



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 005 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

TAX FREEDOM DAY

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the voters of Calgary West for electing me to my sixth term in the House of Commons. It is a great honour and privilege to continue to serve them in this capacity.

Earlier this week, the Fraser Institute proclaimed tax freedom day. This is the day when the average Canadian family has earned enough money to pay all of their taxes.

This year tax freedom day fell on June 6. This is a significant improvement from 2000 when it fell on June 24. With this stable and reliable majority federal government, I hope to move closer to Alberta's tax freedom day of May 18 or, even better, the 1961 record of May 3.

With the help of my colleagues in this majority government, I hope we can continue to move tax freedom day significantly earlier. Let us have more freedom through less government.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the voters of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for placing their trust in me on May 2. I plan to work hard in the coming months to ensure that families in my region are well represented here in Parliament.

The people of my riding are worried about the announcement made by Nova Bus, which is going to lay off 135 workers from its plant in Saint-Eustache. I was very disappointed to learn that 200 buses intended for the Canadian market will be assembled in its plant in the United States.

I promise to do everything I can to ensure that our tax dollars will be used to help families and create jobs here in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

DON VALLEY WEST

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I rise for the first time in this auspicious House, I am compelled to remember my roots as eighth generation Irish who came to this fledgling nation in 1848 seeking relief from famine, poverty and hopelessness.

Here I am today, sent by the great Canadians of Don Valley West, sent by the residents of Canada's great city Toronto, the "meeting place", and I pledge to honour their trust.

First, I thank God for this opportunity of service. I humbly thank all the people of Don Valley West, all my volunteers during the recent election, my wife and children who have encouraged and supported me through my journey to Ottawa.

Most especially, I want to give my thanks and appreciation for the brave and valiant Canadians who have given their all for this great nation. I pledge to honour their sacrifices by my service in the House.

* * *

MICROCREDIT PROGRAMS

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today the House of Commons unanimously passed my motion encouraging the government to increase funding for microcredit programs.

[*Translation*]

I have seen microcredit in action first-hand, and I can say that these programs are producing real results all over the world. These programs help the world's most disadvantaged people. Of course I was very disappointed that the budget presented this week does not contain a single new initiative on microcredit.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

I am disappointed, but not surprised. The government has shown a lack of concern for people with low income, whether we are talking about tax credits for children taking music lessons here at home or whether we are talking about the poorest of the poor who depend on microcredit around the world.

Indifference to those less fortunate, whether at home or abroad, that is the common thread running through the government.

* * *

CYPRESS HILLS—GRASSLANDS

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 10 and a half years go by very quickly. I am proud to be back again with the support of so many good citizens of Cypress Hills—Grasslands. They eagerly expect good solid leadership as we carry through on long time commitments.

The long gun registry, that thorn in the side of westerners, will be revoked. The taxpayers' subsidization of political parties will be reduced. Farmers will actually be able to make their own business decisions. This is why I came to Ottawa.

It was not that long ago that I went to my business partners, my sister and her husband Wendy and Wendell Patzer, to see what they thought of me running for election. They were supportive, so we went ahead.

Over the years my mother has questioned me as to why I am doing this, especially after some particularly biting letter to the editor, but through it all she keeps praying for us. Sheila has been my heart for almost 30 years.

Volunteers have helped us election after election after election. My exceptional staff has reached out to so many constituents so effectively.

Once again, I thank my constituents of Cypress Hills—Grasslands for the privilege of representing them here in this great institution.

* * *

*[Translation]***VISAS**

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to take advantage of my first speech in the House to thank all the people in Laval—Les Îles who voted for me and all the volunteers who worked for me, and to congratulate all my colleagues on their election. Let me add that I am proud to be part of the great NDP family and that I will do everything I can to help families in my riding.

I rise in the House of Commons today to tell the Conservative government that it is high time to relax the laws on obtaining visitor visas. In my riding, as in many others in Canada, families cannot come together for weddings or funerals of loved ones because of the challenges involved in getting a visitor visa.

● (1410)

*[English]***POWELL RIVER**

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the people of Powell River and all others in the magnificent riding that I represent.

Maclean's magazine recently honoured Catalyst Paper Corporation of Powell River as one of Canada's 50 most socially responsible companies and *Corporate Knights* magazine named Catalyst one of Canada's 20 best corporate citizens.

I am honoured to have been re-elected to represent the great riding of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. There we will find some of Canada's most innovative and hard-working people whose efforts benefit not only our community, but also those of Canadians across the nation.

I would also like to salute the city of Powell River, which yesterday received the prestigious 2011 Willis Award for Innovation for its pioneering partnership with Catalyst.

In this global economic crisis, Powell River has worked closely with Catalyst, easing the company's taxes and keeping Canadians at work.

The people of Powell River and Catalyst exemplify the winning spirit of Canadian entrepreneurs. It is Canadians like them who have made our economic action plan a world-leading success.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I rise in the House, I would like to thank the constituents of Etobicoke—Lakeshore for having placed their trust in me.

[Translation]

I also want to congratulate you on your election. You are a breath of fresh air for the House.

I rise today to speak to an important measure announced by my colleague, the finance minister, when he brought down the budget on Monday. Our government is giving small businesses a hiring credit of up to \$1,000. More than half a million businesses will be able to benefit from this credit. That is a concrete measure to help create jobs across the country.

Our government is a firm believer that small businesses drive our economy and we will always support them.

* * *

*[English]***CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am truly honoured and humbled by the confidence shown in me by the voters of Scarborough Southwest by electing me as their representative in the House of Commons.

Statements by Members

In stark contrast to the Conservative government, I intend to represent all the people of Scarborough Southwest. I intend to use my time in this chamber to pressure the government to work for all Canadians struggling to make ends meet and to live with security and dignity.

The Conservatives have missed a chance to work for all Canadians, including the millions who did not vote for them. They have missed the opportunity to make life more affordable, to lift seniors out of poverty and provide new Canadians with adequate settlement services.

The intense personal stories I have heard from my constituents will motivate me in my work as their MP. Voters in Scarborough Southwest voted for change, and I intend to voice that message at every opportunity.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is standing up for Canadian workers. Today, the Minister of Industry highlighted opportunities that lie ahead for the automotive industry.

Canada's economic action plan has helped create and maintain jobs and has helped firms modernize their operations. We will continue to strengthen our industries, such as auto parts manufacturing, with our low tax plan to protect the economy, continued deductions for modernizing plants and facilities and incentives for hiring new workers.

Our government is working with President Obama and his administration to deliver on the shared vision for perimeter security and economic competitiveness. We anticipate these new long-term partnerships will accelerate the legitimate flow of people and goods, while strengthening security and economic competitiveness.

With the restructuring of two of our key auto manufacturers and the worst of the recession behind us, the automotive industry is looking to the future. Now is the time to seize the opportunities that come with this upward momentum.

* * *

[*Translation*]**PLAISANCE HERITAGE CENTRE**

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in this House to represent the people of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel. First, I would like to thank them for placing their trust in me in the recent election.

As I speak for the first time in the House, I would like to point out the exceptional work of the North Nation Mills Corporation's workers and volunteers, who are preparing for the new tourist season at the Plaisance Heritage Centre and Plaisance Falls. Their goal is to showcase the history of this village and its neighbouring communities. The Plaisance Heritage Centre helps keep the origins and the development of the Petite-Nation area alive in our memories.

Such initiatives contribute to the development and vitality of our villages and, therefore, I am proud to recognize the exceptional work done by all those involved.

We wish them much success in 2011.

* * *

●(1415)

[*English*]**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that our Conservative government is committed to expanding free trade because it creates new jobs and economic growth for hard-working Canadians. That is what we said during the campaign and that is what we are going to deliver.

We understand, as most Canadians do, that international trade is fundamentally a kitchen table issue. Almost 60% of our annual GDP and one in four Canadian jobs is directly or indirectly dependent on our exports.

Today the new NDP international trade critic is quoted as saying: "I don't accept that the NDP is opposed to trade deals."

I think the record is clear. Our party is for creating jobs through free trade while the NDP has not supported a single free trade agreement.

New jobs and economic growth to benefit Canadians continues to be our focus. We ask the opposition parties to work with us to strengthen and build trade opportunities that will be crucial to Canada's long-term economic success.

* * *

HOCKEY

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NHL will be returning to Manitoba as the hopes and dreams of thousands were realized on May 31 when it was announced that the Atlanta Thrashers would be relocated to Winnipeg.

There was a request that the team pre-sell 13,000 season tickets by June 20. After some initial ticket offers to Manitoba hockey fans, the season tickets went on sale to the public on June 4 at 12:00 noon and 17 minutes later they were all gone. A waiting list of 8,000 with a \$50 deposit has now been fulfilled.

I am proud to call Winnipeg my home. In my opinion it is the home of the greatest hockey fans in the world. Like most, I want our team to be called the Winnipeg Jets and I look forward to watching my team compete for the Stanley Cup.

I look forward to being a part of the whiteouts, and some of the loudest and most energized crowds that the NHL will ever have.

Go Jets go.

Oral Questions

SYRIA

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada remains gravely concerned about the situation in Syria, and the ongoing use of violence and torture against innocent people. Syria's blatant violations of its own human rights obligations threaten the security of the Middle East, a region which is undergoing important transition.

On May 24, our government took concrete actions against Syria, including various sanctions and imposing a freeze on the assets of those associated with the violent regime. Furthermore, Canada has called in the Syrian chargé d'affaires to raise our concerns and to once again call on Syria to cease the use of force against peaceful demonstrations.

The actions this weekend in the Golan demonstrate a regime that is becoming more isolated and desperate. It is an attempt to distract both domestically and internationally from its own failures and shortcomings, and Israel has every right to defend itself.

Today we hear that Britain and France will be bringing forward a resolution to the United Nations Security Council condemning the repression, and demanding accountability and action.

We will continue to work with our allies in the hopes that the regime will change its ways and end its brutal assault against the Syrian people.

* * *

WORLD OCEANS DAY

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark World Oceans Day, an international day to observe the challenges facing our oceans, and to celebrate and encourage conservation. This year's theme is "Youth: The Next Wave for Change".

We know that young people care about the environment and are concerned for the future. The theme is intended to inspire young people to take action on environmental issues to effect lasting change.

Our oceans face serious risks. Climate change, pollution and overfishing have wreaked havoc on our oceans. The time to act is now.

Canada is lagging well behind in our duty to protect our ocean ecosystems. If we are to fulfill our 2012 commitment, we must dramatically increase the number of marine protected areas on all three coasts. We must also work to lower our emissions and use science-based conservation measures.

I encourage all members of the House to participate in World Oceans Day.

* * *

BETTY ALBRECHT

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my thanks to the citizens of Kitchener—Conestoga for once again entrusting me with the privilege of serving as their representative and for entrusting our party with a stable, national, majority Conservative government.

As members know, on election night my wife, Betty, collapsed to pass away days later. Since then literally thousands of Canadians have reached out, offering prayers, compassion and solace. I thank them.

I thank my colleagues in this House for their support. While this House is sometimes known for a lack of decorum and civility, that image is a stark contrast to the genuine warmth and affection I have felt from my colleagues from all parties through these difficult days.

Betty and I were united as a team in all of our endeavours and Betty was my constant source of encouragement. I thank God for Betty's love and for giving us 39 joyous years of marriage, three fantastic children, Gavin, Benj and Arja, their spouses, and my nine grandchildren of whom I could not be more proud.

They share not only in my sorrow but also in the gratitude I extend to all members today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tax breaks for big corporations are costing us a lot of money. The government claims otherwise but the facts show that the results expected from such an investment have not been achieved. Large corporations are reinvesting only a small fraction of these big government handouts and are pocketing the rest.

Where is the job creation? Why is the Prime Minister pursuing this strategy, which is ineffective and yet so costly?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the recession, the Canadian economy has created over 500,000 jobs. That is one of the most impressive track records in the industrialized countries. For this reason, we are rejecting the NDP's proposals to raise taxes.

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us look at a concrete example. Last year, the Prime Minister gave a gift of over \$100 million to Esso Imperial Oil, a company that made over \$2 billion in profit. It does not need help. Why then is it being offered such a gift?

Can the Prime Minister tell us how many new jobs Esso Imperial Oil created with this gift of \$100 million? Where are the results? Where are the jobs?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in comparison to the other industrialized countries, the Canadian economy has one of the most impressive track records in terms of job creation. That is why we will continue to keep our taxes low, not only for big businesses but also for small and medium-sized businesses and for everyone. It is essential that we avoid the tax hikes proposed by the NDP.

[English]

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one would think the Prime Minister would want to know how many jobs were created if he just gave \$100 million to a large corporation. One would think he would want to know that Canadians do.

He refuses to bring in a job creation strategy. In fact, what we are presented with in the budget is a job reduction strategy and Canadians want to know what jobs, what services, what programs will his government cut.

My question is, will the Prime Minister commit today not to cut services that are key to Canadian families? They are counting on these services.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we will not cut such services, but at the same time what we will not do to Canadian families is raise taxes, as the NDP proposes.

It is due in part to this government's reduction of taxes across the board many years ago, when we first took office, that the Canadian economy has one of the strongest job creation records anywhere in the industrialized world.

More than half a million jobs were created since the recession. That is the kind of policy we want to keep moving forward and that is why Canadians gave us a strong mandate.

• (1425)

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of places that the government should be looking for cuts, but it is not. For example, subsidies to profitable oil companies is a start, cracking down on tax havens is another measure that could be taken, or ending corporate tax giveaways.

Instead, we have cuts to environment, to fisheries, to defence, to the National Gallery. It speaks to the government's priorities: the corporate fat cats get the gold and Canadians get the coal.

I am asking simply, what other cuts does the Prime Minister have up his sleeve? What else are we going to hear about in days to come with regard to services that Canadians count on? Tell us a little more about—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, this government has funded very well the essential services of Canadians and will continue to do so.

In terms of tax policy, there are a number of measures in the budget to make sure that everybody pays their fair share of taxes. I would encourage the leader of the NDP and his caucus to actually read the budget on those matters before deciding to vote against it.

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was actually a short read because the changes were highlighted in blue. I read through it in about 30 minutes.

We have seen this something for nothing approach before. Should we be surprised? The former parliamentary secretary for national defence said that he hoped there would be higher unemployment because that would make it easier to bring on people for the army.

Oral Questions

Would the Prime Minister tell us whether he agrees with such an insult to the 1.4 million unemployed Canadians? Would he set the record straight that he does not accept higher unemployment so that more people can be recruited to our armed services?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the many strong job creations in this budget is a measure called helmets to hardhats, specifically to help former members of the Canadian military find job opportunities in the workforce. I would encourage the leader of the NDP to take his blinders off to vote for these kinds of positive measures, instead of voting against veterans of the Canadian army.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a few short weeks ago, the premier of Ontario, Mr. McGuinty, made a major speech to the people of Ontario about the state of health care and his concerns about the future of the health care accord with the federal government. Premier McGuinty asked particularly that the Prime Minister begin now the negotiations with the provinces about the renewal of the health accord. I have not heard from the Prime Minister about that.

I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell the House what he intends to do to bring the provinces together to improve health care in Canada.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, the health accord comes up for renewal in 2014. That is not this year or next year or even the year after that. However, I do look forward to discussing this matter with the premier of Ontario in the future, whomever that may be.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the future starts now. Premier McGuinty is not the only one calling on the federal government to take a positive approach. All of the provinces want to see a different attitude from the federal government when it comes to health and consulting with the provinces in general.

Why is the government intent on maintaining this unilateral federalism that does not benefit all of Canada?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party is talking about our approach to federalism. When the Liberals were in power, they cut health transfers to the provinces by 30%. Under our government, health transfers have increased by over 30%. That is the Conservative difference.

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recent report of the Health Council of Canada cites lack of federal leadership for the failure to establish a national pharmaceutical strategy, which is a key goal of the 2004 health accord. Yet the budget makes no mention of this critical program.

Oral Questions

The success of the health accord depends on collaboration between the federal and provincial governments.

Will the minister stop passing the buck to the provinces and tell this house what her government will do to establish a pharmaceutical strategy?

• (1430)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of affordable access to drugs as part of a quality health care system, and we work with the provinces and territories, who are responsible, by the way, for deciding which drugs are publicly covered.

That is why we have consistently increased transfers to the provinces and territories by over 30% since we formed government, so they can continue to meet the health care needs of their residents.

* * *

[Translation]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in his latest budget, the Minister of Finance told Canadians to expect \$17 billion in cuts. The problem is that he did not bother to tell us what specific areas will be affected by these cuts. Now people are worried, and rightfully so, that they will lose services and programs that are important to them.

Can the Minister of Finance tell us where the cuts will be made? Can he promise Canadians that the programs and services they rely on will not be cut?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member has an opportunity, he should read pages 182 and 183 of the budget document that was tabled on Monday, which outline the process for the strategic and operating review, looking at the operating expenses of government and the Government of Canada, a large organization.

A review of the operating expenses has not been done in more than 15 years. It is high time it was accomplished in order to cut out some of the fat and unnecessary spending in government.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people have the right to know where these cuts will be made, particularly if their safety and well-being will be affected.

We learned yesterday that cuts have already been made to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. What next? Food safety, public health, airport security?

People have cause to be worried.

Can the minister assure us that none of the other cuts will affect the safety and well-being of Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the process to be undertaken will commence soon. Chaired by my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, a special committee

of cabinet will do a careful review. The committee will not slash and burn, as the Liberal government did in 1995-96 with the provinces, the territories and individuals in Canada. We will maintain the transfer payments to the provinces and territories. We will maintain the transfer payments to individuals in Canada, to seniors, to persons with disabilities. However, we will look carefully at the cost of delivering government services and productivity in government at the operating—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night, while people around the world prepared for World Oceans Day, Canadians learned that their government was planning to slash funding for the protection and conservation of fisheries and oceans. These cuts ignore our responsibility to protect the world's longest coastline. Has the government forgotten when our fisheries were brought to the brink of disaster?

Will the minister see reason and commit to cancelling the planned cuts to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a strategic review is an opportunity for the department to assess the performance of all of its programs. It also allows us to ensure that we are responding to the priorities of Canadians and the strong mandate that Canadians gave us. We have a responsibility to taxpayers to spend their money prudently and where it will do the most good. We must ensure that government programs are efficient, effective and achieving the expected results for Canadians. We believe that DFO is at a critical period in developing its programs and policies to meet the needs of the new fisheries and oceans management for today and the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is making decisions that will compromise the safety of Quebecers. We have learned that the government will be closing maritime search and rescue centres in Quebec in order to centralize operations in Halifax. And it is all in the name of saving money instead of saving lives.

Does the minister realize that these services that protect the public are more effective when they are provided in the region where they are needed?

Oral Questions

●(1435)

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we received a strong mandate from Canadians to implement our budget proposals and deficit reduction measures. The decision to close the call centre will save taxpayer dollars without impacting the safety of people while, at the same time, still providing bilingual services. New communications technologies exist that now permit search and rescue call centre employees to provide the same high-quality service from a central call centre. Existing search and rescue helicopters and vessels will remain where they are currently based.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke said last February that Newfoundlanders should look after themselves when it came to search and rescue, Canadians were shocked. No one realized that this would actually become Conservative government policy.

Closing the maritime rescue sub-centre in St. John's will endanger people's lives. Will the minister commit to reversing this dangerous decision and show he is serious about the safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, safety is a primary issue when it comes to Canadians and all of the services that we provide. This call centre reduction will in no way impact the safety of Canadians and, at the same time, will provide efficiencies as well as savings of Canadian taxpayers' money.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is not a call centre. The St. John's maritime rescue coordination centre handles over 500 incidents a year, involving almost 3,000 people at risk. It depends on local knowledge to save 600 lives each year.

The government has decided to spend billions on corporate tax giveaways. To pay for it, it seems willing to endanger the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Will the government agree right now to reverse this most shameful decision?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is no way that we would make a decision that would have an impact on the safety of any Canadian.

Existing search and rescue resources, including helicopters and vessels, will remain where they are currently based. The call centre function can be provided from a central location, saving dollars as we exercise our commitment to Canadians to reduce our deficit.

* * *

*[Translation]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a report by the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff reveals that the government is considering reducing the number of contractors and reservists by 5% annually. During the recent campaign, the NDP

committed to maintaining the National Defence budget in all regions, including mine, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

Can the Conservatives do this and still assure Canadian Forces members and civilian staff in Bagotville that they will not be affected by these cuts?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I would like to remind the House of this government's record: over the past five years, the defence budget was increased by at least \$1 billion a year, and reservists and civilian staff are included in that budget.

Of course, there will be operational cuts in this year's budget, but that growth and those increases remain part of this government's record and we are very proud of it.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is also about the government's threat to cut defence jobs across the country.

In my riding, there are more than 6,000 regular and reserve officers and more than 2,500 civilians who serve our country every day at CFB Esquimalt. This base contributes over \$600 million a year to our regional economy.

Will the government commit today to stopping these defence cuts that are creating so much uncertainty in my community? Will the government assure the House that no cuts will be made that would affect the operations of our six coastal defence vessels based at Esquimalt?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's record on national defence speaks for itself. On average, the budget for this important department has risen by \$1 billion every year since 2006.

Obviously, just as Canadians are tightening their belts with regard to the situation this country faced in the global downturn, and as this government moves to achieve operational efficiencies, there will be a strategic review of some costs in National Defence and they will be reported to the House in due course.

●(1440)

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nearly 7,000 civilian and military personnel at CFB Valcartier want to know if the Conservatives plan to cut their budget. While several regions of Canada desperately need help from our soldiers, particularly to deal with natural disasters, the soldiers themselves are dealing with limited human and material resources.

How can the government even consider more cuts? Can the Minister of National Defence assure the people of my region that there will be no cuts to CFB Valcartier?

Oral Questions

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, in the context of the strategic review of government spending, of course there will be cuts to the National Defence operating budget.

However, for this important department, the facts speak for themselves: an additional \$1 billion in spending every year since 2006 is the most important part of this government's record when it comes to National Defence.

* * *

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Champlain Bridge problem deserves to be taken seriously. The bridge is regularly partially closed and as a result Quebecers spend more time on the road, arrive late for work and lose precious time with their families. It is a veritable nightmare. This situation is wasting Quebecers' time and money. In the Conservative budget, replacing the Champlain Bridge was totally ignored.

Will this government stand up for Quebecers once and for all? Can the minister immediately commit to providing the necessary funding for replacing the Champlain Bridge?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. He has been a member of Parliament for the Montreal area for many years. In fact, the Liberals were in government for many years and could have started the work.

We have started the work. We have invested several million dollars to repair the bridge and to continue to ensure the safety of the bridge. In this week's budget, we announced \$228 million for continuing the work. What is more, all the options are on the table.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The government announced a \$57 million cut to DFO and the loss of 275 jobs. The fishing industry, which does so much to drive the economy of Canada's Atlantic and Pacific coastal communities, deserves to know the details. These cuts will hurt economically, will diminish research capacity and will pose a safety issue.

Will the government be up front and provide the details on these massive cuts?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, a strategic review was an opportunity for the department to assess the performance of all of its programs. This also allows us to ensure that we are responding to the priorities of Canadians. We have a responsibility to do that and a mandate to do that from Canadians. We must ensure the government programs are efficient, effective and achieving the expected results for Canadians.

We believe that DFO is at a critical juncture.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have just heard, the media reports now confirm that the Conservative government is closing down the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am absolutely shocked at what I just heard in QP. The minister just said, "No way will it impact safety. Efficiencies will be achieved through closing this call centre". I have never heard a distress centre being called a call centre in my life. Nobody has. Achieving efficiencies was in the budget.

Could the minister please show us in this budget, where that—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, new communications technologies exist that now permit search and rescue call centre employees to provide the same high-quality service from a central position.

We have an obligation to Canadians. It was clear, and we will go forward with our obligations to provide cost-saving measures that will protect Canadian investments.

* * *

● (1445)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fight for a climate change plan in Canada has an unlikely ally, the loyal executives at Suncor. They agree that the government's piecemeal approach to regulating emissions is expensive and ineffective.

The government has always had an open door policy for oil executives. Will the minister now commit to dropping his expensive and ineffective approach and introduce a legally binding plan to combat emissions?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that my colleague is expressing concern for a fine Alberta industry that creates so many jobs and generates such great wealth for the Canadian economy.

As my colleague knows full well, we have a plan and the plan is working. We addressed transportation emissions first. We moved on to the coal-fired electricity generating sector, and we are about to begin consultations with other heavy emitters, including the oil and gas sector.

[Translation]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government does not understand that its plan is a failure. Canada is far from meeting its international commitments on climate change. In fact, Canada will not even meet its own targets. And to think that most federal greenhouse gas reduction programs will end in 2012.

When will we have a long-term plan to fight climate change?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true.

[English]

We have a plan and that plan is working. Indeed, the emissions are getting heavier. What we will do to deal with that is to decouple the increase in emissions from the productivity and profitability of the various resource generation sectors.

We have a plan. We are a quarter of our way toward achieving our 2020 goals. We will meet those targets.

[Translation]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the United States Environmental Protection Agency has rejected the Keystone XL pipeline study and considers it to be, and I quote, “inadequate”. Close to one million more barrels of crude oil will be transported by this pipeline. According to the agency, this will increase greenhouse gas emissions associated with the oil sands.

Can the minister confirm these facts and provide any studies on greenhouse gas emissions and the Keystone pipeline?

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the National Energy Board is a strong independent regulator that ensures pipeline safety. It is mandated to ensure the safety and the security of pipelines from when they are first proposed until they are abandoned.

Canada and the U.S. trade oil, natural gas and electricity across our borders every day. The Keystone XL pipeline will provide a substantial economic benefit to Canada.

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government just does not get it. Canada has lost its credibility. The U.S.A. is doing more due diligence on greenhouse gases from Canada's oil sands than the Canadian government has done in five years.

Instead of hiring PR teams to give a good name to the oil sands abroad, will the government regulate absolute reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the oil sands?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a mixed question with a couple of subjects there.

While the opposition continues to bash Canada abroad and here in terms of the way we handle energy, our government will continue to defend the Canadian economy, continue to defend Canadian resources and continue to defend Canadian jobs, and we will not apologize for it.

Oral Questions

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks World Oceans Day, a time when we recognize the importance of maintaining the health of a marine environment and its resources. The Conservative government takes this issue very seriously. We are committed to the preservation of Canada's fragile ocean environment.

Would the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans please inform this House about recent progress to advance this effort?

• (1450)

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley on his recent re-election.

Healthy oceans and their role in the economic and social life for our country are critically important. This is why earlier today I was pleased to announce three new candidate marine protected areas on the east coast and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as well as a strategy for protecting the important corals and sponge reefs on our Pacific coast.

Today's announcements complement the eight marine areas which the government has protected since 2006, as well as our investments in science, the Coast Guard and sustainable fisheries.

* * *

FLOODING IN MONTÉRÉGIE

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's plan to help the residents of the Montérégie region in dealing with the flooding has been, in a word, pathetic.

After withdrawing the troops on the eve of floods becoming worse, the public safety minister said in a letter that the army could not stay there for the cleanup because, and get this, it would be unfair competition for the private sector.

Will the government finally accept Quebec's request to have troops assist volunteers and residents to clean up from this historic disaster?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Forces are on the ground within 24 hours of each provincial request. Over 800 soldiers, sailors and air personnel have helped with dyke reinforcement, sandbagging, protection of infrastructure and houses, maintenance of the central roads and evacuations of civilians from flood ravaged areas.

The Canadian Forces have worked side-by-side with the provincial authorities during these crises to protect our citizens, property and infrastructure. The Canadian Forces is always ready to step in in response to emergencies.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Tarik Brahma (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, thousands of Quebecers will converge on Saint-Jean to help the disaster victims. This solidarity was also part of what we experienced during the Saguenay floods and the ice storm. Unfortunately, it is not shared by the Conservative government, even though it is responsible for representing all Canadians, including Quebecers who voted for the NDP.

Will the government stand in solidarity with the disaster victims and allow Canadian troops to help with the cleanup?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Forces will remain in these regions during these emergencies to assist civil authorities until their unique capabilities are no longer required.

Every member of the House should be proud of the outstanding job the Canadian Forces have done in Quebec, in Manitoba and, most recently, in Saskatchewan to protect Canadians in danger.

* * *

TAX HARMONIZATION

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite Conservatives claiming that the HST would be good for the people of British Columbia, an independent panel commissioned by the B.C. government revealed that families will pay an average of \$350 more in sales tax under the HST, and the promised cost reductions for businesses have yet to be realized.

Could the minister explain to the House if he still thinks the tax is good for the people of British Columbia?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the member opposite realizes, provincial sales tax is a matter of provincial responsibility. It is not a matter of federal responsibility. It is a decision for the Government of British Columbia and the people of British Columbia, as it has been in the past in Ontario and in the provinces in Atlantic Canada that chose to harmonize over time. This is not a decision for the Government of Canada.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government just does not get it. Raising taxes on B.C. families took away any bragging rights the Conservatives may have had on tax relief. Even Premier Clark acknowledges that the HST is hurting B.C. families.

Facing an unprecedented referendum on getting rid of the HST, the B.C. government is now promising changes. However, the fact remains that the HST is a tax shift from companies on to working families.

Will the Conservatives—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Not only does the government get it, Mr. Speaker, but the voters of Canada got it on May 2, based on a very strong mandate. The voters of Canada made a choice between a high tax plan and big spending programs of the NDP, and a low tax plan, jobs, growth, creative Canada, education,

skills training and encouraging small business and larger businesses in Canada to create jobs.

It is a strong mandate from the people of Canada. They made their choice.

* * *

● (1455)

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister has again stated that he will ignore the Wheat Board Act, refuse to hold a plebiscite giving wheat and barley farmers a vote on their livelihood and will unilaterally abolish the Wheat Board.

Forming government with the support of only 24% of Canadians eligible to vote does not constitute the plebiscite set out in the act.

Why does he refuse to ask the very people who will be devastated by his decision if they support the Wheat Board's demise? What is the minister afraid of? Why does he plan to ignore the law?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, western Canadian farmers gave us a strong mandate to move forward in this direction. I cannot understand why the member for Guelph would deny western Canadian farmers the same options, responsibilities and privileges that his farmers enjoy.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers in Ontario have the right to vote.

After four years of study, a federal rail service review reported last October that shippers of grain, forest products and other commodities are getting seriously inferior services. The problem is an imbalance in market power, which strongly favours the railways.

After a further delay of six months, the government agreed last March to correct that imbalance. It only takes a simple amendment to the Canada Transportation Act but the throne speech was oddly silent on that issue.

Will the government commit unequivocally to enact that new legislation before the end of this calendar year?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are currently working on moving ahead with these recommendations. The safety of all transportation in the country is a major priority for our government and, as usual, we will deliver the goods.

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more than five weeks ago a pipeline spilled 28,000 barrels of crude oil on lands claimed by the Lubicon first nation. This massive spill poses a risk to its health and water supply. By cabinet directive, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development must help first nations facing such emergencies. Chief Noskey has requested federal support for independent expertise on damage assessment and remediation.

Can the minister explain what action he is taking to protect the health and interests of the Lubicon first nation?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously our departmental officials have been in contact with and working with the leadership of the Lubicon first nation. I would also like to point out that we have done much in the way of water and water regulations. We have done most of that work through working with the Alberta treaty first nations and we will continue to do so.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie River Basin is home to countless first nations and Métis communities. They rely on the basin for sustenance and transport. Both the Northwest Territories government and the Dene Nation have raised concerns about transboundary impacts of this spill and of oil sands developments in the basin.

As the government is mandated to guard the rights and interests of aboriginal peoples and to address transboundary impacts, when can we finally expect to see federal leadership on the Mackenzie River Basin Agreement?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the critic in the NDP. I did not welcome her and I look forward to our upcoming meeting.

The progress on that initiative is going forward. I have had contact and an early briefing on that. I would like to continue the dialogue with the member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mental health is shaped from the earliest days of life and is influenced by many underlying factors in a child's environment. Would the hon. Minister of Health please inform the House how our government is helping equip children with the ability to deal with difficult situations and improve their social relations, problem-solving skills and academic performance?

• (1500)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Barrie for all of his good work on the mental health issue.

On behalf of the hon. Minister of Health, I am pleased to inform the House today that our government announced a significant investment to support a mental health project for school-aged children. Today's funding announcement will go toward improving

Oral Questions

the emotional and social health of children aged 6 to 12 years of age, as well as parents, teachers and community partners located in 25 schools in Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Alberta.

This project is part of our government's investment to understand what works best to promote positive mental health among vulnerable populations across Canada.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I used to work with small businesses who helped people save energy and money in their homes. They would be disappointed by the non-answer given Tuesday in response to a question about the eco-energy retrofit program for homes. Here is a program the government cut and brought back and cut and brought back. People cannot run small businesses that way.

Since the Conservatives claim to care so much about stability, why do they not stay true to their words and help small businesses by committing to make this program stable for five years instead of just one year?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the \$10 billion investment that our government has invested in clean energy and a cleaner environment. We are proud of the eco-energy program. It is helping thousands of homeowners across the country make their homes more efficient and it has helped small businesses across the country as well.

We are very proud of the significant investments that we continue to make in clean energy, which is supporting renewable energy development across this country.

* * *

[Translation]

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Champlain Bridge is an infrastructure that is vital to Quebec's economy. Experts found that there is an urgent need to replace it and to include a sustainable transportation system for the future. Yet nothing is being done. There is no money in the budget for this and there is no plan. Everyone is wondering when the needs of the south shore will be met.

When will the government finally announce the construction of a new bridge that includes sustainable transportation, such as a light rail system?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is well aware of the importance of this file to the greater Montreal area.

First, I will ask the hon. member to carefully reread the budget. In fact, \$228 million has been allocated for bridges in the Montreal area. So, if the future of the Champlain Bridge is so important to him, he should vote in favour of the budget.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today politicians of the European Union passed a motion calling on Canada to drop the World Trade Organization challenge against their unfair and improper ban on Canadian seal products. We also know our challenge at the WTO regarding seal products is about protecting and advancing the financial security of Canadians.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade please tell the House if Canada intends to back down on this challenge?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, allow me to congratulate the member for Kildonan—St. Paul on her re-election to this House.

Canada's position on seals is a completely separate matter from ongoing negotiations with the European Union over our comprehensive economic trade agreement. Furthermore, the EU ban on virtually all Canadian seal products is inconsistent with the EU's international trade obligations. That is why the Canadian government has initiated the WTO dispute settlement process and we will be moving ahead with our WTO challenge.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a family in my riding is at risk of being deported in one week if the Minister of Immigration does not intervene. Four years ago, members of the Castillo Olivares family fled their home country of Mexico, where they were the victims of violence and their lives were being threatened. They have three children who have integrated well here, and the parents are employed.

In light of the urgency here, why is the minister refusing to use his discretionary power to allow them to remain in the country?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on her election.

Under the Privacy Act, the minister is not authorized to comment on specific cases. That said, we have an extremely fair process for asylum seekers that has a number of levels of appeal, including the ability to apply to become a permanent resident on humanitarian

grounds. I imagine that this family has gone through all of those steps, but our system must treat every case fairly, and that is what we are doing.

* * *

● (1505)

CANADA POST

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post has rejected the union's latest offer to settle the dispute and as the pressure tactics continue, the government's silence on the matter is worrisome.

Does the minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation not realize that with his silence he is condoning the actions of Canada Post, when he should instead be sending a clear message that the government also expects a negotiated solution, which is the only way this public service might be enhanced, including in small communities?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed we have been there. We have had mediators at the table with the two parties encouraging them to resolve their dispute. Oftentimes the best results to these situations of dispute are found between the parties.

We are very frustrated that it is continuing on, so we have put more effort and emphasis on making sure that the parties themselves know the importance of this matter to the Canadian public.

I have met with the president of Canada Post and with the president of the union. We continue to encourage them to get a deal done.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-201, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (travel and accommodation deduction for tradespersons).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to reintroduce this bill on behalf of Canada's building and construction trades as well as their indentured apprentices for the third time since I was first elected.

The building and construction trades have been lobbying for this bill for over 30 years and it continues to be one of the key priorities at each and every one of their legislative conferences.

In every Parliament the government has made vague promises of progress to come, then each Parliament ends without concrete action. The time to rectify that situation is now.

The ask is simple: allow tradespersons and apprentices to deduct travel and accommodation expenses from their taxable income so that they can secure and maintain employment at a construction site that is more than 80 kilometres away from their home.

At a time when some regions of the country suffer from high unemployment while others suffer from temporary skilled labour shortages, this bill offers a solution to both. Best of all, it is revenue neutral for the government because the cost associated with the income tax cut is more than made up by the savings in employment insurance.

Now that the Conservatives have a majority in the House of Commons there are no more excuses. The government can and must support this bill and act unequivocally to support Canada's building and construction trades.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (death benefit).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to introduce a bill today that would address a longstanding grievance for widowed Canadians. In short, it would make the CPP death benefit tax-free.

As it stands now, receiving this benefit can have disastrous financial implications for the surviving spouse. Most obviously, of course, it reduces the amount of money available to cover funeral expenses. More importantly, however, it may push the survivor's income into a higher tax bracket thereby potentially having a negative impact on eligibility for social assistance or the GST/HST tax credit. At \$2,500 the CPP death benefit is already inadequate, but by making it a taxable benefit the government is adding insult to injury.

Instead of imposing a financial penalty on grieving spouses, I call on all members of the House to do the right thing, the fair thing and the compassionate thing by passing my bill at the earliest opportunity so that we can support families as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-203, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (in-home care of relative).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce a bill that I brought forward in the last Parliament, which would make a profoundly positive difference for thousands of Canadians who are the primary caregivers for their spouses.

In many ways, my bill is a fitting complement to the government's enhanced family caregiver tax credit that was announced in its recent budget. Despite the newly increased amount, it still remains the case that spouses are excluded from receiving this benefit. Frankly, that is outrageous.

Every conceivable relative of a person living with disabilities can apply, including a child, grandchild, brother, sister, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, parent or grandparent. Not included is the one person

Routine Proceedings

who is most likely to provide care on an ongoing basis, the spouse. That is patently unfair and undervalues the caregiving that spouses provide every day of every week of every year.

A quarter of Canadians provide informal care to a family or friend with a serious health problem every year. More than 75% of these caregivers are women. The Canadian Caregivers Association estimates that caregivers contribute \$5 billion of unpaid labour per year to the health care system, which represents an enormous savings to federal and provincial governments.

Making spouses eligible for the caregiver amount is a small step forward. It would send a strong signal that the federal government recognizes the exceptional contribution that spouses make as caregivers and would provide a new support for them to help a loved one who is in need of care to live with dignity and as much independence as possible.

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

* * *

● (1515)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF CANADA FOR THE REGION OF NORTHERN ONTARIO ACT

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-204, An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to table An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario. This bill would deliver to northern Ontario an independent economic development agency free of political interference.

Every region in Canada has its own independent agency, including southern Ontario. Yet the government refuses to treat northern Ontarians equally. Under the act, 10 northern Ontario ridings would be serviced by this independent economic development agency.

I urge the government to take this bill and make it its own.

Routine Proceedings

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

[*Translation*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to adopt the following motion: “That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House adjourns on June 16, 2011, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, June 20, 2011. That, on Thursday, June 16, 2011, the hours of the sitting of the House and the order of business shall be as provided in the standing orders for a Friday, with the stipulation that any notices can be filed no later than 6:00 p.m.”

The Speaker: Does the minister have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from concerned citizens requesting that the Government of Canada and the provincial and territorial governments immediately cease negotiations with the European Union, while nationwide public consultations can be held on how and whether to proceed with a potential trade agreement.

The petitioners believe the current free trade agreement being negotiated with the E.U. goes far beyond what is generally understood as trade with respect to procurement rights, local priorities, environmental regulations and water rights.

NATIONAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of students from the Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School in Caledon East in my riding asking for a publicly funded early-education national child care program.

CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to submit the following petition signed by several hundred Guelphites, urging the government to exclude all sub-federal governments and their public agencies, including municipalities, from any Canada–E.U. procurement agreement.

On May 2, 2009, Canada and the E.U. announced the beginning of the negotiations of a comprehensive economic and trade agreement, otherwise known as CETA. It is expected that an agreement will be reached in 2011-12.

As it stands, CETA negotiations include government procurement, including projects at the provincial and municipal levels.

Through losing the right to have independent procurement policies, municipalities like Guelph will lose the right to buy local materials and services, which is one of its most important tools for stimulating local innovation, fostering local community economic

development, creating local employment and achieving other valuable public policy goals.

REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition calling on the Government of Canada to establish a high commission in the Republic of the Fiji Islands. My office has received petitions with hundreds of signatures from Fijian Canadians all across the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

As the petitioners note, immigration business and other consular affairs originating in Fiji are now handled by the Canadian high commission in Sydney, Australia, causing delays and inefficient service. The impact of the situation on tourism, trade, economic co-operation and immigration are significant. There are more than 100,000 Canadians of Fijian descent who have very active travel, immigration business and property interests in both Canada and Fiji.

These individuals are calling on the government to establish a Canadian high commission in Fiji, as has already been done by the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China and India, to improve the delivery of government services for all Canadians and increase economic co-operation between Canada and Fiji.

● (1520)

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition put forward by literally thousands of Canadians who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known and that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial causes combined. Yet they point out that Canada remains one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world.

The petitioners point out, as well, that Canada spends millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry, using our foreign missions and embassies for trade purposes and that teams of Department of Justice lawyers travel the world like globe-trotting propagandists for the asbestos industry.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to ban asbestos in all of its forms, to institute a just transition program for asbestos workers to end all government subsidies of asbestos, both in Canada and abroad, and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

*The Budget***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from June 7 consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: The last time we were debating this motion, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake had five minutes left for questions and comments, so I will call questions and comments.

The hon. minister of western diversification.

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, would the member expand on how good the economic action plan has been for Manitoba and for the Prairies? As western diversification minister, I understand that a lot of the jobs created were under the economic action plan phase one. Now that we are going into the second, would he like to elaborate on some of the plan?

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your election as our Speaker. I am looking forward to working with you for the next four years.

The economic action plan has been a very well-received program in my riding. The municipalities were extremely happy to receive funding for much needed infrastructure investment. It helped trigger dollars out of the province's well, through the building Canada fund and through the community adjustment fund. We saw a lot of investment in a number of different projects right across the riding. Virtually hundreds of millions were invested in the riding, federally, provincially and municipally. That helped create jobs in the short term and provided us with infrastructure that we needed to sustain our productivity and our quality of life throughout rural Manitoba.

Also, the EI work-sharing program really helped some of our major companies, especially in the steel industry where it did see a major downturn with the recession. They were able to keep staff available and on-site through the work share. They were able to do a lot of different upgrades to the plants in my riding. Then, at the end, they were in a position to completely get back up to full steam in very short order because all their staff were still on-site, employed and were able to turn a key and get the plants operating again. That created a bunch of jobs and put economic wealth back into the riding.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the member for Selkirk—Interlake, who I know very well, answer the question that the Prime Minister did not answer earlier about the \$100 million that was given in a former economic

action plan to Imperial Oil. It was \$100 million in corporate tax breaks.

The Leader of the Opposition asked this question, not once, not twice but three times and the Prime Minister was incapable of answering.

Hopefully the Conservatives have had some time to look into this. The question is very simple. The Conservatives spent \$100 million. Could they give us any one of the tangible benefits that came from that \$100 million of taxpayer money that the Conservatives gave away?

• (1525)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the question that comes back to the NDP is this. Why is the NDP not supporting budget 2011? It contains a lot of things for which the NDP asked. There is help for seniors. It may not be as much as what it has asked for, but there is help for seniors through the increase in the GIS.

The NDP has asked for more to be done for rural doctors and nurses. There is help in there for our rural doctors and nurses, but the NDP will vote against this budget.

The NDP wants to ensure we protect health care. Health care is protected in this budget by ensuring that equalization transfers and health care transfers continue to go out to the provinces at a rate increasing by 6% per year. In my province of Manitoba, that means that health care transfers are going to be over \$1 billion this year. That is up almost 30% from when the Liberals were in power.

There are things in there like the eco-energy retrofit program for which the NDP asked. It has been renewed. The NDP members asked for the helmets and hardhats program. We worked with them co-operatively and it is in there.

There is compromise on both sides. Therefore, why is the NDP not supporting this budget?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I am rising in the House since being back, and I would like to congratulate you on your election. I also thank the great people in the riding of Sudbury for putting me back in this place.

I used to sit a lot closer to my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake, and we used to have a lot of conversations. Now we get to have this conversation from the opposite side of the House. It is interesting for both of us.

One of the things that you mentioned in your response to my hon. colleague for Burnaby—New Westminster is the budget addresses the doctor and nurse shortage in rural and northern communities. This side of the House thinks it does not go far enough.

The Budget

I believe the budget sets out a \$9 million in investment, but it does not do enough to actually create the doctors and nurses that we need, especially in northern Ontario and other rural parts. What you are doing is pulling doctors from larger urban centres and then hoping maybe they will—

The Speaker: Order, please. I have to stop the hon. member as there is not much time for a response. I will remind him to address his comments through the Chair and not directly at other members.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Sudbury for his re-election. I did enjoy sitting close to him when we sat at the other end of the House. We will still have lots of time for camaraderie in this place. We do enjoy each other's company.

What we are going to be doing for rural doctors and nurses, creating new opportunities in rural and northern Canada, is something that has not been tried before. Having a student loan forgiveness program of up to \$40,000 for doctors and \$20,000 for nurses and nurse practitioners is something we have not tried. It is a made-in-Canada solution, unlike what is happening right now. We were going all over the world trying to poach doctors, which is not sustainable.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is also my first opportunity to be on my feet in the 41st Parliament.

First, with great humility, I thank my constituents in Hamilton Centre for returning me for a fourth term to this honourable place and for the support that they have shown for so long, going on 26 years, in three orders of government. I am truly blessed and very appreciative of the trust and faith that my constituents have placed in me again.

As well, Mr. Speaker, may I also add my voice to those who wish to congratulate you on your ascension to the throne and the history books, being the youngest Speaker ever. I wish you the best of luck. If you have a great term, we will have a great term, and I do hope you have that great term.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the budget. However, I do not have much time and would like to confine my comments to the party subsidies that are now being withdrawn as a result of amendments to the budget that are now before us.

My overarching thought about this reminds me of a phrase my mom taught me when I was very young: “Penny-wise and pound foolish”.

Penny-wise, there is \$27 million to be saved. That always sounds good, particularly to ordinary Canadians for whom \$27 million is an amount of money they can barely comprehend in their mind let alone the total budget that we have here.

It is understandable that at first blush the government is playing a populous card by saying to Canadians, “Well, why should your tax money go for those awful, horrible political parties? Let them go out and get the money from all their supporters. That is the way it ought to be and we ought to cut back on this. It will save you, taxpayer, \$27 million.”

That is sort of the Coles Notes version of what the government is offering here and that is the penny-wise part. It sounds good to save \$27 million and it does not sound like there would be any pain.

However, the reason it is pound foolish is that it is weakening our democracy. Anything that weakens our democracy weakens the value of Canadian citizenship because, so much of it is predicated on the beautiful democracy that we have. It is a democracy that is held up by many in the world as an example of a mature, advanced and modern democracy. Yet, it is my experience that we are about to lose that.

Having that other place here as an appointed body is an albatross we all carry when we travel the world on behalf of Canada and talk about democracy. Eyes light up when people find out that we have an appointed Senate. What, in the great democracy of Canada? Therefore, we still have work to do, but this was an improvement that did make our democracy stronger.

I have believed every minute that I have been in politics that the further away we keep politicians from political money, the better our democracy is. Reversing the public financing takes us right back to that world where politicians find it necessary to be snuggling up to people and asking them for money, when perhaps the real and only reason is to deal with a policy issue. However, there is that thing in the back of their mind that they constantly have to be raising money in order to run a campaign. I am not getting into the horrible things money can and does do to a democracy, I am just talking about the above-board stuff.

We all know that it is only a question of time before the current limits are going to rise. The table is being set. I do not think it would happen right away, but it will happen over time as the government makes the case, “We need the ability to fund these expensive campaigns, costs are going up, and we do not have the public subsidy any more.” Ergo, it makes sense to raise the donations.

● (1530)

I do not know about other members but in Hamilton Centre coughing up \$1,000 for a political contribution does not happen easily or very often for the simple reason that most of my constituents do not have \$1,000 to just write a cheque. They can do \$50 or \$100, and with enough like that, we can manage the campaign without me, as a member, an elected person, spending my valuable time going for money.

The Budget

There was a study not long ago, and I stand to be corrected, but my memory tells me that U.S. senators in a six year term spent something like 40% or 50% of the time either planning, going to, being at, or returning from fundraisers all over the United States. Is that where we want to go? Is that the direction we want, that those with money more easily get the attention of hon. members? Again, I am talking about the honourable stuff, never mind how it starts to get us closer and closer to some of the bad stuff.

How many times in the history of democracy has money corrupted the process and individuals? Obviously, not everyone here will be corrupt, but it is taking us in the wrong direction, and that is our point, at a time when there is so much need for modern democracies, for mature democracies to be an example.

I have been on six or seven international election monitoring missions, trying to help emerging democracies. The ones I have been to are mostly in the former Soviet Bloc countries that are truly emerging democracies, struggling. They have so many questions about our system because they would like it.

One of the things they talk about is money and how we manage money in the political process. For them to find out that Canada, one of the great models, one of the great hopes, is going in this direction will be devastating for them because if we are not there, how will some of these emerging democracies ever get there themselves? How will that happen? That is part of our international role.

We are not the biggest economy in the world. We are certainly not the biggest military. We do not go throwing our weight around, but what we do have is a great reputation, or we had a great reputation and we are struggling to maintain it, notwithstanding current policy. That reputation is one that our predecessors in this place and Canadians generations before us built, earned and created for Canada. Now we are in the process of offering it away.

I need to split my time with the member for Nickel Belt, Mr. Speaker. There goes most of my speech, but that is okay, I think I made my point.

The fact remains that this is not a positive step. This is a retrograde step. This is taking us in exactly the opposition direction. I do not know when the political climate will be such that we will get it back, but I do know that our democracy is being weakened by this move. The ability of an idea, like a Tommy Douglas idea, to survive and be heard when now money is a bigger issue than before can only lessen the effectiveness of our democracy and, again, therefore the effectiveness of the citizenship that we are all so proud of having in this country.

We will not be supporting the budget and we certainly will not be supporting this. What we will be doing to modernize democracy is fighting to get rid of the Senate and bring in proportional representation. Now, that is a positive step in democracy.

•(1535)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because it is my first opportunity, let me thank the voters in Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission for the opportunity to be back here again.

I listened with interest to the enthusiastic comments made by my colleague. He said the move to change the political subsidies weakens democracy. However, I do not think he made his case. He kept saying it, but he did not ever make his case as far as I could hear.

He talked about the ability to do what he does in his riding in Hamilton, which is to raise money to run his campaign, and he seemed able to do that without difficulty. I think all of us have met that challenge.

Would he not agree that these changes that are being suggested in the budget in terms of removing the subsidy over four years, that really, we are then going at the national level to the same system we already have at the local level, that EDAs have to raise the money from individuals to run their campaigns? Would he not agree that is where we are going, that it works pretty well at the local level and it will work as well at the national level?

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the member's interest and the question.

I want to ensure I understand. When he was talking about "local", was he talking about municipal politics? Am I correct? Is that what the hon. member means?

No. Then I am sorry. I did not quite understand the point he was making with regard to the example because if we talk about municipal politics, there are many problems there too in terms of the wide open nature of money and the influence that it has.

I admit I would have made a better case if I had more time. I do get a little long-winded. I accept that. Not to worry though, I will have many more opportunities to be on my feet talking about this, so that the member will know 100% what the case is that I am making.

I am basically saying that the public subsidy was a reflection of the will of the Canadian people when they voted. The \$2 only went to the party that got the vote. Therefore, that member's vote actually meant something because if one was a New Democrat or a Liberal or a Green member running in Alberta, the fact of the matter is that most of that member's votes did not matter because the first past the post meant that he or she could win with 40%.

Do not forget that we have a government in this place right now that has 40% of the support of the Canadian people, but because we have first past the post it got 100% of the power.

There are all kinds of problems. I say to the hon. member that this just exacerbates it.

•(1540)

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again thank the hon. member for his usual passion in his speeches and for talking about issues that are truly important to Canadians and especially to the people in his riding.

I know you were specific on some of the things that we could be doing to enhance our democracy.

The Budget

When we are looking at the budget, we are losing the subsidy. What do you truly think is the important thing we could be bringing forward here to make the changes necessary to bring forward the reforms that we can see in democracy without having to bring in the mighty dollar to ensure we can do that?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Just a subtle reminder to members to remember to direct their comments through the Chair. That keeps our deliberations civil.

The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sudbury for his support, for the real, positive changes that we could make to this place that quite frankly would make us prouder of the democracy we have.

I mentioned two of them. I would be glad to talk about them over and over, but the heading is to abolish the Senate. If we want to save money on wasted expense, there is \$100 million that we can save with one little bit of surgery. Just cut off that house over there. It is \$100 million. However, it really does not make that much difference except to those who get the cash for life lottery Senate appointment.

The other thing we can do is proportional representation. I started to get into that when I was mentioning that in our current system, the \$2 per vote subsidy meant that every vote made a difference. It actually had an impact whether the member won that seat or not.

With our first past the post system, although the government received less than 40% of the vote of all Canadians who voted, it got 100% of the power not because it did anything wrong but because we have a system that does not serve our democracy as well as proportional representation would.

We will be making suggestions in that regard. We will continue to do that until those changes are actually brought about and we have true democracy in our House of Commons.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is going to be a hard act to follow.

I am honoured to rise in the House once again as the member of Parliament for Nickel Belt. I was born and raised in Nickel Belt. I worked for 34 years at Inco. I was married and raised my family in this great riding.

There is no greater privilege for me than standing in the House and defending the interests of my constituents. I humbly thank them for the confidence they have placed in me and for returning me to this great chamber with an even larger majority than in 2008.

I also want to congratulate all of my colleagues in the House for their election to this great institution.

I wish to congratulate my leader, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, for his energy, for his commitment to the people of this great country, for his unwavering belief that we can make a difference for families everywhere and for his historic success on May 2. I am honoured to sit as a member of the official opposition under his great leadership.

During this election I had the opportunity to connect with constituents from Foleyet to Onaping to Chelmsford and Azilda, to Killarney and Garden Village, and to Noëlville and Sturgeon Falls.

While these communities are distant and unique from one another, the voters of these communities share a lot of common concerns.

At doorstep after doorstep voters shared their worries over their jobs and their pensions. They spoke about the challenges of caring for their loved ones. Seniors spoke about the lack of adequate pensions and access to health care. Active and involved citizens told me they are quitting their volunteer work because they cannot afford to fill their cars with gas.

Just two days ago, splashed across the front page of *The Sudbury Star* was a report that read:

The high price of gasoline isn't just costing Sudburians at the pumps. It is hurting community service organizations that rely on volunteer drivers for vital programs to help seniors and others remain at home and out of institutions. Meals on Wheels has experienced a sharp drop in the number of volunteers delivering meals to thousands of clients in Sudbury every month since gas prices began spiking about a year ago. In some cases, particularly in outlying areas such as Rayside-Balfour, Valley East and Onaping, the shortage of volunteers is so severe, it could soon affect client service.

The reality of the north is such that people do not have access to public transport. Their cars are their lifeline to work, to their extracurricular activities and to their educational institutions.

These are some of the issues of foremost concern in northern Ontario, and these are some of the issues that are neglected in the budget.

Speaking of the budget, I want to start by noting that the government listened to New Democrats and Canadians by restoring the eco-energy home retrofit program. I stress that this program should be reinstated permanently, not just for one year.

I have met with constituents who were cut off when the government abruptly cancelled the program. These people had already signed contracts for renovating their homes, assuming they were going to receive support from the federal government. I ask the government: will these people be able to apply retroactively for this program?

I also have businesses in my riding that had to lay off employees when this program was cancelled. I was very pleased that my leader came up to Nickel Belt and held a press conference at the site of one of these businesses to bring much-needed attention to the consequences of the government's short-sighted decision to cancel this program. Let us make it permanent.

On another positive note, the budget extends the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors for an additional year. New Democrats have been calling for this measure and welcome it.

This week many of my colleagues have stood for the first time in this chamber and given their inaugural speeches on behalf of their constituents. After listening to their eloquent remarks about the short-sightedness of the budget, it is clear that whether one is from British Columbia, the Prairies, Quebec, Ontario or Atlantic Canada, the budget ignores Canadians.

The budget does almost nothing for improving access to rural health care. The loan forgiveness for doctors and nurses does not go far enough because it does not increase the actual number of doctors and nurses in the system, which is what we need.

The Budget

The budget does nothing to strengthen CPP and does nothing to provide relief for the family budget. Despite Conservative claims, we still have 300,000 more unemployed since the recession, and of the jobs that have been created, an overwhelming majority are part time.

• (1545)

The number of involuntary part-time workers in Canada is now at 500,000. How are families going to pay down their debt, save for their children's education or put away for their retirement? They can barely pay their heating bills.

With respect to employment insurance, over the next five years EI premiums will exceed benefits by \$15 billion.

During my first term as member of Parliament for Nickel Belt, my team helped over 1,400 constituents with various issues, but that figure does not include the processing of passports. Over 4,000 passports were processed with the help of my office.

Over one-quarter of the 1,400 cases had to do with EI. Workers who paid into the system were losing their benefits and could not access training. Let me remind the House that miners went through a strike almost a year long as a direct result of the government's refusal to protect the interests of workers and their communities from foreign takeovers.

I also wish to say a few words about the government's ideological move to pressure municipalities into public-private partnerships, also known as P3 projects. There are countless Canadians and international examples of failed or flawed P3 projects, yet the City of Greater Sudbury is planning a \$40 million P3 biodiesel plant with \$10 million of federal funding.

Here are just five of the failed P3 projects. There was the Hamilton Entertainment and Convention Facilities Inc. P3 project; the end result was that it was abandoned because it was inflexible and reduced access. The Hamilton-Wentworth water and wastewater treatment P3 project was abandoned in the end because of maintenance problems, legal disputes, high costs and poor risk transfer. In the case of the Royal Ottawa Hospital P3 project, the end result was that it was flawed with high costs, secrecy and bed cuts. In the case of the Timmins and District Hospital dialysis centre P3, the end result was that it failed because no bidders were interested. The end result of the Welland Community Centre P3 project was that it failed because the project was deemed not viable in the P3 format due to secrecy.

Over the course of my remarks I have offered a snapshot of the reality in the north, yet this budget offers nothing to help.

The government also could have given the north its own independent economic development agency. It could have made FedNor an independent agency.

It is no accident that my first act in Parliament was to table a bill to make FedNor a stand-alone economic agency. The minister from the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka likes to harp that making FedNor independent creates a new bureaucracy, but nothing could be further from the truth. I ask the two ministers who are now responsible, the Minister of Industry and the President of the Treasury Board, why southern Ontario can get its own independent economic develop-

ment agency, but not the north. Why is there the double standard? Is it too hard to relinquish political control?

It is clear that the negatives of this budget far outweigh the small positives. It is also clear that the government paid no attention to the 60% of Canadians who did not vote for it. If, as it claims, it is the government for all Canadians, then we should have expected the Prime Minister to back that claim with meaningful support for Canadian families in this budget. Unfortunately, he did not.

There are billions in corporate tax cuts that do not create jobs, and billions in planned service cuts. There is nothing for small businesses, nothing for improving access to rural health care, nothing for lifting seniors out of poverty and nothing for addressing the needs of Canadian families and their youth. Northern Ontario remains without its own independent economic development agency.

In summary, the concerns of my constituents remain unaddressed. I cannot support this budget. I will not support this budget.

• (1550)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise. I also would like to take a turn to thank my constituents of Scarborough—Agincourt for returning me for an eighth term.

I listened with interest to the debate. It brought me back to the debate when my colleague from, I believe, Hamilton Centre was talking about proportional representation. I am sure his colleague might want to jump in on this and let us know his views.

The figures for what happened in the last election show that nationally the Bloc had 6.5% of the vote, but in Quebec it had 23% of the vote. The Green Party had 3.91%. The Green Party, at 3.91%, has one representative, while the Bloc, at 6.5%, has four representatives. In some countries that have proportional representation, and unlike our country, which has first past the post, if the government of the day does not support the minority that a member represents or where the member is from, it takes that level of 3% or 4% and raises it to 10%.

I am speaking specifically of Turkey, where this upcoming weekend there will be an election. In order for a party to get a seat in Turkey's parliament, it must get 10% of the vote.

If that were the case and the Conservatives were all of a sudden to raise it to 10%, we would not have any representation from the Green Party and we would not have any representation from the Bloc. I wonder if this is the right move—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

The hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, I did not really hear a question in that statement. However, with regard to proportional representation, I think it would be the way to go.

The Budget

A lot of European countries have proportional representation. With proportional representation, everybody in Canada would be represented. That would make their vote count.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to you on your new job in the chair.

I also want to congratulate my colleague from Nickel Belt on his resounding victory. Like the victory of my other colleague from Sudbury, it came about because of their dedication, particularly to the steelworkers of Vale Inco, who, as we know, were on strike for a very long time. Their fight for decent-paying jobs and quality pensions has obviously paid off. I am delighted that they are back.

The member just gave an eloquent speech about what is positive in the budget. Yes, having the eco-energy home retrofit program restored is indeed a positive in this budget, and I am glad he talked about it.

However, he also focused at some length on the most vulnerable in our community. In particular, he had the chance to address the plight of seniors. All of us who were knocking on doors in this last campaign are very well aware that seniors were the innocent victims of this global economic downturn. They have worked all their lives and have played by the rules, and now everywhere they turn, with every bill they open, they are paying more and getting less.

The government missed an important opportunity in the budget to seize the moment. Instead of taking \$700 million to raise every senior out of poverty, it chose to help only half the seniors or, alternatively, to give all the seniors half of what they need to be lifted out of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, you well know that in our province some of that \$50-a-month benefit is going to be clawed back if they live in subsidized housing. Other parts of that \$50 are going to be clawed back by the provincial government.

Would the member comment and tell us whether he thinks \$50 a month is really enough for the hard-working seniors and pensioners in his community of Sudbury?

• (1555)

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. Fifty dollars a month just does not cut it. I have seniors who come to both of my offices in Nickel Belt on a regular basis who are hurting, and \$50 is not going to do it.

We have seniors who cannot afford to pay their heating anymore. They have had to block off sections of their homes so that they can heat the parts of the home they are going to be living in. We have seniors who are using the food bank.

This is not acceptable in a great country like Canada.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I want to indicate that I will be splitting my time with the new member for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon.

I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your ascension to the speakership, as well as your colleagues. I know you will serve this House very well.

I also want to thank the constituents of Edmonton—Leduc for electing me to this chamber for a fifth time.

I would like to congratulate all re-elected and newly elected MPs. It is certainly a very different chamber from what it was before the election. It shows, in fact, that elections matter, that votes matter, that voters can fundamentally alter the political reality and the leadership of political parties in this place, as they have done. It also shows that we should always treasure the form of government we have. Our form of government is obviously, as Winston Churchill said, not perfect, but we should embrace the positive aspects of our political system and the results it delivers.

I also want to acknowledge all of those who put their names forward in the last election, in my constituency and across the country, who were not successful. It takes courage, that virtue which Aristotle said was the greatest virtue, to put their name forward, knock on doors, go out there and participate in forums. I want to commend all of those people who put their names forward.

Lastly I would like to recognize all those who volunteer, those Canadians who give their time and efforts to volunteer for their candidate and party. They deserve our recognition as well.

Today we are debating the budget introduced earlier this week by the hon. Minister of Finance, which is substantially the same document that our government presented in March of this year. During the election, we explicitly promised to reintroduce this budget if re-elected, which is exactly what we have done.

What does this budget do? First of all, it continues to support job creation. We have created 540,000 jobs since July 2009, an outstanding figure when compared to other industrialized countries.

How does it do this? It provides a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring by this vital sector, something that was very strongly put forward and endorsed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

It extends the work-sharing program and the targeted initiative for older workers to help Canadians in some of the hardest hits areas stay in the workforce. This has helped companies like Argus in my constituency in the Nisku area. It had experienced a sharp downturn, but the measures I mentioned allowed it to keep employees. Because it kept these people and did not lose them and is now experiencing more growth, it can fulfill the increased orders. This was a very good program that we are continuing.

The third point I want to mention in this area is our support for the manufacturing and processing sector by extending the accelerated capital cost allowance rate for investment in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for an additional two years. This was first put forward in an industry committee report in February 2007. It was put in the budget of March 2007. It has been extended until this point and, obviously, will be extended for another two years once the budget passes. It is a credit to the committee that I had the privilege of chairing.

The Budget

Mr. Speaker, I know you spent some time on that committee. All four parties endorsed that measure, and I hope they all endorse this measure and this specific budget.

The last thing in this area is providing renewed funding of almost \$100 million over two years for research, development and demonstrations of clean energy and energy efficiency.

The second thing we do in this budget is preserve Canada's fiscal advantage. We reaffirm our plan to eliminate deficits a year earlier than previously projected without raising taxes, without cutting transfers to persons, seniors and families, and without cutting transfers to provinces for things like health care, education and social services. In fact, transfers to provinces for health care will increase by 6% per year and by 3% a year for education and social services.

This hit home very strongly during the recent election campaign. People said they wanted the government to balance the budget as quickly as possible, but they wanted to see essential programs, like health care and education, maintained going forward.

We should recognize that the deficit in 2010-11 is projected to be 25% lower than it was in the previous fiscal year and to shrink again by more than 25% in the next year. This is very good news. We are on track to meet our targets and we should continue to do so.

The third area I want to talk about is strengthening our families and communities. Obviously in this House there has been great discussion about how we help these low income seniors. We are proposing to enhance the guaranteed income supplement for low income seniors by \$300 million, providing additional yearly benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples.

The second thing is to introduce a family caregiver tax credit of up to \$2,000.

The third thing is providing nearly \$870 million over two years to address climate change and air quality, including the extension of the eco-energy retrofit program, which will help homeowners. It is a very popular program and we have proposed extending it by a year.

• (1600)

I want to talk about an area of passion for me personally, that of research and development and innovation. I had the experience, as I mentioned, of serving on the industry committee and meeting a lot of the scientists and creators across this country, who are absolutely inspiring.

This budget continues our efforts along these lines by investing in innovation and the economy of tomorrow. It provides \$80 million in new funding over three years through the industrial research assistance program. The IRAP program under the National Research Council, in my view, is one of the best government programs in targeting resources towards small- and medium-size businesses to improve their efficiency so that they can grow. One of Canada's fundamental challenges going forward is how we get those small- and medium-size businesses to grow and become larger businesses. It is exactly why we are investing in the IRAP program.

Another thing we are doing is establishing 10 new Canada excellence research chairs. I should point out that I am very proud of the university in my city of Edmonton. The University of Alberta has

already been successful at obtaining four Canada excellence research chairs. The university president had a function here in Ottawa in February, where she had all the excellence research chairs from across the country present their ideas and research. It was absolutely fascinating. Our government is obviously adding to this program in this budget, which is an excellent initiative.

We are increasing the budgets of the three federal granting councils by \$47 million annually. This was requested by the Association of Universities and Colleges and by researchers across the country, who were saying that we still needed to fund basic research and the three granting councils at an even better rate.

The next story I want to talk about is our support for students. Since 2006, we have supported students in a number of ways. We have created the Canada student grant program. It is providing up to \$250 per month of assistance to low income students and up to \$100 per month to middle income students.

We have also provided \$140 million per year to encourage more young Canadians to pursue apprenticeships, including the new apprenticeship incentive grant and apprenticeship completion grant. I do want to recognize Sam Shaw from the city of Edmonton. He was president of NAIT, which trains the highest proportion of apprentices across this country and does a fantastic job in doing so.

Where we are going from here with this plan is to talk about student loan forgiveness for doctors and nurses working in rural and remote areas. Practising family physicians will be eligible for federal student loan forgiveness of up to \$8,000 per year to a maximum of \$40,000. Nurse practitioners and nurses will be eligible for federal student loan forgiveness of up to \$4,000 per year to a maximum of \$20,000.

We are also supporting Canadian students abroad. Many student groups have approached us as members of Parliament for this. We are reducing the 13-week minimum duration requirement to 3 consecutive weeks with respect to the education and textbook tax credit. We are doubling the in-study income exemption and we are reducing the in-study interest rate for part-time Canadian student loan recipients.

I want to touch briefly on my own province of Alberta. The budget demonstrates strong federal government support for provinces like Alberta, including transfers for vital areas like health care, education and social services. In fact, we have increased transfers to the Province of Alberta since 2005 by nearly 50%, totalling nearly \$3.4 billion. This is outstanding, allowing provinces to address their health care, education and social service needs.

I ask all parliamentarians to endorse this plan. It is a prudent plan. It is a plan that has been endorsed by economic organizations the world over.

The Budget

Relatively speaking, our country has done very well. We understand that there are some challenges out there and a significant amount of risk, if we look at the tragedy that occurred in Japan, the European debt situation, and the U.S. economy and fiscal situation being weaker than expected. That is why we need a prudent plan going forward, and that is exactly what this budget is.

That is why I am asking members of Parliament to endorse this budget.

• (1605)

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first I must apologize, as I did not congratulate the hon. member in my last question. I send him my congratulations.

With that, I would like to ask the hon. member a question. First, why is he a Bruins fan? The second question relates to something that is of the utmost importance.

Truly, we have had some great discussion over the last few years on the Conservatives' idea of corporate tax giveaways. We on this side of the House see the corporate tax giveaways as not doing what we would like to see, which is addressing the needs of Canadian families and helping seniors, and addressing the needs of family doctors and bringing them to rural and northern Ontario.

Why is there such a push to go to the wall for corporate tax cuts when they are not necessarily creating the jobs we need right now to help Canadian families?

Mr. James Rajotte: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the question about the Bruins is in order, but I will start with that one.

I am in fact an Oilers fan, but when I was growing up as a young man, there was another young man from Parry Sound named Bobby Orr who inspired me to become a Bruins fan. I have to make that confession in the House of Commons.

I do want to congratulate my friend on his re-election. We work on opposite sides of the aisle, but we do work together on many issues.

In terms of corporate taxation, I encourage him to read the report by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters. The opposition often points to banks and the oil companies, but let us talk about the manufacturing sector. The Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters put out an excellent report in January of this year listing all of the benefits of reducing corporate tax rates.

The second thing I would encourage the member to do is to go to the OECD website and compare the corporate tax rates across the OECD. Compare our rates with those of Chile, South Korea, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In fact, we are very competitive if we move to a combined 25% federal-provincial corporate tax rate across this country. We would be in the middle of the OECD and that is where we want to be. We want to be competitive to continue to attract investment to create jobs in this country.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations.

I would like to address something that I know is of interest to my colleague.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are among the most significant and critical health care issues in Canada. We cannot ignore them.

Today, 500,000 Canadians suffer from some form of dementia. The impact on those who have the illness and their families is profound, as is the cost to society of \$15 billion today and \$153 billion in 30 years.

Why does the federal investment in programs, research, and income support and assistance pale in comparison to the health, economic and social impacts of this devastating disease?

• (1610)

Mr. James Rajotte: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. It was addressed by the member and me in this chamber in February when we spoke about the motion that I brought forward on Alzheimer's. She spoke for her party very well in endorsing that motion. The motion was adopted unanimously by the House of Commons.

The member is absolutely right on what the costs Alzheimer's will be for society, not only the fiscal costs but also the tremendous human costs for people who have Alzheimer's and for their families. That is exactly why I would ask her to support this budget. This budget allocates up to \$100 million to establish a Canada brain research fund to support the very best in Canadian neuroscience and accelerate discoveries to improve the health and quality of life for Canadians who suffer from brain disorders. This is in the budget.

In fact, the member should take credit for that because she endorsed that motion put forward on Alzheimer's. I encourage her to take a specific look at that and endorse this budget.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Edmonton—Leduc for the fine work he did as chair of the finance committee and the input he had into this budget.

This budget deals a lot with supporting job growth and making certain that we continue to create jobs. I wonder if the member, who spoke so eloquently, would give us an indication as to what this budget does to bring down our deficit.

I know there were some long-term goals on the deficit and coming back to budgetary balance. Could he explain to us what this good budget does in bringing us back to a balanced budget?

Mr. James Rajotte: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his re-election. I think he received 84% of the vote in this election.

An hon. member: He squeaked through.

Mr. James Rajotte: He barely squeaked through. I do not know who the other 16% are.

In terms of the deficit reduction—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

The Budget

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on being acting Chair, as well.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I wish to table a notice of a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on June 6, 2011.

I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

* * *

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the explanation by the member for Edmonton—Leduc and rundown on the election in Crowfoot. That was quite gratifying. However, I wonder if you would allow him the time to actually answer my question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): As it turns out, that is just a continuing debate issue.

We will resume debate with the member for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the budget today in this my maiden speech in the House of Commons. First, let me congratulate you on your new role in the Chair.

I thank the people of Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon for putting their trust in me to represent them in Ottawa.

On May 2, I said that I would be taking the common sense of the common people to the House of Commons and I make that commitment to them again today.

I thank all of the volunteers who worked so hard to make my election possible. Special thanks goes to my good friend and campaign manager, Matthew Barker; my official agent, Tyler Schulz; my volunteer coordinator, Joe Verhulst; my office manager, Audrey Green; my sign manager, Jeremy Giesbrecht; and the hundreds of others who took part in ensuring we elected a Conservative in Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon.

I also thank my wife, Lisa, and my son, Maclean, for their constant love and support. I would not be here without them. I also thank my sisters, their husbands and my mom and dad for supporting me in whatever path I have chosen, including this latest one.

I thank the many members who have taken the time and gone out of their way to let me know just how well loved Chuck Strahl was when he was in this place. As countless members have reminded me, I have big shoes to fill. And, since countless members have asked, the answer is yes I can sing too, although dad would claim he has a better and lower voice.

I thank the former member of Parliament, Grant McNally, who hired me as a young 20-year-old, and the current member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission who brought me aboard as his executive assistant in 2004 and gave me the opportunity to work for him and to see firsthand how the job of an MP should be done.

Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon is a beautiful big riding. It is 30,000 square kilometres in size. I dare say that it is the most impressive riding in all of Canada. I would invite my colleagues in this House and all Canadians to come and visit. I can assure people that if they do make it out to this great part of our great country, they will be back again and again.

It is an honour to address the budget today. As a Conservative, I campaigned on our low tax plan for jobs and growth and I am proud to see that we delivered on our campaign commitments. We promised additional funding for our most vulnerable seniors and we delivered. We promised tax credits for children's arts programs, for family caregivers, for volunteer firefighters and we have delivered. We promised to keep taxes low, something that no other party in this place campaigned on, and we have delivered.

I note that the official opposition and the Liberal Party, both in the campaign and here in debate, have reiterated their desire to increase taxes on job creators. However, I will tell members what a local non-profit organization in my riding had to say about that plan.

I will read a letter from the Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce into the record. It was sent to my predecessor, Chuck Strahl, on March 2, only three months ago. Just so that there is no confusion and no one can say that I have misconstrued the content, I will read it in its entirety. It reads,

“Dear Mr. Strahl:

“On behalf of the Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to you to convey the importance of protecting the prosperity of the businesses within your constituency by ensuring the government follows through on its promise to reduce business taxes.

“With government stimulus programs ending this year, the tax reductions are especially important as they will free up capital to be put to work to grow Canada's businesses and its economy. This strategy has been supported by a majority of parliamentarians in two federal budgets since its inception in 2007.

“As of Jan. 1, 2011, the federal general corporate income tax rate fell from 18 per cent to 16.5 per cent, with a further 1.5 percentage point reduction scheduled for 2012. When fully implemented, this three percentage point reduction means that in each and every year going forward, business in British Columbia will save approximately \$400 million, money that can be used by businesses across the province to invest in their operations and create jobs.

The Budget

“Today, some politicians are calling for these tax rate reductions to be reversed and for the government to direct the revenues to new spending. The Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce feels strongly this will constrain the job creation and investment in Chilliwack businesses. Our political leaders have to live up to the promises they have made. Businesses in Chilliwack and across the country have invested with the understanding that taxes would decline.

• (1615)

“A sudden change of course would constitute a broken promise to thousands of businesses and the people they employ—including members of your constituency.

“Business tax reductions are relevant to all Canadian businesses—large and small—in all regions of the country, including Chilliwack. Small business has a keen interest in this issue. Most small businesses are suppliers to bigger businesses; opportunities flow when the larger firms have the capital to buy. The alternative—rising taxes—dries up those opportunities. A vibrant large business sector leads to a strong and prosperous small business sector.

“Reducing business taxes is also an issue of vital importance to your constituents. Business taxes fall directly on families in Chilliwack-workers through lower wages, consumers in the form of higher prices for goods and services, and shareholders (including pensioners who own equity through RPPs, RRSPs and mutual funds) through lower returns.

“As my MP, I am calling on you to protect the prosperity of the businesses and families within your constituency by ensuring the government follows through on its promise to reduce business taxes. You can be sure the Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce will continue to champion for a strong economic environment that allows the businesses in our city to grow and create the jobs and opportunities that make this community a wonderful place to live and raise a family. We hope that you will actively do the same.

Sincerely,

Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce”

This letter was not written by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, although there will be benefits all across the country. It was not written by the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce, though there are specific benefits in the budget for British Columbia. It was written by the local chamber of commerce, put on its letterhead and put on its website, because it wanted everyone to know about its position on this issue. This is an organization of small- and medium-size businesses, not the big corporations that the other side likes to talk about.

Some of the most prominent members of the Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce are also prominent members of the local federal Liberal association. Even they can see the value of having tax policies that benefit our local businesses.

Over the last two years, our government has made unprecedented investments in infrastructure right across the country, and certainly in Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon.

On May 27, I was pleased to undertake my first official duty as a member of Parliament to participate in the official opening of the

new Kawkawa Lake Road Bridge in Hope, British Columbia, along with Mayor Laurie French and MLA Barry Penner, a project made possible by Canada's economic action plan.

I was pleased to see in the budget that our government is committed to working with the provinces and municipalities to deliver a long-term infrastructure program that will continue to address the needs of our communities, a move that has been applauded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. We have also doubled the gas tax rebate and made it permanent, which will give our communities the funds and the certainty they need to invest in local infrastructure priorities.

Our budget contains even more items of importance for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon: support for agriculture, support for the forest and mining industries and support for tourism. It contains new investments to support priorities in first nations education, child and family services, water and housing, first nations health, as well as aboriginal skills development and training. There are measures to encourage doctors and nurses to choose to serve rural communities like Lytton, Lillooet, Cache Creek and Ashcroft, to name just a few.

There is much more to say about the Conservatives' low tax plan for jobs and growth. However, I will conclude by saying that the budget is good news for Canada, good news for British Columbia and good news for the people of Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, and I encourage members on all sides of the House to support it.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to this position in the House.

It is a great responsibility and a great honour to be here with all of my colleagues from Quebec. I would first like to thank my constituents in Laval for the trust they placed in me in the election. I will defend their interests every day.

I would also like to highlight the work of my former member of Parliament, Nicole Demers, a wonderful person from the Bloc Québécois who worked for many years for the people of the riding of Laval.

We have different opinions, and I believe that the government's budget this year—which is essentially a cut and paste version of the last one—does not include any plans to improve front-line health care. I know something about that, because the riding of Laval has the largest number of seniors in the region.

The government must strengthen public pensions, because these individuals are very dependent on the small pensions they receive. We must compensate small businesses in the industrial sectors of Laval that need some support. We must also adopt concrete measures to reduce the tax burden on families.

The Budget

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member, a new member like myself, on his election to this place.

The Conservative government has shown its support for health care in each budget that it has introduced since taking office. There have been 6% increases in Canada health and social transfers in every budget we have introduced and there are plans in this budget to continue that going forward.

Unlike previous governments that have chosen to balance the budget on the backs of the provinces by cutting health care, we will continue to support health care by increasing the funding to the provinces in that regard.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new role. I know you will do a great job.

The new member's dad certainly held the respect of all in the House. If his career unfolds with half the success his father had, he will have a pretty good career.

He mentioned one thing in his speech about the firefighter's tax credit. I was able to work with a past colleague, Rick Casson, the former member for Lethbridge, on a couple of different initiatives, as did the member for Malpeque. Rick would take some joy in this being in the budget.

The problem is that the measure is a non-refundable credit. In some fire departments, those making under \$22,000 per year, which is not uncommon in volunteer fire departments, receive no benefits. They take the same risk and do the same job but they are not given the same respect and do not get the same benefit. Does the member see an injustice or inconsistency in that measure?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, it was great to campaign with this in our platform because every community in my riding is served by volunteer firefighters.

I know there has been broad support since we brought this measure forward. Having watched this House on CPAC on occasion when I was an observer, I know the member was part of a government that for 13 years had the opportunity to bring in the changes that he is talking about and it did not do it.

We are taking action. We are bringing in a tax credit of \$3,000 for volunteer firefighters. We think that is a great step.

[Translation]

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Random—Burin—St. George's.

I am pleased to be rising in the House today to speak to the 2011 budget, which was tabled this week. I would first like to thank the constituents in the beautiful riding of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for giving me the opportunity to represent them for the fifth time in nine years. I should add that these wins would not have been possible without the help of my family and friends. As well, I would like to congratulate all of the hon. members here in the House on their victory, especially the newly elected members, who will enjoy the experience of a lifetime.

In addition, I would like to thank all of the candidates who ran as Liberals but, unfortunately, were not elected. We appreciate their hard work, their dedication and their loyalty to the party, and we wish them better luck next time.

Some things never change, and the Conservative government's budgets are one example. They are always more of the same old, same old. There is no vision or plan for the future. My leader, the leader of the Liberal Party, hit the nail on the head yesterday when he said that the budget shows profound complacency. There is no plan for job creation, for tackling the deficit or for poverty reduction. Essentially, this budget has nothing to help ordinary Canadians who are counting on the government. Yet, the budget did not leave out the friends of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance or the Conservative Party.

• (1630)

[English]

A plan for a country such as Canada would require that the federal government put in place measures in order to encourage Canadian industries to make investments in green technologies, research, innovation, education and the corresponding infrastructures that would help with the promotion of this plan.

Money should not be spent frivolously like we have seen in the past few years, where most of the stimulus money was spent on advertising, bill boards, polling and photo ops. Essentially, these sums should be invested, not spent, in strategically vital areas that would contribute to both the long-term and the short-term vitality of the Canadian economy.

[Translation]

Canada needs an entrepreneurial vision that promotes prosperity and equal opportunity for all Canadians. Instead, the budget revealed a lack of long-term vision and failed to present any new ideas.

Even groups representing accountants said that they would like to see more general reductions rather than targeted tax breaks, which only make Canada's fiscal and economic regime more complex and inefficient. I would even go so far as to say that, if Canada wants to establish a financial framework that promotes recovery and sustainable economic growth, the Canadian tax system definitely needs to be simpler, more competitive and more efficient.

The government must develop a credible plan to promote job creation. Granting a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage the recruitment of new employees would be a good start. However, the regions and economic sectors that are still struggling need more than the \$1,000 allocated in this budget.

This budget merely serves to confirm the Conservatives' preference for an inflexible right-wing ideology over sound, evidence-based policies, a preference that is particularly visible in the government's approach to crime, justice, the environment, the economic recovery and deficit reduction.

The Budget

For example, this government wants us to believe that it is managing the public purse carefully. On the contrary, since 2006, it took the Conservative government only one year to spend the largest surplus ever accumulated in the history of Canada. It also created an enormous deficit on top of having the dubious distinction of the being the biggest spending government, year after year, in the history of Canada.

History repeats itself. Proof of this lies in the fact that the first thing the Prime Minister did as leader of a majority government was to increase the number of ministers. Let us not forget that, during his last mandate, he increased the spending budgets of ministers' offices; the Privy Council Office's budget has increased by almost \$50 million in five years; and the Prime Minister's Office's budget increased by about 22%. This government dramatically increased advertising and public opinion research spending, which does not provide any tangible benefit to the Canadian economy but, rather, serves only to help the Conservatives get re-elected.

The Conservatives would like us to believe that they will balance the budget by 2015 but, to date, this government has got all its budget forecasts wrong. In fact, last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said it is unlikely that the budget will be balanced before 2017 at the earliest.

The Conservatives should never have disbanded the expenditure review committee of cabinet established by the Liberals. However, I am very pleased to note that, from time to time, they borrow the Liberals' good ideas and have announced that the committee will be restored to deal with this issue. However, no committee can replace an action plan.

This budget proposes other ideological cuts. The government is spending less money on subsidized housing than it did before the economic action plan was implemented.

There are total cuts of \$300 million, with a 45% decrease in funding for first nations housing. This really is not very surprising given that their recent election platform relied on cuts that the Minister of Finance himself could not explain. Today we see the results.

In their budget, the Conservatives are deliberately excluding low-income Canadians from certain measures, such as the caregiver tax credit and the volunteer firefighters tax credit. They are excluded by the fact that these tax credits are non-refundable and only help Canadians who have earned enough money during the year to pay taxes. I repeat, they are minimal, non-refundable tax credits that are not even available to low-income Canadians.

• (1635)

Furthermore, Canadian taxpayers with income of \$20,000 or less, or who have a dependent—in other words, those who are most in need—are not eligible for the caregiver tax credit.

The guaranteed income supplement will be increased by approximately \$50 per month for seniors. That does not even buy one cup of coffee per day. Canada will face many challenges in coming years. Canadians deserve to know what budget cuts will be made to reduce the deficit.

One of the cuts will affect the per-vote subsidies. We should not forget that the current regulations governing funding for political parties were established in order to limit the influence of big money in politics and to create a level playing field for all parties, especially small ones. We should also not forget that the Liberals are open to reforming funding for political parties, on condition that these principles are respected. No matter what changes are made, we are certain the Liberal Party will adapt and prosper. We will propose a positive, long-term vision to Canadians and will give our supporters a reason to make donations.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his re-election to Parliament here in Ottawa.

He said that in the budget presented by the Conservative government, our seniors will get an additional \$50 or so per month. I wonder if my colleague could tell us what he believes the Conservative government could have done better to improve the lives of Canadian seniors.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, before I answer the question, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Nickel Belt on his election as well.

It is very simple: the increase is about \$50 a month. The Conservatives, who are very good when it comes to communications, are spinning this by saying that it is \$600 a year, and thus \$6,000 over 10 years or \$12,000 over 20 years. However, the increase should have been at least \$100 a month. Instead of \$300 million, they could easily invest \$600 million or \$800 million and cut Conservative spending on advertising and public opinion polls.

[English]

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate my colleague for the great work that he has done in his riding and will continue to do here in our party.

I want to ask him about the whole issue in and around seniors and the struggles that seniors have in maintaining the quality of life to which we know they aspire.

I see nothing in the budget that speaks to the issue of housing. It is an important issue in the Montreal area that the member represents. I would like to hear his comments on the issue of housing and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

• (1640)

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I too want to congratulate the member for York West.

I want to make a comment again about jurisdiction. In the Liberal Party platform in the last election we proposed putting money into social housing. It would have supplemented provincial moneys that were to be put in, but the decisions would have been made at the local level.

The Budget

Every member in the House has people in their riding who need social housing. In a riding that is well-to-do, where people live well, there are still people who are struggling and have a hard time making ends meet. What the Liberal Party had proposed was the perfect answer, or part of the solution to respond to some of the requests that were made across this country for social housing.

It is not just people in my riding or in the riding of York West who need money, but members across the way also need money in their ridings for social housing. The Liberal Party had the right answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to commend my hon. colleague from Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, who just gave an important speech on the budget. He talked about the problems experienced by some of our most vulnerable seniors concerning the guaranteed income supplement. What is really missing is another \$50—or half of the amount needed to ensure that these people are not living below the poverty line.

The member talked about certain sectors. For example, the government has tripled the amount it spends on advertising since it came to power. I could suggest a few other things to my colleague, who could explain them further, things like tax havens and the tax breaks given to oil companies. The Conservatives need to get their priorities straight.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska. I think I got the name of his riding right this time. I want to congratulate him on his re-election.

We can easily give a number of examples, which we talked about during the election campaign. They could cut the costs associated with the prisons, the fighter jets and the corporate tax cuts. That is an easy answer.

If the members opposite were willing, everyone could agree that we should be giving more money to seniors.

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to speak to the budget. First, I want to acknowledge the support of the people of Random—Burin—St. George's. I am honoured again to have the privilege to represent them. This is the second time they have elected me in this federal capacity. I represented part of the riding in the District of Grand Bank for 12 years, so this is a continuation of the opportunity again to represent those constituents.

Random—Burin—St. George's is very much a rural riding. It has 180 communities and spreads from one end of the province to the other. For anyone to have some kind of understanding and appreciation for the riding, one really has to travel there. There are eight isolated communities and people can only get to them by ferry. To campaign in the riding of Random—Burin—St. George's takes a lot of effort, especially to get to the 180 very rural communities, but it is important to do so.

It is because of my riding being so rural that I have a real appreciation for the lack of jobs in those very small communities, for any kind of measure taken that would impact on the jobs or services being supplied in rural communities, especially federal services.

People think it is very easy to cut federal services in very small towns and that there really is not a lot of flak as a result of cutting a federal service in a small town. They think that a few people cannot be too much of a concern and their protests about the closure of any kind of federal facility will not have much of an impact. That is the wrong way to approach the removal of services, particularly federal services.

When I look at what is happening in the budget with respect to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, I am really surprised. I guess “disappointed” is a better word because it clearly shows that there is no appreciation or understanding for how important the fishery is to the economy of Canada, not just to Newfoundland and Labrador, the Atlantic provinces or the Pacific coast but to the entire country. Obviously, any type of realization of income from any part of the region impacts other parts of Canada.

What is being proposed for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans over three years is more than \$80 million being cut. For me that is a serious issue and one that must be responded to, addressed, and brought to the attention of anyone who is willing to listen, especially the Conservative government.

It appears the Conservatives have no understanding or realization of how important the fishery is to the entire country, especially when we talk about fish as a product, source of food and protein. What really bothered me was some of the commentary around the reduction in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the blanket commentary when the government talks about trying to create more effective service and efficiencies in the system.

One line that really bothered me was that Conservatives are doing this to focus on the government's priorities. I have a real issue with that. If they are going to remove in excess of \$80 million from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, my first question is, what about the priorities of the fishers and the industry? Did any consultation take place?

The Conservatives are talking about doing a strategic review, yet they have identified the amount of money that has to be removed from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. If a strategic review is going to be done and the removal of that amount of money has already been identified, at some point in time it must have been decided where that money would come from, what services would be impacted, and what jobs would be lost.

Yet, we are told that the strategic review has not even taken place, but that amount of money is going to be cut from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Budget

•(1645)

That is a concern for me because it will impact on services and jobs. Cutting money from ACOA, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, is a real issue for us in Atlantic Canada. That is our economic development engine. The money that flows through ACOA from the Conservative government, or from any government for that matter, is money that is used for economic development, especially in small communities that really do not have access to government funding in terms of grants and do not have access to money from banks. These communities look to ACOA to partner with them in terms of trying to create employment and put some infrastructure in place.

Those are serious issues that are going to impact the people in Atlantic Canada. When the government is talking about removing in excess of \$31 million from ACOA, jobs are going to be impacted, people's lives are going to be impacted, and economic development is going to be impacted. Those are all serious issues.

Let us look at Marine Atlantic. Marine Atlantic services the Gulf of St. Lawrence, between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Actually the ferry lands in my riding in Port aux Basques. Looking at that, it is really an extension of the Trans-Canada Highway. That is how we view Marine Atlantic.

When I am looking at Marine Atlantic and seeing a cut of \$6.6 million over three years, clearly jobs are going to be impacted, services are going to be impacted, and yet the government does not identify what those services are going to be. What has the government done? It has created a crisis among employees who really do not know whether or not they are going to have jobs. They do not know what services are going to be impacted.

This is a serious issue for us in Newfoundland and Labrador, just as it is serious issue for the people in Nova Scotia when we consider that this is in fact an extension of our Trans-Canada Highway. Those are serious issues when that amount of money is being removed without consultation. Yet, when the government says it is going to do a strategic review, it has not consulted. How can the government just say that it is going to remove that amount of money from these particular entities? These three impact negatively on Newfoundland and Labrador.

I look at what is happening with rural post offices, another serious issue for us. Here we are looking at the hours of employees in rural post offices being cut, and yet the government says it has a moratorium on the closure of post offices in rural communities.

Well, there can be a moratorium on the closure of post offices, but in the end it will impact on the service provided if there is a reduction in the number of employees' hours. Again, what does that mean? It means that federal services are being impacted. These are serious issues.

Let us look at the marine safety sub-centre in St. John's. The government is going to move what the minister regrettably called "a call centre" to Nova Scotia. I have no problem with moving anything, but things cannot be moved without consulting, talking, and finding out if it is the right thing to do. Clearly, this is not the right thing to do.

It is a distress centre. There are 10,000 miles of coastline around Newfoundland. If we do not realize what this means in terms of moving that distress centre, the service offered through that distress centre out of Newfoundland and Labrador, then the government does not understand the importance of marine safety.

This is not about just fishers. This is about anybody who utilizes the waterways as a highway, whether it is tourists or businesses other than fishers. A lot of trade takes place. A lot of boats come into Newfoundland and Labrador. Somehow no one has taken into account the impact of going down this path on these issues.

If the government is going to look at strategic review exercises, if it is going to look at trying to find ways of saving money, for Heaven's sake it should work with those who are going to be impacted.

Because of the Conservative government, we have the largest debt in our history. We are looking at \$56 billion. If we are looking at a debt of that magnitude, then the issue for us is that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador or Atlantic Canada or Canada at large did not create that debt, so the government should not put burdens on their backs to try to solve it.

•(1650)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. member back to the House of Commons and congratulate her on her re-election.

However, I would like to correct the record on a couple of points.

Mr. Brian Storseth: Do you have enough time?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I probably do not have enough time for all, Mr. Speaker, However, the one that concerns me the most is the misrepresentation on the marine station sub-centre. I guess it is in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Search and rescue is a serious subject. I do not know if the hon. member has ever had to depend on search and rescue or ever seen search and rescue, but I have. I can tell the member that I do not care where the phone call comes from at all. I want to ensure that a boat, or a chopper or a plane can get out there. That is the whole purpose of search and rescue. It is not about who receives the call.

The search and rescue centre in Halifax handles everything from one side of Greenland down to the American line. It handles all the Gulf of St. Lawrence. How can it do that if the member's theory is correct?

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, clearly, the member opposite has no understanding of the lifestyle and the impact in terms of having access to a centre like that in Newfoundland and Labrador, with 10,000 miles of coastline and people working in that distress centre who understand what is happening on the waterways of Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, we are also talking about jobs being impacted.

If that does not mean anything to the member, it means something to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are working in that distress centre and who will no longer have employment.

The Budget

That is a serious issue in our province, as well.

If you look at what has been happening in Newfoundland and Labrador, you will see the number of federal employees dropped progressively for the last three years. This year there are over 200 federal jobs less in Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is going to create an even further decrease.

• (1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. I just another remind members to direct their comments to the Chair.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked if the sub-centre, the search and rescue centre, is in St. John's. Yes, it is in St. John's South—Mount Pearl. It is in my riding. He should know that before he stands up to ask a question.

In terms of the member for Random—Burin—St. George's, I congratulate her on her re-election to the House of Commons.

Some comments were made on the functions of the search and rescue centre. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans called it a call centre. It is far from a call centre. Not only do the search and rescue people take calls, but if they cannot raise the vessel, they also try to contact the family, the vessel owner, the whole nine yards.

I have a question for the member for Random—Burin—St. George's. What is the Liberal stand with regard to the call for an inquiry into the fall of the Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries?

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl to this House. It is good to have him here with us.

The issue for us is to ensure that the fishery survives. That is what is crucial. We have to ensure that we do everything we can to see that industry continues as a viable industry, whether that means some restructuring. However, it is important that whatever we do, we work with the province.

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville today.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about this, the most important bill Parliament passes every year.

Before going further, I would like to formally thank the people of Oakville for their confidence in electing me on May 2. Our team put together the largest percentage of the votes in Oakville since 1993, at 51.6%, which was more than all the other parties combined. I will continue to work hard in the interest of the people of Oakville in the 41st Parliament.

Outside of interest rates, which is delegated to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, the federal budget essentially creates the financial structure of our country. This budget will benefit every Canadian to one degree or another, but in particular I would like to talk about our elderly citizens and our youth.

There is no magic bullet for the economy of Canada and there is no government that can take some grand action in one year and solve

all our problems. Good budgeting requires consistency and stability over years, something this government has accomplished with great discipline and by being principle based.

Investors, entrepreneurs, employers and inventors are all risk takers. They make things happen. They create jobs. They need to know the conditions under which they risk their energies, their time, their talents and their capital will be relatively stable. What many opposition members in the House do not understand, and I do not think some have ever understood, is that if these people cannot move forward with fair taxes, reasonable rules and a reasonable level of productivity, they will take their resources and they will create jobs in another country.

Canada is currently the envy of the world for a number of reasons: the stability of our banking system; the low debt to GDP ratio; and growth in our economy, which is to a large degree due to good and consistent management of credit since 2006. Not that we were timid to act to protect our economy in the worldwide recession. That recession demanded dynamic action in the 2009 budget, encompassed in Canada's economic action plan, which the official opposition of the day supported, and the benefits have been realized over two and a half years. In fact, they are still being realized with this budget and it will ensure that the growth continues.

Mostly through 2009, over about nine months, 400,000 jobs were lost. The economic action plan has now helped bring back over 540,000 new jobs, most of them full-time, since the summer of 2009.

The vast majority of the jobs were not created inside governments. The idea of continually increasing the size of governments is not sustainable. Just ask any person who has lived through what they are experiencing in Ireland, Greece or Portugal today. Those people are suffering through what was technically bankruptcy in their nations.

The jobs were created primarily by companies, small and large, that bid on 26,000 projects across Canada and built them and also by their suppliers. Therefore, a lot of these jobs were not visible. For every hour of construction, it takes four hours of planning and engineering. Thousands of planners, engineers and surveyors were employed, plus all their support staff and people at the companies that provided their facilities such as paper, computers, software. Even local restaurants had more jobs.

The economic action plan created a chain reaction of connected and dynamic synergies of economic activity across Canada, and it worked. Since July 2009, 540,000 Canadians have been able to go home and tell their families that they have a job.

The Budget

Unlike many other countries, our success has been demonstrated in seven consecutive quarters of economic growth. Canada is on the threshold of a brilliant future if we remain consistent in maintaining the conditions for growth and are cautious with our spending. That is what this budget will accomplish as part of a consistent, principle-based, national financial plan since 2006. If we stay on track, the world will increasingly come to our door with investment and the jobs investment brings. The world needs what Canada has such as high-tech equipment, autos, energy, mineral wealth.

In the election we just won, Canadians told us they wanted stability and they wanted us to continue to strengthen our country. They do not want new taxes. They are burdened enough and this budget contains no new taxes. However, unemployment is still too high in Canada, and the worldwide economic problems are certainly not over.

● (1700)

Our American friends buy over 60% of what we produce in Canada, everything from state of the art technology, such as RIM's BlackBerry, autos, potash to paper. However, their economy is quite sluggish. For example, their real estate market is near dead and dragging them down. It is great that Americans buy Canadian products. One out of four jobs in Canada comes from trade, but we have been over-dependent on the U.S. market for decades. Our government has recognized this and the budget addresses a key problem, which is productivity.

We are also pursuing free trade with 50 other nations to expand our international customer base into the billions, including the European Union, China and India.

We are told that Canadian workers produce less than American workers. By the numbers technically that is true and has been for a long time. Why is that? We work long hours. It is because U.S. companies in the past invested in methods, machinery and technology that allowed them to produce more per worker.

Why did Canadian companies not do that? They did not have to because of the low Canadian dollar in the nineties. The government of the day was very complacent. Manufacturers simply undersold U.S. manufacturers due to the exchange rates. That competitive edge is now gone and we have to play catch up. This budget once again recognizes that by allowing businesses to purchase computers and take 100% of the cost out of their profits before paying taxes with the accelerated capital cost allowance.

The budget will also allow manufacturers to take 50% of the cost of new machinery out of potential profits on a straight line basis before paying taxes. What will that do? That will change the financial equation for hundreds of Canadian companies that will go out and buy and install state of the art machinery to become the low cost producers of the future.

The budget also keeps in place the lower corporate taxes. Every week across the U.S., Europe and the rest of the world, CEOs make decisions on where they are going to locate the next plant or facility. Along with transportation, skilled workforce and proximity to markets, tax rates are absolutely one of the key things they look at in making that decision.

Just last year the people at Tim Hortons, Canada's iconic company, decided to bring its head office back home to Oakville, Ontario from New York state because Canada's corporate taxes had gone down to 18%. However, it was not only because of that. Remember it is consistency. It is because this year the taxes will go to 16.5% and next year they will go to 15%, the lowest rate in the G8. That is just one company of hundreds more that will come back to Canada to create jobs.

Businesses live or die with long-term planning and so must government. I shudder to think what would have happened to jobs and investment in Canada if an NDP-led coalition had prevailed on May 2.

The budget preserves and builds on the conditions for a brilliant future for Canadian trade, industry, economic opportunities for my generation, but also for our youth, who deserve, in my view, unlimited opportunities in our great country.

Another issue the budget addresses because of its continuance is tax-free savings accounts.

I visited Taiwan last January. The people of Taiwan do not have employment insurance. They save 40% of everything they earn. Imagine the interest income they make on savings like that. Imagine the interest savings they have by not borrowing money to buy consumer goods like so many of us do in North America.

A key concern in Canada right now is our debt to net income ratio for the average Canadian family, which is around 1.5. It is a serious matter. While the Taiwanese save 40% of what they earn, Canadians spend, as a way of life, a lot more than they earn. We pay out a lot of money in interest.

That is why I believe in maintaining and growing tax-free savings accounts after introducing them in 2009. The long-term commitment to double the amount that Canadians over 18 years of age can save or invest within these accounts to \$10,000 is incredibly important for our country.

What could be a more powerful way to encourage people to save for their priorities than stop taxing the growth in savings they get from investing back into our economy? The budget maintains tax-free savings accounts and will lead to 2015 when we will double the amount Canadians can invest in these accounts without paying tax on the interest or growth.

The Budget

An 18 year old who is able to save \$1,000 a year in such an account and invest it and receive a 5% return would have \$61,000 at age 48. If that same 18 year old invested \$3,000 a year and received 6% growth in Canadian stocks, the individual would have a quarter of a million dollars. At age 68, he or she would have close to \$1 million.

We know tremendous wealth will be built in Canada for individuals and our country. It makes for a far more brilliant future for our youth and our seniors. Seniors suffer when they invest their money in GICs, for example, as half of which is taken up in inflation and the other half taken up in taxes. It is a benefit to both seniors and youth.

•(1705)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Oakville seems to be an expert in economics and a whiz with numbers.

How am I going to tell my mother how to manage on \$1.68 a day, when this year the cost of heating increased by 15%, the cost of basic food increased by 15% and the cost of petroleum products increased by 25%? She gets \$1.68 a day. How is she supposed to get by on \$1.68?

[*English*]

Mr. Terence Young: Mr. Speaker, it is worth examining and discussing with all seniors in Canada what has happened over the last few years.

Our government has provided over \$2.3 billion in tax relief to seniors and pensioners. As well, we took 85,000 seniors off the tax roles altogether. The member's mother obviously was not one of them. However, 85,000 seniors who were having difficulty paying federal tax no longer have to pay it.

We have introduced income splitting for pensioners so that they can lower their taxes and have more money in hand.

We have doubled the pension income credit to \$2,000 and increased the age credit amount. Once again, this would leave more money in seniors' hands.

Of course, the tax free savings account, for those who can afford it, provides an interest-free way to build savings and save for priorities.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the member, but I think the government has missed the mark in the area of small business and the way in which small business could contribute so much more if it had a government that was more proactive and sympathetic.

It seems that the government has looked at both small business and corporations. However, it has made the determination that the big corporations, through those tax breaks, is the way to go to generate additional job creation in the country.

Would the member acknowledge that small businesses across Canada have the potential to generate far more jobs than big

corporations? Why the mix-up in overall dollar value in terms of government commitment as a priority?

•(1710)

Mr. Terence Young: Mr. Speaker, this budget will benefit all businesses in Canada.

As I said earlier, we have an integrated economy. When big business suffers, they cannot buy more from their suppliers. I used restaurant, paper and computer suppliers as an example.

It is an integrated economy. When big business grows, they buy from their customers. Also, small business is grown and will continue to grow with the low-tax regime we have introduced with this government.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since this is the first opportunity I have had to stand in this Parliament I would like to thank my constituents of Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale for trusting me once more and allowing me to serve here for them.

My colleague from Oakville mentioned Tim Hortons coming back. The Ancaster business park is also blessed with Tim Hortons investing in a coffee grinding plant with high quality manufacturing jobs. In fact, in my colleague's riding in downtown Hamilton, Max Aicher, an international company, invested in the old rod plant of Stelco. They have a highly integrated product and have created over 100 jobs.

Since we live in a modern 21st century world where the Internet and mass travel is inexpensive, when a business starts up they compete globally. That means they have an opportunity to locate wherever they want globally.

What would happen to the jobs that have been created by these companies that were attracted here by a low tax regime if we did not have that tax regime? Where would those jobs go?

Mr. Terence Young: Mr. Speaker, I have talked to a lot of business owners. I also talked to a lot of business owners in the early 1990s when we had an NDP government in Ontario and businesses fled the jurisdiction.

Businesses could go to South Carolina, Kentucky, or anywhere in the U.S. where there is a more favourable tax plan. They could go further afield. Sometimes they just stay within one province in Canada.

My biggest fear, as it was in the early 1990s, the jobs would go primarily to the United States.

The Budget

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate you on your re-election and of course your re-appointment to the chair. I would like to congratulate all members on their election to the House. Before I start, I would also like to thank the constituents of my riding, the great riding of Leeds—Grenville, who once again, for the fourth time, placed their trust in me to represent them in the House of Commons. I really am humbled by their support and I have committed to do my very best to make sure that they are well represented here and in all the work that I undertake on their behalf.

It seems like a long time ago, because we have now had two budget presentations and an election in between, but back in January I travelled throughout my riding, meeting with constituents and discussing with them what they wanted to see in this year's federal budget. I was told in January to keep working on the economy, wind down the stimulus program, keep working on job creation and eliminate the deficit and the gun registry.

I was also told that the eastern Ontario development program needed renewed funding. Homeowners required help to retrofit their homes to help reduce their energy bills, and our most vulnerable seniors required assistance. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for listening to the constituents of Leeds—Grenville when he developed the budget first on March 22 and of course his budget that was delivered just the other day.

The residents of my historic riding are like most other Canadians. They are hard-working, they pay their taxes, they enjoy their families, their homes and their freedom and they are concerned about the economy. They play by the rules and they expect others to do the same. Our election platform, which was based on our March budget, reflected their thoughts.

There are many items in the budget that are not only welcomed by Leeds—Grenville, but they are crucial for its continued recovery. I could stand here all day and go through the budget, item by item, and explain, but my time is limited. I want to talk a little bit about a few measures in the budget that are especially crucial for the residents of Leeds—Grenville.

Even before the economic downturn, my riding was suffering from a loss of manufacturing jobs. These were jobs that had been around for generations, and families in my riding had grown up knowing that those jobs were available. At the same time the Community Futures Development Corporation was established in three locations serving my riding. The Brockville area is served mostly by the Thousand Islands Community Futures Development Corporation. In Grenville county it was served by the Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation and the other part of my riding was served by the Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation. These are the folks who deliver federal economic development funds at the community level. I have to say that this is a model of federal investment that works extremely well.

The CFDCs are operated by local people and governed by a local board of directors. They know what works in the area. They know what is needed in their communities and they have the business expertise to assist entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses. Their success stories are many.

In this year's budget there is a notation that the eastern Ontario development program will be continued with a commitment of \$20 million over the next two years. This program, administered by the CFDCs, not only in my riding, but in all of eastern Ontario, has been a huge success. Tom Russell is the executive director of the program at the Thousand Island CFDC in Brockville, Heather Lawless performs the same function at the Grenville CFDC, and John Doherty at the Valley Heartland CFDC, and they have provided this brief overview.

Since its inception in 2004, the Thousand Islands CDC and the Grenville CFDC have invested almost \$8 million in over 700 clients. The program provides increased access to capital for rehabilitation of vacant or underutilized commercial spaces, skills development subsidies, subsidization of expert customized business, export or marketing plans, community capacity building initiatives and incentives to attract and retain youth.

As a specific example, the EODP has played a pivotal role in developing and supporting new programs at St. Lawrence College Brockville Campus, a campus which had experienced a decline in enrolment and programming, received funding to develop and staff an art gallery which subsequently led to the creation of a performing arts program, followed by a music theatre program. These programs are now the St. Lawrence College's cornerstone, each receiving critical acclaim and each a driver in securing the future of the campus.

● (1715)

The college also recently received EODP support for the Centre for Training and Development. The centre identified a looming shortage of power engineers and EODP funding was provided to develop a power engineering program to address the shortage and further strengthen St. Lawrence College's efforts to be a leading training facility. Dozens of graduates already have meaningful employment that would previously have been unavailable to them.

Applications for funding for this renewed program have been lying in wait in the various CFDC offices serving my riding. With this budget we would be pleased to see it move forward.

I would also like to talk about another budget element that has been critical to job retention in Leeds—Grenville. That is the work sharing program. The work sharing program helps employers maintain jobs by offering employment insurance benefits to workers who are willing to work a reduced work week while their company recovers. In my hometown of Gananoque, there was a company that took advantage of this program and people remained on the job during the economic downturn.

Many thousands of workers across Canada were able to keep their jobs during the recession because of this program, throughout my riding of Leeds—Grenville and there were some right in my own hometown. I know the workers were thankful. I have heard it from them individually. In many cases these are small family-owned companies that have benefited from this program and I know they were thankful as well.

The Budget

This year's budget will extend existing or terminated work sharing agreements by up to 16 weeks while the economy continues to recover and I know there are owners of manufacturing plants in my area who will be pleased to hear about this measure.

In Leeds—Grenville, as in other parts of the country, we have witnessed rapidly rising energy costs which have led to cost increases for other basic items. Especially in the winter heating season, I received letters this past year in my office from vulnerable seniors who were concerned about their cost of living. It was especially critical this past winter, which of course was long and cold. This measure was met with a great deal of support in this budget, as we promised to increase the guaranteed income supplement for these, our most vulnerable seniors.

Over the last few years, I have had many representations from local volunteer firefighters wishing to see a \$3,000 tax credit as a reward for their commitment. In my riding, similar to many other rural ridings, most of the firefighters are volunteers.

I want to read a quote from a local fire chief who reacted to the announcement of this credit. The quote is lengthy, but I will cover what needs to be said. This is from the Augusta Township fire chief, Rob Bowman, who is himself a volunteer firefighter. There are 40 volunteer firefighters in this township.

He said: "It's very important for volunteer firefighters. These guys and gals do a lot of work for very little money. They risk their lives. It's hard for us to recruit firefighters and keep them because of the time commitment. Volunteer firefighters must leave work at a moment's notice to respond to fires and accidents. They are also held to the same standards as professional firefighters, meaning they must spend the time training. We have to meet the same legislation, but do it after work and on weekends".

Mr. Bowman believes "the tax credit will provide an incentive to counterbalance these drawbacks to becoming a volunteer firefighter. The credit will help offset other costs firefighters incur, such as gas in their vehicles to get to the scene of the fire or to the fire hall, and the ruined clothes they often discover after getting out of their bunker gear when their job is done".

I think it is clear that this tax credit will be well received.

Another tax credit that is being well received is the children's arts tax credit. When our government introduced the children's fitness tax credit back in 2006, it was seen as a positive step in all of the communities in my riding. However, there are questions about arts and cultural learning experiences and why they were not recognized.

Participation in arts, cultural, recreational and developmental activities also contribute to a child's development in a positive fashion and many such programs exist in my riding. The tax credit will be provided on up to \$500 of eligible fees per child under the age of 16 or age 18 if the child also qualifies for the disability tax credit. This is a positive and welcome step in my riding.

The final point I would like to raise is the firearms licence-fee waiver. Hunting is a traditional pastime in my riding. Everyone in the riding knows not to schedule a special event during the opening week of duck hunting or deer hunting. As well, farmers maintain firearms as part of their operations.

This new budget commits \$20.9 million to waive firearms licence renewal fees for all classes of firearms. From May 2011 to May 2012, no firearms owner will have to pay to renew a licence. Leeds—Grenville not only welcomes this, but the residents look forward to hearing more news on the firearms registry, hopefully this fall.

As I mentioned at the outset, I could go item by item about this budget until we could explain why it is so popular in Leeds—Grenville and I am pleased to have this opportunity to highlight just some of the important measures that have been taken in this budget.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éleine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as this is almost the first time I have spoken in the House, I want to take this opportunity to quickly thank the voters, the people of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, very much for the trust they have placed in me. They voted for the NDP in order to have change and a presence in the House and in the riding. That is what I plan to provide. I will work as hard as I can to represent their interests.

In the Conservative budget before us, there are many measures, including tax credits, that are supposed to improve the lives of Canadian families. However, I think the budget falls quite short and the government is failing to achieve the goal of tangibly improving life for families. I am thinking about family caregivers. A non-refundable tax credit is being offered for family caregivers, but they need immediate and concrete help. In my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier we have the Portneuf Association des proches aidants. Along with other family caregiver associations in the area, it is calling for concrete and immediate measures.

Can someone explain to me how this non-refundable tax credit is really going to give these families the means to improve their lives and how this will really provide support to family members?

[*English*]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on her election and welcome her to the House of Commons. I think she has asked an excellent question.

The Budget

We have recognized in this budget the importance of caregivers and there have been many measures taken. We can never do enough to help caregivers. I know of people in my riding who have had to care for sick children. We are taking measures in this budget that I know will be well-received. There is always opportunity to do more, but I think what this government has done in recognizing this in the budget is something that will be well-received. I know that it will be well-received by the constituents in Leeds—Grenville.

• (1725)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Congratulations, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleague across the way.

I know of the member's interest with multiple sclerosis, which affects 55,000 to 75,000 Canadians. I know he is aware of new research that shows that the prevalence of chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency in MS is about 90%, that there have been over 12,500 procedures performed worldwide now in 50 countries, and that they are showing an improvement in the quality of life for MS patients.

We absolutely need evidence-based medicine in Canada. That means we must collect the evidence.

I would ask him, why the refusal to undertake a nationally-funded, multi-centred clinical trial to determine if treating CCSVI will improve the quality of life for MS patients?

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I would like to, first, congratulate the member on her re-election and also thank her for all her efforts on behalf of those who suffer across Canada from MS.

As the hon. member noted, I have become very familiar with the CCSVI procedure, which I see does help mitigate some of the symptoms that those who are suffering from MS have to deal with.

As the hon. member knows, we did make an announcement not that long ago of about \$100 million for brain disease research. In terms of MS, we are creating a monitoring system that will also include monitoring of those who have undertaken the CCSVI procedure out of Canada. I think this is something that many members are concerned about. I know that the government is concerned about it.

However, it is not something to be just dealt with here in the federal Parliament. It is something that the provinces are also involved with. I know that some provinces are now working on clinical trials. I know others, and myself, are continuing to encourage this across Canada because there are so many people suffering from MS. There are some in my riding and I know that the hon. member has been in contact with some of the people as well. I will continue to work hard on this issue and I thank the member for her interest in this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

[*English*]

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-appointment to the Chair. The robes look good on you. It is a good

fit. The tailors in the House are obviously quite skilled and congratulations on the good job you have done from the Chair.

As it is my first time rising in the House, I wish to thank the good people of Skeena—Bulkley Valley in the northwest of British Columbia, an area a little larger than the country of Poland and stunning in its beauty and diversity. I am speaking not just about the natural environment, which is most impressive for any who have been to British Columbia, and people are most welcome at any time to the northwestern part of B.C. where residents know how to lay out a good table and roll out the invitation mat to all, but it is also a place diverse in its views, a place that has relied on the natural resources and wealth of our country to create economies generation after generation.

About 35% of my riding consists of first nations, representing some of the strongest and longest historical occupation of North America, more than 15,000 years, and since time immemorial for some, the Haida, the Haisla, the Tlingit, the Taku River, the Tlingit, the Tsimshian, proud nations that have learned over multiple generations to work in harmony with the environment, to produce an economy that sustains them, and in fact restores and replenishes that environment which we rely upon.

That is one of the things that comes first to attention and notice when looking through this budget. This is obviously one of the largest opportunities the federal government has to affect the lives of Canadians. It is one of the largest expenditures by any source, if not the largest in the country. Every year some \$280-odd billion goes out the door. The lack of accountability of the government in taking care of some of the most fundamental concerns of Canadians is somewhat breathtaking.

Having so recently gone through an election and having met with constituents from across the country who presented concerns to members on the economy, the environment, pensions, and the public safety net that has been so eroded over the years, it is surprising to me what a missed opportunity this budget now represents to Canadians and to the government. One would have thought that rather than rehash the document from 60 days ago, the government would have reflected on what it heard from Canadians, if it was listening at all.

That brings to mind that the Prime Minister never actually took any real questions from real Canadians during the election, that the entire scripted process led to some sort of preordained public event that was meant to look like a campaign but was in fact nothing more than a public relations exercise. The failed opportunity in that was that Canadians were trying to express something to the Prime Minister and his party, suggesting that there is a need to balance the views they hold, that no one party or ideology in this place has all the answers available to us, and that we have to take from different pieces.

The Budget

The helmets to hardhats is a good example of a program that was initiated by all parties, seeking a way for our veterans land in good, sustainable jobs, but it is a small piece and there are many more pieces available that we could have grasped on to. There has been much mention within the ranks of the 103 New Democrats sitting as the official opposition that four and a half million Canadians responded to the message we offered them, saying we wanted a government that was a little more caring and balanced, and that looked at the books of our economy.

The government is running two deficits now. It is not just running the fiscal deficit, it is running a social deficit as well. These programs are very quick and easy to tear down. The finance minister has contemplated a staff reduction in the federal government by as much as 30%. Cutting and slashing is easy to do. It is much more difficult to build efficiency and proper services to Canadians who are in fact paying for them.

When we look at the other side of the ledger, we see the government willy-nilly cutting the corporate tax rate another couple of points and saying this will obviously bring jobs to the economy when we compare it to the U.S., as one of my colleagues did. We are sitting below half of the corporate tax rate that the Americans are enjoying right now. There is such a thing as a law of diminishing returns. If the tax rate were 50% and we lowered it to 40%, we would see some results. If we were to lower it to 30%, we would see a few more but less. If we were to lower it to 20%, 15% or 14%, we would see less and less, to the point where we would see nothing at all.

The leader of the official opposition today, the member for Toronto—Danforth, asked a direct question of the Prime Minister about \$100 million to one oil company alone in the last budget. That is a lot of money. He asked the Prime Minister a simple question: Has the finance department done any assessment at all as to what kind of return we got back for \$100 million?

I know what kind of return we could get back for \$100 million to help seniors get out of poverty. I know what kind of return we could get back to help Canadians create the green economy that they have been so desperately looking for. We in the NDP know those facts and figures because we have done the research. If the government were to do nothing else, it should build its policies based on actual evidence as opposed to mere rhetoric.

• (1730)

We asked the government to assess the cost of its crime agenda, a very simple question. In fact, it is the same question the government put to us when we pushed for climate change legislation. It asked, “What’s the program cost? Can you give us the dollar figures?”

We proposed a bill that said that the Government of Canada, every five years, should declare its intention on climate change initiatives, what it planned to do, and every five years should report back on the successes and failures of the previous five years. That is what we asked for.

The government went ballistic saying that the costs would be insane to have such an open and transparent government, as if somehow there would be a cost for being honest with the Canadian people.

Now let us reverse the tables for a moment and talk about crime. It says it is going to increase the prison population by this much. The Parliamentary Budget Officer and others have come forward to say this. We can do the math, but when we ask the government to actually put some figures forward, as to the efficacy of its crime agenda, as to the actual costs, it says that if one victim is saved then the cost is worth it. What simple-minded rhetoric.

We can do better in this place. We can bring forward evidence when making policies. When we look to this budget and ask the government to justify a further two point reduction in the corporate tax rate, it should justify it and show us the evidence or some research. There are all these folks working around the Hill and all over Parliament who are very bright. There are some folks in the finance department who are extremely accomplished. I am sure they could punch a few numbers into a calculator and then tell us what two points more gets us in terms of job creation in this country.

We can do the math quickly because in the law of diminishing returns it gets us nothing. We do not get any more if we are half of what our closest competitor is charging for business and corporate taxes. It does not pay off. For American companies working in Canada, they have to declare their profits in the United States anyway. We know this. We have been through this. We have seen governments around the world try the same mantra, replacing good politics with rhetoric.

The results are that the public sector will be starved to the point where people will seek it through the private sector. It is privatization through starvation. If the government runs down the public sector enough, when Canadians still need the services, roads, hospitals and schools, they will start to seek the private solution more and more. They are being handed this carrot that it will be better in this Shangri-La private world, that the public sector cannot deliver these things.

The whole fundamental and basic concept of governance is to come together collectively to do what we cannot do individually. I cannot pave the road in front of my house, nor can my neighbours slap the money together to do it. We do it collectively and we see priorities from one to the other.

My kids are not in school yet, but I fund the local school in my region because I understand the value that education is expensive, but ignorance is much more expensive.

There is a fundamental concern I have when the budget is presented like this. We have a crisis in the northwest with the fishing sector. We are going to go into one of the worst fishing seasons on record. There is nothing with regard to employment insurance, which I know my friend from Acadie—Bathurst will talk about.

Instead, the Conservatives are going to cut \$57 million out of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, rather than monitoring or assisting the fishermen who are going to go broke this summer. The solution from the Conservatives is to cut another \$57 million out of a department that is already starved.

The Budget

This is not a solution. This is not a practical result. We in the official opposition seek not just to oppose but to propose, to make suggestions that there are such things as investments in the public sector, that government can do things well, that government must in fact do things well and exceedingly do things better. That is the expectation from the people who put us here.

The people in the northwest have been going through a recession that many who sit in their seats would loathe to experience. I have communities that have upward of 80% unemployment. That is structural unemployment. It gets to a level where the need for assistance, the collective operation of government, is required.

We have a government that is starting to believe its own spin. It says the recession must be over, so it must be over. So it makes a budget that does not have a recession in mind.

I have news for the government. The recession is still going on in too many parts of our country. This was not a time to pull back. This was not a time to play politics with our economy. This was a time to give serious and honest consideration to the needs of people, not cutting western diversification as the minister is now going to oversee, but helping, putting it back into those places that we know create jobs, helping the small business community, and ending the handouts and freebies to the government buddies in the oil and banking sectors.

● (1735)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure in my youth to plant trees in the member's riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, so I am familiar with the economy of the region.

I would like to ask the hon. member the following question. How many jobs and how many communities would stand to benefit from the free trade agenda proposed by the government and new trade liberalization measures with the Americas, Asia and other parts of the world? That is the only way to generate new jobs and new employment across this country, including in his riding.

Has the member done the math? Has he done the calculations? After having done them, will he not consider supporting this budget and its ambitious trade liberalization regime for those reasons?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Yes, we absolutely have done the math in my part of the world, Mr. Speaker.

I welcome my colleague to come see the devastation that has resulted from free trade and the softwood lumber agreement. It is a loss. We have done the math. The math is that 250,000 jobs have been lost in the forestry sector and mills have closed throughout British Columbia and Alberta. We have seen those mills reopen south of the border using tax havens that were allowed for in previous Conservative budgets. The softwood lumber agreement helped fund the people who were suing us in Washington. Of the \$4.5 billion that was collected, \$3.5 billion stayed in the United States and helped fund the lawyers who are now suing us again.

We in the New Democrats are for trade. We are for fair trade. We are for trade agreements that are worked out with principles of fairness, of the environment, of the society and of the economy. However, to simply put forward free trade, as my hon. colleague

said, as the only way to create jobs is a blindness of ideology that forbids the idea that evidence can be brought forward.

Exporting the raw logs of the trees that my hon. colleague planted is not good for the economy. Exporting raw bitumen out of the oil sands is a loss of 15,000 jobs for every 400,000 barrels exported. If that is the member's idea of a good economy for the future, I loath to think what else he would do to the manufacturing sector, the auto sector and the aerospace sector, sectors that we built up with good government policy, not with this mantra of free trade for all and everyone will have a chicken in their pot. It is much more complicated and better than that.

● (1740)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, welcome the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley back to the House and congratulate him on his re-election to the House.

Liberal members have been committed to corporate tax fairness for a great number of years. We proceeded with corporate tax cuts through years when the books were balanced and years when there were surplus budgets. However, now that we are in the midst of a deficit, I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague that this is not the time to cut corporate taxes.

My colleague brought forward a point in his speech on the issue of the law of diminishing return. If we had no corporate taxes that would be fabulous and there would be jobs all over the place. However, let us look at Ireland. I know my colleague is a well-read man. Ireland brought its corporate tax rate down to 13%. How is that working out for Ireland?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, as an Irish descendant, it pains me to say that the Celtic Tiger did not work out so well. It was the law of diminishing returns on steroids. Ireland kept dropping the rate and that was celebrated as the solution by many of the more Conservative economists and by members who are sitting on the front bench of the government today. The solution is not working out so well. It creates a false economy. It creates bubbles. It creates things that cannot be sustained and then things like the public service gets absolutely annihilated because the revenue is not coming in.

I would like the member to know this. When the government cuts taxes while running a deficit, it is borrowing money for corporate tax cuts. That is what the government is doing. It is not \$1 billion off the corporate ledger. It is \$1 billion plus all of the interest payments that need to be made on that borrowed money. Canadians get the math. If people re-mortgage their house to go to Disney World, it is not \$2,000 for the trip. It is \$2,000 plus all of the interest payments.

The Budget

These tax cuts cannot pay for themselves. The math will not work out because the law of returns is well since passed. We are diminishing. My fear is that in place of this argument around helping the economy, it is more of an ideology that simply says that those guys simply do not like the idea of government very much. They love the private sector in all cases. The private sector does wonderful things. However, the public sector is where we go to get our health care. It should not matter what is in a parent's wallet when they show up with a sick kid. If the government opposes it, we will stand in its way every day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate you on having been elected as Speaker of the House of Commons. We are very proud of how you direct the House of Commons. I wish you luck.

I would like to sincerely thank the people of Acadie—Bathurst, who have put their trust in me for the sixth time. I will try to live up to their expectations. I would also like to thank the people of Quebec who brought our NDP cousins into the family fold. Welcome.

As a francophone member, I am very pleased to be part of a francophone caucus like the one we have, and I am pleased that we can work together.

And now the fun begins with the Conservative budget. Today I listened to the Prime Minister say that Canadians placed their trust in the Conservatives by giving them a large majority and the mandate to form the Government of Canada. He forgot to say that only 61% of Canadians voted. And only 41% of that 61% voted for the Conservatives, which is not that many people. Another 60% of those who voted did not put their trust in them.

The budget they tabled is cut and paste, to use tech talk. That is exactly what we got, with the exception of the \$2.1 billion promised to Quebec if there is a tax harmonization agreement.

Let us talk about job creation. How can the Conservatives proudly claim that jobs are being created in our country when we look at what is going on in the Atlantic region today? What kind of job creation are they talking about when we see that Smurfit-Stone has shut down in Bathurst and that UPM has shut down in Miramichi? In the forestry industry, AbitibiBowater has also closed down in Dalhousie and Smurfit-Stone has shut down in New Richmond. In this little corner of our country, there are all these closures, and the Conservatives are bragging that jobs are being created. The jobs created by the Conservative government are part-time jobs at minimum wage. The government should focus on creating real jobs. What is even more insulting is that it is cutting \$15 million from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, or ACOA, whose mission is to promote economic development.

Let us talk about job creation. In 2010, the Conservative government reduced the crab quotas in our region, in the Atlantic and in Quebec. The quotas went from 20,000 metric tonnes to 7,500 metric tonnes. This year, they were increased to 8,700 metric tonnes. Just two years ago, people working in the crab industry worked for at least eight weeks. That was not a lot, but now they do not work more than three or four weeks.

What did the Minister of Natural Resources have to say when I ask her about this? She said that it was New Brunswick's problem, that the government gave money to New Brunswick, and that it was up to the province to sort out its problems. That is what the Conservative government said in the House yesterday: that New Brunswick should take care of its own problems.

My office receives calls from women and men, women who have children, single mothers, who are told that if they want to work in Shippagan, they are going to have to make the short drive to Cap-Pelé, two hours away. They just have to stay there for one, two, three or four weeks and be separated from their children. That is what the Conservative government—both provincial and federal—told us. That is shameful and unacceptable.

There is nothing in this budget for employment insurance. At one time, people applying for employment insurance for the first time had to have 910 hours of work in order to qualify. The government reduced that number to 840 hours and then turned around and increased it again to 910 hours. Why? Because it had to do with workers. The government has no respect for workers. Then again, it has no problem granting large corporations tax breaks worth \$15 billion. Banks made \$20 billion in profits and paid out \$11 billion in bonuses, yet the Conservatives are giving them taxpayers' money.

● (1745)

This is completely shameful and unacceptable. It is a slap in the face. Giving tax cuts to large corporations is nothing to brag about. Even the Obama administration has said that now is not the time to give any tax cuts to large corporations that are making money.

I am sure that our constituents know that oil companies have no problem raising the price of gas to \$1.34 a litre. They want to make money and they do make money. They make billions of dollars. And these are the people getting tax breaks? This is going to create a debt that will eventually have to be paid by the government and by taxpayers. On top of that, the government is going to reduce services. When we talk to our constituents about taxes, they understand that when taxes are lowered, services have to suffer.

In hospitals right now, people are lying in the hallways, waiting for a bed. Our constituents want services. People are applying for employment insurance and there is no one left to even answer the telephone because of federal government cutbacks. And there will be even more cutbacks. We have not seen the worst of it.

Billions of dollars have been cut and will continue to be cut on the backs of the people in order to serve the people on Bank Street in Toronto. They are the ones who will get this money. It is totally unacceptable.

The Budget

Let us talk about job creation. There are jobs out west and people back home are moving west. They tell me that immigrants are being sent to work out west, in Fort McMurray, and that people from back home are being laid off and told that there is no work. However, the immigrants get to stay there. I thought an agreement had been reached whereby immigrants are hired and kept on only if there is a labour shortage. People from back home are calling me to say they would like to work out west, but they cannot because the positions have been filled by immigrants. It should not be like that. When we need immigrants during a labour shortage, then we can bring them over. However, there is currently no labour shortage, since the unemployment rate back home is 16%. People are prepared to go out west to work. Where is the program to help those people? The government could help those people.

On top of all that, the government is boasting that our seniors will receive an additional \$50 a month in the guaranteed income supplement. When you are not getting much to begin with, \$50 is not very a lot. Seniors are calling me to say that they are unable to pay their rent or electricity bills. These people are in need. Rather than giving billions of dollars to big corporations, we should be taking that money and giving it to the community, to people who have worked hard their entire lives.

As I said before, I am receiving calls. Does the government really want to promote this? To show just how anti-worker the government is, Canada Post, a crown corporation owned by the government, has just announced that in the coming weeks, it will be cutting off benefits for people who are sick and who have been granted sick leave. This means that people will not receive their medication. Why are they being punished?

The member opposite is indicating that such is not the case, but they are going to cut these benefits; they have already sent a memo about it to all employees. Canada Post has currently reduced its services to Canadians to two days a week to increase pressure to accept the collective agreement. The benefits of workers will be cut and the government is going to line the pockets of big corporations by giving them piles of money because big corporations are friends of the federal government and the Conservatives. I do not think this is right.

That is why we will not vote in favour of the government's budget. It is not a good budget. I want to remind the House that the Conservatives received only 40% of the votes of the 61% of Canadians who went to the polls.

• (1750)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would look more for clarification. In his comments, the member made reference to the fact there are many jobs in western Canada and many people living in Atlantic Canada who are looking for jobs. However, he seemed to be of the opinion that immigrants were filling those jobs in western Canada and thereby not allowing individuals from Atlantic Canada to fill those jobs.

Perhaps he could provide a bit more on that particular comment. Does he have some statistics that could clearly demonstrate that?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I get the statistics every time I take a plane. Some guy from down home will tell me that he cannot go back because has been laid off.

I did not take figures and use scientific statistics, but I will tell you about the calls that I get from people saying that they would like to get a job and work in their own country of Canada but that they have to go home because someone has come from another country and gets the job and now they have to go home without a job. I am getting lots of these kinds of calls in my office about people not returning, which I feel is not right. It is not the right thing to do. We should serve our people first and if we have openings for other people, we can allow that.

We brought that issue to the minister many times. We have told the minister that it is not right, but the government is not looking into it. I think it should be looking into it to ensure that Canadians work first and then after that, if we need immigrants to do work here, there will be a place for them and they will be welcomed to our country.

• (1755)

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first off, I would like to welcome you to the Chair. It is great to see you back up there where you belong.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. He continues to refer to 61% of the people in this country not voting for the Conservative government. However, our system is a democratic system and we are the government. We form a majority of the seats in this House. We have a strong, stable majority Conservative government. I would also like to remind the member that a full 70% of the people in this country also did not vote for the New Democratic Party of Canada.

There are many members of my constituency who have actually gone out west to work. They are finding gainful employment in the oil sands. Over 500,000 Canadians currently find their employment in the oil sands, many from my own riding. The New Democratic Party has said that it wants to shut down the oil sands.

I wonder if he could make a comment to the people from his riding who actually find employment in the oil sands. What does he say to them?

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would say to them that they are welcome to go to work in the tar sands and that they have their jobs. What I would say, though, is that it has to be an environmentally friendly place to work.

The way the oil sands are being exploited makes no sense. There could be a better way. Personally, when I went down there, I saw piles of uncovered sulphur with particles flying in the wind. This is not right. I saw the pond located just beside the river. The companies are saying it is okay, yet it breaks down and contaminates the river. We could do things differently.

When I met with people at the University of Edmonton, they said they had some solutions, which they had told the company and the government, but were told in turn that it would cost too much and that it could not be done.

The Budget

The environment is too important. The earth does not belong to us, as we are just here in passing. It belongs to the next generation and the one after that, our children. We have a responsibility to look after our children and to provide them with a healthy place to live.

That is what I tell people back home and they believe what I say because it is the right thing to say.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for my hon. colleague from Acadie—Bathurst.

I listened to his passionate words and great concern about the high levels of unemployment in his riding. I am aware that some of the companies in the oil sands areas are using temporary workers under the temporary workers program, which does not allow temporary workers to accumulate any rights in Canada. For instance, the Canadian Natural Resources Horizon mine, I believe, has had up to 400 workers from China at a time.

The hon. member has raised an interesting issue here today. I am wondering how he would suggest we ensure, or should we ensure, Canadians jobs first in such Canadian projects.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, one thing I believe is that companies use immigrants as cheap labour. They do not give them the benefits they should get. That is one of the reasons they want to have 400 workers from China. Then they say to Canadians, those who are unionized with good benefits, to go home because the company does not need them.

What the government has to do is to take leadership in this area to ensure that does not happen and to serve Canadians first, instead of just using people from other countries and taking away the benefits that a human being should get and treating workers in this country the way should be, with respect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before resuming debate, I would like to remind all hon. members to direct their questions and comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time today with my colleague, my good friend from Newmarket—Aurora.

I want to thank the people of Wellington—Halton Hills for re-electing me as their representative in Ottawa. I am humbled by their support and I pledge to them to work my hardest to uphold the trust they have placed in me to represent them in this House, the people's House.

In the weeks up to the election on May 2, I spoke to thousands of people throughout my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills, on doorsteps and porches and over the phone. I heard consistently from these Canadians they were concerned about their jobs and economic growth. They were concerned about food and fuel prices and about a number of other economic issues.

We have heard those concerns and this Monday past, my colleague, the Minister of Finance, the member for Whitby—Oshawa, introduced budget 2011 in this House, a budget that addresses the concerns I heard during the election campaign and throughout this year from the Canadians I represent. On May 2, Canadians gave us a very strong mandate to continue with our

economic action plan. Through their democratic votes on May 2, they decided to re-elect our government because they had confidence in the first phase of our economic action plan and wanted to see a continuation of that plan in the next phase introduced in this budget of 2011.

Today I rise in this House to support the motion by the Minister of Finance that this House does approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Budget 2011 is a plan for jobs and economic growth. It is a plan ensuring that Canadians can continue to meet the challenges we face in this ever-changing global economy. This budget responds to the concerns that I and many of my colleagues heard at the doorstep and on the front porch in the recent election. It introduces the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, building on the successes of the first phase that we introduced in January 2009.

I want to take members of this House back to give them a bit of an overview, from my perspective, of what has happened in the last three years. Just over two and a half years ago, one of the worst global recessions to hit our shores arrived in September 2008. Our government reacted swiftly to what was an unprecedented global slowdown by introducing Canada's economic action plan in its budget of January 2009. Our government's swift actions ensured that Canada's economy not only weathered the storm better than any other major developed economy in the world but also has actually emerged from this recession stronger and better positioned than any other major economy.

The facts speak for themselves. We are on the right track. Over 540,000 new jobs have been created since the recession ended in July 2009, and we have had seven quarters of positive economic growth. Our job-creation machine has been the envy of other major industrialized nations. Our job growth has not been concentrated in low-wage-paying sectors but in full-time positions in relatively high-wage industries.

While this is positive news, it is also true that many Canadians are still looking for work and the global economy remains fragile. It remains fragile because we face three major external risks as an economy. We are facing continuing turmoil in the energy markets as a result of the unrest in the Middle East and North Africa. We are facing continuing troubles in sovereign debt markets as a result of the ongoing challenges faced by the eurozone and its sovereign debt markets. We are also facing the continuing economic aftershocks of the terrible earthquake and tsunami that hit the Japanese economy. In fact, many parts suppliers, parts companies, auto-part companies and automobile manufacturers in southern Ontario, both domestic and foreign-owned, have actually gone into shutdown mode because of sourcing problems with their components from Japan.

These risks all present an unsettled and unpredictable global economic environment. That is why it is crucial that we implement a prudent and long-term economic plan. It is crucial that we adopt the motion by the Minister of Finance because it will lay the foundation for future prosperity and build on the successes we have had as an economy and as Canadians in the last two and a half years.

The Budget

•(1800)

The next phase of our economic action plan, as presented in this budget, has a number of elements that I want to highlight for members in the House. It introduces a hiring credit for small businesses to encourage them to hire new employees. It also includes a two-year extension of the 50% straight line accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturers to purchase new equipment and machinery. It provides additional support for the work-sharing program that has ensured the protection of more than 277,000 workers.

It has renewed two special EI measures that have assisted Canadians in their search for a job and is providing \$420 million over the next 12 months in this area. It extends the targeted initiative for older workers, who often have a difficult time transitioning from one sector of the economy to another, to have additional support for the next couple of years.

We have also introduced a well deserved helmets to hardhats program to help transition men and women leaving our Canadian Forces into the civilian workforce. It has introduced a volunteer firefighter tax credit as well as measures to help younger Canadians by extending and enhancing the benefits for Canada student loans and grants.

These are some of the new measures that are in the budget to help Canadians with their jobs and help the Canadian economy with economic growth.

In the last few years we have introduced a number of measures to help households with the rising cost of food and fuel and the rising burden in paying bills. We have done that by reducing the taxation burden. In fact, the average family of four now receives almost \$3,100 in extra tax savings, thanks to the numerous tax reductions that we have introduced over the last number of years. This is also why the federal tax burden is now the lowest it has been in 50 years. We are building on that record in this budget by introducing additional measures.

We are introducing an enhanced guaranteed income supplement for seniors. For a typical single senior this would mean significant new money for their monthly GIS cheques and for a senior couple it would also mean additional new money. This would help raise up more than 680,000 seniors across this country, people who have worked hard and contributed greatly to our society over their lives and now need a little extra help to meet the monthly bills they have to pay.

Also in the budget is \$400 million to help extend the eco-energy retrofit for homes program in order to help make homes more energy efficient for Canadians. This is another way that our government is going to help Canadian households tackle the rising cost of fuel.

Despite many of the external risks facing our economy, our future looks promising. Our plan is working and the next phase introduced in this budget will ensure that we are laying the foundations for prosperity for this coming decade.

The budget also contains a plan to help reduce our deficit and eliminate it in three years, a year earlier than we had originally planned. We are not going to do this by raising taxes. Our balanced

budget proposal will be arrived at by conducting a strategic and operating review designed to realize substantial savings. We expect to realize \$4 billion in savings annually. Over the next three years, along with the wind-down of the stimulus money, we expect that these savings will help us balance the budget by 2014-15, a year earlier.

This is a responsible, credible approach. We have met our deficit targets for the last two years and we expect to do so in the coming three years.

I would like to finish on this final note.

Just as it is important for the Canadian government to balance its books and ensure it acts prudently on our federal debt, so too is it important that Canadian households do not increase their debt in an unsustainable way. Our government has played a strong role in that regard and I want to commend the Minister of Finance for his efforts in this area by recently reducing the maximum amortization for mortgages from 35 to 30 years and by removing the insurability under CMHC's program for home equity lines of credit. These were two prudent measures to take to slow down the increase in household debt. Canadian households and governments need to be vigilant about the levels of debt that we have taken on in recent years.

In a democracy the people are always right and a month ago the people of Canada decided to elect a stable majority Conservative government. I ask members of the House to respect the will of the Canadian people by supporting the motion that the Minister of Finance has tabled and by allowing us to lay the foundation for prosperity in the next decade.

•(1805)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on being re-elected to the House.

I have a question with regard to page 115 of the budget, where it talks about the \$400 million that the government will put into the eco-energy retrofit program. The last sentence in that short paragraph states that further details regarding this program will be announced in the near future.

Could the hon. member tell me whether the government will reconsider the people who were affected by the cutoff date of retrofit program, which I think was back in March, in this new application?

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the question is, I do not know. We will have to wait until the Minister of Natural Resources releases the details of how this \$400 million one year extension of the eco-energy retrofit for homes program will work.

What I will say is that the item on page 115 falls under the rubric of protecting Canada's environment. I am quite proud that our government has, as part of the Speech from the Throne, announced its intention to establish a new urban national park in the Rouge Valley. This is great news for the residents of the greater Toronto area. It demonstrates our government's strong commitment to expanding and enhancing Canada's national park system.

The Budget

•(1810)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome and congratulate the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. I always appreciate the sincerity in his remarks in the House.

He mentioned the plan to reduce the deficit and he talked a lot about the restraint that had to happen, but we know there will be cuts in programs and in services to Canadians.

However, while we talk restraint in the House, the Prime Minister is having a Challenger repaired so he and the heritage minister can go to Boston to watch a hockey game, at a \$10,000 an hour cost for that Challenger jet.

How can members in the Conservative Party sit over there and talk about restraint when the Prime Minister is costing taxpayers that much money? Is it just restraint for Canadians and excesses for the cabinet? Is that what is taking place? Why will Conservatives not stand and say no to the excesses by the cabinet?

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the Prime Minister was unable to attend the upcoming Vancouver-Boston game in Vancouver. He, being a big hockey fan, really wanted to see the next game and the only opportunity to go and see one was in Boston. He has committed to paying the full fare of his ticket, as has the minister who is accompanying him. Therefore, he is paying his way for this ticket.

More important, we have to realize that the Prime Minister has committed to paying his way in this regard and has committed to paying his ticket. That is what Canadians know and understand, and they see through the politics being played right here.

The fact is the Prime Minister is an avid hockey fan. I am sure all Canadians are going to join him in watching this great game and ensuring that Vancouver carries the team to success in the Stanley Cup.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief comment and recall a bit of history. I would like to remind my colleague that former Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney went to a Quebec Nordiques hockey game. He was admonished by the House and he reimbursed the cost of the plane ticket, which had been paid by the government.

Does the member believe that the Prime Minister should do the same thing?

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for his question.

[*English*]

Definitely the Prime Minister is going to reimburse the Government of Canada for the cost of his ticket. He has committed to doing that.

In fact, the Prime Minister has never accepted a free ticket to a hockey game while in office. He has always paid for each and every ticket that he has ever received. That demonstrates a high degree of ethics and accountability and it is unlike any previous government.

Members opposite need to be accepting of the facts here. The facts are that the Prime Minister is an avid hockey fan, he is paying for his hockey tickets and for the cost of his flight down there. Obviously, he cannot fly commercial. He is the head of a government of a G7 country and security requires that he flies on a government Challenger jet. Therefore, he is going to take that jet, but he is also going to pay for his ticket. I do not think any previous government can say that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 6:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment 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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

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

•(1840)

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easter	Eyking
Footé	Freeman

The Budget

Fry
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hassainia
Hughes
Jacob
Karygiannis
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Péclet
Pilon
Rae
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Savoie
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Trudeau
Valeriote — 133

Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu
Hyer
Julian
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
Layton
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Perreault
Quach
Rafferty
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scarpaleggia
Sgro

St-Denis
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay
Turmel

Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Flaherty
Fortin
Gallant
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
Mayes
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Mourani
Norlock
O'Neill Gordon
Oliver
Payne
Plamondon
Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Richards
Rickford
Saxton
Seeback
Shipley
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 159

Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Hoeyppner
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Obhrai
Opitz
Penashue
Poilievre
Raitt
Rathgeber
Rempel
Richardson
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Baird
Bellavance
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment defeated.

It being 6:43 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:44 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Tax Freedom Day	
Mr. Anders	121
Employment	
Ms. Liu	121
Don Valley West	
Mr. Carmichael	121
Microcredit Programs	
Mr. McCallum	121
Cypress Hills—Grasslands	
Mr. Anderson	122
Visas	
Mr. Pilon	122
Powell River	
Mr. Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	122
Small Business	
Mr. Trotter	122
Conservative Government	
Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	122
Automotive Industry	
Mr. Van Kesteren	123
Plaisance Heritage Centre	
Ms. Freeman	123
International Trade	
Mr. Saxton	123
Hockey	
Mr. Lamoureux	123
Syria	
Mr. Dechert	124
World Oceans Day	
Mr. Donnelly	124
Betty Albrecht	
Mr. Albrecht	124

ORAL QUESTIONS

Employment	
Mr. Layton	124
Mr. Harper	124
Mr. Layton	124
Mr. Harper	124
Mr. Layton	125
Mr. Harper	125
Mr. Layton	125
Mr. Harper	125
Mr. Layton	125
Mr. Harper	125

Health	
Mr. Rae	125
Mr. Harper	125
Mr. Rae	125
Mr. Harper	125
Ms. Fry	125
Mr. Carrie	126
The Budget	
Mr. Boulerice	126
Mr. Flaherty	126
Mr. Boulerice	126
Mr. Flaherty	126
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Donnelly	126
Mr. Ashfield	126
Mr. Toone	126
Mr. Ashfield	127
Mr. Cleary	127
Mr. Ashfield	127
Mr. Harris (St. John's East)	127
Mr. Ashfield	127
National Defence	
Mr. Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	127
Mr. Alexander	127
Mr. Garrison	127
Mr. Alexander	127
Ms. Michaud	127
Mr. Alexander	128
Champlain Bridge	
Mr. Pacetti	128
Mr. Lebel	128
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. MacAulay	128
Mr. Ashfield	128
Mr. Simms	128
Mr. Ashfield	128
The Environment	
Ms. Leslie	128
Mr. Kent	128
Ms. Leslie	129
Mr. Kent	129
Mr. Saganash	129
Mr. Anderson	129
Mr. Saganash	129
Mr. Anderson	129
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Armstrong	129
Mr. Ashfield	129
Flooding in Montérégie	
Mr. Sandhu	129

Mr. Young (Oakville)	149
Mr. Dionne Labelle	151
Mr. Lamoureux	151
Mr. Sweet	151
Mr. Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	152
Ms. Michaud	153
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	154
Mr. Cullen	154
Mr. Alexander	156
Mr. Cuzner	156

Mr. Godin	157
Mr. Lamoureux	158
Mr. Armstrong	158
Ms. May	159
Mr. Chong	159
Mr. Gravelle	160
Mr. Easter	161
Mr. Plamondon	161
Amendment to the amendment negatived	162

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:

Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

En cas de non-livraison,

retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>