.

I would like to hear my hon. colleague's comments and thoughts on the government's inaction on that file.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, the member has explained that there are some good things in the bill that all of us would have liked to support, but there are so many other things that we disagree with and that should have been open to a thorough debate.

We want to see our companies doing well, because when the companies are doing well, they are paying taxes, hiring people, and growing and expanding. Those are the kinds of things we want to see happening.

Unfortunately, the temporary foreign worker program has doubled the amount that used to be allowed, number one. Number two is that the program is not being managed properly. Programs can be good, but if they are not well-managed, they can get out of control, which has happened with the temporary foreign worker program.

There are far too many people coming in and getting into positions with LMOs that are not thoroughly analyzed and vetted the way they should be.

● (1845)

**Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss Bill C-31 at report stage. The bill proposes to implement certain measures from economic action plan 2014.

Today's bill focuses on the drivers of growth and job creation, which are innovation, education, skills and communities. They are underpinned by our ongoing commitment to keep taxes low and returning to a balanced budget by 2015.

In an uncertain global economy, our government's top priority is creating jobs and economic growth by building on our economic action plan, a plan that has worked and served Canadians well.

Evidence of that success is all around us. Since we introduced the economic action plan to respond to the global recession, Canada has recovered more than all of the output in all of the jobs lost during the recession.

The Canadian economy has posted one of the strongest job creation records in the G7 over the recovery. With more than one million jobs created since July, 2009, most have been full-time jobs.

Canada's GDP is now 7.6% above our pre-recession peak. Not only that, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirms that our government has put \$30 billion in tax relief back into Canadian pockets, benefiting low-middle income families the most.

The middle class has particularly benefited from a reduction in the GST, which we cut from 7% to 6% to 5%. Under our Conservative government, the average family of four will save nearly \$3,400 in taxes this year.

It is clear that Canadian families are benefiting from our low-tax plan, with their net worth up over 44%. Even *The New York Times* says that Canada has the most affluent middle class in the world.

This economic resilience reflects the actions that our government took before the global crisis by lowering taxes, paying down debt, reducing red tape and promoting free trade and innovation. However, this is still an uncertain global economic environment, and it is crucial that we strengthen Canada's economic action plan. That is exactly what we would do with today's legislation.

*Government Orders*

First, Bill C-31 proposes to increase existing tax support for Canadians who take on the responsibility of adopting a child. As a parent, I believe there is no higher calling than raising a child, and no reward is equal. Canadians who have children deserve the government's full support, particularly when it comes to recognizing some of the additional costs borne by adoptive parents.

While all parents incur costs in raising children, there are additional expenses that adoptive parents face, including travel, adoption agency fees and legal fees. These charges can be significant, especially in the case of children who are adopted from outside of Canada. As a result, adopting a child can be a long and costly process.

While an adoption expense tax credit has existed for a while, some new and future parents were telling us that it did not cover enough of the expenses. We heard their concern. That is why our government, through economic action plan 2014, acted by proposing to enhance the tax credit to support these parents even more.

To provide further tax recognition of adoption-related expenses, Bill C-31 proposes to increase the maximum amount of the adoption expense tax credit from \$11,774 to \$15,000 in expenses per child for 2014. This amount will continue to be indexed for inflation for subsequent years.

My colleague from Essex did a lot of hard work on this initiative in our budget. He has adopted two children himself. As a grandfather of two boys who my oldest daughter adopted from Haiti, I wish this had been in place when she adopted our two 11-year-old grandsons. It would have been a great benefit to them, because it is a costly process.

Our Conservative government is listening to Canadians who want to have children but, unfortunately, are unable to. We are accommodating them and making it easier for them.

● (1850)

At the same time, our government is committed to ensuring that the tax system reflects the evolving nature of the health care system and the health care needs of Canadians. We all use the health care system, and we want it to remain strong and sustainable so that it is there for Canadians when they need it.

In fact, under our government, health care transfers are at an all-time high of over \$20 billion from when we formed government, and over \$32 billion this year and growing. Unlike the old Liberal government, we have not cut funding to provinces for health care. Under our funding formula, health care transfers will grow, but in a sensible and sustainable way. We will keep growing health care funding to ensure Canadian families can depend on our health care system today and in the future.

Moreover, we recognize that there are external costs, like out-of-pocket health care costs that Canadians have been paying for, such as for service animals. That is why in Bill C-31 we have proposed to expand the list of eligible expenses under the medical expense tax credit. The expanded list would include costs associated with service animals specially trained to assist individuals with severe diabetes, such as diabetes alert dogs.

Not only that, today's legislation also focuses on connecting Canadians with available jobs by helping them to acquire the skills that will get them hired or help to get them better jobs. By ensuring that federal funding responds to the hiring needs of employers and by giving them the opportunity to participate meaningfully as partners in skills training, the Canada job grant would transform skills and training in Canada. The greatest resource in any country is its people, and we recognize that. We are continuing to help people be all that they can be and to contribute to the economy of this country.

The Canadian job grant could provide up to \$15,000 per person for training costs, including tuition and training materials, which includes up to \$10,000 in federal contributions with employers contributing, on average, one-third of the total cost of training. After consulting extensively with employers and provinces on the design of the grant, Canadians would be able to take advantage of it by July 1 of this year. It would offer them real support toward improved employment and earning prospects.

As important as this milestone is, economic action plan went one step further by creating the Canada apprentice loan to help registered apprentices with the cost of their training. It would do so by expanding the Canada student loans program to provide apprentices registered in Red Seal trades with access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year.

Economic action plan 2014 also introduces the flexibility and innovation in the apprenticeship technical training pilot project to expand the use of innovative approaches to apprentice technical training. With this initiative, we are continuing to work with provinces and territories to harmonize apprenticeship systems and to reduce barriers to certification in the skilled trades so that apprentices can more easily work and train where the jobs are.

In conclusion, I trust that my comments have convinced hon. members that these measures from economic action plan contained in this bill meet the government's goal of not only improving the quality of life for Canadians, but also creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

It also proves, in some of the measures that I have mentioned, that this bill has a heart to help those families in Canada to have children and to be all that they can be in the future. I trust that all members in this House will quickly pass this bill.

● (1855)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his presentation. While I was close to being converted, I do not think I am there yet and unfortunately I still think that I and many of my colleagues on this side of the House will be opposing the bill. A lot of it relates to many of the things that we do not see in the bill.



*Government Orders*

On this side of the House we are seeing the elimination of the small business hiring tax credit. That helped 560,000 businesses across the country just last year and that no longer exists. We are also not seeing enough to create jobs. We have also seen this being rammed through the House. Unfortunately, as we admitted, there are some good things in the 350 pages of the bill. If we had been able to have an opportunity to pull some of those out or at least debate some of those in a little more detail, there would have been an opportunity for us to get some of those passed quickly.

Why is it that we continue to see omnibus budget bills from the government? Why do we have to see for the fifth time an omnibus budget bill with over 500 changes to clauses and legislation? Really what we could be doing is looking at a budget bill and passing a budget bill and voting on a budget bill rather than on so many other things.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member needs to repent and come on board, but I would have to talk a little longer. The reason there is so much in the budget is because we have budget consultations right across Canada. We listen to Canadians and we hear what they say and they say a lot. We try to incorporate as much as we can of what their priorities are in the budget.

When we talk about the employer tax credit, the fact is that the number one priority we heard from employers is that we need people trained and we need to have skills training to happen in the country. We cannot do everything. This is a budget and we have only a certain amount of money because we do want to balance the budget. We looked at the priorities we felt the money should be spent on at this time in accordance with the priorities of businesses, to have people trained. That is why there is such a huge investment in our Canada job grant.

Obviously, there could be more in the budget, but the member complained about the size of the budget. It is the size that it is because we responded to so many of the priorities that Canadians put forward to our government.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member is a key member of the B. C. Conservative caucus. One of the things that we pushed for as a group and as individuals was the search and rescue tax credit. In Chilliwack and Hope, those people provide a huge service to my community.

I wanted to get the member's views on the search and rescue volunteers in his riding of Okanagan—Shuswap. What value do they bring to his communities and what feedback has he had from them on the search and rescue tax credit?

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Mr. Speaker, I live in the north Okanagan and it is right next door to the beautiful recreation facilities in Revelstoke. Of course there is a lot of snow machining going on there, but there is a risk of avalanche. There are people working in search and rescue who do a great job volunteering to look for people who may have been lost in the back woods. This tax credit says that we value the efforts that they make as volunteers for the community and the good of their fellow man. I think that is a good thing for government.

It is just another way of our government proving that we have a heart, to appreciate those who give of themselves to help their fellow man. It is a privilege. We did it first with the volunteer firefighters, for example. They really did appreciate it and that is what makes communities operate. They do not operate on government, they operate on community spirit. We are glad to be there to help them out with that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-31, even in a context of limited debate, unfortunately. Obviously, the Conservatives have not changed their ways. As usual, they have introduced a massive bill, an omnibus budget implementation bill designed to make us adopt hundreds of changes before they can even be studied properly.

This bill is over 350 pages long, has nearly 500 clauses, amends 60 laws and includes measures that were never mentioned in the budget speech. To ensure that this bill is passed as quickly as possible, the government is limiting debate in the House and not giving enough time for the committees to thoroughly review it. That way, many clauses are adopted quickly. The Conservatives are doing everything in their power to avoid being accountable to the House for their budgetary measures.

True to form, the government prefers to undermine the democratic process. That is beneath the dignity of a government of a democratic country like ours. We have the facts to prove it. For example, the hon. member for North Vancouver moved a motion whereby at 11 p. m. on May 29, 2014, all clauses that had not yet been voted on would be deemed adopted and all amendments not yet voted upon would be deemed rejected.

This does not live up to Canadians' expectations. They deserve better than this government that has no respect for democratic, parliamentary institutions. It is incredible that the government is pushing the passage of bills that have not been properly studied by Parliament and the Standing Committee on Finance, as is the case here.

No one will be surprised to learn that we will not support this budget, because it places Canadians in a position where their privacy could be violated. The bill contains nothing to support SMEs. Even worse, there is nothing in this bill to help the additional 300,000 Canadians who have become unemployed since the recession to find work, or to replace the 400,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the current Prime Minister.

Small and medium-sized businesses have been hit hard by this government. Many owners of SMEs have pointed out that the bill does not renew the hiring credit that the NDP was the first to propose in 2011 and that has now disappeared, unfortunately. However, changes were proposed to the labour-sponsored venture capital corporations tax credit.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve investments, economic development and high-quality jobs for the middle class.

*Government Orders*

We would have liked to have seen measures to help Canadian businesses grow, create jobs and increase their exports in this budget implementation bill. The government should have devised a comprehensive strategy for tackling youth unemployment and underemployment. One solution would have been to create a credit to encourage businesses to hire and train young people. By cracking down on unpaid internships, we would have ensured that young people were paid for their work.

If this government really wanted to work with the provinces to create jobs, it could have established a long-term strategy to address the shortages of skilled labour in order to support workers who want to move to another part of the country to take a long- or short-term job.

It is asking far too much of this government to bring together the provinces, employers, unions and educational institutions in order to improve the existing labour market development agreements. The government obviously prefers to establish policies behind closed doors, without any consultation.

Canada is a federation and the government, in many respects, seems to have forgotten the principle of co-operative federalism.

This bill is also a slap in the face to our veterans. Instead of compensating disabled veterans for the unjust deductions from their pensions since 2006, the government plans only to offer retroactive compensation for deductions that were made after the Federal Court ruling against the government in May 2012.

●(1900)

That is six years of deductions that the Conservatives do not have the decency to reimburse to these cheated veterans. It is beyond comprehension.

The government managed to find \$36 million to challenge the veterans' case before the courts before being set straight. It found \$28 million to fund celebrations of the War of 1812. Recently, it found \$103,000 to promote tweets by Veterans Affairs Canada. It also found \$4 million more this year for advertising so that the government and the minister could inform veterans. Inform them about what? Just a phone number is provided and very often no one even answers. The government prefers to pat itself on the back rather than compensate our veterans properly.

Veterans obviously deserve to be compensated adequately for their sacrifices, a principle this government seems to have forgotten yet again, given the lack of measures in this budget to help veterans.

I would like to quote something that retired captain Sean Bruyca said about this bill:

The omnibus budget bill does not meet Canada's democratic standard. It allows many changes to Canada's laws to enter the back door of government policy without full participatory and democratic due process. Ramming through legislation without proper scrutiny is an insult to the dignity of all that the military has sacrificed in Canada's name and at Parliament's order.

I could not summarize the situation better than Captain Bruyca does in that quotation.

For all Montrealers, and for the people in my riding listening to us, the bill also includes provisions about the Champlain Bridge. Bill C-31 exempts the Champlain Bridge from some of the key

consumer protection and safety requirements in the User Fees Act and the Bridges Act, and gives the minister in charge the power to exempt this project from all federal laws.

We might mention, for example, the requirement to consult the public, to justify setting tolls, to establish an independent body to examine complaints, to reduce fees deemed to be excessive, and to ask the Department of Public Works and Government Services to verify the completeness and the safety of the project.

This government has therefore reiterated its desire to impose tolls on the new Champlain Bridge with no consultation, dismissing out of hand the interests of Montrealers and everyone in my riding, who will have to pay for the replacement of existing infrastructure. The effect of that will be to clog other bridges; it makes no sense. This government keeps working behind closed doors to impose the tolls. More than 1,000 people have written to tell me that they are absolutely opposed to such a provision. This infrastructure is essential for the economy of the Montreal area and also for the economy of Canada as a whole. The Conservatives consider the bridge to be a piece of local infrastructure. It does not span a little stream; it spans one of the biggest and most important shipping routes in Canada. It is the busiest bridge in the country.

We in the NDP listen to our constituents. This is why we proposed four amendments in committee to prevent tolls from being imposed. Of course, those amendments were dismissed outright by the Conservative members on the committee. We will continue to fight, come what may, to stop the government from imposing tolls on the new Champlain Bridge.

Canadians deserve a budget bill that supports our businesses, which are the engine of job creation. Canadians therefore expected measures that would make their lives more affordable and that would help them save for their retirement. They expected funding for veterans' programs that reflected the sacrifices these people made for their country. Instead, the Conservatives decided to cut programs and tax credits so that they could balance the budget and hand out goodies to their target demographic just before next year's election.

●(1905)

Canadians deserve better than that, and we obviously do not support this bill.

●(1910)

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his passionate speech and commend him for the work he does for our veterans.

What I do not understand is the disdain that this government has for veterans. Just as much as I do not understand racism, I do not understand why the government is incapable, here in the House, of recognizing the contribution veterans have made, the sacrifices they have made for our country, often at the cost of their health or their lives.

*Government Orders*

I would like my colleague to elaborate on the comments he made about veterans in his speech. We know that members on the other side of the House rely heavily on rhetoric when it comes to veterans' issues. The NDP has proposed meaningful initiatives in that regard. I would like him to talk a little about that.

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his observations and for his excellent question about veterans. He is absolutely right: the government likes to take advantage of veterans.

The numbers vary when the government talks about veterans. I sometimes hear government members talk about an extra \$5 billion since 2006, whereas others say \$6 billion and some say \$4 billion.

The reality is that there have been substantial amounts in the budget, an extra \$5 billion or so since 2006, but there has also been about \$1 billion in the budget that has not been spent to support our veterans, at a time when they have trouble obtaining the services they are entitled to. Our veterans are disadvantaged and do not receive the compensation they deserve.

This week, we made 14 recommendations on the review of the new veterans charter. In fact, I urge the minister to stop spending millions of dollars on useless ads and to use the money to properly compensate and support our veterans.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the important measures in Bill C-31, of course, is for the Minister of Transport to be able to issue recalls on safety. I wonder if the member would comment on whether he supports that measure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I think this is a somewhat controversial measure.

I cannot comment on the measure my colleague is talking about because I think I am getting it mixed up with another measure that is very controversial, the one that could jeopardize Canadians' privacy.

I cannot answer my colleague's question on transportation because this is an extremely controversial bill. I did not spend a lot of time looking at transportation issues. I do not know whether I would support that measure.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his speech and the hard work he does for veterans and in his riding.

I would like to remind him that 71 veterans with post-traumatic stress syndrome have committed suicide since 2008.

Last week, the Minister of Veterans Affairs showed no interest in listening to Ms. Migneault, who lives in my riding, Brome—Missisquoi. In fact, he ran away from her.

I would like to ask him why Bill C-31 does not include measures to help the men and women who have to live with the after-effects of being in combat.

• (1915)

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine:** Madam Speaker, I have a quick answer for my colleague.

Since 2006, the government has been balancing the budget at veterans' expense.

[*English*]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am truly honoured to once again be able to rise in this House to speak and of course debate, while representing the great folks of my riding of Sudbury, representing their voice and the voice of the New Democratic Party here in the House of Commons.

We are debating Bill C-31, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014, and other measures. I believe that this is act 1 of many acts to follow.

What we have is a budget bill that is over 350 pages long. It is not a play. We are not debating a play. This is not act 1 and act 2. What I can really say is that there will not be a happy ending for many Canadians when this budget bill passes.

I would first like to talk a little about the hiring credit for small businesses. Just last year, 560,000 small businesses in this country used that hiring credit. Now, when we think about the 2.4 million small businesses in this country, that is a significant amount of small businesses that are using that.

Let us not forget that in this country, the real job creators are small and medium-sized enterprises, the economic engine of our country. It is not Bay Street but Main Street that is actually creating the jobs.

If we are actually cutting the hiring credit for small businesses, when we know there are 2.4 million businesses in this country and 1 million of those businesses offer employment to more than 1 employee, we really should have thought about this before the government actually removed this credit from the budget.

The cost of this program was approximately \$235 million. That is a significant amount of change. Let us not diminish that. However, when we look at the corporate tax cuts that the government has made over the last few years, from 22% down to 15%, that cost is approximately \$1.3 billion.

We heard from the former finance minister—bless his soul, a very good man—that this became money that the corporations are sitting on, and they are not creating the jobs that we want and that we need in this country. On one hand, we have small businesses that are creating the jobs, creating one-third the growth of the GDP in this country, and then on the other hand we have the corporations that are sitting on the money that they are saving in the corporate tax rates, not creating jobs.

We keep giving the large corporations the breaks, and we are doing nothing to help the small business and medium-sized enterprise in this country. That is shameful.

The government has an opportunity to actually put that small business hiring tax credit back in place. Let us make sure that more than 560,000 of these small businesses in this country utilize that hiring tax credit, because right now not only are they losing that hiring tax credit, but they are getting hit and hit hard by the government's inaction on merchant fees. It is \$4.2 billion per year that our small and medium-sized enterprises have to spend just to accept credit card payments in this country.

*Government Orders*

What we are not saying is that the credit card companies and the banks cannot recoup their costs and make a profit. However, do they have to do it so much so that small businesses are now saying that one more increase will break their backs, or that they are shutting their doors, or that they are not hiring people, or that they cannot expand their business?

I have the 2013 state of industry report from the Canadian Convenience Stores Association, which was just released. This is what it is saying in its statistics: last year, all of the convenience stores across this country lost \$254 million. They lost money, but they also had to spend \$832 million just to accept credit card payments. That means they cannot hire more employees.

• (1920)

A total of 61% of all convenience stores across the country say that they cannot hire more employees. They cannot pay down debt as quickly. That is 51% of all of these businesses. They cannot invest in equipment and expansion, which also has a ripple effect in our communities.

They cannot increase the employees' wages and benefits. They cannot increase donations to charity. As a former executive director of the United Way in Sudbury, I can attest that the small and medium enterprises in my community, and I am sure right across the country, are the businesses that invest in our charities. They invest in our communities. If we can keep more money in their pockets by addressing this merchant fee, they would continue to address and invest in their own communities.

They have to increase prices. Small and medium-sized business owners from coast to coast to coast, whether they are the Canadian Convenience Stores Association, the Retail Council of Canada, or independent business owners, will say that if we do not do something now in relation to merchant fees, we are going to be in trouble, because they are going to stop investing. They are going to stop hiring people, and we need them to hire people. We need to continue to grow our economy by supporting our small and medium-sized enterprises.

So far what we have seen from the government is the elimination of a hiring tax credit and doing nothing on the merchant fees. It created a voluntary code that is still full of loopholes.

The CFIB and others continue to push the government to act. Even the Competition Bureau asked the Competition Tribunal to investigate some of the anti-competitive practices that are in place in this country when it comes to Visa and Mastercard. The Competition Tribunal investigated. We were expecting a decision in December 2012. It came out in July 2013, and what did it do? It punted that decision back to Parliament. The Competition Tribunal is saying that this is a decision Parliament needs to act on. Instead, we have not heard an iota of any type of change on these requests from the tribunal to make sure that we can support our small and medium-sized enterprises.

Surely when we are looking at this 350-page budget document that would change everything from veterans to FATCA to all the other things that are in there, could we not have put one small regulation in place to prevent the anti-competitive practices being used by Visa and Mastercard and some of the banks and help our

small businesses continue to grow? That could have been a simple change, but it did not happen.

One of the other things we were hoping to see in this budget implementation act was on OBSI. OBSI, the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments, provides a great service to all Canadians, both consumers and businesses alike. What we have seen are the slowly diminishing powers of OBSI. Again, one quick regulation could have shut the door and stopped some of the banks from leaving. Instead, the Conservative have left it open. By leaving it open, we are going against the recommendation of the crazy, left-wing IMF and the World Bank that a single dispute mechanism for all consumers, small businesses, and all businesses in this country is the way to go. Instead, what we have seen is the Conservative government allowing banks to leave and choose their own law firms to be their ombudsmen for their consumers.

While OBSI is at an arm's length from the financial institutions, we are now allowing the banks to hire their own law firms to act on behalf of consumers who are having a problem with the banks. Again, that is like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse. That cannot happen, but it does.

Unfortunately, we have seen the Conservative government choose not to put that regulation into an omnibus budget bill. It has 350 pages and it has really closed the door on ensuring that small businesses get the support they need to continue to grow our economy.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, this is act no. 1. Act no. 2 is coming, and there really is no happy ending for this.

• (1925)

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to that rant from across the way. I have to compliment the member on the timbre of his voice. He has a perfect face for radio, as they say.

He mentioned in his speech that the government has not done anything for small business. I speak to owners of small businesses all the time in my riding and across the country, and they really admire the things we have done since 2006, in the past three budgets in particular.

We eliminated the corporate surtax in 2008, which is a big deal to small businesses. It was a big part of what they were paying. It reduced the small business tax rate. However, the really important thing for them is succession. Small businesses have been built up with sweat and tears, and raising the lifetime capital gains is a really important measure for them. They have built up capital. That is their future, and they want to hand it off to future generations. Raising the limit to \$800,000 is something they are very thankful for.

The comments about government not doing anything for small business I really do not agree with. Owners of small businesses do not agree with it either. Maybe the member would comment on that, please.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I agree that elevating capital gains was important for owners of small and medium-sized businesses. It was something that this side of the House supported. However, the problem is that if we are cutting out a hiring tax credit, if we are making sure that they have to pay more on merchant fees, if we are putting forward a bill that is really not going to reduce any of the red tape, there is not going to be anything to be a successor of.

Really, what the government needs to do is listen to the CFIB, the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Convenience Stores Association, and Restaurants Canada. All of them are saying on the merchant fee file that these guys are not doing anything. It is costing them \$4.2 billion per year, and rather than act on that, the government wants to put it down on paper and never act. Unfortunately, it will actually cost them more than it is right now and what it should be.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and for being such a fine champion of small business in this country.

My riding of Beaches—East York is in Toronto. Often we conflate Toronto with Bay Street when we think about business, but of course, Toronto is a big place. I think a confederation of neighbourhoods is what Jane Jacobs once called it. In all of those neighbourhoods, there are small businesses, and the success of small business is, in fact, the success of the neighbourhoods of the communities we live in. We notice in our neighbourhoods when a small business does not succeed. There are empty storefronts and so on and so forth.

Another spinoff, obviously, of the success of small business is the issue of youth employment. Toronto is facing about 18% youth unemployment, and small business is an obvious employment opportunity for young people. It is a great place to get started in the labour market. I was wondering if my colleague could comment on the connection between youth unemployment and the success of small business in Canada.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, recently I was at the chamber in Victoria, British Columbia talking about a lot of the things we want to hear about from small businesses. One thing I took from that, besides many of the recommendations, was their congratulations to the NDP for having an urban affairs critic. I wanted to make sure that I passed that along to my hon. colleague.

In relation to the question about youth unemployment and small business, part of the proposal we are putting forward is a hiring tax credit for youth that would give small businesses \$4,000, especially in those areas that have higher youth unemployment, like my riding of Sudbury, unfortunately. I was shocked to learn when I was recently in Victoria with the member for Victoria that there is a 14% unemployment rate for youth between 18 and 25. Across the country, that is happening in too many cities.

New Democrats have a proposal. If the government wants to take it, we would be more than happy, but I do not think it will do that, because we have not seen it act on anything substantive to help small business in a very long time. This is something that would be a win-win: we will help employ our youth, and we will make sure that the small businesses get the employees they need so urgently.

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot say I am happy to speak about another omnibus bill.

Bill C-31, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, is once again an omnibus bill that contains a number of measures in other bills.

As Canadians are well aware, these omnibus bills include provisions that have absolutely nothing to do with financial or budgetary measures. These mammoth bills make huge changes in our society by means of provisions that are hidden in bills so that the government can impose its ideological views by leaving Canadians in the dark.

The opposition, which may reject some initiatives but approve of others, is deliberately placed in such a position that it must oppose all of the initiatives, even the ones it approves of. Then the Conservatives accuse us of voting against a particular provision.

However, Canadians are not buying it. They know that the Conservative government forces mammoth bills through in order to hide its mistakes and incompetence and bring in measures that are solely in its own interest and not in the interest of Canadians.

In addition to the problem of a catch-all bill, this kind of process makes it impossible to consider the bill in depth. What democracy. We in the NDP are opposed to this bill for these reasons, but especially because of its content.

Serious questions were raised in committee about the implementation of this legislation. We sincerely hoped that the Conservatives would set aside partisanship and carefully examine the amendments put forward by the NDP. Since this bill has more than 350 clauses, I can only mention some of them.

The bill would enable the government to amend and repeal a wide range of regulations on rail safety without informing the public. The regulations in question deal with technical standards, worker training, hours of work, maintenance and performance, for example. These amendments would not be open to public debate. They could be made secretly by cabinet and have an impact on the transportation of dangerous goods.

I would like to point out that there are railways that pass through my riding, Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. My constituents are very concerned about the transportation of dangerous goods. The government should pay attention to those who are involved and take their concerns into consideration. It is extremely worrisome to think that amendments that could threaten the safety of a community could be adopted without the residents being informed.

I would also like to talk about the Champlain Bridge. Over the past few weeks, we have received hundreds of petitions against bringing in toll charges on the Champlain Bridge.

*Government Orders*

On the one hand, the Conservative government does not want to listen to the public; it does not understand that nobody wants the new toll, not even the municipalities involved. On the other hand, this shows once again that the only thing the Conservatives have done since they came to power has been to tax households; there is no relief for families. Bringing in a toll proves once again that the government is incapable of listening to Canadians and incapable of giving them a break.

● (1935)

That is why the NDP and the members on the south shore, including myself, will not just stand idly by.

My constituents, as well as all those who are affected by the new toll, are worried. We live in a democratic country where the government was elected by the people. The people do not want this legislation and they do not want the toll. The government must hear what they are saying and listen to reason.

Lastly, this bill has serious consequences for small and medium-sized businesses, which are the lifeblood of our economy. The Conservatives often attack us and say that the NDP never supports the economic measures they propose. This is why: we cannot support a bill that fails to renew the hiring credit for small and medium-sized businesses. Bad laws hurt Canadians' ability to grow their business, create jobs and build a better future for themselves.

I will finish by reading a quote:

When the bill was rammed through the House with closure, it really did not present a lot of opportunity for meaningful public debate. We had begun to hear... from provincial and territorial governments, from many academics and experts and from many individual Canadians...

The electoral process...affect[s] all Canadians. The interests of all Canadians must be served, not the interests of politicians, not partisan interests or political self-interest.

The person who said these words and who was railing against the Liberals' schemes with omnibus bills is now our Prime Minister. Omnibus bills have become his Trojan horse, which stops us from doing our work as parliamentarians.

I rise in the House this evening to oppose this bill and the process that gave rise to it. It is shameful for our democracy. Canadians deserve better. They deserve investment, innovation, economic development, and quality employment for the middle class. They deserve realistic support and community infrastructure. They deserve help in saving and investing for their retirement. They deserve to have their lives made a little more affordable with measures to reduce household debt, and they deserve to be provided with the services they need.

This budget unfortunately does none of that. That is why New Democrats will not support it.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. friend how she can explain her hypocrisy.

First of all, she talked about supporting the hiring credit for small business. In 2011, when she had the opportunity to support that hiring credit for small business, she chose to vote against it. In 2012, the hiring credit for small business was in the economic action plan.

Now she claims to be for it, but then she voted against it. Now she is claiming she is for it again.

I mean, this is kind of like a John Kerry scenario. She voted against it before she voted in favour of it.

Can the member explain her hypocrisy to the House and I am sure her interested fellow NDP colleagues?

● (1940)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah:** Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my distinguished colleague for his question. It allows me to expand on this once more by saying that this government is presenting us with mammoth bills in which it stuffs everything, even bills to amend the Criminal Code.

How can we vote in good conscience on things that we have not even had the time to debate or to suggest amendments for? This is what they like to do and what I was denouncing at the start of my speech. We are being forced to vote against measures that could be good for Canadians, but unfortunately, everything is in the same bag, in the form of an omnibus bill. Then afterwards, they like to accuse us of being hypocrites. We are not hypocrites, we are responsible and we are showing our leadership.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the budget implementation bill is one aspect of the overall budget wherein we saw significant cuts to the CBC. A good number of jobs will be lost, but more importantly, concern has been raised with respect to the overall impact the cuts will have on the CBC's future. I for one believe in CBC TV and radio and the value they bring to our society as a whole.

The question I have for the member is this. With respect to the CBC and the budget implementation bill, what we see in the bill is to the detriment of the CBC. Canadians want us to come to the table and advocate on this issue, yet the government has invoked time allocation. On an important bill such as this, there are rarely serious time constraints. I have had the opportunity to speak to the bill myself, but there will be many members who will not be afforded the opportunity to speak to it because of time allocation.

This is a budget bill and budgets are all about priorities, but through the imposition of time allocation, the government is preventing members of Parliament from contributing to the debate on setting priorities for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my Liberal colleague for his pertinent question.

Like all Canadians, we have gotten used to how the Conservatives operate. The more secretive they are on that side, the more we are transparent and tell the truth, on ours. Every time we asked about the CBC, the Minister of Heritage told us that it was all in the CBC's hands, not the government's. We were there, it is on the record. Once again, we are seeing a lack of leadership from this government when the time comes to take a stance in support of Canadians, no matter what the issue.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have only four minutes left to speak during this debate, and that is because of the time allocation motion that the Conservatives moved and voted for today.

That leaves very little time for people like me, who live in the far north and come from a remote area, to discuss the measures included in this proposed budget, as well as the ones that were not included. Clearly, I am very puzzled by the fact that I cannot talk about the things that directly impact the people of my riding, Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

I will use the four minutes I have left to debunk some of the Conservative myths surrounding jobs and the economy.

When the Conservatives came to power in 2006, and I just happened to choose this example, there was a \$26-billion trade surplus in terms of international trade. Now, listen to this. The Conservatives turned that surplus into a \$62-billion trade deficit.

The Conservatives are saying that they are very good negotiators. They are signing all these free trade agreements with countries around the globe. However, in actual fact, they are proving that they are not as good at negotiating as they would have us believe.

I would also like to address the matter of the budget deficit. It is important to think about that because, on the other side of the House, the Conservatives are bragging that they are good managers and that they know how to manage the economy. Nevertheless, the public debt has increased by over \$100 billion over the past six years. We must remind the Canadians who are watching this evening of that. The Conservatives are responsible for the largest budget deficit in Canadian history.

It is important to keep that in mind because, on this side of the House at least, we are tired of hearing the Conservatives talk about this subject. I know that they do not like facts. However, the facts certainly contradict what they are saying.

Our youth is another example that I could give in the House tonight. The youth unemployment rate is double the national rate at almost 14%.

How can the Conservatives brag about doing such a great job of managing the economy and the country when they cannot even find jobs for our young people, the future of this country? The Conservatives cannot do it.

Let us talk about this economic recovery they are still bragging about today. An additional 300,000 Canadians have become unemployed since the recession and 400,000 jobs have been lost in the manufacturing industry since this Prime Minister took office. They call that an economic recovery?

I think that we need to speak out about the fact that the Conservatives are not capable of doing the work. This Conservative government is tired and corrupt. It is no longer capable of defending its record. It is important to point that out.

I will end by saying—

• (1945)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being 7:48 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, and 6.

The next question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 10 to 12.

The question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 8 and 9.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*English*]

(Motion No. 7 negatived)

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** We will now proceed to move motions under Group No. 2.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 110.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 111.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 112.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 113.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 114.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 115.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 116.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 117.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 118.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 119.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 120.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 121.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 122.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 123.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 124.

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 125.

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 126.

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 127.  
Motion No. 31

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 128.  
Motion No. 32

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 129.  
Motion No. 33

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 130.  
Motion No. 34

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 131.  
Motion No. 35

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 132.  
Motion No. 36

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 133.  
Motion No. 37

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 134.  
Motion No. 38

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 135.  
Motion No. 39

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 136.  
Motion No. 40

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 137.  
Motion No. 41

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 138.  
Motion No. 42

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 139.  
Motion No. 43

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 140.  
Motion No. 44

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 141.  
Motion No. 45

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 142.  
Motion No. 46

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 143.  
Motion No. 47

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 144.  
Motion No. 48

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 145.  
Motion No. 49

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 146.  
Motion No. 50

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 147.  
Motion No. 51

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 148.  
Motion No. 52

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 149.  
Motion No. 53

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 150.  
Motion No. 54

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 151.  
Motion No. 55

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 152.  
Motion No. 56

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 153.  
Motion No. 57

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 154.  
Motion No. 58

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 155.  
Motion No. 59

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 156.









*Government Orders*

Motion No. 242

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 452.

Motion No. 243

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 453.

Motion No. 244

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 454.

Motion No. 245

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 455.

Motion No. 246

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 456.

Motion No. 247

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 457.

Motion No. 248

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 458.

Motion No. 249

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 459.

Motion No. 250

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 460.

Motion No. 251

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 461.

Motion No. 252

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 462.

Motion No. 253

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 463.

Motion No. 254

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 464.

Motion No. 255

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 465.

Motion No. 256

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 466.

Motion No. 257

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 467.

Motion No. 258

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 468.

Motion No. 259

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 469.

Motion No. 260

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 470.

Motion No. 261

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 471.

Motion No. 262

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 472.

Motion No. 263

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 473.

Motion No. 264

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 474.

Motion No. 265

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 475.

Motion No. 266

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 476.

Motion No. 267

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 477.

Motion No. 268

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 478.

Motion No. 269

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 479.

Motion No. 270

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 480.

Motion No. 271

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 481.

Motion No. 272

That Bill C-31 be amended by deleting Clause 482.

● (2025)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The next question is on Motion No. 13. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 14 to 65.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 66. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred, and the recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 67 to 69.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 70. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 71 to 83.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 84. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred, and the recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 85 to 87.

• (2030)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The next question is on Motion No. 88. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** A recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

• (2035)

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 89. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 90 to 93.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 94. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** A recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 95 to 97.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 98. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some Hon. Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 99 and 100.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 101. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** A recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 102. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some Hon. Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 103 to 153.

[English]

The question is on the Motion No. 154. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** A recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 155.

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 156. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 157 to 159.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 160.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

*Government Orders*

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** A recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

• (2040)

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 166. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 167 to 272.

[*English*]

Normally at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 27, the divisions stand deferred until Monday, June 9, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### CANADA-HONDURAS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (for the Minister of International Trade)** moved that Bill C-20, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Honduras and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation

between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak in support of the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement today.

Since 2006, our Conservative government has been focused on the priorities of Canadians: creating jobs, growth, and economic opportunities for all. One of the ways we have been achieving real results for Canadians is through opening new markets for Canadian businesses.

The Canadian economy relies on international trade. Our companies, over 40,000 of them, are already exporting. As the global economy becomes more and more interconnected, value chains grow and more of our businesses become active internationally. In Canada, one in five jobs is dependent on exports. Today trade-related activity represents more than 60% of Canada's gross domestic product.

Canadian companies are among the best in the world. Not only can they compete, they can succeed in the global marketplace. Our government is creating conditions to support the success of our companies, and we owe it to them to take action.

Canada has always been active in international trade. With the global economic crisis and the toxic threat of greater protectionism, the need for open markets has now become clearer than ever.

Canadian businesses have expressed broad support for trade and investment agreements. These agreements directly benefit small and medium-sized businesses for whom red tape and delays can be particularly burdensome. Our Conservative government continues to be a strong advocate on the world stage for free and open markets. In fact, the Minister of International Trade recently announced that Canada will join 13 World Trade Organization members, including China, the European Union, Japan, and the United States of America, in negotiations toward a new World Trade Organization plurilateral agreement on environmental goods. More open trade in environmental products will increase the availability and lower the cost of environmental goods, such as hydraulic turbines, air handling equipment, water treatment technologies, and waste management or recycling equipment. It is an ambitious agreement that will significantly facilitate the achievement of the green growth and sustainable development objectives of the World Trade Organization economies by creating a win-win situation for trade and for the environment.

Rather than take a wait-and-see approach and hope for the best, Canada decided to proactively focus on diversifying our trading relationships through regional and bilateral free trade agreements. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade, 2013 was the most successful year for trade in Canadian history.

### *Government Orders*

Last October our Conservative government reached an agreement in principle on the Canada-European free trade agreement. It is a great achievement, I might add. This is a major milestone on Canada's international trade negotiations agenda. Through the Canada-Europe free trade agreement, our companies will gain preferential access to a market of over 500 million affluent consumers and a collective gross domestic product of \$17 trillion. A Canada-European Union joint study concluded that the agreement would increase Canada's GDP by \$12 billion annually and would grow bilateral trade by 20%.

In addition to this historic agreement in principle with the European Union, since 2006 we have concluded agreements with the European Free Trade Association, which includes Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Lichtenstein, and with Peru, Colombia, Jordan, and Panama. We most recently concluded negotiations with Korea. We are also working expeditiously to conclude negotiations with the members of the trans-Pacific partnership as well as bilateral agreements with Japan and India.

● (2045)

To help Canadian investors, since 2007 we have concluded or brought into force 22 new or updated foreign investment protection and promotion agreements. These are just a few examples of our international trade achievements to date.

Contrast this with the Liberal record on trade, signing only three free trade agreements, agreements that are being broadened and modernized by this Conservative government, and having expensive political photo ops without any proven results or follow up, unfortunately. We have left behind that decade of Liberal trade neglect. To do this, we conducted consultations right across this great country. We engaged around 400 business and industry stakeholders. These were not just large corporations but the small and medium-sized businesses that are the lifeblood of the Canadian economy.

This is why we are so proud of the global markets action plan we launched in November 2013. This is not a bureaucratic exercise. It is a concrete plan for Canadian business developed with Canadian business. The global markets action plan focuses on our international economic engagement by identifying priority sectors and markets. It also underscores the importance of economic diplomacy, and of course, it aims to help Canadian small and medium-sized companies expand their global reach.

Through this government's initiatives, we want to support Canadian companies, whether they export goods or services or want to invest, to be competitive in these new markets.

Speaking of new markets, our government has long recognized the growing importance of the Americas. The Prime Minister confirmed this when he made that region a foreign policy priority in 2007. Increased trade and commercial engagement is part of the Prime Minister's vision for a more prosperous, secure, and democratic hemisphere, and it makes sense to Canadian businesses too. Total trade between countries in the Americas and Canada increased 34% from 2007 to 2013, not to mention that Canadian direct investment was up 58.6% from 2007 to 2012, a big jump.

How does Honduras fit into our ambitious free trade plan to create jobs and opportunities for Canadians? That is a very good question. In 2011, the Prime Minister announced that we had successfully concluded free trade agreement negotiations with Honduras. I would like to note three key reasons why it was important for Canada to conclude this agreement.

First, Canadian companies were already at a competitive disadvantage in Honduras, and that is a fact. Since 2006, American companies have benefited from having an established free trade deal with Honduras.

Listen to what César Urias, director, Latin America, for Canada Pork International, said to the international trade committee during its study of the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement. He stated:

In 2004...Canada exported 1,345 metric tons estimated at \$2.2 million, approximately one-third of Honduras pork imports. By 2006, Canadian pork exports dropped to zero as the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States free trade agreement...came into effect.

This unlevel playing field was made even worse when the European Union concluded its free trade deal with Central America, including Honduras, in 2010. That free trade agreement has been provisionally applied with Honduras since the summer of 2013. Our companies need to catch up with our U.S. and EU counterparts. The Canada-Honduras free trade agreement would put them on a level playing field, a level playing field for which they have been asking.

Take as an example what Vincent Taddeo, vice-president international for Cavendish Farms, said. He stated:

The Canadian government must make the timely establishment of free trade negotiations a greater priority and ensure a more level playing field for our exports and exporters; ...be proactive and aggressive in negotiating and conducting other free trade agreements.

● (2050)

I can assure our pork farmers, producers, and workers at companies like Cavendish Farms that this Conservative government is heeding their call.

Second, when we negotiate a free trade agreement, we are looking at the potential for trade in the future. From 2009 to 2013 our two-way merchandise trade with Honduras grew 59.2%. This trend speaks to the potential for further growth of our trading relationship with Honduras. Once the free trade agreement enters into force and our companies begin to see the benefits of tariff elimination, imagine the enhanced opportunities for Canadian business. When our businesses trade, they create jobs and opportunities for workers here in Canada.

To take a snapshot of what this agreement would mean for our pork producers, I will again refer to Mr. César Urias' comments when he stated:

The free trade agreement with Honduras is estimated to generate sales of \$5 million to \$7 million in the first year following implementation.

That is just in the first year. Stories like that from our industry prove why this agreement needs to be passed and as soon as possible. I repeat: as soon as we can.



*Government Orders*

What the anti-trade New Democratic Party does not understand is how broad the benefits would be for Canadians, even after Mr. Urias spelled it out for its members at committee, when he explained:

...[the free trade agreement] benefits the very base, the very foundation of the producing sector, as well as farmers, distributors, transporters by train, truck, or you name it. It even benefits financial services, insurance, and credit industries. There's a large, vast effect that is replicated in many other industries, not just...[the pork industry]. It's not just a focused effect. It spreads all over.

When this improved market access for goods is combined with the agreement's provisions on investment, services, and government procurement, we will have created the conditions for Canadian companies to succeed in that market.

Investors would also benefit. The Canada-Honduras free trade agreement includes provisions designed to protect bilateral investment through legally binding obligations, and to ensure that investors would be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner. Through the free trade agreement, investors would also have access to transparent, impartial, and binding dispute settlement. The investment provisions of this free trade agreement would support a stable legal framework that would protect Canadian investments in Honduras and vice versa, including guaranteeing the transfer of investment capital and protecting investors against expropriation without prompt and adequate compensation.

Finally, this agreement underscores Canada's ongoing commitment to our partnership with Honduras. Honduras is a country with many difficulties and it would be easy to, as the NDP constantly demands, turn our backs in the face of human rights and security challenges. However, this government firmly believes in engagement, not isolation. That is the real way to achieve results. Only by continuing to build an open and credible dialogue can we support positive change in the country.

Even Jim Bannantine, president and CEO of Aura Minerals, a Canadian mining company operating in Honduras, agrees. He said:

...the free trade agreement, through the economic integration and jobs, is the best effect on the security in Honduras. By far the number one positive factor in security in Honduras, that allows us to practise our...[corporate social responsibility] and operate unimpeded, is jobs, economic growth; jobs make the best defence against this violence.

• (2055)

This commitment to building positive change is evident in Canada's multi-faceted, bilateral relationship with Honduras, from our people-to-people links to Canada's development program, and extends into our free trade agreement negotiations. This is why it is important to Canada that we include provisions like corporate social responsibility and anti-corruption and why we negotiated parallel agreements on labour and environmental co-operation.

During his testimony, Mr. Bannantine made it very clear that the Honduran people are seeing results, when he said:

On the...[corporate social responsibility] side, there are lots of examples on the ground. A couple of million dollars a year go to the local community.

For these reasons, the free trade agreement is a cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. The Canada-Honduras free trade agreement would absolutely benefit both our countries.

I urge all hon. members to support the implementation of the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement. Let us get together and pass Bill C-20 as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, perhaps we should put things back in context. I am prepared to believe that we have lost the treaty with Europe, as the treaty has not been signed, but going from a treaty with Europe to another treaty with Honduras is a long and painful drop.

Need I remind the House that, economically, Honduras is not as significant as the railway disaster in Lac-Mégantic?

If the Conservatives paid a little more attention to rail transportation in Canada, it would be a lot more profitable from an economic point of view than trying to reach an economic deal with Honduras.

The member spoke about a level playing field, about transfers and about protecting our investments. When the international community is telling Honduras that its Supreme Court justices are corrupt, when the United Nations and some U.S. senators are saying that the most senior judges in Honduras are corrupt, what kind of legal protection will there be for our investments? I would really like to have an answer.

• (2100)

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I just would remind the member that what I said in my speech earlier was that Canadian businesses, small, medium, and large, are working on an unlevel playing field. The European Union already has a free trade agreement with Honduras, as does the United States of America. We have seen our inability to compete by these onerous tariffs. They have denied Canada's pork producers, as I gave as an example, where they were selling half of the supply of pork down to zero.

While the member raises concerns on a variety of fronts, let us keep our eye on the ball. We want to support Canadian producers, we want to support Canadian jobs, and we want to engage in a positive relationship with Honduras. I hope that member will join with me.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not necessarily mean to be mean and pop the member's bubble on his speech, but I must say I am somewhat surprised on two points.

The one is that he never acknowledged the wonderful performance of former prime minister Jean Chrétien, who actually initiated the discussions with not only Honduras but Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, recognizing that was a region in which Canada should be moving toward freer trade agreements. That is one of his failures in acknowledging, I suspect.

The other one is that he makes reference to the European Union. He says that it set this agreement. We have not been able to locate a document where the Prime Minister actually signed it off as an agreement.

*Government Orders*

I wonder if the member could do us all a favour and table or make a commitment to table, sometime between now and when we leave, an actual document that the Prime Minister signed, as proof that there is, in fact, some sort of agreement with the European Union, because we have not been able to find it.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Winnipeg North for basically putting in *Hansard* all of my failures. When he comes to pointing out that the Chrétien government was so great on trade, there were 3 agreements versus 38 agreements with us now.

To paraphrase a former Liberal member, they did not get it done. I certainly can appreciate that the member wants to see good things for Canada. I do as well. I hope that the member can encourage his Liberal caucus to vote with us, so we can see an enhanced relationship with Honduras. It would be good for Canada, but also good for the Honduran people.

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the parliamentary secretary on a well-organized and insightful speech on not only the conceptual arguments in favour of free trade but also the benefits of having a free trade agreement with Honduras.

I would like to begin by saying I am glad that the parliamentary secretary mentioned our record of 43 trade agreements negotiated since 2006 versus the Liberal record of only 3 trade agreements negotiated. I am glad my hon. friend brought up Jean Chrétien, because he said he was going to tear up the NAFTA. I am glad that the parliamentary secretary mentioned Pork International, because if there is one thing the Liberals are experts at, it is pork.

Our government has taken Canada from being a trading nation to a nation of traders. Could he inform the House, particularly the NDP that believes we should set up walls and go back to Smoot-Hawley, of the benefits of free trade and why it is so important that we have maintained focus on trade agreements with other countries around the world in order to create jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity?

• (2105)

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, it is important to be mindful that one out five jobs in Canada is dependent on trade. The NDP member for British Columbia Southern Interior had written that free trade agreements “threaten the very existence of our nation”.

I believe that Canada has a special future, but it is not going to be put out by vague ideas or platitudes or charismatic speeches. It will be done by giving business and Canadian entrepreneurs the opportunity to succeed. That is something government can help with. We can help negotiate free trade agreements. We can help make sure there is investment protection.

I believe in Canada's ability to grow and to compete with the best of them. I would ask all members to give entrepreneurs the opportunity to compete. Let us make this country special and more so now—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am always astonished by the way the Conservatives talk about their record on free trade with other countries.

Honduras, for instance, ranks about 104th on the list of Canada's export markets. In 2012, Canada exported \$38 million in goods to Honduras and imported \$218 million. We have to recognize that this is quite a substantial trade deficit.

When this government came to power in 2006, our trade surplus was \$26 billion. Today, we have a deficit of \$62 billion in terms of our trade with other countries.

Can my colleague explain what has gone wrong?

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a step back. When we look at trade, we see that trade benefits both parties, or else they would not agree to trade in the first place. Trade balances and surplus change from month to month and from year to year. We had a case where Canada was selling more pork products to Honduras, but because someone else was able to engage and to see tariff-free access, it went down to zero. For those people who rely on that income in places like Merritt in Nicola Valley in British Columbia in my riding, it is very important.

While the member opposite may dismiss the value of Honduras, I would say there are eight million people who want to see a better future, and they look to Canada as being a place where we can trade with them and they with us and we can have prosperity on both sides of both of our borders.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my Conservative colleague's remarks tonight. I have great respect for much of the work he does, particularly around the Canadian wine industry.

I am a little surprised that he is boasting about the Conservative record on trade when we have seen such growth in the trade deficit under the Conservatives, who inherited a significant trade surplus. Beyond that, the Conservatives are signing trade agreements with relatively small economies like Honduras.

Why is it that if the Conservatives believe in economic engagement as a way to engage in other issues, including human rights and social development, they have ignored and let atrophy our relationship with powerhouses like China and Africa, with which we had incredibly strong, favoured relations for decades under both Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's comments as well as his support for some of my work on the interprovincial transfer of wine.

To go back to the topic of trade deficits versus trade surpluses, those change over time. We should also remember that economies also change. Sometimes an economy will start out with very little resource development but eventually move into value-added. For example, in the auto industry we will sometimes bring in parts from other countries and then put them together using Canadian labour and Canadian know-how and sell them at a surplus.

*Government Orders*

I would again point out to the member that a tenet of trade economics 101 is that everyone benefits. We can look at the work of David Ricardo. It is one of the principles of economics. Everyone benefits from trade, or else people would not trade.

My last point is that if a country wants to do business with Canada, wants to work hand in hand to build investment and build prosperity, I would hope that the government would look at it seriously and would always go forward with a deal that would make sense for both countries.

• (2110)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I understand from my colleague's previous speech on Bill C-20, concerning the free trade agreement between Canada and Honduras, that for the Conservatives, it is quantity that counts, and not quality. Canadians know that we have to negotiate trade agreements that offer winning conditions for Canada, which is precisely what the Conservatives have not done.

I would like to say that I oppose this bill. I also had the pleasure of being a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade, where we examined this bill. First, let me reiterate that the NDP is in favour of international trade. We want to trade with other countries. We want to sign agreements with democracies around the world that can help Canadian manufacturers and contribute to our economy. However, our approach is not the same as the Conservatives'. We believe we must negotiate agreements that meet important criteria.

I would like to speak to the House again about the three criteria that all free trade agreements must meet to earn the support of the NDP. First, we have to ask whether the proposed partner respects democracy and human rights principles. Does the partnership enable both countries to establish and apply adequate environmental and labour standards? If that is not the case, is it really a good idea to support the trade agreement? In that case, the answer is no.

Second, we have to see whether the proposed partnership is of significant value to Canada and whether it will really benefit us. It is clear that the Conservatives have not done their homework on this subject. In fact, Honduras currently ranks 104th among Canada's export markets, in terms of export value. We know that it is an economy even smaller than the economy of Ottawa-Gatineau. That gives us an idea of the strategic value of trade with Honduras.

Third, we have to determine whether the terms of the proposed agreement are satisfactory. This is also not the case for the free trade agreement between Canada and Honduras.

Like me, people may wonder why the government chose Honduras to negotiate a trade agreement. This is a question that a number of Canadians are also asking themselves. My Conservative colleague boasted about the number of free trade agreements the Conservative government has signed. In fact, that shows how desperate the Conservatives are, since they are working from a weakened position on the international scene.

I would like to give a brief summary of the reasons why they came to negotiate a free trade agreement with that country, which has such a small economy and flouts human rights.

We know that once Canada had barely managed to sign a multilateral agreement with the Central American economies as a whole, it looked to the weakest political player, Honduras, to negotiate a specific agreement as part of what is an ideological pursuit of free trade agreements.

In August 2011, the Prime Minister announced the conclusion of negotiations between Canada and Honduras, and in November 2013, the Minister of International Trade and his Honduran counterpart signed the free trade agreement.

Therefore, the reason that an agreement had to be negotiated with a country like Honduras, a country that, moreover, does not respect human rights and has virtually no reliable democratic institutions, is that negotiations with the other countries in the region had failed.

• (2115)

I am now going to explain how the economic benefits of a free trade agreement with Honduras are minimal. It is not as the Conservative member said. According to internal analyses done by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian economy will apparently get very little from the agreement. We can see that the Conservatives do not even pay attention to the reports produced by their own department.

As I said, Honduras currently ranks 104th among Canada's export markets, in terms of export value. The 2011 statistics show that the total value of exports of goods was only \$38 million, while imports came to \$218 million, which represents a substantial trade deficit.

We wonder whether the Conservatives even took the time to do an impact analysis, to see whether there are really any benefits from this agreement, particularly knowing that tariffs are already very low with Honduras. In fact, a majority of tariffs are below 5%. We wonder why the Conservatives are in such a hurry to negotiate this agreement.

The witnesses raised another concern at the Standing Committee on International Trade, which is the lack of transparency.

We know that the agreement was negotiated with no transparency at all. In spite of repeated requests by civil society in Canada, the Government of Canada did not release the texts of the agreement during the negotiation process.

I would like to digress a moment, if I may. We can see that the Conservatives have taken a particular approach to negotiating free trade agreements: they do not consult adequately with Canadians. They do not consult with civil society, with workers, with first nations or with other groups, and they do not make the text public.

The Standing Committee on International Trade also studied our free trade agreement with Europe or the European Union. During these meetings, witnesses stated that the consultations had not been extensive enough.

I would like to quote what was said by Jerry Dias, Unifor's national president:

...we've been critical of the way this deal has been negotiated, without the full and meaningful participation of trade unions, environmental NGOs, and other groups in Canada's civil society.

*Government Orders*

The text of the free trade agreement with the European Union was made public in other jurisdictions. U.S. decision-makers had access to the draft texts, and European parliamentarians too had access to these texts. The Conservative government asked for our trust and prevented us from having access to these draft texts.

I think this lack of transparency is deplorable. It concerns me a great deal because it has become a habit of this Conservative government. It is a habit that prevents civil society groups from consulting with members of Parliament, giving advice to the government and providing the negotiators with facts and information that might help them in negotiating free trade agreements in the best interests of Canadians.

It should also be mentioned that the token environmental impact assessment of the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement, which was released in October 2013, omitted any assessment of the impact of Canadian investment in Honduras. Those figures were deemed confidential.

In addition, the side agreements on the environment and labour are inadequate. A number of witnesses at the committee meetings said so. The reason they are inadequate is that they are not accompanied by any real measures for enforcing them. In fact, as we say, they lack teeth. They lack the power to be enforced.

According to the section on investments in the Canada-Honduras free trade agreement, companies can sue governments in international tribunals, something that undermines the ability of governments to make decisions intended to safeguard the public good.

● (2120)

Canada's federal government must be able to make decisions that safeguard the public good without businesses having a veto over them. This is necessary.

Now, I would just like to go to the heart of my argument, which concerns human rights, because this is something that is very important to me and something that we have discussed on numerous occasions in this debate.

We can talk about the economic impact of this free trade agreement. However, Canada also has a duty to behave responsibly on the international scene. It has a role to play in promoting human rights, and as members of Parliament, we must encourage the government play this role.

In 2011, in Honduras, there were to 85.5 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. This means that in 2011, Honduras was the most dangerous country in the world. This is a very serious matter. I would like to say more about the issue of freedom of the press and explain how grim the human rights situation is in this country.

Journalists and human rights advocates have a pervasive sense that they are under threat, and that the state is at best unable or unwilling to defend them or at worst complicit in the abuses, which is also the general feeling of a large majority of the population. Between 2003 and 2013, there were only two convictions, even though 38 journalists were murdered. That represents an impunity rate of 95%.

It is worth noting that, according to the witnesses who came to the parliamentary committee, there are likely no real investigations in Honduras. That makes it complicated to assign responsibility for the murders of those journalists. We were able to hear witnesses from PEN Canada, a civil society group that studies human rights and journalists' rights.

PEN Canada submitted a report to the committee. The report is entitled "Honduras: Journalism in the Shadow of Impunity"; unfortunately, it is available in English only. I strongly suggest that everyone listening this evening read that very informative report. It contains a lot of useful information. The report specifically looked into the stories that the journalists were covering at the time they were murdered, and found common themes, like corruption, political intrigue, and organized crime.

In terms of the government's participation, because of the links between organized crime and Honduran security forces—whether the police or the army—it is very difficult to separate the acts of violence committed by those non-state actors from the human rights violations committed by agents of the state. In some cases, we have seen that circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that the state was either complicit in, or was actually behind, the murder of journalists.

When we look at countries in the region, we see that Honduras is in a worse situation than Canada's current trade partners in the region. Honduras is not like the other countries. We really must see it as an exception.

To give you an idea of our situation compared to other countries, it is important to note that, according to Freedom House's global freedom of the press index for 191 countries, Canada ranks 29th.

● (2125)

Chile is ranked 64th; Peru, 89th; and even Colombia, another country that is grappling with drug trafficking, is ranked 112th. Honduras is ranked 140th out of 191 countries, tied with Egypt, a country where the rights of journalists have been repeatedly violated since the protests of a few years ago.

This agreement is not in keeping with the course of current affairs in Canada. When it comes to freedom of the press, Honduras has a track record that is far worse than its neighbours or Canada's other preferred trade partners.

PEN Canada also pointed out that a lot of the topics that are putting journalists in danger include business, investment and trade. All evidence suggests that journalists who write about far more controversial and sensitive subjects, such as the environment, natural resources and land disputes, are at a far greater risk than their colleagues of being victims of violence or murder.

The Conservatives keep saying that signing a free trade agreement will improve the human rights situation in Honduras. Honestly, do they believe in magic? Not only have Honduran institutions been unable to protect the fundamental human rights of Hondurans, but the government has a history of being involved in human rights violations.

When I asked Karen Spring, who testified before the committee, whether she thought the free trade agreement would have a positive or negative effect on human rights issues, this is what she said:

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I would say even the enforcement mechanisms that are established in Honduras under Honduran law are not being enforced in any way given the high impunity rate, so I would say the human rights situation will be negative if we encourage further economic interests in sectors that have traditionally been linked to mass human rights abuses that haven't been mediated by the state.

I also asked Ms. Spring whether she thought Hondurans would benefit from the agreement. This was her answer:

...I would say foreign companies, foreign investment, and the 10 to 12 [Honduran] families who have traditionally run the Honduran economy and political arena [and who will benefit].

According to the experts, not even Hondurans will benefit from this free trade agreement.

Unfortunately, I do not have enough time to discuss other subjects. I oppose this bill and I hope my colleagues will too.

● (2130)

[English]

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend were right, I would agree with her. However, the problem is this. We have to give the New Democrats credit; at least they are consistent, but they are consistently wrong.

We just have to think back awhile to when first a free trade agreement with Canada and the U.S. was negotiated and the NAFTA. The New Democrats and their union friends were all dancing in the streets, holding hands, singing *Kumbaya* and saying how they had to destroy the free trade agreement and the NAFTA.

However, once the NAFTA was in place for a few years, the CAW and then later Unifor all said that it was the best thing that had ever happened to trade between Canada and the United States and that it had led to the creation of tens of thousands of new jobs and increased trade between the two.

How will \$58 billion in reckless spending and a \$21 billion carbon tax help create jobs in Canada more than negotiating free trade agreements between Canada and countries around the world? Could she answer that question for me, please?

[Translation]

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, the point my colleague raised does not make any sense at all, but I would like to thank him for bringing up the NDP's position, because I would like to elaborate on that.

We need to negotiate free trade agreements that will benefit Canada. The NDP is prepared to examine the text of the agreement between Canada and the European Union. Of course, we raised a number of concerns, and my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé also moved a motion in the House to ensure that dairy producers receive financial compensation from the government to cover any losses that may result from this agreement. However, we are going to examine the agreement. The democratic countries that make up the European Union are countries with which we should be negotiating free trade agreements.

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague from the New Democratic Party, and her description of Honduras and the importance of human rights.

However, I remember the NDP provided some support to the Canada-Jordan trade agreement some time back. The reality is that Jordan continues to have significant human rights issues. I assume the reason why the NDP supported the Canada-Jordan trade agreement was that the NDP believed in that case that economic engagement would foster better engagement on human rights issues.

I just looked at the Human Rights Watch website tonight to get an update on Jordan. It says:

Jordanian law criminalizes speech deemed critical of the king, government officials, and institutions, as well as Islam and speech considered defamatory of others.

Perpetrators of torture or other ill-treatment continued to enjoy near-total impunity.

I am not saying that it was wrong for Canada to sign an FTA with Jordan. In fact, this economic engagement can actually improve human rights engagement and dialogue.

However, why does the NDP believe that a free trade agreement with Jordan, with its human rights abuses, is fine, and yet one with Honduras would not be fine?

Is it perhaps, and I do not want to be cynical, that the NDP were looking for one free trade agreement that it could say, "We supported that, so thus we are not so ideological as our opponents may accuse of. We actually supported one free trade agreement?"

If the only free trade agreement the NDP has ever supported was with Jordan, that creates a real challenge for Canadians watching this discussion on human rights and trade tonight.

● (2135)

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, the question from my colleague is absolutely inconsistent, seeing as the Liberal Party supports free trade with a country that in 2012 was the most dangerous country in the world.

It is interesting that the member is right now pretending to care about human rights, seeing as his party actually supports this free trade agreement that would not improve human rights in Honduras, but might actually, as many witnesses in committee mentioned, exacerbate the horrible human rights situation existing there today.

Let me briefly mention testimony that PEN Canada brought to committee. When asked whether this trade agreement would improve or degrade the human rights situation, PEN Canada said that this difficult, complex situation would likely degrade the human rights situation with regard to free speech as journalists who covered issues related to international trade tended to be the ones who were victims of violence, persecution and murders.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would frankly ask my distinguished colleague the following: how can the government hope to turn our trade situation around, when Canada has a trade deficit in the order of tens of billions of dollars, by using Honduras as a miracle solution? Again, the House budget is bigger than that country's GDP. I would like someone to explain to me how we are going to turn such a deplorable economic situation around by signing an agreement with people who are such thugs.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Roughly half of Hondurans live in poverty. The Conservatives say they are going to find people who are going to buy Canadian products. However, when half the population of a country lives in poverty and its economy is smaller than Ottawa-Gatineau's, then where are these consumers of Canadian products? We have to wonder.

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, frankly, the questions and comments of the Liberal Party and our Conservative friend are ridiculous. The facts and figures show that they did not succeed in that regard either.

My colleague briefly described the three most important criteria when it comes to free trade agreements. First, the proposed partner's economy must be of value to Canada. Second, the terms of the agreement must be beneficial to our country. Third—and a number of members have talked about this—the proposed partner must respect human rights and meet high environmental and labour standards. This agreement does not meet these very important criteria.

Earlier, I read the most recent report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination or the CERD, as it is called at the international level. This report, dated March 13, 2014, is quite critical of Honduras' track record, particularly when it comes to respecting human rights.

Members of the United Nations are required to honour the Charter of the United Nations, which requires us to promote and protect human rights. We need to consider those issues when we negotiate agreements.

Does my colleague agree with me?

• (2140)

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for the question. I know that he speaks with a lot of gravity and authority on the subject.

Let me give the House one fact to drive this point home. We know that Honduran authorities devote minimal resources to investigating human rights complaints. In 2012, the country's special prosecutor for human rights was responsible for acting on 7,000 cases. That is a very high number, and it was done while employing just 16 prosecutors and 9 investigators.

We can see that this is not a country in which human rights abuses stand to be investigated. It is not a country in which the assassinations of journalists stand to be solved.

For these reasons, I encourage my colleagues to oppose this trade agreement.

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tonight I will speak about why the Liberal Party is supportive of free trade as an important, essential part of Canada's economic strategy. I will talk about why we support this Honduran free trade deal. I will talk about some of the problems with this deal that we need to be aware of. We think it is a deal that we need to enter into with eyes wide open, and I will speak about some of the overall problems that we are seeing in the trade strategy being pursued by the government.

Let me start by talking a little bit about free trade and why it is so essential to Canada. Eighty per cent of our economy is in some way connected with international trade. We are a big country geographically, but there are not too many of us. In this globalized world economy, it is absolutely essential for Canada to be open to the world economy. Some 19.2% of jobs in Canada are directly connected with trade. In addition, each job in the export sector adds another 1.9 jobs, so trade is really an essential part of any economic strategy to make Canada grow.

With the Honduras deal in particular, we have been talking about the relative size of this deal, the relative size of the Honduran economy, why it is really a small piece of our overall trade puzzle, and that is absolutely right, but it is also really important to get Honduran trade right. In fact, right now, I am sad to report that when it comes to Honduras, we are not dealing particularly well. Currently, as of 2012, we exported \$39 million worth of goods to Honduras, and imported \$219 million worth of goods.

A little bit earlier in the debate we heard some loose talk about Ricardo, and how, when it comes to trade, we should not worry too much about trade deficits. It all evens out in the end. Trade is just basically good. That is a nice theory and a nice point of view, but I submit, when it comes to jobs in Canada and the real lives of middle-class Canadians, it is absolutely essential that we have a strong, export-led, and export-driven economy. I would urge people who are interested in the works of Ricardo, if they have read them, to actually look at the more recent experience of highly successful economies like Germany, where we have seen very powerful, very strong, very strategic export-led growth be a recipe for a strong middle class. I think to argue that deficits do not matter, trade deficits do not matter, is a very profound mistake.

I would like to talk a little bit now about the Honduras deal and an issue that I think is very important for us to bear in mind, and that is the value side of the equation. As I have said, we support this deal. We believe in trade and we believe in trading with the world, but it is important to note that Honduras is a country that has a very troubled political and human rights record. We do not think that is a reason to not trade with Honduras. We are great believers that engagement, that trade, can be a way for Canada's democracy to help countries along that continuum. We have seen that happen in many parts of the world.

*Government Orders*

We also believe it is absolutely essential to be aware of these issues from the start, and to enter into this trading relationship aware of them and with a plan to monitor them. I would urge all of us, as we are talking about expanding our trade relations with Honduras, to be very mindful of the example of Russia, a country I personally know very well and really love.

As Russia moved out of Communism on the path to a market economy and democracy, we made a similar argument, that trade and engagement would be a valuable way of helping Russia become a more open society, and for many years, I believe that was the case. However, sometimes that just does not work, and what we have seen with Russia is Russia making a choice with Ukraine in November 2013, and most crucially and tragically, with Crimea in February 2014, to exclude itself from the international community.

● (2145)

What that has meant is that the countries that made this pact with Russia, which said they were going to extend a hand of friendship and trade with it, are now having to pull back, and that means a real economic cost. I would say to all of us here, particularly those members who, like the Liberal Party, support this deal with Honduras, let us make a pledge tonight that part of the deal is putting values first.

Part of the deal, of course, is about the Canadian economy and the importance of trade, but we also need to pledge to watch very closely what is happening with democracy, journalists, labour activists, indigenous people, women, and the LGBT community. If there is a tipping point, we have to be prepared, even if it comes at an economic cost, to pull out of that trading relationship. I cannot emphasize how important it is to us as a country to put those values at the centre.

Having spoken about Honduras, I would like to speak a bit more generally about where our free trade agenda is in the picture of the Canadian economy. Like everyone in the House, I noted with great disappointment the surprising trade deficit in April, which was \$638 million according to Statistics Canada. That is a very poor performance and it is very worrying.

I suspect that my respected colleagues, especially those on the other side of the House, may not take my word for it when it comes to where Canada's trading relationship and performance are. I think there is an organization, you gentlemen, and it is only gentlemen this evening—we could talk about gender issues, but we will not do that right now—I think you gentlemen are probably interested in the Canadian—

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Why is everything a gender issue with you?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** I think you gentlemen are probably interested—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. I would remind the hon. member to direct her comments to the Chair. That avoids us getting into this cross-communication between members.

The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I will do that, although I would ask you to help ensure more collegial behaviour on all sides of the House.

I suspect that the members on the other side of the House will not doubt the credibility or the significance of a report from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, one of our country's leading industry bodies. In May 2014, it published a report called “Turning it Around: How to Restore Canada's Trade Success”. That title should worry us. It does not sound like it is too great a verdict.

The first chapter is called “Canada's Lagging Trade Performance”. Here is what it says:

International trade is one of the fastest and most effective ways for Canadian businesses to grow, create jobs and contribute to the economy. However, the increase in exports and outward investment has been slow in recent years, and diversification to emerging economies has been limited.

...Canada is lagging its peers according to several measures. Over the past decade, the value of exports has increased at only a modest pace.... If...price increases [in energy] are excluded, the volume of merchandise exports shipped in 2012 was actually five per cent lower than in 2000 despite a 57 per cent increase in trade worldwide.

For a party like the Liberal Party, which believes strongly in middle-class prosperity and in trade as a path toward that, these are damning words indeed.

According to the report:

Canada's foreign investment trends tell a similar story. Export Development Canada has recorded significant growth in sales by Canadian foreign affiliates...but evidence suggests that sales levels are relatively higher for affiliates from the U.S., the U.K., Japan and Australia.

Not only are we doing less well than we did in 2000, despite a robustly globalizing world economy, we are lagging our international peers. This is why the Liberal Party believes so strongly in trade and why we would really like to see Canadian policy, Canadian action, that is not just about slogans, not just about photo ops, but is actually about a strategic approach and getting deals done.

That brings me to a deal we have been speaking about quite a lot this week, which is the European trade deal. In October, our Prime Minister, with great fanfare and at some expense, travelled to Brussels to sign an agreement in principle on the European trade deal. I am very sad to report that unfortunately, that deal has not yet been concluded, despite the fact that the Prime Minister has travelled again this week to Brussels, which would have been a great opportunity to conclude that very important deal.

I have more worrying news still to report. We requested from the government the actual documents the Prime Minister signed. We can see the Prime Minister signing it if we look at video of that October 18 event. Here was the response we had from the PCO:

A thorough search of the records under the control of the PCO was carried out on your behalf; however, no records relevant to your request were found.

We would like to hear at some point what the Prime Minister actually signed and what is happening with that deal. We believe the Honduras free trade deal is important, but obviously the European free trade deal is much more important.

*Government Orders*

In conclusion, we believe absolutely that particularly today, in 2014, in the age of globalization, in the age when technology has truly flattened the world economy, Canada has no choice but to be an energetically and strategically trading nation. That is our path to prosperity for our own middle class, and if we do it right and we do it with pure hearts, as well as with smart brains, we can use trade to be a real way of encouraging the growth of democracy in civil society around the world.

• (2150)

However, I am very sad to say that today in our trade agenda we see Canada falling behind. As the Canadian Chamber of Commerce itself concluded just last month, we have a lagging trade performance. I submit that it is because we are focusing far too much on photo ops, which may have been without an actual document signed. We would love to hear more about that.

We have much less of a clear strategy focusing on big trading partners and on the big places of growth in the world, and much less effective follow-through. We would love to see much more focus on Africa, for example.

Here is what Canada needs: a truly strategic global trade policy, a policy that is about world strategy and fitting Canada into the global economy, a policy that always remembers that we cannot be an effective trading nation without putting our values first, and finally, a trade policy that is not just about photo ops but is about actually getting the deal done.

• (2155)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** There is a lot of interest in questions and comments. We do have 10 minutes, but given the level of interest, I would ask hon. members to keep their interventions to around a minute or so.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention today. It sounds to me like she has brought up some good examples, like Germany. Germany, obviously, with its *Mittelstand* of small and medium-sized manufacturers, is an excellent point. I think she should also reflect on the fact that every country comes to the trade game, so to speak, with a different collection of strengths and weaknesses. While there are certain things we can garner from looking at the German model, its apprenticeship system is quite different, and its whole economy is different in the fact that it is based on geographical areas. Labour is much different in the EU than it is here in Canada.

I would like a clarification. Is the member suggesting that we should only be looking at exporting and not trying to bring in imports from other countries?

The member mentioned David Ricardo. Part of David Ricardo's genius was in recognizing that mercantilism, that very strategy, producing exports and then reducing the amount of imports, does not work to everyone's benefit. What the member I think is advocating is a warmed-over neo-mercantilism.

Could the member please explain if that is what she is conveying? If not, could she give us a better example?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start with the hon. member's point about Germany and how its apprenticeship system, which I think has a lot of admirable traits, may not be relevant to Canada.

I would like to point out to the member that his own employment minister speaks often and very favourably of the German apprenticeship program. Although the German apprenticeship program is not on the agenda tonight, it would be great for the government to get its act together, but maybe the talking points on apprenticeships were not on the top of the pile this evening.

To the point of trade, of course, anyone who advocates trade as strongly, wholeheartedly, and with as deep an interest in it as the Liberal Party does understands that trade is a two-way relationship. What I am arguing, however, is that right now what we are seeing in Canada is a worrying one-way relationship, as witnessed by that \$638-million trade deficit in April. What we are seeing is that we are pretty good at buying goods from other people, but we are not that great at selling our stuff abroad. That worries me. It should worry everybody else in this House.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, but I would like to remind her that she is not the only woman in the House. The NDP women are also here to stand up for their constituents.

I would like to know why the Liberals want to support and put in place a preferential agreement with a country where there is no democracy, a country with the worst human rights record in the world. It also has the highest rate of journalist murders. It is a major cocaine trafficking centre and it tolerates policies that are harmful to the environment.

I do not understand how the Liberal Party can support an agreement with a country such as that. Does it still want to support it even though, according to the statistics, only 10% of the population benefits from the country's wealth?

[*English*]

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by addressing the gender point. I salute all the women in the House. It is important to have more women here. It is always a pleasure for me to meet them and see the very strong female presence, particularly on this side of the House, and the solidarity among us. It is great that they are here. It is great to see some women on the other side of the aisle as well.

To the point of democracy and human rights in Honduras, as I said in my remarks, this is tricky. It is a difficult issue, and it is a tough continuum. Of course I would prefer a world in which everyone enjoys the democracy and human rights Canada does. All of us in the House are united in the belief that part of our duty as Canadian parliamentarians is to work toward improving those conditions not only for Canadians but for everyone in the world.



*Government Orders*

It is, however, my belief that trade can be a way to help countries move on that authoritarianism-to-democracy continuum. Cutting countries off from the world economy should be a last resort, not the first thing we do.

• (2200)

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her erudite comments on trade with Honduras and the broader issue of trade in Canada.

Canada shares a lot of experiences and a lot of opportunities with the people of Honduras. We both have indigenous peoples and a huge challenge around equality of opportunity for first nations. We also have opportunities in oil and gas and the extractive sectors. Twenty years ago, indigenous people in Canada were largely opposed to the development of our natural resources. Today there is a greater level of economic integration and co-operation and sharing of wealth.

We could work more closely with the people of Honduras and share our example of the potential for oil, gas, and extractive wealth to raise the standard of living and the quality of life of indigenous people. Is that one of the areas where we need to deepen co-operation, both to improve conditions here in Canada around first nations and to develop best practice models with the people of Honduras, so that its indigenous people have the opportunity to benefit from the positive development of the oil and gas and extractive sectors?

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I could not have said it better myself. The hon. member for Kings—Hants identified a powerful and important opportunity in the Canadian-Honduran relationship.

I would point out, as he so very wisely said, that we have to understand that the learning here is not one-way, and there is a lot for Canada to learn on this specific issue as well.

I would also point out in terms of opportunities that there are some terrific trade opportunities for our beef and pork producers, and that is one reason we in the Liberal Party support this deal.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague opposite talk about the disastrous balance-in-trade deficit in April 2014 of \$638 million. That is a one-month figure. I just checked Statistics Canada. In March, Canada had a trade surplus of \$765.6 million. That was a huge success. The month before there was a trade surplus of \$813.3 million.

Can the member not see that there are month-to-month patterns? To use one data point and say that there is some kind of challenge with our trading ability is really a stretch. I would like the member to please comment on that.

**Ms. Chrystia Freeland:** Mr. Speaker, I believe in listening to what the markets say and to what market experts are forecasting. Part of the reason I was so worried and concerned about the April trade numbers is that they were a surprise to market economists. They found them to be very disappointing and part of a worrying trend.

If the hon. member on the other side of the aisle feels that the view of Bay Street economists does not matter, that is his purview. I

personally really listen to the people who are in our capital markets and who are paid to have an opinion.

I would also point out, the view of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which noted just last month that Canada's lagging trade performance was worthy of a report. That is something all of us should be worried about. We in the Liberal Party believe in listening to what business is telling us. When this esteemed business institution issues a significant, thoughtful report pointing to our lagging trade performance, people should look beyond their talking points and look at what is happening with our economy.

• (2205)

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time with my colleague from Toronto—Danforth.

It only feels like yesterday that I spoke to this bill. In fact, it was two days ago and it was on this very bill.

I want to begin by saying how disappointed I am that we are ramming this bill through, a bill that has everything to do with the need to respect democratic processes—which we are not doing through this agreement and which is not happening in Honduras—and the need to delve into what this trade agreement is all about. Fundamentally, it is a trade agreement that will not bring benefit to Canadians but will benefit a few people in specific sectors that are close to the government.

I am concerned, not just as a Canadian member of Parliament but as a Canadian, that Canada is embarking on a journey and into a relationship with a country that in recent years has proven its complete disregard for the principles that guide us in this place: democracy, respect for the rule of law, and human rights. We are engaging in a relationship to benefit the very same people who have imposed an oppressive regime that in some cases has been involved in persecution and is as far away from the Canadian value set as we can get.

I rise in this House in consideration of not just the benefit to Canadians, which is not being realized through this free trade agreement, but also of the reality that Hondurans face. While Honduras is not a country that I have had a chance to visit, I have had the experience of travelling in Central America and seeing or hearing first-hand a very dark history that people in countries across Latin America have had with military coup d'états, with the fight for democracy, with the fight for human rights. Sadly, while many Central American countries, such as Chile and Argentina, have shaken off that dark history, Honduras has just recently re-embarked on that same undemocratic dictatorial path.

As we know, Honduras is a very poor country with a seriously flawed human rights record and a history of repressive, undemocratic politics. The democratically elected government of left-leaning President Manuel Zelaya was toppled by a military coup in 2009, and subsequent governmental actions and elections have been heavily criticized by international observers as failing to meet acceptable democratic standards. In 2009, five short years ago, Honduras underwent a military coup, and it continues to be a repressive and regressive environment. Thanks to the current government, this is the country we are now going to engage with as part of this free trade relationship.

*Government Orders*

We have heard a lot of talk about the underground economy. We have heard about the predominance of the drug trade. We have heard about the lack of legitimate and positive economic opportunities for the people of Honduras. We have also heard how this free trade agreement will not do anything to change that reality. In fact, in many ways it will continue to legitimize a regime that is oppressive toward the Honduran people. As a New Democrat, I am proud to stand with my party in opposition to this bill.

We believe that there are three fundamentally important criteria to assess trade agreements, including this one.

First, does the proposed partner respect democracy, human rights, adequate environmental and labour standards, and Canadian values? If there are challenges in this regard, is the partner on a positive trajectory toward these goals? We know that Honduras has failed in this regard.

Second, is the proposed partner's economy of significant or strategic value to Canada? We know that there is particular interest from the Canadian government in the mining sector and in certain agricultural sectors, but by and large, given that Honduras only represents about 1% of our trade, this will not make or break the Canadian economy by any stretch of the imagination, so this proposed agreement does not meet the second criterion.

Third, are the terms of the proposed agreement satisfactory? Again, it is a resounding fail.

● (2210)

This trade agreement, like every trade agreement that is negotiated by the current government, has been behind closed doors, without the kind of transparent process that we, as parliamentarians, ought to be able to access but, more important, that Canadians ought to be able to engage in.

For all of these three reasons, for all of these three failures, we in the NDP cannot support this free trade agreement.

I want to read into the record some words of people who are very close to the situation in Honduras who have come before Parliament and have spoken very strongly against this agreement.

Stacey Gomez, coordinator of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation's Americas Policy Group, said:

We have long maintained that under the right conditions, trade can generate growth and support the realization of human rights. These conditions simply do not exist in Honduras. Until there is a verifiable improvement in the country's democratic governance and human rights situation, the Canada-Honduras FTA will do more harm than good.

The Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras said:

One of the main concerns in Honduras is the consistent trend of killings, physical attacks and threats against human rights defenders – including: Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant and peasant leaders, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) activists, lawyers and journalists. All these attacks are carried out with almost total impunity.

Carmen Cheung, a researcher in the International Human Rights Program, said to the committee, on April 10:

These past five years have seen a dramatic erosion in protections for expressive life in Honduras. Journalists are threatened, they're harassed, attacked, and murdered with near impunity, and sometimes in circumstances that strongly suggest the

involvement of state agents.... Among the journalists and human rights defenders we spoke with, there is a pervasive sense that they are under threat, and that the state is, at best, unable or unwilling to defend them, or at worst, complicit in the abuses.

These are chilling words from people who are not speaking in the abstract. They work closely on the ground with labour activists, with journalists, with lesbian and gay activists, with indigenous peoples. They know the cost of human life, the cost to democratic rights, freedom of expression, freedom of association, that this military coup has meant to the people of Honduras. They are saying, unequivocally, that "We cannot support this free trade agreement".

I want to particularly emphasize the comments made by Ms. Cheung and made by the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras with reference to how state agents are complicit in these abuses.

The current government wants to enter into a relationship and support the state agents who, we are hearing here, are involved in these kinds of human rights abuses.

My question is, what has happened to Canada, a country that over years and through the hard work of Canadians in their insistence that the respect for human rights needs to guide our international work, whether it is trade or our involvement in multilateral institutions, that the importance of human rights is fundamental to who we are as Canadians is clearly not represented in the government's actions through Bill C-20, through this free trade agreement but, furthermore, in a range of actions that the government has shown over its tenure?

That is why I am proud to rise in this House and share the words of human rights activists who are calling upon us to oppose the free trade agreement, who are demanding better for Canadians, who are demanding better for the people of Honduras. I am proud to stand with the party that, in this House, night after night, day after day, is fighting for the very principle that so many Canadians believe is so important to us: human rights and the fundamental principle of democracy.

● (2215)

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP would have some credibility on the free trade file if, at one point, it supported at least a single free trade agreement. It has not supported any. It says no to every single free trade agreement.

In terms of our negotiations or what we hear in the House this evening about Canada-Honduras, is that how the NDP thinks? That if we do not have a free trade agreement with Honduras that trade will somehow not exist. Trade exists right now. The purpose of a free trade agreement is to impose a statutory or regulatory regime on what exists and by virtue of lowering tariff barriers, the goal is to increase prosperity for both partners.

Let me just put this to the member. When will the NDP stand up for jobs, when will the NDP stand up for Canadians, and when will the NDP stand up for Canada?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, it is critical that tonight we do not talk in the abstract. I have clearly indicated our prioritization of three considerations in deciding on the free trade agreements we are looking at.

*Government Orders*

It is very important that we focus on what is in front of us, which is a trade agreement with a country that is under a military coup, where people are involved in a fight for fundamental human rights. We are talking about journalists, labour activists, and LGBT activists. We are talking about people who here in Canada have made our country a better place. These people are killed in Honduras. Their human rights are not just not respected; these people are persecuted.

It is not okay for Canada to engage in a relationship that we know will not benefit the Hondurans and that will legitimize and strengthen a regime that continues to attack the human rights of people in their own country. We cannot support this free trade agreement, and we would hope that the government would see the light on this one and refrain from going forward.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the New Democrats for her speech tonight. I share her concerns about human rights in Honduras, but I also want to remind her that one of the greatest perpetrators of human rights abuses in Honduras is the drug trade. The illicit drug trade and the production of drugs in Honduras has for far too long had a significant impact on people's lives in terms of human rights abuses.

Does the member not see the potential for legitimate economic opportunities, through rules-based trade, to actually provide people who are currently victimized by the illicit drug trade with other options? Does she not see as well the danger of economic isolationism and the prevention of the people of Honduras from having legitimate economic opportunities through trade with Canada? That could actually force more of them into illicit economic activities to make a living any way they can, and as such, force more of them into the drug trade.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's points, but moving away from the theory to the practice, let us look at the example of Colombia, a country that has very similar struggles on the political level. Canada signed a free trade agreement. What we have seen is that Canadian companies, with great gusto, have gone into that country and have developed particularly the resource extraction sector and have treated people in similar ways, sadly, as some of the state agents we hear about in that country. We hear of security groups. We hear of vigilante groups that attack indigenous activists, peasant activists, and labour union leaders who are seen as threatening to Canadian companies.

Sadly, some corporations that have head offices in Canada, and I would not call them Canadian corporations, benefit from free trade agreements like the one with Colombia. They will certainly benefit as a result of the one with Honduras and will sadly disrespect the human rights of the people in these countries in a way that would never be acceptable in Canada. Therefore, we cannot accept this free trade agreement before us today.

• (2220)

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-20, with some experience in Honduras. I was a member of the Comisión de Verdad, one of the two truth commissions set up after the coup in 2009. I stepped down when I was elected to the House, but I have been following it ever since, including the report that the commission put out in October 2012, which I may refer to now and again.

It is important to give some human rights context. My colleagues have given lots of reasons why human rights, rule of law and the overall governance structures in a country matter for a free trade agreement. However, it is important to remember that 65% of Hondurans live in poverty and around 46%, almost 50%, live in extreme poverty. As our former ambassador to Costa Rica and Honduras, Neil Reeder, said, "It suffers from extremely unequal income distribution".

It is a country that not only has serious problems meeting the social and economic rights of its population, but it has become a very repressive state, even though there is the veneer of democracy since the coup and the subsequent election six months after the coup. In 2013, Human Rights Watch's report indicated that 23 journalists had been killed since 2010, and in 2014, PEN International's report told us that 34 journalists had been killed since the coup in 2009.

Before the committee, COFADEH, probably the leading human rights organization in Honduras, led by Bertha Oliva, told us that it had documented at least 16 activists or candidates from the main opposition party before the most recent election, the party that is called "LIBRE", had been assassinated since June 2012, and 15 others attacked.

The Economist Intelligence Unit, which basically does surveys every few years on countries and their overall state of affairs, downgraded Honduras from what it called a "flawed democracy" in 2008, even before the coup, to a "hybrid regime" in 2012. That is a regime that is not even actually a democracy. From all my experience in the country after eight visits, I can attest to that as being an accurate qualification.

My colleague from Toronto Centre has mentioned on occasion, as did my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca in his speech, that the situation of the LGBTQ community in Honduras has long been one of great precarity. It was never great, especially for transsexuals who were always subject to extreme violence. However, after the coup in 2009, between 2009 and 2011—only a year and a half, because it is only the first part of 2011 that these numbers count for—35 members of the LGBTQ community were assassinated in ways that were associated with the fact of their membership in that community and the fact that by and large that community supported the efforts of the previous administration and were against the coup. At some level, the coup also resulted in a general opening up or licence for others, such as paramilitary groups and conservative forces in society, to kill with impunity.

I would like to pay tribute to three people before I go on to some of the economic issues.

*Government Orders*

Walter Trochez is kind of the symbol of the LGBTQ community in Honduras. I talked to his apartment mate about the night that he died. He was murdered by being shot. The apartment mate received Walter's final call just before he lost his life, literally saying "They killed me, they killed me". This had been preceded by endless encounters with the police where he had been detained, and abductions as well by hooded men. In all of those instances, every one of the three or four instances that the Comisión de Verdad documented, he was taunted with the fact that he was a *marica* or *maricon*, which excuse me, translates as "faggot".

[*Member spoke in Spanish and provided the following translation:*]

Faggots are not worth anything. Faggots do not have rights.

At the same time, when he was abducted by four armed men and had managed to escape from them, they linked him to the resistance to the coup, so ultimately he was killed for the fact that he not only was an active human rights advocate for the LGBTQ community but also he dared also to support at the political level the resistance to the coup.

• (2225)

I would like to salute Walter Trochez as a symbol of that community's suffering.

I would also like to speak about Eddy, who was the lead security guard for the Comisión de Verdad. He was almost the one person who lost his life during the Comisión's time. We had a couple of Honduran commissioners who had to flee the country, and he almost lost his life.

He was approached by four men with pistols in their hands who tried to shove him into a car in the middle of the street, with all kinds of onlookers. Brave as he was and knowledgeable as he was about what would happen if he ever got in the car, he made a bolt for it. The men shot after him as he was running down the street. He was escaped, not without psychological trauma, but with his life.

The last person that I want to pay tribute to is Eva, who is a constituent in Toronto—Danforth. She was recently accepted as a refugee in Canada, having been shot multiple times while tending her small business in Tegucigalpa, by somebody dressed in plain clothes, but who all the neighbours identified as a policeman.

That is the kind of context at a broad human rights level. It is important to know that economically, Honduras is an extremely problematic country to be investing in and to have our corporate actors going down and expecting to be doing good, rather than harm.

As the Comisión de Verdad reported—and I will be translating from page 47 of the report—career politicians serve and have served businessmen and leaders of political clans in their demands, creating and reproducing the discourses and the beliefs of the entrepreneurial or business classes and the industrial classes without actually generating conditions for economic prosperity for others. New interests, as well, have begun to interact with the political parties to the point that they have been working with global economic classes to propose whole zones, called "model cities", that would be completely free from Honduran governance. They would effectively be multinational capital sovereigns.

There is this interpenetration of the six to nine traditional families and the newer groups interacting with various global interests. Frankly, all analyses indicate how they have completely captured the state apparatus, both of the main parties, the executive in terms of the civil service, and, I am sorry to say, much of the judiciary and the police.

In that context, it is important to note that the situation in Bajo Aguan is kind of emblematic. It is one of the worst situations, but it is also emblematic of what can happen.

In February 2014, Human Rights Watch published a report called "There Are No Investigations Here", documenting how between 150 and 200 homicides in the Bajo Aguan region were alleged to have been committed by security forces hired by large landowners. Many of those landowners are cultivating the land for agri-industrial business in African palm oil for global markets.

The report also shows how there is absolutely no police, prosecutorial, or judicial protection for the campesinos who have been murdered in this fashion.

Only a few months ago, the World Bank Group ombudsman ruled that the World Bank itself had inappropriately invested \$15 million of a promised \$30 million in a group called Corporación Dinant, which is owned by the Facussé family. The ombudsman said that the World Bank Group should never have given money to that operation because of the involvement of Dinant in conducting, facilitating, and supporting forced evictions of farmers in Bajo Aguan and violence against farmers in and around the plantations, including multiple killings.

• (2230)

I would end by saying that the UN Working Group on Mercenaries in February 2013 also ruled that private security forces in the hands of the larger agricultural and other corporations in Honduras had been responsible for, or there are reasonable concerns that they are responsible for, serious repression in that country. That is the pattern. That is not an environment in which Canadian companies at this time should have any involvement through a free trade agreement.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question related to trade, but it goes beyond just free trade agreements. As the member would know, Canada already trades, in the hundreds of millions of dollars, with Honduras. If we use the logic of the New Democrats, we should not have trade agreements, because, for all intents and purposes, they have never voted in favour of trade agreements, but they voted not to support this one based on human rights, and so forth. I can respect their reason for concern. I genuinely respect why we should be concerned about that.

The question I have specifically for the member is this. If the New Democrats do not believe we should have free trade with Honduras, do they believe we should be allowing trade with countries of this nature? Would he support reducing trade? It would seem to be a logical extension of the arguments that many of his caucus colleagues have made, that Honduras is a bad country and we should not trade with it. Would he advocate that, where we can, we should look at reducing trade where there are issues related to human rights?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of my colleague to reduce my arguments to argument ad absurdum, but I think the absurdity is coming from the other side. There is no issue of the NDP ever embracing the idea of stopping trade that occurs on its own versus the idea of deepening trade and producing all kinds of structures that could enhance corporate power and would end up creating worse conditions, quite possibly, for the people in the other country, quite apart from the effects of what they might feel in Canada. That is actually not my concern, no.

However, I would like to correct him so he can start asking my colleagues another zinger that his colleague from Kings—Hants thought he was asking. Yes, we voted for the Jordan free trade agreement, but we did so for reasons that were very considered. It does not have an investor state provision such as this one does and—

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** That's after you voted against it.

**Mr. Craig Scott:** We did, Mr. Speaker.

The labour co-operation agreement also includes enforcement mechanisms that include options for an independent review panel, et cetera, whereas what we have here is a provision in the agreement, article 816. I will read it quickly. It is very short. It says:

Each Party should encourage enterprises operating within its territory or subject to its jurisdiction to voluntarily incorporate internationally recognized standards of corporate social responsibility...

That is a very different situation between those agreements.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak again on this issue this evening.

I was involved in multilateral negotiations at the international level for over 25 years. I know how complex this process can be and how issues can sometimes be extremely complicated. Many factors must be considered when we negotiate agreements.

I am rather intrigued by the question asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North, who spoke about free trade in general terms. His party that applauded the recent agreement with the European Union without even having read it. I clearly remember his leader, the hon. member for Papineau, rising in the House to applaud the Prime Minister for signing an agreement with the European Union, which he had not even read. We should show some sensitivity when we are dealing with these issues.

As I have always done with international issues, I read several reports, particularly the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which deals with aboriginal people. As we know, a number of mining companies are active in Latin America. Relations with first nations, with the aboriginal peoples of these countries, are very important.

I am familiar with the hon. member's experience. I wonder if he could tell us about it.

• (2235)

[*English*]

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that, in the Honduran context, all the important procedural duties, including the

duty to seek the prior informed consent of indigenous peoples, are almost certainly not in a position to be enforced.

Canadian mining companies and agricultural companies that might get involved are going to have to rely on the acquisition of land and rights near land that will not conform to international standards.

I would predict that there is going to be a serious problem. I can only agree with my colleague about the irony of a leader standing up in the House, giving unqualified support to a document he had never read and now having his trade critic criticize people because she cannot read it.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be in the House this evening with the opportunity to speak to Bill C-20, an act to implement the free trade agreement between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, and to the other agreements on environmental co-operation and labour co-operation as well.

By way of starting, let me provide a little context for this discussion, taking it away from Honduras and this specific agreement to talk about the broader trade agenda and trade record of the government.

When the Conservatives came into power in 2006, they were spotted an \$18 billion current account surplus. That is to say that trade was enriching us as a country, setting aside for the moment the issue of the equity of the distribution of that account surplus. It was indeed a surplus to the tune of \$18 billion, no paltry sum.

Today, eight years on, under the Conservative government, we have a current account deficit of \$62 billion. That leaves us with a nice round swing number of \$80 billion as the negative swing, the delta, the loss, whatever one wants to call it. Part of the problem here is that we are trading raw or barely processed exports, reducing the importance of value-added exports in this trading mix.

Clearly, the government, with its sole, exclusive focus on the export of resources, is causing economic challenges for us in Canada.

I recently had the occasion, as the chair of the Canada-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group, to talk at the University of Ottawa on development issues for Bangladesh specifically.

The panel invited to speak at the invitation of its His Excellency Kamrul Ahsan was made up of experts with various backgrounds and specialities. It gave me cause to look closely at the trading relationship between Canada and Bangladesh. It would seem to be fairly typical of what is going on with Canada's trading regime. It is not a particularly huge trading relationship, with just over \$1 billion worth of goods coming in from Bangladesh and about half of that going out of Canada destined for that country.

*Government Orders*

What is noticeable is that, apart from a couple of helicopters, Bangladesh is sending to us value-added goods, mainly in the form of garments, but that is not to ignore the development of their own shipbuilding industry and a flourishing pharmaceutical industry. In return, we send them natural resources and unprocessed agricultural products.

It is interesting to note that Honduras has a trade account deficit, but it seems that Canada would be one of the countries with which it has a trade account surplus.

This kind of dismal trading record, established under the government, earns one special recognition. Between 2006 and 2012, Canada had the worst current account deficit when we compared our trading performance against 17 similar countries around the world.

Before the optimists leap to the thought that maybe we have reached the bottom, that the bleeding has stopped and things are on the mend, let me advise that in 23 of the last 24 months, we have experienced a merchandise trade deficit. It brings to mind the definition of madness put forward by, I think, Einstein: to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result.

That is what we are seeing with the government, tonight and when we discuss trade agreements, talking about how many of these agreements it has signed. Here we go again with Bill C-20.

Contrary to the 14-second soundbites that come from across the floor, we are not anti-trade over here. That would be to take an ideological position and eschew all practical considerations and objectives. That is not what we are about.

That is what those guys do over there, and what the Liberals do, too, as we have seen tonight, although they like to confuse it by saying that they are concerned. They seem to think that free trade agreements are something like hockey cards or some other kind of collectable, and we should just keep signing them and then make triumphant noises, and then collect another one as though that was the end in itself. Never mind that with each one they sign, the current account deficit seems to actually deepen.

● (2240)

The Conservatives do not even read them first. The content does not seem to matter either. The outcome does not seem to matter. Nothing seems to matter, other than getting one signed.

In the grandest farce of all, we have had multiple announcements of the agreement on the comprehensive economic trade agreement with the European Union. The government just could not wait to announce that one; it said there were just details, i's and t's to be crossed and dotted.

The leader of the third party leapt out of his seat enthusiastically at the news to express his admiration and support for the government landing the deal. Nobody on this side of the House, the Liberal leader included, has even read the deal to be able to determine whether or not it is a good deal, worthy of celebration, a deal that might enrich Canada and Canadians. The irony is not lost on us that we have the Liberals tonight calling to see the Honduran deal when they celebrated the European deal sight unseen.

There is a simple reason for all of this. There is no deal. The Conservatives made an announcement about nothing, and the Liberals applauded them and congratulated them heartily upon their announcement of a deal that does not exist.

Word is that our Prime Minister is scrambling furiously over in Europe now, trying to rescue a deal, but we wish him well in securing a deal that would serve Canada and Canadians well. That, after all, would be the only point of such a trade deal, would it not? That is actually a real and open question. We know the answer from the Conservatives and the Liberals. They have answered by way of their actions, their embrace of a deal that is more phantom than real, a deal they have not read because it does not actually exist.

That is the simplistic, ideological reflex of those parties, both the Conservatives and the Liberals, the reflex that Einstein called madness, the reflex that sees a \$62 billion current account deficit, more dollars leaving this country through trade than coming in, the reflex that takes us back to a time we were trying to grow out of, the time when we did what was easiest, the time when we did what the rest of the world wanted us to do: just dig it up and ship it out, rip it and ship it, as we say, or grow it and throw it. In support of all of that, of course, they cite an economist born in 1772 as support for this ideological reflex they have.

Therefore, it is time for a change, time for a more thoughtful, purposeful look at trade and what it ought to do for Canada, a look at our objectives. It is time for a look at trade that is sufficiently nuanced to be able to distinguish between partners and the kinds of agreements that are suitable for different trading partnerships.

The comprehensive economic trade agreement may be a template suitable for a large, sophisticated, and developed market like the European Union. We do not know that. We will see whether it serves us well when we get a chance to read it, if we ever do, but that same agreement may not serve as a particularly useful template for a trading agreement with Honduras. Indeed, a trading relationship with Honduras may not even be the appropriate way to engage with Honduras.

Our party believes that there are three fundamentally important criteria for assessing a trade agreement. One, is the proposed partner one that respects democracy and human rights, and does it have adequate environmental and labour standards? If the answer is not clearly yes, then the question becomes this. Is the proposed partner on a positive trajectory towards those goals, at least? Second, is the proposed partner's economy of significance or strategic value to Canada? Finally, if the answer to that strategic question is yes, then the question becomes very much a practical one. Are the terms of the proposed agreement satisfactory? In other words, did we get a good deal? Will Canada benefit from this agreement? Against these assessment criteria, Bill C-20 runs into problems right off the bat.

Let me turn now to have a closer look at Honduras. Let us see not just who we are doing business with, but who it is that we are actually proposing to treat preferentially through the passage of the bill.

*Government Orders*

• (2245)

If we look at the first criterion, on the issue of democracy or respect for democratic rights, we know that the democratically elected government of President Zelaya was toppled by a military coup in 2009, which was widely condemned around the world, including by all Latin American nations, the European Union, the United States, and the UN General Assembly. We know that 94 members of the U.S. Congress have called upon the U.S. Department of State to halt all military aid to Honduras in light of its violent repression of political activity.

If we go to the Economist Intelligence Unit and its report on Honduras, its 2013 Democracy Index ranks Honduras 85th out of 160 countries, which represents no change from the 2012 index. It remains, as my colleague for Toronto—Danforth said earlier in his speech, a “hybrid” regime. That score reflects deficiencies in most categories, “... owing to its low level of institutional development, a weak judiciary, high levels of corruption...and unabated drug- and gang-related violence...”. That is a quote from the Economist Intelligence Unit country report on Honduras.

If we go to other sources, such as the Human Rights Watch, we see that in December 2012 the Honduran Congress arbitrarily dismissed four Supreme Court judges and passed further legislation empowering itself to remove justices and the Attorney General. Again, in November 2011, the Congress passed an emergency decree allowing military personnel to carry out public security duties, which has since been extended. This is the so-called trade by rule of law where Supreme Court justices get dismissed, just like that.

Now all of this spills over into issues plainly of human rights. The Human Rights Watch report on Honduras, as part of the World Report, begins with the sentence: “Honduras suffers from rampant crime and impunity for human rights abuses”. That is where we start, with that report.

Others, including Tasleem Thawar, executive director of PEN Canada, actually gave testimony at the Standing Committee on International Trade on April 10, 2014, which was not too long ago. She said:

...not only have Honduran institutions failed at protecting basic human rights for its citizens; there is a history of government involvement in these human rights abuses. Our research shows that the state not only failed to investigate crimes against journalists; in many cases state actors were themselves complicit in these crimes.

Again, from the Human Rights Watch 2014 report:

Journalists, peasant activists, and LGBTI individuals are particularly vulnerable to attacks, yet the government routinely fails to prosecute those responsible and provide protection for those at risk.

It goes on to say that:

Impunity for serious police abuses is a chronic problem. Police killed 149 civilians from January 2011 to November 2012, including 18 individuals under age 19....

...a May 2013 investigation...suggested police involvement in at least five extrajudicial executions or disappearances...

...more than 90 LGBTI people were killed between 2009 and 2012, and many more subjected to attacks and harassment. The alleged involvement of Honduran police in some of these violent abuses is of particular concern.

All of that is out of the Human Rights Watch report from 2014.

On the issues of environment and labour, I have to express deep skepticism about these co-operation agreements based on some recent inquiries that I made in the form of questions on the order paper.

The Department of Public Works and Government Services advertises the fact that it has a policy to ensure that the goods the department procures are manufactured in compliance with local labour laws, so I asked the minister whether the department procures garments from foreign markets and, if so, from where. The answer is that the government procures garments from around the world, including China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and indeed Honduras.

I also asked if the departments knew what factories these garments are made in. The answer came back from every department, “no”, with the exception of public works, which said that it was third-party information.

• (2250)

They disavowed knowledge of where these garments were made, rendering the government's policy absolutely impossible to implement and making a mockery of the whole policy and the whole exercise, and this paper social responsibility exercise is perpetrated by our own federal government on these issues. Now we are asked to look at so-called labour and environmental co-operation agreements and find some sense of satisfaction and comfort in those.

My immediate interest in asking these questions had to do with the collapse of the Rana Plaza building that housed a number of garment factories in Bangladesh. That collapse killed 1,135 workers and injured another 2,500, adding to the long column of tragedies, deaths, and injuries in the garment industry.

However, at least in Bangladesh there is broad agreement that the employment laws and the labour laws and the building code are decently formulated laws and that if they are properly implemented in the future, they would provide protection to workers.

Not so in Honduras. According to the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, Honduran trade unionists are routinely threatened, intimidated, harassed, and even murdered for attempting to form unions, and criminals are rarely brought to justice. Since the 2009 coup, 31 trade unionists have been assassinated and more than 200 injured in violent attacks.

It is worth noting that in response to other questions on the order paper, the minister for public works responded that they have done no audits for compliance with local labour laws because they had no information to warrant such audits. Never mind the factory collapsing and killing 1,135 people. Never mind the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center having the basic facts of intimidation and assassinations of trade unionists right on its website. All of that should trigger some interest in whether government-procured garments are actually being made in compliance with local labour laws.

*Government Orders*

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left? Two minutes. I see the House leader finds that funny. He has a strange sense of humour, as we have noted over the last three years.

Let me skip to my conclusion, because I do not want to miss that.

Clearly, when one looks through the criteria that our party has spelled out for assessing whether a country qualifies for preferential trading treatment, we can see that Honduras fails quickly and does not qualify. It is worth noting that even if it did not fail on the first grounds, it fails on the second grounds, which have to do with the significance of the economy or the strategic value of an agreement in providing a preferential trading relationship with the country. Honduras is currently Canada's 104th export market in terms of value of exports.

Over the 2007-2012 period, annual Canadian exports to Honduras averaged just \$50 million and annual Canadian imports from Honduras averaged \$161 million. From the current account deficit, we see that we cannot manage even an equal trading relationship with Honduras under this government. Even internal DFAIT analyses confirm that only marginal benefits to the Canadian economy are expected from the deal. There is in fact nothing to recommend this bill.

It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that the passage of the bill would be a benign act. Let me finish with a quote from Stacey Gomez, the coordinator of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation. She says:

We have long maintained that under the right conditions, trade can generate growth and support the realization of human rights. These conditions simply do not exist in Honduras. Canada should refrain from signing the FTA with Honduras until there is a verifiable improvement in the country's democratic governance and human rights situation. Until these things are achieved, the Canada-Honduras FTA will do more harm than good.

• (2255)

This bill represents an ethically bankrupt notion of relationships and engagement. It is nothing other than an ideological reflex unpackaged. It suggests that free trade, that is trade with no meaningful conditionality, somehow in and of itself alleviates instead of exploits corruption and poverty, that somehow it will build government capacity instead of exploiting its absence, and that business, in the absence of labour law, will voluntarily leave surplus behind in Honduras, helping social and economic progress in Honduras. Of course, we do not believe that any of that is true.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very well-researched speech. I wonder if he could comment on the following sentence:

...an FTA would provide international legitimacy to a political regime and economic model that is oligarchic, oppressive and unjust.

Those are not my words. They are from Ricardo Grinspun, an associate professor in the Department of Economics at York University, who appeared before the Standing Committee on International Trade on May 1, 2014.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, I am quite proud to note that economist Dr. Grinspun happens to be a constituent of mine, so of course, he is correct, for all sorts of reasons, including the substance

of what he said to the committee. That is consistent with that last quote I gave from Stacey Gomez. What we are doing by way of providing preferential treatment to a country like Honduras, with its human rights deficit, its democratic rights deficit, and the atrocities committed there, as evidenced at that committee but also by the experiences of my colleague, and witnessed by my colleague from Toronto—Danforth, is that we are validating a regime and political practices that Canada should not be. That is the harm of this deal. That is why approving this deal cannot be considered to be a benign act.

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this of my colleague, after what frankly was one of the most brilliant speeches I have heard since arriving in this House two years ago. I would have liked to have asked the Liberal trade critic from Toronto Centre, but there was great competition to ask questions, and I did not get to ask one.

We heard from the Liberals tonight that somehow or other they are interested in wanting this agreement signed, and they support this bill, but at the same time, they are sort of signalling that, maybe at some point when values are offended to too great an extent, we might well withdraw from this treaty. There were some hints of that in the Liberal trade critic's speech on January 29, when she said, "it will only work if it is more than words". I was wondering if my colleague can help me understand what is going on here.

She also stated:

...we have to be very aware of what is going on in Honduras...[otherwise] we could be complicit in political, environmental and labour violations...; we have to watch closely and be absolutely certain that we and Canada are behaving well.

With respect to the problem with the side agreements being voluntary, she states:

That puts a great onus on us to be aware, to watch and to be absolutely careful that those political, environmental and labour standards are watched and observed.

With respect to what is facing the LGBT community, it means that "we have to be absolutely aware of and watchful about" this.

She goes on:

Regarding the environmental standards, we have to be watchful about this... we have to take incredible care.

I am wondering if my colleague from Beaches—East York can help me understand where the Liberal Party may be going with this approach?



*Government Orders*

• (2300)

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question and more so for the lovely statement about my speech. I am going to disappoint him now because I cannot accommodate that question with a response. After I heard the Liberal trade critic I was confused by that party's position and I do not think the confusion was just mine alone. It is a confusing position that those members take.

The little quote that I caught from the Liberal trade critic was, "We'll go in, eyes wide open". My question is: what is it that she needs to see that she has not seen already?

I will go back to the Human Rights Watch *World Report* from 2014. The opening talks about Honduras suffering from rampant crime and impunity. It talks about police abuse and corruption. It goes on to talk about the supreme court justices being removed for unsatisfactory administrative conduct. It talks about attacks on journalists. It talks about rural violence. These are all things that my colleague from Toronto—Danforth talked about in his speech and in his personal experience during his time in Honduras.

If those things that are cited over and over again in all sorts of publications, including the Human Rights Watch report, are not enough to offend one's values and to say no, then the Liberal Party is as ethically bankrupt frankly as the ideological responses that come from the Conservative Party on the issue of trade.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to Transparency International, Honduras, the most corrupt country in Central America, is a key player in the drug trade. There are also confirmed ties between government members, the police and drug dealers. Moreover, this country has the greatest income disparity in the region.

Instead of giving preferential treatment to this country, should the government not help it achieve a healthy democracy, understand and respect human rights and labour law, and fight corruption and impunity? Would this not be the best way to help that country? I wonder if my colleague could comment on that.

• (2305)

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I thank my hon. colleague for that question because it gets us to the point that the only type of engagement that the Conservative Party seems to know is one of trade. The third party seems to know that as well, except that it is at least wise enough to express care and caution and all the rest of those things.

There are many other forms of engagement, including trade with conditionality. This is the opportunity that Canada has with all sorts of countries around the world. If they are interested, if there is a prospect, if they are on a trajectory toward improved human rights and democratic rights for the citizens of that country, then there are opportunities to engage in conditional trade. There are opportunities to engage in other ways around, simply, development, development of state capacity for democratic institutions and all the rest of it. It does not have to be a trade-based form of engagement.

All of those things are open to us as a country to play an important role in enriching the citizens of Honduras, and by enriching I do not mean simply in monetary fashion, but enriching their lives in terms of freeing them from a society that is riddled with crime and danger as we have heard many times through the speeches tonight.

These opportunities are available to us. The NDP understands that one trade agreement, one template, is not sufficient. It is ethically bankrupt. There are opportunities for us to engage around the world in all sorts of different but meaningful, productive, and constructive ways with different countries.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-20. I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Laval.

I need to begin my comments by strongly underscoring that the New Democrats recognize the importance of trade to our economy, however, we favour expanded trade opportunities and have a long record of supporting Canada's manufacturers and exporters in seeking new opportunities at home and abroad.

With that being said, the New Democrats would prefer to see increased trade with nations that respect Canadian values, particularly when it comes to the protection of human rights and safe working conditions. Further, we believe these trade agreements need to have clearly defined benefits to the Canadian economy such as increased job growth here at home.

The New Democrats support a strategic trade policy where we restart multilateral negotiations and where we sign trade deals with developed countries that have high standards and with developing countries that are on a progressive trajectory, countries like Japan, Brazil, South Africa, for example. These are countries that we should be signing free trade agreements with, not countries like Honduras where drug traffickers operate with near impunity, human rights are regularly abused, democracy is under threat and where there are very low labour and production standards that have the potential to hurt the Canadian economy in a race to the bottom for wages and workers' rights.

To be blunt, Honduras is a country with undemocratic practices, a corrupt government, weak institutions, low standards, insignificant strategic value and a record of human rights abuses. NGOs have documented these serious human rights abuses. Killings, arbitrary detention of thousands of people, severe restrictions on public demonstrations, protests and freedom of expression and interference in the independence of the judiciary are all well established.

Transparency International ranks it as the most corrupt country in Central America and a major drug smuggling centre with known linkages between the ruling party politicians, the police and trafficking.

Expert testimony at the Standing Committee on International Trade reinforced the concerns of the New Democrats about human rights abuses in Honduras and substantiated our refusal to support an expanded trade agreement with a government that was directly involved in perpetrating these abuses against trade activists, journalists and members of the LGBT community.

The executive director of PEN Canada stated:

### *Government Orders*

—not only have Honduran institutions failed at protecting basic human rights for its citizens; there is a history of government involvement in these human rights abuses. Our research shows that the state not only failed to investigate crimes against journalists; in many cases state actors were themselves complicit in these crimes.

Not only is the regime in Honduras a habitual offender of human rights, its policies have also almost exclusively sought to increase what is already the most stratified country in Latin America.

Dr. Rosemary Joyce, an internationally recognized Honduran expert and professor at Berkeley University, stated:

Starting the very day of the coup in 2009 and continuing today, the most salient governmental issues have been the steps taken to enrich a small wealthy elite at the expense of the majority of the Honduran population, leading to the highest level of inequality in Latin America.

Finally, in June 2013, 24 U.S. senators signed a letter expressing concern about the human rights situation in Honduras and requested that Secretary of State John Kerry make every reasonable effort to help ensure that Honduras' November 2013 elections were free, fair and peaceful.

• (2310)

Further, 94 members of congress have called upon the U.S. State Department to halt all military aid to Honduras, in light of its violent repression of political activity.

What we are seeing is a government steadfastly determined to enter into a trade agreement with a corrupt, abusive regime whose sole aim has been to enrich the small cadre of loyalists and friendly business elites at the expense of the remaining 99.9% of Honduran society.

I strongly believe that entering into this agreement would only reinforce the stranglehold of the regime and would be counter to values which Canadians believe our government should be promoting abroad.

Canadians expect our federal government to be a leader on the world stage. That is why most Canadians agree that giving preferential trade terms to corrupt, undemocratic countries that suppress dissent, violate citizens' human rights, and facilitate drug trafficking is the wrong approach to trade policy.

Let me reiterate. New Democrats recognize the importance of trade to our economy. We favour expanded trade opportunities. However, in determining our support for a trade deal, we also consider the fact that trade agreements must provide clearly defined benefits to the Canadian economy, so let us look at the impact the Canada-Honduras trade deal would have on the Canadian economy.

Currently Honduras accounts for less than 1% of our trade and is Canada's 104th-largest export market in terms of value of exports. In 2012, merchandise exports totalled a meagre \$38 million, while imports were \$218 million, meaning there is already a significant trade deficit between our economies.

Obviously, given these figures, Honduras is not a strategic trade partner. Therefore, a failure to ratify this agreement would not have an adverse impact upon the Canadian economy, while the ratification of the agreement would have no discernible impact upon Canadian exporters.

Since the Conservatives took power, Canada's export performance has suffered badly, going from a significant trade surplus to a huge deficit. My Conservative colleagues often brag about the number of agreements they have signed, but the fact is that they have not finalized even one agreement with a major market that would offer significant benefits for Canadians.

In fact, leaked reports from the Department of Foreign Affairs reveal the Conservatives' pursuit of insignificant agreements like this one with Honduras has tied up resources and compromised Canada's ability to secure agreements with high-standard economies that would offer real opportunities, such as Japan.

This speaks directly to the Conservatives' record on trade. When they came to power, they inherited a current account surplus of \$18 billion, but eight years later, Canada's current account deficit stands at \$62 billion. That represents a negative swing of \$80 billion and an average decline of \$10 billion a year.

Canada's trade record vis-à-vis that of our international counterparts emphasizes the failure of the Conservative government to increase export-driven trade, which historically has been a key driver of our economy. Here, between 2006 and 2012, Canada had the worst current account performance when our trade performance is compared with 17 other countries around the world.

While the Conservatives continue to chastise the NDP's position on supporting balanced, mutually beneficial trade agreements, their record on trade, just like their record on so many other important economic files, speaks for itself.

In conclusion, I believe this is the wrong trade deal at the wrong time. Honduras' record on human rights is atrocious, its leadership is corrupt and continues to use the country's public institutions to benefit a select few, and there is no significant advantage for the Canadian economy in signing this deal.

Instead of focusing on marginal trade deals such as this one, we should be looking to strengthening our trading relationships with economies that can offer real benefits to Canada in terms of both cheaper imports and increased exports of manufactured goods, not just raw materials.

That is why I will continue to oppose the bill in Parliament.

• (2315)

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are like the cows watching the train go by. The world has changed and the NDP has not. The world embraces trade. Every country aspires to have bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, and Canada has been very aggressive on the bilateral free trade agreement front. We have negotiated 43 free trade agreements since 2006 and the NDP has opposed every single one of them.

*Government Orders*

I would like to ask my hon. friend this. Why do New Democrats favour higher taxes, particularly a \$21-billion carbon tax, and reckless spending that would push us far into deficit and increase our debt, and oppose free trade that would help Canada become a more prosperous economy, bearing in mind that one out of five jobs depend on trade in this country? Why are they stuck in the 19th century? Why do they not bring themselves into the 21st century and realize that free trade leads to jobs and prosperity and it is great for Canada? It is time they accept it.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** That is quite rich, Mr. Speaker, from a party that has been quoting Ricardo from the 18th century all day. It is absolutely ludicrous that Conservatives come forward with these questions.

When we look at what the government is doing with Honduras, it is supporting a corrupt government, it is supporting drug traffickers. It is actually not looking at making sure that we can protect the environment and protect journalists. My hon. colleague earlier was quoting individuals who were being taken away in cars and the Conservatives think this is a good government to deal with.

New Democrats are not the ones stuck in the 19th century. We are a progressive group who wants to ensure that there is fair trade, that we expand our trade with countries that actually reflect our values and grow our economy. Unfortunately, they are stuck in the 1950s.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, if I heard my hon. friend correctly, he said that the government supports drug traffickers. If he has any evidence of that, I would like him to table that in the House.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I think you can just look at this bill. Conservatives are supporting the Honduras government, which is implicit in a lot of the drug trafficking that is happening in Honduras. Therefore, it is a very simple answer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I am glad there is agreement on that.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beaches—East York.

• (2320)

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, because the Conservatives keep asking all the easy questions of my colleague, I am going to ask a more challenging one, in part because I got asked a more challenging one, and it is this. How does one make sense of the Liberals' policy and position on this particular agreement? Their position seems to be that values matter. They support the agreement, values matter, they will go in with eyes wide open. My colleague cited all the violations of human rights, democratic rights, and others in his speech. If that is not enough for the Liberals to say this is a problem, I do not know what is.

I am wondering if the member can reconcile the Liberal position for me.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beaches—East York for the question, but I cannot fathom an answer as to where that is coming from. It seems that the Conservatives and the Liberals and a lot of their allies frequently present that false dichotomy to Canadians.

They always say that they need to engage through this free trade agreement, but, really, when it comes to importance of what we can do as Canadians and represent Canadian values, we can call for engagement that focuses on building institutional, judicial, and democratic capacities, such as protecting freedom of speech, protecting vulnerable groups, confronting the rampant post-coup society, and redistributing the power and wealth in one of the most unequal countries in the Americas. That is what we could be doing as a country and as a Parliament to ensure we support that type of growth in Honduras.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Sudbury for sharing his time with me. I would also like to commend my hon. colleague from Beaches—East York for his wonderful speech. Anyone who listened to it understood right away what it was about.

I would like to delve right into the main theme of my speech on Bill C-20. I will start by taking a brief look back in history. I will not go back as far as the 19th century, but it is important to point out that Honduras has been an independent country since 1821.

Honduras has therefore been an independent nation for 193 years. It has made progress and has had highs and lows, but it has carried on. Recently, there have been a lot of problems in the country that have significantly lowered the quality of life for its residents. The biggest blow was the coup against democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya in 2009.

The military then conned the people and ruled for several years until another election was held. The existing government does not really represent any true segment of Honduran society. There is a lot of corruption and human rights are violated. In short, there is no real guarantee of living a decent life there.

When I see the Conservative government bragging and saying that it is going to sign a free trade agreement with Honduras, it is a disgrace to anything that might be considered good about international free trade.

Why? Despite all the advantages and disadvantages of international trade agreements between countries, I believe that the Conservatives look only at the economic aspect of it, the matter of profit and what they can get out of it, since traditionally trade with Honduras has always resulted in a negative balance. We know that. The figures have been mentioned before. It makes no sense. This agreement is of no real economic value to Canada, and the Conservatives are not abiding by the main criteria, as we have already discussed here.

One of those criteria stipulates that the proposed partner's economy must be of significant or strategic value to Canada. However, that does not seem to be the case here. Another criterion stipulates that the terms of the proposed agreement must be satisfactory. That too is not the case.

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No good economist would enter into the negotiation of a trade agreement, whether it be between countries or strictly local, without analyzing far more criteria.

• (2325)

Among those criteria, aside from the economic aspect that I was just talking about, there is also the qualitative criterion. The NDP caucus wants the Conservatives to understand that this is the criterion they are failing to meet. They are not taking it into account. What will be the consequences of this free trade agreement that they are trying to sign with Honduras?

Across North America, 25 recognized organizations tried to warn the Conservatives about the risks of signing this agreement. They did not listen. These organizations fully explained and documented the tangible societal consequences this agreement would have. They warned the Conservatives that signing this contract would fuel the social conflict that currently exists. Everyone here knows that, and it has been said many times.

Honduras is having problems right now. Inequalities are getting bigger every year. I do not think it is good business to sign a free trade agreement with a country in that situation. A developed country such as ours, with one of the largest economies in the world, should not engage in this type of negotiation when we know that it will only benefit a small oligarchy in that country. It is because Canadian imports are huge and exports to Honduras amount to nothing.

Another thing that has been swept under this black rug—or perhaps blue if it is a Conservative rug—is an ulterior motive, and that is to allow the ruling oligarchy to become richer.

When the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade merged, they studied this agreement. In their report, they concluded that there was a worthwhile aspect to this agreement. Unless I am mistaken, basically, there was protection for Canadian mining interests in the region.

This free trade agreement will produce results similar to the trading outcomes Honduras has had with the United States, particularly with a company called Rosario Mining, which wreaked havoc wherever it went.

• (2330)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that it was the NDP that sent its deputy leader down to Washington D.C. to argue against the oil sands and to try to destroy Canadian jobs. The NDP leader called the oil sands a disease.

The member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour referred to free trade as job destroying. The NDP committed in its platform—and it has been reaffirmed at convention after convention—that if it ever gets into power, it will be renegotiating NAFTA. The NDP member for British Columbia Southern Interior said that free trade threatens the very existence of Canada.

Given the fact that the member's party seems to be approaching free trade with ideological blinders, I would ask him to please

remove the ideological blinders, stand up for Canada, stand up for Canadians, and stand up for Canadian jobs, and let us get this Canada-Honduras agreement through the House so that it can benefit both Canada and Honduras.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo:** Mr. Speaker, please allow me to respond to the hon. member for York Centre. He has been asking pathetic questions like that all evening. Either he is way off topic or he is trying to get us to go off topic.

If he did not understand what I said in my speech, maybe it will be translated. However, what I said was that the NDP is trying to point out the repercussions of this free trade agreement. That has nothing to do with what he just said or a hypothetical carbon tax or whatever. What is more, he is talking about negotiation. My God. No, they will see what we are going to do in 2015.

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the things we hear in the House at this time of night can be quite amusing. I will not repeat them.

I listened closely to my colleague's speech. As I was listening to the Conservative member's question, I was reminded why Canada's international reputation has suffered so greatly. We were in a very enviable position for quite some time. Our reputation was strong and solid until the Conservatives came to power. We are slowly losing our global influence. We on this side have been saying that the free trade agreements we are negotiating need to be in line with Canadian values. I would like to quote Sheila Katz, who said this:

The Americas Policy Group has recommended that Canada refrain from concluding free trade agreements with countries that have poor democratic governance and human rights records.

Would my colleague like to comment on that?

• (2335)

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo:** Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to answer my colleague. In fact, he was the one who spoke about the criteria. We need to be somewhat responsible about this. He himself reminded us that Canada, as a member of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, has to follow certain rules. The government cannot carelessly impose a free trade agreement.

As I said, this is not about economic gain. There has always been a negative trade balance. We do not sell very much to the Hondurans. We buy many things from them. However, as I said, there is another goal here, and that is to somehow protect mining companies so that they cannot be held responsible when they make a mess in these third world countries by recklessly exploiting their natural resources.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

In 2013, when I sat on the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, we studied the case of Honduras at length. Therefore, I believe I have enough facts to oppose this bill, which is unacceptable.

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The despotic regime that reigns in Honduras is characterized by its anti-democratic practices, its corruption, its failed institutions and its history of human rights violations. Canada should not be signing a free trade agreement with that country.

The NDP believes there are three fundamental criteria when considering a trade agreement. First, does the proposed partner respect democracy and human rights, acceptable environmental and labour standards, and Canadian values? Second, does the proposed partner's economy have significant or strategic value to Canada? Third, are the terms of the proposed agreement satisfactory?

The proposed agreement with Honduras does not meet any of these criteria, as we clearly showed in the previous debates, despite the fact that the Conservatives have used their majority to limit the time to review this bill. Only five hours of debate on a treaty that was negotiated over three years. This is ridiculous. I also find it difficult to understand why Liberal members would agree to signing an agreement with Honduras.

We are promoting an agreement with a brutal dictatorship, and I am choosing my words carefully. By signing this agreement, we are giving legitimacy to a regime put in place following a coup. The Subcommittee on International Human Rights heard several witnesses from Honduras and experts on this issue. I heard horror stories. Since the coup in Honduras, journalists, union representatives and people who are asking for greater democracy are being killed. In fact, they will kill anything they do not like in that country. Honduras is the murder capital of the world, and most of the murders are not even properly investigated by the police.

Professor Gordon of Wilfrid Laurier University, who testified before the committee, said that the possibility of a free election needs to be called into question. Some members of the opposition parties have been assassinated. In 2013, there was an average of 10 killings a month. According to Professor Dana Frank from the University of California, 80% of crimes in Honduras go unpunished. There are many documented cases of police corruption. Between January 2011 and November 2012 alone, the police carried out 149 summary executions of civilians. In January 2013, the United Nations asked for the removal of four judges of the Supreme Court of Honduras for violations of international standards and because there was a serious threat to democracy. In February 2013, the United Nations working group on the use of mercenaries indicated that the Government of Honduras had failed to properly regulate private security companies. These companies are involved in numerous cases of human rights violations, including murders, disappearances, forced expulsions and rapes.

Moreover, censorship is common in Honduras. It is alleged that journalists are corrupted and advertisements are manipulated to ensure that coverage is positive and to silence opponents.

• (2340)

According to the national human rights commission of Honduras, 29 journalists have been murdered since the coup.

This is the question I would ask: if Canadian mining engineers were murdered, what recourse would Canada have? It would have none. There is no justice and therefore murderers are not even prosecuted. It is in the interest of Canadian mining companies to

have a certain legal framework in Honduras. I would ask them the following question: what good is a legal framework when there is no rule of law in the country?

Should Canada support, by means of a trade agreement, a government of thugs? The Honduran regime is corrupt. All the stakeholders have said the same thing and even the U.S. Senate acknowledged that this is unacceptable.

Will this agreement benefit Honduras? I seriously doubt it. Two years after the coup, 100% of the increase in income went to only 10% of the population, while poverty increased by 26%. This agreement will only benefit a corrupt elite.

Canada used to be a world leader in foreign affairs, renowned for its ability to help other organizations and other countries become more democratic, freer, fairer to its citizens and more respectful of human rights. However, agreements such as this one, supported by the Conservatives and the Liberals, will make us take a step backwards.

Entering into such an agreement with a corrupt government shows little concern for human rights and sends the message to similar countries that this is acceptable to Canada. The Conservative government and its partners, the Liberals, find that acceptable. We are debating an agreement with a brutal regime, and closure has been invoked.

We are trampling democracy, here and elsewhere, and I am sad to see the Liberal members supporting this process. The Conservative government imposed closure 68 times to end debate. Is that a sign that the government is turning away from democracy?

The agreement with Honduras was negotiated without any transparency and despite repeated requests from stakeholders in various sectors of Canada's economy. The Government of Canada was never willing to make the text of the agreement public during the negotiation process. Given these concerns, I am disappointed that my colleagues from the other parties want to support this treaty. This agreement is stained with the blood of Hondurans.

We risk damaging Canada's international reputation if we enter into a partnership with such a regime. My constituents of Brome—Missisquoi sent me here in the hope of building a different Canada.

In light of the facts that we have been able to show despite the time allocation brought in by the Conservatives, I will not support Bill C-20. I hope that Canadians will remember that the Liberals and Conservatives voted in favour of a free trade agreement with a brutal dictatorship.

*Government Orders*

• (2345)

[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

COMMENTS BY THE MEMBER FOR MARC-AURÈLE-FORTIN

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. Just a short while ago, the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin made a comment, which I was very alarmed at. I believe it was directed at me because of my Jewish faith. The member said that Israel is an apartheid state, that Muslims and Catholics do not have the same rights as Jews in the State of Israel. I would hope that the member would take this opportunity to apologize for that statement, to me and to the Jewish people and to the State of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The Chair will take this on advisement and give the hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin a chance to reply to it.

\* \* \*

**CANADA-HONDURAS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-20, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Honduras and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Honduras, be read the third time and passed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Questions and comments, the hon. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada does have a development program that Honduras has been very appreciative of. The development funding supports regional multilateral initiatives as well as initiatives of Canadian partners in the areas of human rights, gender inequality, security, justice reform, citizen participation, and democratic governance. Canada believes that supporting economic and sustainable growth for the poor and reducing inequalities are essential to addressing the multiple challenges facing Honduras.

Recently there has been a new government and the new leader's priorities have been very much in line with our priorities. They also want to promote sustainable economic growth and reduce social exclusion and inequality through investments. They have worked through rural development, food security, health, and education. All of the priorities that we have, the new government in Honduras is working toward.

I would think that the NDP would be looking into some of the new changes that have happened in Honduras before its members continue to use such, I think, unacceptable language such that they have been using tonight. The member should know, with his recent remarks about working with the Hondurans and their blood, that in fact we are working very much with programs that are developing and—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her question.

Unlike the Liberals and the Conservatives, who are ready to accept free trade agreements at all costs for the sake of a signing ceremony and photo ops, we, in the NDP, believe that the importance of international trade should be recognized.

We want to increase our international trade, but, at the same time, this has to be done in a manner consistent with Canadian values. We also want the Canadian economy to benefit from this trade.

• (2350)

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will echo the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Consular and remind my colleague again that efforts have been made on both sides, in Honduras. For example, Canada has implemented regional development programs. As for the new government in place, it is focusing more and more on sustainable economic growth and prosperity, which will help reduce social inequalities.

My colleague says that he wants to promote Canadian values, but I believe that what he really wants it to advance the NDP's partisan values, including turning down any type of trade agreement with another country.

As such, I will echo my colleague from York Centre, and again urge the NDP to leave the 19th century behind, join the 21st century and be part of what is happening in the international community. Being involved in international development also means doing trade with economies that are making an effort, instead of relying on all sorts of dictates that are totally disconnected from reality.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I am saying that Honduras does not need a co-conspirator. What Pablo Heidrich, an economist at the North-South Institute, said before the Standing Committee on International Trade on April 10, 2014, is that Honduras needs technical assistance and a certain level of pressure so that the government becomes more responsive to wider social demands and it stops being sort of a committee that administers the gains of a very limited group of people.

**Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today about this free trade agreement between Canada and Honduras. Obviously, I am opposed to this agreement, and I am proud that my party is opposed to it too.

There are three fundamental criteria that must be considered when evaluating trade agreements. First, does the proposed partner respect democracy, human rights, adequate environmental and labour standards, and Canadian values? If there are challenges in this regard, is the partner on a positive trajectory toward these goals? Second, is the proposed partner's economy of significant or strategic value to Canada? Third, are the terms of the proposed agreement satisfactory?

Unfortunately, the free trade agreement with Honduras does not meet any of these criteria. I therefore do not really see why we would agree to sign such an agreement with that country.

Honduras is known for its undemocratic practices, its corrupt government, its weak institutions and a record of human rights abuses. It has poor standards and is of insignificant strategic value to Canada in the context of a free trade agreement. I therefore do not see the point of such an agreement.

The NDP wants increased trade with certain countries. Contrary to what the government seems to believe, we are not against trade, but we think it is important to do business with countries that uphold Canadian values and to conclude trade agreements that also benefit the Canadian economy.

Let me paint a picture of the country in question. It is a very poor country with repressive and anti-democratic political ideology. Honduras has an appalling human rights record. The democratically elected government of leftist President Manuel Zelaya was overturned by a military coup in 2009. The government's actions and the elections have since been heavily criticized by international observers for not meeting acceptable democratic standards.

The 2009 coup was carried out by the Honduran army under the pretext of a constitutional crisis that had developed between the Supreme Court and the president. The coup was widely condemned—I remember that because it was not so long ago—around the world, especially by all other Latin American countries, the European Union, the United States, and the UN General Assembly. Obviously it is very controversial.

I think it is important to point out that Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world and it is the most dangerous country for journalists. It also has very significant income disparity.

In taking stock of the situation, I came up with some questions. Is this really what Canada wants? Do we really want to flout human rights, democracy and social justice in the name of free trade and business? Is that really what we want as a country? That is what I am asking my colleagues.

In other words, the government is asking us to support undemocratic practices, corruption, crime and a growing gap between rich and poor.

Of course, the government is going to accuse us of opposing every free trade agreement, of being anti-trade and of being evil communists. Quite the opposite, actually. On this side of the House, we are keenly aware of how important trade is for our economy.

We, too, support Canadian exporters and we do not disagree with everything. However, we do not believe this should happen at any price, especially given that internal analyses done by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade have shown that Canada's economy stands to gain very little from this agreement.

● (2355)

Therefore, I am wondering why the government wants to trample many Canadian values for an agreement that will not even benefit our exporters and will certainly not benefit the Honduran people.

### *Point of Order*

I really do not see the value of this agreement, and we are not the only ones. A number of stakeholders support our position, including Sheila Katz, a representative of the Americas Policy Group of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation. This is what she told the Standing Committee on International Trade on April 22, 2013:

The Americas Policy Group has recommended that Canada refrain from concluding free trade agreements with countries that have poor democratic governance and human rights records.

That says it all. This is what Neil Reeder, director general, Latin America and Caribbean Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, said:

Corruption within the Honduran police force is a particular problem, which the Government of Honduras also recognizes. Largely because Central America is situated between the drug-producing countries of South America and the drug-consuming countries to the north, Honduras and its neighbours have been particularly affected by the growth of transnational drug trafficking, human trafficking, and the impact of organized crime. It's estimated that nearly 80% of all cocaine-smuggling flights departing South America touch land in Honduras before continuing northward.

I will end on that eloquent note. I could have quoted several other experts who oppose this agreement too, but I think these two quotes will suffice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin on a point of order.

\* \* \*

### **POINT OF ORDER**

COMMENTS OF THE MEMBER FOR MARC-AURÈLE FORTIN

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Toronto rose on a point of order and accused me of all kinds of things.

During a private discussion that was not outside Parliament, we talked about an international situation. I did not insult him; that was not my intention. I did not use unparliamentary language. We talked about an international situation, and I am very disappointed that he took it that way.

It was certainly not my intention to insult him, and I did not use unparliamentary language.

● (2400)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The Speaker will return to this, if necessary. This may be considered closed.

It being 12 a.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 27, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until later today at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)





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