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Monday, September 17, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 17, 2012

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

● (1100)
[English]

VACANCIES

DURHAM AND VICTORIA

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that vacancies have occurred in the representation: namely, Ms. Bev Oda, member for the electoral district of Durham, by resignation, effective July 31, 2012; and Madame Denise Savoie, for the electoral district of Victoria, by resignation, effective August 31, 2012.

Pursuant to subsection 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I address warrants to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of writs for the election of members to fill these vacancies.

It being 11:02, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-370, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-370, which would change the name of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park to Thousand Islands National Park.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park includes several ecologically important areas and over twenty islands between Kingston and Brockville. It was created in 1904. It was Canada's first national park east of the Rockies. Now, 108 years later, the Conservative member for Leeds—Grenville would like to change the well-established name of this national park to Thousand Islands National Park. He thinks that this name change would help brand the park and could increase tourism, since people are more familiar with the “Thousand Islands” name.

I am sure that his intentions are good, but I think that this is a bit too hasty. He claims that this is what the public wants. But I read over the debates and documentation related to this bill, and nowhere did I see any references to formal public consultations or public consultations that were open to everyone. There was no poll. There is nothing, other than guesstimates from the member. I think that the member should go back to the drawing board and provide more evidence of public support.

The Secretariat of the Geographical Names Board of Canada is provided by Natural Resources Canada. This secretariat strongly recommends that the respective geographic authorities be consulted when naming a park or any other land division established by legislation. Did the sponsor of Bill C-370 at least consult the Geographical Names Board of Canada before introducing the bill? Many problems can be avoided by taking such precautions.

I will give a very concrete example. The lovely riding that I represent, Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, borders on the magnificent Mille-Îles River, and contains a majestic park known for its diversity of fauna and flora—the Rivière-des-Mille-Îles Park.

This park is made up of municipal and private land that was combined through awareness work by the organization Éco-Nature and with the involvement of the property owners along the river who wish to protect the environment. The park's rich and unique biodiversity is consistent with its status as a wildlife refuge. It received the protected area designation in 1998 and consists of 10 islands covering 26.2 hectares of private land belonging to the cities of Laval and Rosemère, and Éco-Nature.

In short, the member for Leeds—Grenville is proposing to rename a national park with the name of an existing park in my riding. He wanted to make things clearer for foreign tourists, but has failed. He will run into problems with his chambers of commerce when they find out that funds allocated to promote his park will target tourists from northern Montreal.

I take the member to task for not getting his priorities right, in addition to not conducting the necessary consultations and acting too quickly in this matter. If he were truly concerned with the brand of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park and maximizing tourist revenues, then he should start by holding a meeting with the Minister of Finance and the minister responsible for national parks—namely the Minister of the Environment—because they are the ones who are responsible for the budget cuts to Parks Canada.

Private Members' Business

Need we point out that the 2012 budget will result in cuts of \$30 million to the Parks Canada budget by 2015? More than 600 employees were declared surplus and 1,500 employees will be affected in some way by 2015.

As we all already know, St. Lawrence Islands National Park will be severely affected. Don Marrin, superintendent of Parks Canada's East Ontario Field Unit, told the *Gananoque Reporter* that people should expect a significant reduction in services and hours of operation. So when the hon. member says he wants to improve the branding of the park, maybe he could start by keeping the park open and ensuring that there is enough staff to protect the region's biodiversity and heritage.

It is important to note that the park receives about 81,000 visitors per year, two-thirds of whom arrive by boat. Without checks and balances, these visitors could have adverse impacts on the park's ecosystem. In fact, according to the ecological integrity statement for St. Lawrence Islands National Park written in February 1999, visitor pressures present the primary threat to the park's ecological integrity.

• (1105)

Since this is a conservation issue, I would like to say a few words about the national conservation plan that is currently being developed. I take a particular interest in this issue because I was a member of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, which conducted the study. At committee, we received dozens of witnesses, including many from Quebec. Those witnesses felt that, with this government, there is a lot of talk but very little action when it comes to conservation. Even worse, some of its actions work against conservation.

How can the Conservatives claim to care about conservation and then turn around and cut the budget for the staff needed to conserve our parks?

How can the Conservatives claim to care about conservation and then turn around and eliminate the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, which produced an excellent report on conservation in 2003?

How can the Conservatives claim to care about conservation and then turn around and eliminate funding to the Canadian Environmental Network, which could have helped develop a national conservation plan and implement regional initiatives?

How can the Conservatives claim to care about conservation and then turn around and repeal the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, destroy the legislation that protects fish habitats and shut down an open-air laboratory that allowed experts to do research on our lakes?

Lastly, how can the Conservatives claim to care about conservation when they are trying to shove Enbridge's northern gateway pipeline down the throats of British Columbians?

In June, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development submitted its report on conservation. I invite all parliamentarians to read the report tabled during the last sitting and the NDP's recommendations in the dissenting opinion.

Basically, the NDP caucus is asking the government to develop strict conservation regulations so that clear rules and priorities can be established. Regulations should be based on rigorous scientific work and supported by a public service with adequate resources to carry out its mandate. Without these resources, the Conservatives' conservation plan will never be more than a charade.

I would like to invite the sponsor of the bill, who claims to care about conservation and developing our parks, to join us in urging the Conservative government to maintain Parks Canada's budget, to provide adequate funding for science and research, to maintain the Experimental Lakes Area program, and, most importantly, to implement a workable policy for fighting and adapting to climate change.

The member will no doubt agree that visitor impact, lack of Parks Canada resources, climate change, invasive species and shoreline erosion pose a much greater threat to the future of St. Lawrence Islands National Park than its name does.

Given the Conservative government's draconian cuts to Parks Canada's budget, the agency cannot be asked to expend resources on renaming a park that has been around for 108 years, at least not at a time when visiting hours are being cut along with staff responsible for protecting the park's plants and animals.

This government would be better off focusing on things that Canadians really care about, such as heritage protection, job creation and access to public services.

When will the government start listening?

• (1110)

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-370, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, namely to change the name of St. Lawrence Islands National Park to Thousand Islands National Park. There has been considerable community consultation and there is broad consensus that this will be good for the region and the economy, as the name is recognized by tourists all over the world. I would therefore like to commend the member for Leeds—Grenville for this initiative and recognize that both he and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands are both good friends of St. Lawrence Islands National Park and of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, an official United Nations biosphere reserve.

Very briefly, a biosphere reserve is where local communities or representatives from key sectors such as agriculture, business, conservation, education and tourism work together to develop projects that link conservation with economic development in the region. The committees are voluntary and community based.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is the smallest national park in Canada and the oldest national park east of the Rockies, having been created in 1904. The area is an important part of our history. The first inhabitants of the park were aboriginal people who began fishing and hunting about 10,000 years ago at the beginning of the Holocene epoch, the epoch that we are now exiting. Later, following the American revolution, European settlers began moving into the area, and during the War of 1812 the area of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park was visited by both American and British warships. In the early 20th century the area became a gateway for the rich and famous in North America, and today elegant homes and summer cottages are among the beautiful sights seen on the various boat cruises of tourist attractions.

The Thousand Islands region consists of 1,864 islands at the western edge of the St. Lawrence Seaway, right in the region of the park.

Why is the park important and why should it be renamed? The first reason is to accurately brand the area. The name that people use to quickly and easily identify the area is the Thousand Islands. If one were to conduct an Internet search for the St. Lawrence Islands, he or she would find very little information. However, if the search were for the Thousand Islands there would be many hits. This is absolutely an indication that the Thousand Islands name is the one that is popularly used to describe the region and the place where the park is located.

The second reason is to accurately describe the region. The St. Lawrence River passes from Kingston to Quebec and beyond. The St. Lawrence Islands National Park stretches from Kingston to Mallorytown, so it really is centred on the Thousand Islands region. It is important not to confuse the area with the whole of the St. Lawrence River and all of the other islands within the St. Lawrence River.

It is also important to distinguish this particular national park from the phrase “parks of the St. Lawrence”, which is used by the Province of Ontario to describe a number of other attractions in the area, including Fort Henry, which, by the way, everyone should visit the first chance they have. It is important to ensure that tourist buses passing on the 401 stop and visit the region and enjoy what it has to offer. The park is a very important part of the region's economy and provides a considerable number of jobs. The latest statistics show there are 438 enterprises, employing almost 6,000 people in Leeds-Grenville alone, that consider themselves visitor based.

While this is an important initiative for the Thousand Islands region, it is important to point out that the recent cuts to Parks Canada mean that the St. Lawrence National Park could be struggling. The Parks Canada agency is responsible for 42 national parks, 167 national historic sites and 4 national marine conservation areas in Canada, and it falls under the responsibility of Environment Canada. Sadly, the government is gutting Parks Canada through implementing \$29 million in budget cuts. In so doing, it is undermining the health and integrity of Canada's world renowned parks, risking some of our world heritage sites, significantly reducing the number of scientists and technical staff, hurting relationships with aboriginal peoples and attacking rural economies. Indeed, a former deputy minister of Environment Canada said that the federal budget cuts would undermine a decade of progress on

Private Members' Business

protecting the health of Canada's national parks, while another critic called the cuts a “lobotomy” of the parks' system.

●(1115)

PSAC reported that 1,689 of its members received affected notices and 638 positions will be eliminated, representing close to 30% of all scientists. According to the union, the affected workers include scientists, engineers, carpenters, mechanics, technicians and program managers. If the scientific monitors are reduced, who will know what is happening to Canadian ecosystems and what will restore endangered species like Canada's woodland caribou?

On July 12, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, CPAWS, issued a sobering report about the state of Canada's parks. It highlighted the dangers to our national parks due to funding cuts, the loss of science and monitoring capacity, the growth of inappropriate development within and adjacent to many current and proposed parks, the shortening of seasons, and inappropriate recreation and tourism activities.

Under the Aichi biodiversity targets, the commitment is to protect at least 10% of our marine and 17% of our land areas by 2020. Currently, just 1% of Canada's marine environment is protected and 627 species are at risk of extinction. The rate of extinction is expected to peak in the next 50 years because of climate change, economic expansion, habitat destruction and pollution, yet the government, through Bill C-38, has limited the environmental assessment process and stripped endangered aquatic species of habitat protection.

According Parks Canada's report on plans and priorities, it is likely that user fees at national parks and historic sites will increase at the beginning of the next fiscal year. These include entry fees, camping fees, lockage and mooring fees. A national user fee proposal is expected to be tabled in Parliament in early 2013, which will outline the business increases.

Our party has criticized the Minister of the Environment's claim that businesses near national parks and historic sites are getting a “free ride”. We have stated that it was insulting to the owners and operators of thousands of small businesses across Canada who are a key pillar of the Canadian economy and employ over 500,000 Canadians.

In conclusion, the name change has been thought through by the community. This is not rebranding but rather about attaching the name of a park to a brand that is very old and well-known throughout the world, and something that people naturally talk about when they talk about the region.

Private Members' Business

One of my earliest memories is visiting the Thousand Islands and sitting on the dock with my brother and dad, waiting for one of the cruises. In fact, it is that faded picture that my father always hung in his office and that now lies quietly in his drawer. I hope to revisit the renamed Thousand Islands National Park with my family very soon. It is time to take them back there. I encourage all members to do so as well.

• (1120)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the summer in my constituency it gives me great pleasure to come back to the House to support my colleague, the member for Leeds—Grenville, and his bill, which would do a tremendous service for Canada's national parks system, particularly for national parks located in Ontario. The bill would rename the St. Lawrence Islands National Park to the Thousand Islands National Park.

As this is the second hour of debate, I want to summarize what was talked about and presented in the House during the first hour of debate on the history of the current park, the St. Lawrence Islands National Park as it is called.

Our national parks are governed by framework legislation mandating that Parks Canada protects and presents outstanding representative examples of natural landscapes and natural phenomena that occur in Canada. St. Lawrence Islands National Park is an amazing example of a slice of Canada's biodiversity, not only in terms of its natural history and ecology but also in terms of its cultural history. This year being the 200th year anniversary of the War of 1812, this is an historical area that saw many of the conflicts that gave birth to the defence of Canada and to the early risings and stirrings of the Canadian identity.

It is also ecologically important. The park consists of several important ecologically important properties between Kingston and Brockville, Ontario. It is part of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and it lies at the eastern end of the Great Lakes system. It acts as a land bridge and this is something many people may not realize. This park straddles two other major parks. There is Algonquin Park, which is a provincial park. In fact, I spent some time there this summer canoeing through North Tea Lake and Manitou and Three Mile Lake and Erables Lake through the northwestern part of the park. It used to be called Algonquin National Park. Even though it has always been a provincial park, at some point the provincial government decided to call it a national park, but it was renamed back to Algonquin Park as we currently know it.

The St. Lawrence Islands National Park sits between Algonquin Park, a major protected area in the near north in Ontario, and the Adirondacks in New York State. The Thousand Islands Park, as we hope it will be called, acts as a land bridge between these two very ecologically important protected areas. These areas are significant because they contain transition forests and transition biospheres between what is known as the eastern deciduous forests in the northern United States and the boreal forest zone that covers much of Canada's vast north. This acts as a bridge between the transition zone and is full of unique fauna and flora, many of which are at the very northern end of their habitat as southern species and many of which are at the very southern end of their habitat as northern species. That

is why this park is significant and why we need to highlight it and draw Canadians' attention to it.

Part of this government's approach to national parks is to encourage more visits and tourists to our parks, both foreign and Canadians. All government departments, in conjunction with the private sector, are being encouraged to take whatever steps are necessary to encourage visitors to come to our national parks system.

It is unclear why the park was named St. Lawrence Islands National Park instead of Thousand Islands National Park, but it is an historic error that must be corrected. My colleague from Brant began discussing the history of the park. It had a long history before European contact. Aboriginal peoples had been in the area for many generations and centuries before European contact.

The French first called the area Les Mille Isles, the Thousand Islands, some 400 years ago when they first set foot in the region. They were the ones who first used the term "Thousand Islands". Then the British Royal Navy arrived and charted and named the various islands. We saw the advent of the American Civil War in mid-1860s. After that war ended, the area opened up significantly to development. Many wealthy Americans from New York State came to the Thousand Islands to build their summer homes and cottages.

• (1125)

It was at this time that the area started to really get developed. It was also when local residents started to become concerned about the area they had once hunted, fished, farmed and picnicked on for generations. They were concerned that this land was rapidly being lost to private property and no trespassing signs.

In 1874, their concerns led to two petitions being presented to the then Governor General of Canada asking that this area be protected for public use. At the time, the government was not very interested in doing so. Nevertheless, local pressure continued to be brought to bear over the subsequent decades, and in 1877, a new champion in Thaddeus Leavitt, the editor of the *Brockville Recorder* and an historian in his day, started to push for this area to be protected as a park. He was not successful, but by the 1890s citizens on both sides of the river were becoming interested in a park and pressure mounted for an international park spanning both sides of the boundary waters.

In 1895, a number of islands were considered for formal park status and the federal government of the day took a first step toward establishing a park. It did so by saying that if the Americans established a protected area on their side of the border, the Canadian government would then follow, but because the Americans never did anything, the park was never established.

It was not until 1904 that St. Lawrence Islands National Park was created with a base at Mallorytown Landing, which was donated by the Mallory family. The natives in the region also agreed with the formation of this national park and the preservation of some islands. The government then began work immediately on establishing pavilions and docks. By the 1960s, the park had its own superintendent and over the years it expanded significantly. Only a few years ago it acquired some more inland property to expand the protection of some of the sensitive biosphere areas.

The reason for this lengthy history lesson has been to highlight that over the last 400 years, since European contact, the area has been known as the Thousand Islands. For almost four centuries, local businesses, companies and communities have known and talked about the area as the Thousand Islands. It is a brand that locals and people from outside the area know well. No one knows exactly why the original name was created of St. Lawrence Islands National Park, but there is no doubt that it confuses people and is one of the reasons why the park may not be visited as much as it could be if it had the same name as the local area.

Many of the local councils and communities, ranging from Elizabethtown to Gananoque and from Brockville to the Front of Yonge township and the Leeds and the Thousand Islands township, have petitioned the member to rename the park to Thousand Islands park. This is an opportunity for us to do it, and I will point out to members in the House who are considering supporting this bill why it is so very important.

Ontario does not have a great number of national parks. People who live in Calgary are within an hour's drive to Banff National Park. People who live in Edmonton have access to Jasper National Park. The people on Vancouver Island can access the Pacific Rim National Park. For people who live in Montreal there is La Mauricie National Park.

Within striking distance of many of our metropolitan regions across the country, there are major national parks that are well visited and well known. In Ontario there are much smaller national parks, such as Point Pelee and the one in eastern Ontario known as the St. Lawrence Islands National Park. They are not well visited and we need to encourage Canadians, especially new Canadians who flock in great numbers to Ontario, to access the great outdoors and to understand that part of what it means to be Canadian is to understand our north and our great outdoors. By renaming the Thousand Islands National Park, we would ensure better branding and visibility for the park and ensure that it gets the attention it needs as a protected area in one of Canada's most sensitive biosphere zones.

I encourage all members to support this bill. It is a great idea. It is a little thing that would not cost us any money but would raise the visibility of our national park system in Ontario, a province that I and the member for Leeds—Grenville are proud to call home.

• (1130)

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about Bill C-370, which would change the name of St. Lawrence Islands National Park to Thousand Islands National Park. I also want to welcome viewers at home and members of the House back from what I hope was a good summer in the ridings for what I know will be a productive and, hopefully, somewhat congenial session of Parliament. I think this private member's bill is a good way to start.

The bill the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville has brought forward for debate today would celebrate and recognize the national heritage that Canada and the famous Thousand Islands region have to offer.

What is in the name of a park?

Private Members' Business

A name with meaning builds the location in the consciousness of the public. It sets a site within the context of its surroundings. It is open and inviting to those who seek to engage with our nation's protected natural heritage. It is vast and it is something of which we are all proud. The St. Lawrence is a great and majestic river that originates from the outflow from Lake Ontario, near Kingston, and moves eastward 3,058 kilometres, one of the longest rivers in the world, where it flows into the Atlantic Ocean. There are several prominent islands in the St. Lawrence: Wolfe Island, Montreal, Île d'Orléans and Anticosti Island are just a few.

What does St. Lawrence Islands National Park, as a name, say to the average Canadian?

Those who do not know the park would not imagine a region where majestic castles and historic summer homes stand in contrast to rugged islands of granite and pine that are home to lumbering turtles, soaring eagles and countless other species. The current name says nothing about how the park is located in the heart of the Thousand Islands area, an 80-kilometre-wide extension of granite hilltops joining the Canadian Shield of northern Ontario with the Adirondack Mountains in New York State.

This is a park that showcases the unique landscape created by glaciers retreating 10,000 years ago, scraping sediments and exposing the rounded knobs of an ancient mountain chain. When the St. Lawrence River flooded the area on its path to the Atlantic Ocean, 1,000 hilltops became the Thousand Islands. It is a land where soil was slow to form over the acidic granite; where even today the area retains a rugged beauty.

Plants and animals migrated to the region, encouraged by the moderating effects of the Great Lakes and the variety of microhabitats that were created by the rugged topography. The islands form a land bridge, as was mentioned by the previous speaker, from northwest to southeast, across the St. Lawrence River, aiding movement of species across the landscape.

Notable examples of species that are common in the area, but rare in the rest of Canada, include: the deerberry, a plant that exists in only two locations in this country; the black rat snake, Canada's largest snake; the pitch pine, a southern tree species with a range that extends along the Frontenac Arch to just north of the Thousand Islands; and the least bittern, a wading bird whose wetland habitats are decreasing elsewhere within its northern range.

This national park in the Thousand Islands forms part of the UNESCO-recognized Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. It is an area that has important natural and ecological values and is a place where people live, work and enjoy a variety of economic and recreational activities based upon respect for the environment. The people of the region recognize the importance of protecting this land. Local residents were lobbying as far back as the 1880s for the creation of a national park in the Thousand Islands. As was stated earlier, although it took until 1904, the park was still the first national park east of the Rockies.

So, why did the park end up being called St. Lawrence Islands National Park? That is a good question, which my colleague beside me failed to answer, as well. I do not know the answer, either.

Private Members' Business

Historic government records do not clearly explain why that name was selected but refer to the park land as islands in the St. Lawrence which comprise the Thousand Islands group. They should have had a clue right there.

Despite what may be on the entry sign, many locals and visitors have always used the name Thousand Islands National Park. Each year, the park receives many letters from visitors who address their comments to Thousand Islands National Park. Quite simply, the name St. Lawrence Islands does not fit. It does not fit what this park is, it does not mean anything, and it is not recognized by even those who return to the park on an annual basis.

The idea of changing the park name is not new. It has been debated at the local level for decades. There was a recommendation to change the name of the park to Thousands Islands National Park in 1978, by the St. Lawrence Islands National Park advisory committee. This committee was formed by the Hon. Judd Buchanan, the then Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. The committee was made up of representatives of local municipalities, chambers of commerce, local citizens, and provincial and national organizations.

For this current action to change the park's name, the City of Kingston, the Front of Yonge township, the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, the Town of Gananoque, the Thousand Islands Area Residents' Association and the directors of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve all approved motions in support of the name change. The 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce also supports the proposal.

• (1135)

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is a tiny jewel comprised of over 20 islands with a rich and complex history of natural and human interactions. However, the current name does not fit the billboard. The current name does not build public identity and does not increase awareness and support for the park in the Thousand Islands region. It does not capture the imagination of the public. It does not fit the historical regional references to the park.

Our national parks are national treasures. They are also personal treasures. We have all grown up visiting national parks. Growing up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, we spent a lot of time at Riding Mountain National Park. As an Albertan now, I and my family spend a lot of time in Banff and Jasper national parks, which are just magnificent. Those who have not been there need to go. Vacationing on the west coast, we spent time in Pacific Rim National Park.

These are all fabulous areas that are the envy of the world. We should take great pride in them, and we should make sure that they are treated accordingly, whether it is respect for the environment or whether it is making the name mean something.

Let me conclude by saying that I respect the dedication of the hon. member in bringing this bill to our attention for a second time. Changing the name of a national park is not an easy thing to do and it should not be an easy thing to do. I support the member's obvious commitment to the protection of our national environment, and I support his commitment to inspiring the meaningful recognition of a national treasure that does not hold a proper place in the consciousness of Canadians at the present time.

Thousand Islands National Park is a name that has meaning. Thousand Islands National Park inspires imagination. Thousand Islands National Park says something specific about an incredible and unique region of our country. Thousand Islands National Park provides a direct link to the public with Parks Canada's mandate to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and to foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

It is time for the Thousand Islands National Park to be recognized for what it is, what it has always been and what it will be for future generations. I would urge all members of the House to support this worthwhile bill.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to stand today on our first day back to the House from our summer recess to talk to Bill C-370, which would change the name of St. Lawrence Islands National Park to the Thousand Islands national park. I am happy to be talking to this today, but as someone who was born in Brockville, I thought the mover of the motion might rename the national park after me. That did not work out, but I do appreciate what the mover of the motion is trying to accomplish.

I would like to add my voice to those already in support of Bill C-370 and the renaming of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park to Thousand Islands national park.

Our national parks represent the very best that Canada has to offer. These special places are protected so they can be enjoyed by visitors today and tomorrow. In fact, through Parks Canada, the federal government is Canada's largest provider of natural and cultural tourism products and its iconic destinations: national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. These form the cornerstones of the Canadian tourism industry. Tourism represents a significant economic opportunity for Canada. In 2010, the tourism sector contributed \$29.7 billion to the Canadian economy and employed 617,000 Canadians.

As in the whole of Canada, our national parks offer important economic possibilities for the province of Ontario. The Thousand Islands is known throughout the world as a tourism destination. Every year millions of tourists flock to the iconic Thousand Islands region, but very few people know that there is a national park located in the heart of those islands. In fact, it is the closest national park to the city of Ottawa and, even without the creation of Rouge National Urban Park, Thousand Islands national park will remain one of the closest national parks to the city of Toronto.

It is time for us to adapt and renew the possibilities of this majestic national park. Something as simple as changing its name will dramatically alter how Parks Canada engages and attracts members of the public who seek to create great personal memories through meaningful experiences in an incredible national space.

For over 100 years tourism has played a prominent role in the Thousand Islands community, supporting family-owned businesses from generation to generation. St. Lawrence Islands National Park has an annual budget in excess of \$1.5 million. While some of that revenue is self generated, a majority comes from Canadian taxpayers. When Parks Canada has publicly stated that it is trying to encourage new Canadians, young Canadians and urban Canadians to visit national parks, it does not make sense for Parks Canada to work outside the regional brand of the Thousand Islands.

Parks Canada has an exemplary record of working within communities through partnering initiatives and stakeholder relations, yet in a region where other private tourism providers take advantage of the strong, recognized and powerful “World Famous Thousand Islands” brand name, in using the term St. Lawrence Islands, Parks Canada is not talking the same language as other Thousand Islands tourism operators.

If members were travelling from Vancouver, Newfoundland or England, would they not find it difficult to distinguish among the offerings of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, Parks of the St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence Islands National Park? Two of these three organizations have many sites outside the immediate Thousand Islands area and are not interchangeable with the national park and have different mandates.

As the government, it is our role to help remove barriers that limit opportunities for Canadians to become more engaged with treasured natural places. We should be doing all we can to help provide opportunities to showcase what Parks Canada has to offer. Placing Thousand Islands national park on the map is a small but significant step that would help enhance public awareness of this incredible park. A name change would present an opportunity to renew Canadians' passion and support for our country's important natural spaces. A name change could help ensure that this national park would find a place in the consciousness of Canadians and would help ensure that future generations would be inspired by and would support this long-established protected treasure.

● (1140)

Economically, a name change to the Thousand Islands national park would align our public offering with those of other regional tourism providers. This would help initiate sustainable expandable growth generating activities and relationships. We would be creating a legacy that would say that lasting improvements could be made by this government. Parks Canada would be able to expand its reach and impact by taking advantage of the existing regional brand.

I realize there may be some in the House who oppose this name change initiative simply because the St. Lawrence Islands National Park has been the official name of the Thousand Islands national park for over 100 years. In fact, national parks have been renamed twice before. In both of these instances the new name better reflected the region in which they were situated. The Northern Yukon National Park was been renamed to Ivvavik National Park and Ellesmere Island National Park became Quttinirpaaq National Park.

Bill C-370 is an easy bill to support because changing the name of St. Lawrence Islands National Park to a name that better reflects the local region to a name that is already used by regional residents and existing park visitors, to a name that will help Parks Canada position

the wonderful landscapes and features of the park in the psyche of Canadians, to a name that will immediately improve local, national and international recognition of the park, to a name that will facilitate better interactions with other regional tour operators and tour initiatives, improving the local economic opportunity, simply makes sense.

Thousand Islands national park fits the region, it fits the tradition and it fits the future. Thousand Islands national park is the right name for the right park at the right time.

● (1145)

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their input and discussion during the second reading of the bill that proposes to change the name of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park to Thousand Islands national park. I appreciate their interest and involvement.

When I opened this debate, I indicated there were a number of facets to my argument that the name of this park should be changed. I would like to review those again as I close the debate.

The St. Lawrence Islands National Park is located in what is popularly known and identified worldwide as the Thousand Islands. The Thousand Islands region is of significant importance in the geological history and cultural history of our nation. In fact, on a Monday 200 years ago this week, one of the first skirmishes of the War of 1812 happened with a raid on Gananoque by Americans, and we had a wonderful re-enactment of that battle just a few weeks ago.

Formed as a result of the last ice age, the Thousand Islands region provides a land bridge across the St. Lawrence River for plants and animals. We have heard from other speakers that it joins the Canadian shield in the north at Algonquin Park through to the Adirondack Mountains in the south.

The Great Lakes, particularly Lake Ontario, which lie to the west, provide a heat sink, which helps moderate both winter and summer temperatures in the region, which in turn attracts flora and fauna that might not otherwise be found in the area. As a result of all this, the area has been recognized by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve.

When Europeans first discovered this place, the French named it Les Mille Isles and the English named the islands in 1816 after the British Navy, but it has continued to be identified as the Thousand Islands. Today, many people in the area already refer to the park as the Thousand Islands national park because this is how the region is known.

Visitor services are a growing and important part of the economic development of the region that encompasses this park. This has always been the case as people flock from around the globe to visit the world famous Thousand Islands, but it is increasingly important as the economic mix of the area has changed from manufacturing to services. According to Statistics Canada, close to 6,000 jobs in my riding alone rely upon the visitor services industry.

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Our government has been supportive of this economic change by helping to fund what was known as the Maritime Discovery Centre, which is now called Aquatarium, in Brockville at the eastern end of this part. This centre's exhibits will concentrate on the Thousand Islands.

When Parks Canada celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011 and the parks were advertised across the country to promote this anniversary, there were questions raised about the name of the park. In fact, one of the television ads featured the park and said, "St. Lawrence Islands National Park". However, many people did not know where it was on the St. Lawrence.

The St. Lawrence Islands National Park, as I mentioned in my opening remarks on the bill, could be anywhere on the length of the St. Lawrence River, all the way from Kingston to the Gaspé.

In my earlier speech on the bill I spoke about branding. Thousand Islands is the drawing card for the region. It is the brand upon which the region hangs its future and reviews its past.

My home town of Gananoque bills itself as the Canadian gateway to the Thousand Islands. Brockville calls itself the city of the Thousand Islands. Thousand Islands is the moniker that is used by everyone in the region to differentiate themselves from any other region.

Simple marketing theory demands that the park be easily identified in its location on the lengthy St. Lawrence River, and that location is the Thousand Islands.

I call upon my colleagues from all sides of the House to support the bill moving on to committee and then we hope it will be moved forward to see the name of the St. Lawrence Islands National Park for 2013 changed to the Thousand Islands national park.

● (1150)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time provided for debate has expired. Therefore, the question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 19, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House stands suspended until 12 o'clock.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:51 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 11:59 a.m.)

* * *

● (1155)

[Translation]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bills, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, and Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (prize fights).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

[English]

ENHANCING ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC) moved that Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, with its roots stretching back to the 1870s, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has evolved into one of the world's most respected police forces. It is clear that the RCMP is a vital national institution but even the deepest roots need tending to remain strong.

RCMP members are hard-working and dedicated Canadians who put their lives on the line to protect us each and every day.

As an organization, the RCMP is respected around the world as a symbol of who we are as Canadians and what we value: professionalism, honesty, integrity and compassion. However, these ideals and Canadians' confidence in the RCMP has been tested over the past few years. As parliamentarians, we are all aware of the high profile events, public inquiries and, most recently, allegations of sexual harassment within the force. I know there is a consensus in this chamber that changes are needed.

There is also no doubt that the leadership of the RCMP deserves modern, updated tools to do its job.

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Earlier this year, we signed 20-year contracts with our provincial and territorial partners, further demonstrating our government's commitment to the RCMP. We remain committed to ensuring that Mounties can effectively serve and protect our communities for generations to come. I therefore was very proud to enable the enhancing RCMP accountability act on June 20.

Before outlining the major provisions of the bill, I will paint a larger picture of why these changes are so necessary.

Over the past four years, the RCMP has been busy addressing deficiencies to strengthen the trust and the confidence of Canadians. Most important, in November 2011, our government appointed Mr. Bob Paulson as the new Commissioner of the RCMP. A senior police leader with extensive experience across the RCMP's complex mandate, including in British Columbia, Commissioner Paulson is well-positioned to deal with the challenges associated with maintaining the RCMP as a key Canadian institution.

While we have seen progress in several areas, for example, the provinces and territories recently signed a 20-year RCMP services agreement that addressed key issues such as governance, accountability, program sustainability and cost containment, more needs to be done and that means amending the legislation governing the RCMP.

It is surprising to think that the RCMP Act has not been significantly amended in nearly 25 years. The RCMP Act, last amended in 1988, has served us well but the time has come for a change.

The proposed legislation would further enhance the RCMP's accountability by reforming the legislation in a number of key areas: First, it would strengthen the RCMP's review and complaints body; second, it would create a statutory framework to handle investigations of serious incidents involving RCMP members in order to promote greater transparency; and third, it would modernize discipline, grievance and human resource management processes for members of the RCMP. This would help prevent, address and correct performance issues in a way that is both fair and timely.

If some of those ideas sound familiar it is not surprising. The proposed legislation contains all of the elements of the former Bill C-38 and several components of former Bill C-43 related to human resource management.

I will delve into each of these areas more deeply.

In 1988, the RCMP Act established the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, or CPC for short. As its name suggests, the CPC is an independent, arm's-length, civilian body that ensures that public complaints made about the conduct of RCMP officers are examined fairly and impartially.

In recent years, many different stakeholders have expressed concerns about the limitations of that review body. Whether the criticisms stem from contract jurisdictions, parliamentary committees, reports from public inquiries or critiques from individual Canadians, they all share a similar thrust: a belief that the CPC requires enhanced legislative powers for an effective and fulsome review of RCMP activities.

●(1205)

The government has listened to the concerns of Canadians and I have spent the summer travelling the country listening to the concerns of front line RCMP members, community leaders and Canadians. I have heard clearly these concerns. The government recognizes that a growing chorus is demanding change to the review and complaints framework of the RCMP.

I am proud that Bill C-42 fully addresses these issues. The bill would create a new commission that would enhance, streamline and update many elements of the CPC that are currently working effectively. Additionally, new powers would be conferred on the new commission, including the authority to summon and compel witnesses to give oral or written evidence, grant greater access to RCMP information deemed relevant by the new commission for the performance of its duties and, finally, to conduct policy reviews. This would bring the new commission in line with other modern provincial, federal and international review bodies. The legislation would also permit the new commission to have broad access to RCMP information but subject to appropriate safeguards.

As we know, many jurisdictions contract the RCMP for policing services. They have made it very clear that they want enhanced accountability for RCMP member conduct in their communities. They have also asked that the legislative framework for the new commission be designed to dovetail with their own police review bodies. Oftentimes contract jurisdictions want a detailed analysis of RCMP activity tailored to their individual needs. Here, too, Bill C-42 will deliver the goods.

The proposed commission would issue customized annual reports to contract jurisdictions identifying the number and nature of complaints as well as evidence of trends, if there are any.

By its very nature, the RCMP's work is often difficult and dangerous. Members can be called upon to use weapons and occasionally deadly force in the performance of their duties. When serious incidents occur, such as life-threatening injuries or death, the RCMP would be required to refer the case to the provincial civilian investigative body, where one exists. For example, in Alberta, the Alberta serious incident response team would be in charge of carrying out the criminal investigation into an RCMP member's conduct if serious injury or death resulted from an RCMP interaction with the public. In the absence of such a body, the RCMP would have to refer the investigation to another police force whenever practical. In those rare incidents where neither of those two options are available, the RCMP would conduct its own investigation, but this last option would be the exception rather than the norm. This process is both workable and practical for a force spread across one of the largest countries in the world and has the broadest support from the jurisdictions the RCMP serves.

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We have built in safeguards that if the RCMP has to investigate one of its own members or if it refers the case to another police force, an independent observer could be appointed by the jurisdiction or the new commission to monitor the impartiality of the investigation. This policy is a result of concerns about a conflict of interest with Mounties investigating their own members.

The government has taken these criticisms to heart and, while we acknowledge the work that the RCMP has done in this regard with its 2010 external investigation or review policies, it is time to solidify this policy in law. The proposed legislation reduces the potential for bias, promotes transparency and promotes public accountability in serious incident investigations.

Recent allegations relating to misconduct and harassment in the RCMP are well-known and I am deeply troubled by these allegations. No doubt, hon. members are also familiar with criticism of the RCMP for how it deals with these kinds of allegations. That is why we believe it is vital to reform the discipline, grievance and human resource management processes within the RCMP and to do so through legislation.

• (1210)

Thus, Bill C-42 would reorient and streamline current processes and provide the commissioner with the authorities needed to manage the organization more effectively.

Let me touch on each of the three components, beginning with discipline.

Simply put, the current process is not working as well as it could, given the existing limitations in the current legislation. Sanctions and remedial options are limited, and the process is weighted down by red tape. Proceedings can literally drag on for years. This is why we are reforming the adjudication boards currently in place.

For most disciplinary actions of any severity, for example, the RCMP is required to use a three-person adjudication board. These boards effectively undermine the role of front-line managers who lack the ability to resolve issues promptly, as well as the flexibility to make decisions on sanctions. As a result, the use of boards creates an adversarial work climate, not to mention long delays in the process.

Under the proposed changes, front-line managers would finally gain the authority and responsibility to impose appropriate, punitive measures. These measures would range from remedial training to corrective action such as holding back pay. Managers would not have to resort to a formal board process, except in the case of dismissal.

Like cases of discipline, the airing of grievances in the RCMP is terribly inefficient. There are, for example, separate processes to deal with terms and conditions of employment, appeals of discharge for unsatisfactory performance, and appeals of formal and informal disciplinary sanctions. On top of that, each process has different decision-makers and administrative structures.

The proposed legislation would create a single grievance and appeal process, allowing for consistency, fairness and efficiency. The legislation would also empower managers, allowing them to deal with issues before they mushroom into big problems. For example, in August 2004, a grievance was filed over a dinner allowance claim

of \$15, and under the current system it took seven years to obtain a final decision on the matter. Under our proposed legislation, that would be streamlined and dealt with in a matter of weeks, not years. In other words, the proposed legislation would inject some much-needed flexibility into the current rigid system.

We must also pay attention to how decisions get made at the top. In contrast to other police chiefs, for example, the Commissioner of the RCMP lacks the authority to make fundamental human resource decisions. Specifically, he cannot establish and maintain processes for the demotion or discharge of members for administrative reasons. Nor can the commissioner make decisions stemming from these processes or establish a system to prevent, investigate and resolve harassment cases.

Under the proposed legislation, the commissioner would gain increased authorities to fully manage the RCMP workforce. Given the complex and dynamic operating environment of the organization, these changes are nothing short of essential. Specifically, the legislation would address the shortcomings I mentioned.

The commissioner would be able to demote and discharge members and appoint commissioned officers, everyone but the deputy commissioners and commanding officers of the RCMP divisions. Other powers include the authority to establish processes to investigate and resolve disputes involving harassment in the workplace.

As a final consideration to enhance human resource management, Bill C-42 would reduce the number of employee categories. Currently there are three categories: regular members, civilian members and public service members. Bill C-42 proposes to eliminate one of the three categories by converting civilian members into public service employees. This would allow the RCMP to focus on the RCMP's core mandate, protecting Canadians while saving valuable taxpayer dollars by streamlining its administration.

• (1215)

The time is now for the enhancing RCMP accountability act, as it would enable the RCMP to advance its transformative agenda and improve public confidence in the organization. It would further enhance the RCMP's accountability by reforming legislation in several key areas that I have outlined.

The RCMP has a proud and illustrious past, but this government believes the best is yet to come. As Minister of Public Safety I have had the privilege of meeting RCMP members and staff across the country. This summer particularly I have also witnessed the pride and appreciation Canadians have for the men and women of the RCMP. The legislation would be important in ensuring the RCMP is an accountable, trusted and adaptive organization for generations to come.

We have identified a small number of grammatical and translation errors in the bill that the government will aim to correct at committee stage.

I trust that all members will support these amendments to ensure we have the best bill possible. I urge all members to join with me in supporting the bill and a speedy passage through to committee.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will have a chance in just a few minutes to state our own position on the legislation.

There have been many reports suggesting reforms to accountability in the RCMP over the past six or seven years. This proposed bill does not appear to align specifically with any of those or include the full recommendations of some of those reports.

How did the minister arrive at this particular package as being the solution to accountability for the RCMP?

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, we have spent a great deal of time with respect to examining all of those reports and discussing this matter with the RCMP and with experts in the field of policing to ensure that the problems the RCMP is currently facing are addressed by the legislation.

I would have liked to have had the bill come forward to the House sooner, but given the lack of clarity in respect of the constitutionality of provisions dealing with the collective bargaining situation, we had to wait for the court to render its decision. Finally in June of this year, I tabled the bill because we simply could not wait any longer for the court to clarify those important areas, and subsequently the court has clarified that. We believe this is an appropriate package to go forward.

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, having served in the RCMP for more than 18 years, getting to the rank of sergeant, I faced a lot of the challenges that the bill deals with on RCMP accountability.

When individuals first join the RCMP they learn the esprit de corps, maintain the right. It is entrenched in each member to serve their communities. When serving across Canada members always uphold different accountability.

I have met with many detachment leaders. I had a conversation yesterday with one member who is in charge of her own detachment.

What we see taking place is a lack of accountability. Members going through the process are not being held accountable for their actions while on or off duty. I am curious if the minister could perhaps elaborate further. While going across Canada, what type of consultation process did the minister do over the summer?

• (1220)

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his question and, of course, for his 18 years of service in the RCMP. He had a remarkable career. He is a fine example of the product of the RCMP. We know there are many others in the RCMP who have similar exemplary service records.

We, in fact, consulted extensively over the last number of years, even prior to my becoming the public safety minister. We certainly looked at some of these issues, especially the disciplinary issues.

The legislation we brought forward has the full support of the commissioner and his senior officers. It reflects some of the concerns they have had as commanding officers at lower levels in the organization. We believe that the disciplinary measures are absolutely essential, that line commanders have a degree of responsibility in ensuring that disciplinary matters are dealt with

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very quickly and effectively so the organization can focus on the protection of Canadians.

Not only did I do this in the summer, to ensure we are on the right track, which I believe we are, but this has been the product of extensive consultation over the last number of years.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome all my colleagues and the members opposite.

In such matters there should be zero tolerance. Consequently, in cases of harassment, there must be action and investigations. Zero tolerance means that the people causing the problem must be fired, whether they are men or women, although mostly men have been involved in the harassment.

Will the Minister of Public Safety be able to proceed and actually put in place standards to eliminate harassment in the RCMP?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, that is essentially what the commissioner has been doing since he was appointed by our government. We believe that is an important matter that needs to be attended to: that there is a clear process and expectation in terms of the standards that RCMP officers have to meet. However, processes alone will not solve the problem. Attitudes need to change, but where problems arise, they will be dealt with appropriately.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will continue in the same vein. Can the minister explain how a commission that makes recommendations that are not binding can have enough teeth to truly change the corporate culture of the RCMP?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, processes alone will not solve the problem, and attitudes need to change. This proposal, in respect of the harassment process, would facilitate the timely and effective prevention, investigation and resolution of harassment issues and address the serious concerns being expressed by RCMP employees and the public. The proposed legislation, together with the process in respect of harassment, would provide the commissioner with the authority to establish a single, seamless and comprehensive investigation and resolution process for harassment complaints against members.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his comments on Bill C-42. I would like to revisit a question that one of my Conservative colleagues raised earlier. I do not think a full answer was provided. Apparently consultations about this bill were held this summer before it was introduced.

May we have more information about the associations, members or people who were consulted in the lead-up to Bill C-42?

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●(1225)

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, for clarification, the bill was put forward prior to the summer. The summer was a good time for me to get the reaction of RCMP members from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador and of civilians who were under the jurisdiction of the RCMP. I thought their reaction was good, but if the member believes there are changes that need to be made and that further consultation needs to take place, I would like to hear from her.

We will be hearing from witnesses at the end of second reading to ensure that we understand fully the implications of the bill and how it will be acted upon by the RCMP. However, generally speaking, the reaction was a very positive one.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-42. I could not agree more with the minister when he said that we should have had this legislation in the House much sooner. There is an urgency for the public in terms of confidence in the RCMP. There is an issue for the RCMP rank and file members who are working in a workplace climate that is often not supportive of the difficult and dangerous work they do. It is also important to the RCMP leadership that is charged with the task of making those necessary changes.

We on this side find much to agree with in this bill and the reasons for undertaking reform of the RCMP Act. In the preamble it talks about many things which we can agree with. First and foremost is the necessity to restore the confidence of Canadians in our international police force.

The RCMP has long provided excellent service to Canadians from coast to coast but over the previous years, dating back to the Liberal government, we have had increasing questions about incidents involving use of force where public confidence has waned in the RCMP. That is a problem not just for the public but for the serving members in the RCMP.

The bill's second purpose as stated is to promote transparency and public accountability in law enforcement. Again, we could not agree more that this is essential if we are going to meet that first objective which is to restore public confidence in the RCMP. The only way to do that is through enhanced transparency and public accountability.

The third reason for reforming the RCMP Act, which is stated in the bill's preamble, deals with the relationship with provincial, regional and municipal governments that hold contracts with the RCMP. They have entered into those contracts in good faith but often feel that they do not have adequate input into the policing in their jurisdictions or adequate accountability measures for the RCMP when they have questions about what has happened in those jurisdictions.

A fourth measure, as stated in the preamble of the bill, is to promote the highest levels of conduct within the RCMP. This, of course, is a goal that is shared by governments, RCMP members and the public at large. We know that day in and day out virtually all RCMP members strive to meet those levels of conduct. However, we need clear statements of what happens when those levels of conduct are not met with clear consequences and procedures that would also

protect the rights of RCMP members who have dedicated themselves to the service of Canadians so that they do not find themselves subject to arbitrary procedures as part of discipline.

Finally, the bill's preamble states that we need to reform this legislation to create a framework for ongoing reform so that we do not find ourselves in this situation again 25 years later where government after government, Liberal and Conservative, have failed to address these questions and failed to provide leadership on these issues.

We in the official opposition can agree on the goals expressed in this legislation and I believe we can go further. We can even agree on the key areas for action identified in the summary of the bill. Although, the bill's summary counts the areas of action as only two vital areas, I would count them as three.

We on this side agree that there needs to be action to strengthen the RCMP review and complaints body. The RCMP Public Complaints Commission has provided a valuable service but we have concerns about its full independence and its ability to oversee independent investigations.

Second, we believe there needs to be a framework to handle investigation of serious incidents involving members, incidents that involve death or serious injury, which will help enhance transparency. In this day and age, the public has said very clearly that it does not accept that the police investigate themselves in these very serious incidents. We believe that independent investigation not only benefits public confidence but it also benefits those who serve in the RCMP by guaranteeing that the public will understand the outcome of those investigations and where their names are cleared they will be cleared once and for all.

Finally, there needs to be action in the area of modernizing discipline, grievance and human resource management processes. The minister has cited anecdotal evidence of things that take way too long and we all know that is true. However, what is lacking is clear guidance for RCMP members of what those standards are and how failure of those standards will be dealt with in a judicious and fair manner. In addition, when RCMP members have grievances they need to have the understanding that their concerns can be brought forward in a timely manner and that those grievances can be resolved and not drag on for years and years.

●(1230)

We do agree on the areas in which we need to make reforms to the RCMP Act. In particular, we believe it is crucial to allow the RCMP commissioner reforms in the area of discipline to deal with the climate of sexual harassment that exists in the RCMP. We would like to see leadership from the government in mandating the commissioner to bring in a clear anti-harassment policy and a clear process that contains specific standards of behaviour with regard to sexual harassment and specific criteria for evaluating the performance of all employees in this very important area.

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However, having said how much we agree with the objectives of this legislation and that we agree with the areas that need to be reformed, I have not risen in the House today simply to present bouquets to the minister. We in the opposition have our concerns, both about government inaction by the Liberals and the Conservatives and government inaction in particular in the area of transparency and accountability.

The present government has been in power since 2006 and, yes, it inherited a record of inaction from the previous Liberal government. However, it has been six years, three ministers and two RCMP commissioners and we are just now embarking on the process to reform this legislation so we can get measures that make a real difference in the performance and work lives of RCMP members now in 2012. In the meantime, we have had more than 200 women members of the RCMP join lawsuits alleging sexual harassment within the RCMP. We also have had an ongoing series of problems with loss of public confidence in the RCMP in investigations of serious incidents like the death of Robert Dziekanski.

We have wasted valuable time and we have had numerous studies that presented solutions to these problems. We had the task force, which was appointed by the government, and I give it credit for doing so, that reported back in 2007, nearly five years ago, with important proposals for reforming the culture of the RCMP, discipline of the RCMP and important recommendations on the Public Complaints Commission. We had an internal review, completed in 2008, of the process of using independent observers in police investigations of themselves. We had the recommendations from Mr. Justice O'Connor in the Maher Arar inquiry with regard to the national security activities of the RCMP in 2006. Most recently, we had recommendations from the former Public Complaints commissioner, Paul Kennedy, both on investigations of serious incidents, which were tabled in 2009, and when he appeared before the justice committee in January of last year to give recommendations on increasing the independence of the job that he used to hold. So there is no shortage of advice available.

However, in a question that I asked earlier to the minister, it is unclear why the government chose to pick only certain recommendations and certain pieces of all these reports. It is hard to see the overall theme that guides this legislation.

We have said that leadership from the government is required but that means more than just legislation. Therefore, I cannot let this opportunity go by without pointing out some of the things that the government has done in the area of the RCMP and the Public Complaints Commission. Just the past week, the government issued lay-off notices to two staff members at the RCMP Public Complaints Commission. When we are in the midst of reforming this and when that commission is in the midst of a massive study of the sexual harassment complaints that have taken place in the RCMP, why has the government chosen to lay off two staff members at the Public Complaints Commission in the midst of this crisis over sexual harassment that the commission was attempting to address?

Also in the last week we saw lay-off notices given to 149 support staff members of the RCMP across the country, including 42 support staff in British Columbia alone. These people provide important services in helping the RCMP do its job on a daily basis. These are not uniformed members who received the lay-off notices but people

who work everywhere from the forensic labs to personnel, recruiting and in all the other very important functions that support the basic police duties of the RCMP.

When it comes to the Public Complaints Commission and the RCMP, the government has been following a peculiar practice. When Mr. Kennedy produced his strong recommendations on investigations, the response of the government was to fail to reappoint him to the job. Having appointed him in 2005 and giving him annual reappointments every year, when his very strong recommendations came out, suddenly he was no longer its first choice for the job as the Public Complaints commissioner.

●(1235)

The new interim commissioner, Ian McPhail, was initially given a one-year term as interim chair and now has been appointed again for another year. I am emphasizing the single year because we are talking about someone who should have independence from the government in doing the job of providing civilian oversight of the RCMP. How can someone do that with any confidence when at the end of every year he or she could lose their job? While I am encouraged that the new legislation talks about a term of up to five years for the new chair of the civilian review agency, I am concerned that the government will continue its practice of making only annual appointments, which gives it far too much power over what should be an independent commissioner.

While we believe that Bill C-42 does deal with issues of urgent public concern about the RCMP, we on this side of the House will be supporting the bill at second reading in order to move the bill to committee. I was very pleased to hear the minister say in his opening remarks that he was open to amendments to the bill at committee. We look forward to seeing all kinds of witnesses come forward at committee, witnesses who have previously provided advice to the minister, although he was unable to name any of them specifically today. We hope to see them called as witnesses at committee so we can hear from them about whether the ways the government has chosen to address these issues are the right measures.

While we agree with Commissioner Paulson that legislation alone is not enough, we do need to produce the optimum legislation at this time. That will require extensive amendments to the bill at committee. We believe a positive aspect is that of giving the commissioner power to create one process to deal with the issue of sexual harassment. We understand there are competing RCMP and Treasury Board guidelines, which have created a great deal of confusion within the force. It is a positive measure, but we have some serious concerns about the independence of a new civilian review agency. There are restrictions on its ability to undertake independent investigations. I have already raised the issue of the length of the term for the chair of that commission.

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As I mentioned briefly, we also have a concern that the disciplinary reforms needed in the RCMP because of the lengthy and complicated process involved should not err too much on the other side. The RCMP operates in a non-union environment. Many of the rank and file members of the RCMP we talked to over the summer expressed a concern that where they do not have an organization to advocate on their behalf as individuals, there needs to be balance in the disciplinary process so they are not subject to arbitrary dismissal when they have devoted their lives to helping and serving all Canadians.

Therefore, we will be talking at committee on how to ensure there is a balance in the disciplinary process. We agree that it needs to be streamlined and improved, but the government's solution seems to be to concentrate more and more arbitrary power in the hands of the minister. We remain concerned that we get a chance to explore fully at committee what those disciplinary processes would look like and how people's rights as employees would be protected in a non-union environment.

I find the minister's excuse for the most recent delays in introducing the bill, namely waiting for a court decision on whether the RCMP has the right to unionize, a bit weak. It was obviously possible to bring the bill forward with a previous section of Bill C-38 omitted. However, I hope we will have some discussion of the issue of whether or not having a union in the RCMP might be a good way to address some of these outstanding issues, particularly in the area of sexual harassment where people often need an advocate in the workplace to approach management, especially if management is part of the problem. People need someone to approach management and advocate on their behalf. We might not be in the situation we are in today with more than 200 women filing lawsuits against the RCMP if we had a more conducive work environment and a better way of making sure that individual members had advocates on their behalf in the RCMP.

• (1240)

I want to touch on some of the reports that have been issued and what we believe should be addressed at committee. The 2006 report of the Justice O'Connor inquiry into the actions of Canadian officials in relation to Maher Arar called for Parliament to create an RCMP watchdog along the lines of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. It already monitors CSIS but would also have the right to audit RCMP files and activities and have the power to subpoena related documents and compel testimony. The present complaints commission does not have enough powers over the RCMP's national security activities.

Thus, while we are glad to see provisions in the bill that would increase those powers, given the causes behind the creation of CSIS, we have a question about the RCMP recreating an arm that would undertake national security activities that would appear to operate without adequate parliamentary oversight. That is a question that we will be addressing in committee.

The report filed in 2007 by the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP proposed reforms to establish the RCMP as a separate entity from government, with separate employer status. That was a very interesting proposal that appears nowhere in this bill. I would like to know why the government, having

appointed this commission of eminent persons with expertise to suggest solutions to the problems in the RCMP, including a former commissioner of the RCMP, a vice-admiral of the Canadian Navy, a very prominent Canadian corporate lawyer, and a member of the Alberta Law Enforcement Review Board, set aside a major recommendation of theirs. That is a question for which I would like to hear the government's answer.

In addition to the idea of having separate employer status for the RCMP, many groups in the past have suggested that there needs to be some kind of civilian input mechanism for the RCMP, perhaps only at the national level, but maybe also at the regional level.

While municipalities have boards that provide civilian guidance and control over their police forces and that provide insulation from the local politicians, we have nothing like that in the RCMP. Accordingly, we have had proposals that we create an independent management board, which again came from the 2007 report, which would give Canadians the confidence that the government cannot interfere directly in the activities of the RCMP and cannot give so-called advice to the commissioner, who has to report directly to the minister.

We are depending here upon the integrity of the minister and the integrity of the RCMP commissioner to protect the independence of policing, and reports have often recommended that it would be better to create a structural impediment to that kind of interference than simply depending on the integrity and goodwill of the people occupying those positions.

I am not questioning either the integrity of the minister or of the RCMP commissioner, but the public has to have confidence that independence is there. When those relations go on in private and they are direct reporting relationship, it is difficult for the public to have that confidence in the independence of the RCMP.

Many provisions in Bill C-42 are similar to those in Bill C-38. I would just like to mention a brief comment by Paul Kennedy, the former RCMP public complaints commissioner, that Bill C-38 was so riddled with loopholes that it did not meet the standards necessary to guarantee independence of policing.

Again, here is someone appointed by the Conservatives to the position of public complaints commissioner who presented reports to them on the kinds of reforms that needed to be brought forward. He had serious concerns about what was happening in Bill C-38 and would, I am sure, have those same concerns when it comes to Bill C-42 given that many of the sections remain the same.

With the very limited amount of time I have to conclude my remarks, I would like to say that we do understand the urgency for action here. It is not our goal in this debate to delay these reforms to RCMP accountability and transparency, but it is important that we get them right. We must get them right in terms of public confidence; we must get them right in terms of the careers of individual RCMP members; and we must get them right to give Commissioner Paulson the powers and the abilities he needs to take care of some very serious problems in the workplace climate involving sexual harassment inside the RCMP.

Government Orders

We have one chance to get this right. I am hoping to work co-operatively with the government. Again, as I said, the minister said he would welcome discussion of amendments in the committee, and so we will be putting forward those kinds of amendments.

• (1245)

Finally, I would stress the importance of both the independence of the RCMP from government and the independence of investigations into RCMP conduct from the government and the RCMP, and also the independence of the commissioner, who really ought to be the chair of this new civilian agency and report to Parliament rather than to the minister of the day.

These are the kinds of concerns that New Democrats will be raising at committee.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent remarks on this important issue, as it is obviously something that we in the NDP have been fighting for. While we are glad to see the government take leadership, as my colleague noted, it has been a long time coming.

I would like to focus on the question of the RCMP's response to sexual harassment in the force. I heard the minister's remarks, which very rarely referenced what is not only a national concern but also a level of crisis among many women working in the force, as well as to a lot of women across Canada who are asking what is going on within our national police force and are wanting to see national leadership on this.

Yes, this legislation is a response to some of it, but it by no means is an exhaustive or proactive response to what is a very serious issue both for the RCMP and Canadians. I would like to ask my colleague how he feels about this need for focus and the kind of leadership we would like to see from the government when it comes to standing up for women in the RCMP, all RCMP officers and a general approach to gender equality in our country.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, there are two further concerns in the area of sexual harassment. One of them is that the RCMP commissioner has launched a gender audit within the RCMP to determine what kinds of problems he is going to need to address. We are going ahead with the legislation in the absence of the results from that audit. Therefore, I am hoping that when we go to committee we will be able to get at least some interim advice from the commissioner on what he has found in those areas. This could help guide the government in providing real leadership in ending sexual harassment within the RCMP and sending a signal to the broader Canadian society and young women who might want to join the RCMP about the confidence they can have. I do feel that we will have a crisis in recruiting women in the force if we do not address this.

The second concern is that the public complaints commission has launched an investigation into sexual harassment within the RCMP and we are now replacing that commission with a new body. One of the questions that New Democrats will be asking in committee is what are the succession plans to allow the commission to complete its work on sexual harassment. Again, we are hoping to have some interim indications to help guide us in committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his excellent speech and for doing such a terrific job of summarizing what Bill C-42 is all about.

Like the minister did in his opening remarks, my colleague talked about a number of amendments the committee would be able to make. Can he talk about the kind of amendments he would like to add to this bill to flesh it out and make it tougher on harassment in the RCMP?

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very serious question on how we can actually make the legislation provide the kinds of things the RCMP commissioner needs to take action on sexual harassment.

In terms of the timing of the bill, one of the curious things is that the minister had the courtesy to inform me that there were translation errors in the text of the bill. If it has taken this long to get the bill into the House of Commons it is a bit odd to receive a letter from the minister saying the bill will have to be corrected.

Apart from those housekeeping things, New Democrats will be talking about the kinds of amendments that would ensure a balanced disciplinary procedure, greater independence for investigations and greater independence for those who serve on the new civilian review body that is being created under the legislation.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister a question, but I found his answer unsatisfactory, so I would like to ask my colleague the same question.

Many people have said that the RCMP has fundamental problems and that the recommendations of the commission mentioned in the bill are not binding.

How can such a commission, which has no teeth whatsoever, solve these fundamental problems?

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, this is part on which Paul Kennedy, the former public complaints commissioner, made very strong statements. His view was that in his time in the job, which amounted to five years, he felt he needed greater powers to make binding recommendations.

It goes back to this kind of nexus of relationships between the commissioner and the minister and the commission, which is supposed to hold them accountable. Both the commission, which is supposed to do the accountability, and the commissioner report to the minister, so there is no clear hierarchy of someone who can make recommendations that will have to be carried out.

The reports from the commission, even the new commission that is proposed, that have to come to Parliament are only annual reports. Therefore, with any interim reports with recommendations in them, the minister can choose whether to forward those to Parliament for debate.

Government Orders

We are left with a situation that I believe lacks the true independence we need in the civilian oversight of the RCMP.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, my colleague just spoke about the independence of the RCMP. This reminded me that Bill C-42 is partly based on Bill C-38, which was introduced in a previous Parliament.

Both bills propose similar things. For example, this type of bill would once again enable the RCMP to conduct investigations itself in certain circumstances. For example, the bill proposes that each province be able to choose the organization responsible for investigating the RCMP; if no organization is able to do so, the RCMP itself will investigate.

I would like to ask my NDP colleague what he thinks about this piecemeal system within the RCMP. Does he not think that this type of system would undermine Canadians' trust in the RCMP?

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the member has asked a very interesting question.

We have seen a regrettable tendency by the government across the board to shed responsibilities and pass them down to the provinces. The RCMP is in fact our national police force. If Canadians are to have confidence in the RCMP, it seems that the buck has to stop at the national level which should quit trying to push these responsibilities down to the provincial level. That is a great concern in the bill and one that we will address in committee.

Like the minister, the hon. member, my associate critic, and I fanned out across the country. I know the member for Alfred-Pellan met with the Canadian Police Association. She also met with the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs. I attended the annual meetings of the Canadian Association of Police Boards. In all those meetings with all of those people we found serious concerns, not that the government was heading in the wrong direction or addressing the wrong problems but with some serious concerns about the measures contained in the bill to address those problems.

Once again, we will look to the committee process to make amendments to the bill, which are quite significant in terms of independence of investigation, independence of oversight and to give the commissioner balanced disciplinary powers and the powers he needs to address sexual harassment.

● (1255)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill to start us off this fall in the House, and I am pleased to participate in this debate.

To start, I would like to talk more generally about the actions of police forces by sharing with members an incident I witnessed this summer.

I stopped at a Tim Hortons restaurant in my riding to get a coffee and work on my work plan. When I entered, there were three people seated at a table: two women and a man. After some time it became clear that the third person did not really know the other two. This third person was a woman in her twenties. She had her head in her

hands and was crying. She was obviously very upset. This went on rather quietly for about 15 minutes. Then, two SPVM—Service de police de la Ville de Montréal—police officers walked in. They started to speak to the woman who was obviously upset, and took her outside. There was a long discussion that lasted a good 30 minutes. The police officers were extremely professional. They were very compassionate towards this woman. They asked her questions. This woman may have been suicidal or on drugs, or she may have been going through a psychological crisis. Eventually an ambulance arrived and the police officers helped the woman lie down on a stretcher. The ambulance obviously took her to the hospital.

I shared this story as an example of how wonderful and professional our police forces are, and how patient and attentive they are when they are helping individuals or facing a situation that could turn out badly.

[English]

This exemplary conduct on the part of Montreal's finest should not surprise anyone.

I know we are talking about misconduct of police officers, and specifically officers within the RCMP, but I think for every one incident of alleged misconduct or questionable behaviour by the police, there are thousands of incidences every day in the country, like the one I described, in which officers acted in a manner consistent with the highest professional standards, in a manner faithful to their lengthy and rigorous training and in keeping with the highest ideals of service to the community, the same ideals that led them to seek a career in law enforcement in the first place.

On a personal level, the police officers I know in my community are individuals of the highest integrity. They are committed to public service. I think of Roberto Del Pappa, the community relations officer at station 1 in my riding. I think of Paul Dufort, a detective for many years, a gentleman who had a career as a detective with the Montreal police prior to being elected city councillor in my hometown of Kirkland. I think of Michel Lecompte, now retired, but for many years a stalwart presence in Montreal's West Island community as commander of station 1.

There are many police officers serving in the House in a new capacity as elected representatives of the same people they once served as peace officers. I take this opportunity to salute their previous contributions to Canada in their role as members of various police forces.

● (1300)

It is true that what I described did not specifically involve the RCMP, and we are talking about the RCMP's problems today. However, all peace officers are pretty much cut from the same cloth. They are all members of the same family, life members of a true honour society, what used to be called a "brotherhood" before women joined the forces to serve in the same capacity as men and provide the diversity necessary in any public institution that aims to earn and keep the trust, respect and support of the general population.

I came to understand the deep and special bonds that existed within the police community through a friend of mine, the Honourable George Springate, who is now a senior citizenship judge. Many members in the House may have heard of him. He started his career as a policeman and then became a place-kicker for the Montreal Alouettes and helped win the Grey Cup in 1970. After that, he became a lawyer and afterward was head of the police technology program at John Abbott College in my riding. He has been a citizenship judge for a number of years now, doing an exemplary job giving the oath to new citizens. I have come to understand that Judge Springate knows every police officer in the country. Every time he runs into a police officer, somehow he seems to know him or her. Whether it is an RCMP agent or a member of other police forces or municipal police forces, he makes us realize that it is one big community of individuals, men and women, serving society.

It is true that there is some cynicism in our society toward police officers. Even when I was at that Tim Hortons this summer and the police officers were dealing with the situation at hand in an exceptionally professional and noble way, there were people in the coffee shop who somehow thought they were using too much force, which was absolutely not the case. Therefore, there is a level of cynicism toward the police. Obviously, to some extent this bill is intended to reassure the public that our RCMP officers are behaving properly.

However, I would like to suggest that this cynicism is really surface deep. Fundamentally, Canadians truly trust their police officers and feel they are there to maintain order and to do the best in upholding the public good. We just have to think for a moment that everyone here who might have kids probably would have given them the following advice: "If ever you're in trouble, lost or you need some help and there's a police officer around, go to the police officer". A public that is cynical toward the forces of law and order would not say that to their children.

Also, we all know how much more comfortable we feel if we are in a situation where there is or the potential of a disturbance when we see a police officer not far away. If we see someone speeding on the highway and we just happen to see a police car not far away, we somehow feel much more secure. That means we really fundamentally do appreciate the work of our police forces.

This does not mean that police forces always operate in a perfect way or that reform is not required. Police forces are human creations. They are human constructs and human institutions. As a result, their management structures, procedures and operations are a function of legislation that is created by legislators. Sometimes some reform is required. The system is not perfect and changes need to be brought, especially as society evolves. Fundamentally, Bill C-42 is about changing procedures so that inappropriate behaviours can be dealt with effectively and decisively by the RCMP's internal disciplinary mechanisms. However, it is also about changing RCMP culture.

• (1305)

Organizational cultures communicate signals about what is expected, about what is tolerated and, conversely, about what is not tolerated. I would suspect that, as in any organization, the vast majority of RCMP officers' core personal ethics guide them

instinctively toward appropriate behaviour, both as citizens and in their role as police officers.

At the other extreme, there are no doubt those who require clearer signals from the surrounding environment and corporate culture to inform them of what behaviour is acceptable and what behaviour is not.

The RCMP's internal disciplinary structures, policies and procedures must clarify, even simplify, those signals so that expected standards of conduct for a federal police officer are clearly communicated. Obviously, this has not always been the case. One simply has to look at the disciplinary process within the RCMP at the moment to understand how complex it is. It is really hard to wrap one's mind around the various aspects of that system.

Maybe this is one of the reasons why there have been some incidents over the last few years involving the RCMP; for example, the Maher Arar case where matters were not properly dealt with, where the RCMP took some false information to American authorities that resulted in Mr. Arar's imprisonment and torture.

Maybe it is the current system and its failure to communicate properly the inherent, solid values of the RCMP that has led officers to go astray in other ways. For example, in 2004 the RCMP raided the home and office of *Ottawa Citizen* reporter Juliet O'Neill. Soon thereafter, the Ontario Court of Justice ruled that the sections of the Security of Information Act used by the RCMP violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Somewhere there is a problem in communicating, to some officers anyway, what is expected in standards of behaviour. The court also found that the issuance and execution of the warrants in that case constituted an abuse of process by the RCMP and ordered that they be quashed.

Then in 2007, David Brown, a former head of the Ontario Securities Commission, released his report on allegations that senior RCMP officers covered up problems in the administration of the force's pension and insurance fund. He did not find an issue of cover-up, just mismanagement, saying the force requires major changes to its governance and culture: "We need fundamental cultural, structural and governance changes throughout the RCMP". He went on to say that the RCMP structure and culture "is completely at odds with the reality of running a \$3 billion enterprise".

Today we are debating a bill that is intended to bring some reform, some clarity and perhaps some simplification to disciplinary procedures and other related procedures within the RCMP so they are clearly understood by RCMP officers.

In regard to the bill, we are especially pleased that the government has finally given in on something Liberals have been seeking for a long time: a civilian complaints commission with the power to compel witnesses to give evidence, to review the RCMP's compliance with legislation and regulations and to appoint civilian observers to assess the impartiality of criminal investigations.

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One of my colleagues raised this point somewhat in a tangential way a moment ago in her question to the NDP critic. Yes, provincial police forces will be empowered, and I believe they are empowered at the moment, to investigate situations of potential or alleged misconduct by RCMP officers. However, the new complaints commission or complaints office, the name of which escapes me at this moment, will have the power to review investigations to see if they were truly impartial and will also have the power to call witnesses.

• (1310)

That is an important safeguard. Whether it is a perfect mechanism, we will see in committee. We will hear differing opinions on that, no doubt, and we will produce amendments as a result.

The RCMP is an iconic and thus powerful symbol for Canadians, but its identification with Canada and our Canadian values of order and good government is also international. If I am not mistaken, the RCMP or mounted police, as it is known, is the most identifiable symbol of Canada in the world outside our borders. We must restore that symbol's polish not so much to maintain the global community's esteem for Canada, though that is desirable, but more important, so that Canadians can have the confidence they require that our country's laws are being respected by those who enforce them and that the peace officers who work to uphold that respect are carrying out their duties with integrity. In other words, that the values that they represent are real and that there is no double standard in living and applying those values. That is why this bill is important. That is why we must get its detailed provisions right. We cannot afford, as a committee, as a Parliament, to slip up on this important task before us.

I look forward to participating in the study of Bill C-42 in committee and working with my colleagues in amending it where necessary. I sincerely hope that government members on committee will be open to suggestions from the opposition. The government probably has its own point of view of what needs to be amended, but I sincerely hope the government listens to the debate because these debates sometimes uncover issues that people who prepared the bill did not foresee, people within the department or ministers of cabinet. That is going to be an important part of this process, and I hope the government takes advantage of the committee process to make the bill better.

Finally, it is unfortunate that it took a letter from new RCMP Commissioner Robert Paulson underscoring the need for urgent reform before the government saw fit to act. It is also unfortunate, quite frankly, that it took some high profile sexual harassment cases to encourage the government to act.

We Liberals obviously wish to assist the new commissioner in the mandate he has been given to reform the RCMP's structures, disciplinary processes and ultimately its culture and credibility with Canadians. We are looking forward to working on the bill at committee. We will obviously be supporting it at second reading.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more than 200 women have now come forward in a class action lawsuit regarding sexual harassment in the RCMP. As members know, we on this side of the House have been pushing the minister

for months now to prioritize the issue of sexual harassment in the RCMP.

One of the things Bill C-42 does not directly address is the systemic issues in the culture of the RCMP. The bill by itself would not change the current climate in the RCMP. In fact, for me, there is one glaring omission in the bill.

Nowhere in the bill, or anywhere else for that matter, has the minister mandated the adoption of a clear anti-harassment policy in the RCMP, one that contains specific standards for behaviour and specific criteria for evaluating the performance of all employees. It is obvious to me that such a policy is needed to serve as a basis for a fair and disciplined process.

I was interested in the member's remarks on the topic of sexual harassment in the RCMP, but I note that when the Liberals were in government they did not create such a policy. I wonder whether he would indicate to me now whether he would be supportive of adopting a sexual harassment policy in the RCMP.

• (1315)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Of course we would, Mr. Speaker. I sincerely believe that everyone in the House would like to see an up-to-date and rigorous sexual harassment policy in the RCMP.

One of the other concerns I have about the bill, which relates to the point that the hon. member raised, is that so much is being left to future regulation. We ran into a similar situation when the committee was studying private member's bill C-293. That bill lays out a framework, but the details are to come later.

It is important that at committee perhaps the RCMP could table a model sexual harassment policy, one in which it would commit to putting in regulations, perhaps, but one to which it would commit today, publicly, as being the one it would live by.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in any large organization that one is managing, it is impossible, very inefficient and very expensive to try to micro-manage and keep track of what every single person in that large institution is doing. That is why it is so important, at a senior management level, to take control of the culture of an organization that one is managing.

My question to my hon. colleague is whether or not this bill reassures him and makes him believe that change in culture will occur at the RCMP.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful. I do think there needs to be more detail. We need to know more about the kinds of structures that will be created.

However, we do know that the commissioner will be given more latitude to reward well-performing officers and to discipline those who fall short of expected standards of behaviour. This is a positive development. It is a desire to cut through bureaucratic disciplinary systems that have probably evolved over a long period of time but have never truly been simplified or rationalized.

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I hope the commissioner will exercise his new latitude decisively and wisely, thereby helping to transform the culture. However, we need more detail about why the current system does not work and about what the government plans to put in its stead.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

My colleague from Hamilton Mountain asked an excellent question about what is going on with the class action lawsuit regarding sexual harassment brought forward by nearly 200 women against their employer, the RCMP.

It is crucial that we create an anti-harassment policy, and Bill C-42 presents the perfect opportunity to do just that: to create a policy that will transform the unhealthy environment that reigns within the RCMP.

Since this has been going on for years, my colleague likely knew that harassment that existed when he was in government.

Now that they agree that an anti-harassment policy is needed, why did they not do something about it when they were in power?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I was not part of the government at the time.

We need to act now. Maybe something should have been done in 2005, but everyone was surprised by the scope of the problem. We were surprised when some female members of the RCMP reported that they had been sexually harassed. Fortunately, this has been making headlines recently, which is forcing the government and everyone else to take action. However, something should have been done sooner.

The committee's examination will determine if any policy on sexual harassment existed and what went wrong.

We need to look toward the future. As committee members, our duty is not so much to look to the past, but rather to ensure that the sexual harassment policy that is developed is designed for the 21st century.

• (1320)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize up front that the RCMP, as a police entity, has respect throughout the world as an organization that in many different ways has it right. In fact, the RCMP is looked to as a model agency that other countries try to duplicate. I, for one, am very proud of the fact that our RCMP is there. I go to many citizenship courts and see the RCMP officers standing in the red serge, and people identify that and want to have their pictures taken with them. There is an RCMP officer at the front of the stairs in the House of Commons and tourists want to be there. It is an iconic symbol of Canada.

We should recognize that in having such a large organization as we do with the RCMP, there are bound to be some issues that need to be addressed. I am wondering if my colleague would talk about the benefits and strengths in how Canadians identify with what I believe is the best police force in the world.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I began my speech by trying as best I could to pay homage not only to RCMP officers but the broader family of peace officers in Canada. It is of utmost importance that the public trust in our police forces be maintained and enhanced at every opportunity. They are the ones that ensure that our society remains orderly and an orderly society is required in order for everyone's rights to be respected.

We have to repolish the RCMP's image following a number of well-publicized incidents. I said at the beginning of my speech that I believe 99.99% of police officers across this country do their duty in the most exemplary way. It would be a shame if a few bad apples, as they say, cast aspersions on the family of police officers Canada wide.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I first thank my hon. colleagues from Lac-Saint-Louis and Winnipeg North for their comments. Before I get into the bulk of my speech, I will read a section from "Sharing Common Grounds", a document written in the Yukon Territory on the review of the RCMP and its police force. It states:

We have heard many accounts of policing excellence, including stories of RCMP members going above and beyond their normal duties. The purpose of the Review is to improve the quality of policing services for all citizens in the territory.

So I am pleased to rise today to support Bill C-42, the enhancing Royal Canadian Mounted Police accountability act, because I believe this bill would achieve just what that review was highlighting.

This is a critical piece of legislation that would ultimately have an impact on every Canadian right across this country. The RCMP is a national presence, serving eight provinces, three territories, more than 190 municipalities, 184 aboriginal communities and three international airports from coast to coast to coast. However, it is more than that. It is woven into the very fabric of our nation.

Almost 140 years ago, Canada's first prime minister, Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, established the North-West Mounted Police to help bring law and order to the newly acquired western territories. The idea then was to make the force something uniquely Canadian by opting for a red uniform in order to differentiate it from the blue ones worn by the Americans. Since then, the red serge has become recognized around the world as a symbol of what it means to be Canadian. Indeed, it has come to symbolize what we as a nation value the most: peace, honesty, integrity and compassion. The RCMP's reputation follows it around the world, with our officers deployed every day in far-flung corners as part of international peacekeeping operations. This global presence is just one more reason why we must ensure that the RCMP continues its ongoing transformation and modernization efforts.

Unfortunately, these ideals and Canadians' confidence in the RCMP have been tested over the past few years due to high-profile events, public inquiries and most recently by the allegations of sexual harassment brought forward by RCMP members. That is why our government has always placed RCMP modernization at the top of its priorities. Once again, the "Sharing Common Ground" document from the territory notes in its executive summary:

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The public expects that police officers will act with integrity and that their conduct will be above reproach at all times. From time to time, police services fall short of this expectation. This can be due to the result of a single act by a police officer that offends public sensibility or through a more general decline in the quality of service over time. When either or both occurs, it erodes the public's trust in its policing service. In these situations, there must be independent, transparent and accessible processes that hold individual members and the organization accountable.

Since first coming into power in 2006, our government has made great progress helping the RCMP modernize and transform itself in key areas. We have already heard the calls for better civilian oversight, more accountability and a stronger framework to handle investigations of serious incidents involving the RCMP. We have heard the calls for more modern discipline, grievance in human resource management frameworks and one that will bring about the cultural shift within the RCMP. We have responded.

The RCMP has also made changes. For example, it has adopted an external investigation and review policy for serious incidents involving RCMP officers. Whenever possible, it refers these investigations to other agencies. It has also revised its conducted energy weapon policy, and it has introduced new operational responses and readiness policies to ensure front-line officers have the resources they require to do their jobs safely and efficiently.

Overall, the vast majority of Canadians remain confident in and proud of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This was made clear earlier this year when all provinces and territories that rely on the RCMP to keep their communities secure and their citizens safe resigned new 20-year RCMP police service agreements.

• (1325)

Notably, among the key issues addressed within the new agreements was accountability, a theme that underpins Bill C-42 and one that I will be returning to often. Although progress has been made on many fronts, we must take further steps to enhance the RCMP's accountability and transparency to all Canadians. Bill C-42 is that body of legislation. It is a comprehensive bill that would allow us to move forward with certainty in our transformation exercise. It addresses calls for increased oversight and accountability of the RCMP and builds on the progress already being made in the management of its workforce.

Underpinning this legislation is the idea of strengthening the accountability of the RCMP: accountability to the Canadian public, and the accountability of senior management to RCMP members themselves and of RCMP members to each other.

Focusing on the first thought, that of accountability of the RCMP to the Canadian public, this legislation would put in place a new civilian review and complaints commission for the RCMP. This new review commission would replace the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, or CPC, which was created in 1980 to review public complaints made against RCMP members. The CPC has fulfilled its role with great fortitude and dedication and we are grateful for the tremendous efforts of its members over the years. The reality is, however, that the CPC's powers have limited its ability to fully and effectively review RCMP activities. As such, its efforts to hold the RCMP to account on behalf of the Canadian public have been hampered. The new commission would maintain many elements of the CPC but would operate under an enhanced framework that would allow it to be a more effective oversight body.

The most important changes are new powers, including the power to conduct policy reviews, subject to certain identified limitations; the authority to summon and compel witnesses to give oral or written evidence under oath, or to provide documents and other materials relevant to the complaint; and the authority to access all RCMP information, except cabinet confidences, that the commission needs to undertake its reviews. For example, the commission would be able to request privileged information if it could demonstrate that it is both relevant and necessary to fully review the conduct of an RCMP member.

I am pleased to note that the framework for this commission was developed in close consultation with the provinces and the territories that contract RCMP services. During the negotiations for new police service agreements, provinces and territories spoke of the need for a more efficient review system that removes overlaps and redundancies as well as meets or exceeds other police review bodies. The new commission would be better integrated and harmonized with provincial police review bodies including the sharing of information, conducting joint investigations as needed, and issuing annual case specific reports to provinces and territories regarding complaints and reviews in their region.

A further step toward better accountability to the Canadian public can be found in the framework proposed for investigations of serious incidents. When an RCMP member is involved in an incident that results in death or serious injury, or some other matter of great public interest, the Canadian public wants to know that there is a system in place to allow an independent and comprehensive criminal investigation. In other words, it addresses concerns regarding the police investigating the police.

I refer back to an earlier remark about this being done in consultation with the provinces. When I reviewed the "Sharing Common Ground" document, an underlying theme that I found within it was that the concerns of the community revolved around the police investigating the police when it involved serious incidents or death. Drawing directly from "Sharing Common Ground", we see how Bill C-42 is addressing, at least, the specific needs outlined in that territory's review of its police force.

• (1330)

Every time RCMP members put on their badges and leave their homes there is potential that they might have to put their lives on the line to protect Canadians. Because the police hold special powers in our society, Canadians rightfully hold them to higher standards. Canadians have every right to feel confident that there is a very strong system in place to review serious incidents and that the system is fair, impartial, highly transparent and accountable.

Government Orders

Under the proposed framework and building on the RCMP's policy on external investigations announced in 2010, the RCMP would be required by law to refer serious incident investigations involving the RCMP to an independent provincial body that has, as its core mandate, the investigation of police related incidents, for example, Alberta's serious incident response team. Where no such body exists, the RCMP would then be required to refer the investigation to another police service and only in those very rare instances where these two options are not available would the RCMP undertake the investigation itself.

The framework also provides for an independent observer to be appointed to monitor the impartiality of these investigations when they are conducted by the RCMP or another police service. This would go a long way toward maintaining public trust in the RCMP. Public trust and confidence is the cornerstone of policing and without accountability that trust is lost.

The bill also focuses on improving the RCMP's accountability to its employees. It does so with greatly improved and streamlined frameworks to address discipline, grievance and human resource management issues. These changes cannot come soon enough.

All hon. members are aware of the recent headlines about allegations of misconduct and harassment within the RCMP ranks. The proposed legislation would reorient and streamline a system that is currently bogged down in red tape, overburdened with administrative processes and plagued with lengthy proceedings that can last for years in some cases.

All RCMP members deserve to have access to a discipline and grievous system that is timely, fair and transparent. Just as Canadians need to feel confident in their police organization, so, too, do RCMP members need to trust in their senior management. They need to know that there is a strong system in place to hold their managers and themselves to account for their actions.

Our goal is to ensure that the RCMP as an organization has the tools available to address workplace conflict, performance and conduct matters at the first instance and, where possible, at the front line. This means moving decision-making down to the lowest appropriate level, thereby empowering managers and giving them more responsibility for discipline. This means ensuring there is a proper grievous system in place that allows for early intervention into workplace issues that is flexible in how grievances and appeals are managed and that is based on engagement and fairness. The timely resolution of workplace issues means that officers would no longer be crippled by long and drawn out administrative processes.

Bill C-42 also proposes a new human resources management framework that would give the RCMP commissioner enhanced authority closer in line with those of a deputy minister of a federal department and other police chiefs across Canada. In other words, the commissioner would be more fully able to manage the complex and dynamic environment in which the RCMP operates. The bill would give the commissioner the authority to make decisions regarding hiring, demoting or discharging most members, including officers other than deputy commissioners and commanding officers in charge of divisions, as well as the flexibility to delegate these authorities to another person. He or she would also have the

authority to establish processes for investigations into disputes relating to harassment in the workplace.

Of course, with these new powers must come strengthened accountability and transparency. For example, while the RCMP commissioner would be able to demote or discharge a member, he or she would be required to show cause for decisions and serious discipline decisions would be reviewed by an independent external review committee.

The final element of the bill is the proposal to streamline the employee categories within the RCMP. To do this, the bill contains a mechanism that would move the RCMP from three categories of employees to two and provides for the conversion of civilian members to public service employees.

●(1335)

Taken together, the amendments proposed in Bill C-42 would truly set the RCMP on a course for a strong future. They would strengthen and modernize the RCMP to make it more accountable and create a more efficient grievance and discipline system.

The bill would help ensure that the RCMP continues to evolve into a more transparent, effective and accountable force of which all Canadians can continue to be proud.

I call on all hon. members to support this important bill and to ensure its passage. Now is the time that we must work together so that the RCMP remains a source of great national pride whose members represent the values we all cherish of honesty, integrity, compassion, respect, accountability, professionalism and the willingness to go the extra mile to help someone in need.

I move:

That this question be now put.

●(1340)

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we in the House are lucky to have the benefit of significant advice when it comes to matters like debating Bill C-42.

I want to draw members' attention to the 2006 report of Justice O'Connor's inquiry into the actions of Canadian officials in relation to Maher Arar. That report called on Parliament to create an RCMP watchdog along the lines of the security and intelligence review committee which monitors CSIS. It would have the right to audit all RCMP files and activities and the power to subpoena related documents and compel testimony from any federal, provincial, municipal or private sector person or entity.

Government Orders

The present RCMP Public Complaints Commission “does not have review powers to ensure systematically that the RCMP’s national security activities are conducted in accordance with the law and with respect for rights and freedoms”. That speaks to the fact that the government must take the next step. It must allow binding recommendations and full civilian investigation of the RCMP through a truly independent watchdog panel that will report directly to Parliament.

Would the member opposite be supportive of creating an agency that actually had teeth and, if that were the case, would he then support that when the bill goes to committee?

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this legislation has teeth and that it is based on the recommendations and input put forward by the provinces and territories in which they tabled detailed reviews of their police forces. The one from the Yukon, Sharing Common Ground, has called almost exactly for what we have put forward in the bill.

When we look at the RCMP and its uniqueness of policing from coast to coast to coast, from urban to rural communities, it will not always be possible to have those reviews done in a timely, clear and independent fashion by one single board based in one region of our country. The flexibility in this legislation allows the RCMP, other police agencies or an independent board to conduct timely, flexible, clear and accountable reviews of policing actions in Canada’s unique geography which is unlike any other on this planet.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we were to canvass some of the strongest advocates for the types of changes that are being proposed in the legislation, there is no doubt that we would find within the ranks of the RCMP officers who recognize the value of transparency, accountability and the need for independent investigations.

However, there is some concern with the government’s attitude in changing the legislation and that there could be a need for some amendments to the legislation. The member finished his speech and then moved that the question be now put. It is a continuation from where we left off in the sense that the government feels that there is no role for the House of Commons to play in terms of contributing to the debate. It raises the concern of how open the government will be in terms of amendments brought forward from the Liberal Party or suggestions that come from individuals who present at the committee stage.

Could the member assure the Liberal Party and Canadians that once the bill gets to committee that the government will be open and receptive to amendments that could come forward, whether it is from the Liberal Party or possibly others?

• (1345)

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, if we move this to the committee stage, that is exactly where we will get an opportunity to hear from the experts, the people with the skills, knowledge and ability to give us their input on the strengths, weaknesses and room for improvement in the bill itself. As members of that committee, we will have the opportunity to ask our own questions of those witnesses and see what comes of that from committee. We are looking very much forward to that I am sure.

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate the fact that we all want to achieve the same goal in terms of bringing more accountability to the RCMP and I think we can work together to see that happen.

My question for my colleague is with regard to the practical ways that modernizing the way complaints are dealt with at the supervisor level would change things. Obviously there is nothing we can do about what happened in the past but what we are looking forward to is the future and how in the future, when complaints or grievances come up within the RCMP, this modernization would, in practical terms, make the process go a lot faster and, hopefully, would implement education so that we would see people working together rather than have a confrontational process, which is what we see happening right now.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, we just need to look at any business right now. Dealing with complaints at the lowest level is the most effective location to do that. This legislation would provide the RCMP the opportunity to do that.

As I mentioned in answer to a question posed by the opposition a bit earlier, Canada is massive. We have police officers policing in remote communities with less than 200 people, right up to municipalities where there are 300-plus RCMP members, such as the Surrey detachment. Therefore, for the detachment commanders and the people working on those front lines having an opportunity to deal with any issue right away would speed up the service that we get. It would be fairer and transparent and it would get the issue dealt with rather quickly. Those things tend to take a tremendous amount of time and resources away from the front line policing that the officers need to do. Things that tend to linger on like that have great impacts on small detachments.

This would help, most specifically, some of our smaller and rural detachments, as well as the big ones, but I can see a direct benefit there to small communities.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member across, who represents an area with very similar challenges to my own when it comes to policing and support for the RCMP.

While this legislation talks about disciplinary action, with what kinds of resources would this action take place when we know that in areas in northern Canada there are extreme shortfalls in terms of funding and in terms of resources on the ground that the RCMP have to work with? Last week in my own riding it hit the national media that people in Lac Brochet had to be chained to doors in an arena.

Is that the way we treat Canadians in the year 2012? Where is the federal government’s support in terms of resources for the RCMP?

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, I understand the needs of the policing situations in the north. Obviously, it is up to the justice ministers of the provinces to negotiate their resource needs with the commanding officer of that division. They highlight those needs and set them and that is generally supported by the contract that is outlined here in Parliament.

However, when we look at the advantage with this bill, a good bulk of the shortages that I know we are facing in the north have a lot to do with members being displaced because of disciplinary hearings and actions that are long ongoing, some of them for four or five years. If we could shrink those things down, those resources that are determined for the detachment in the division could be allocated directly to where they are supposed to be and we would not have one or two members working short-staffed or short-handed because there is a disciplinary review process that has now taken a resource away from that community or detachment for two and three years as this review is being undertaken.

In terms of capital resources, the federal government is continuing to invest in the RCMP and we are making that a priority.

• (1350)

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before starting my speech, I would like to say that I will share my time with the member for Châteauguay—Saint-Constant.

After some consideration I rise today to speak to Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts. In my speech I will focus on the current cases of misconduct and sexual harassment within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This extremely delicate subject must be taken into account in the debate here. As a woman and as deputy public safety critic for the official opposition, I feel it is my duty to speak to this issue.

During the last parliamentary session, my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, several other members of the opposition and I asked the government to take swifter action in response to the many allegations of sexual harassment within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Minister of Public Safety promised us a bill that would address issues of discipline within the RCMP, which we have now in Bill C-42.

The NDP has long wanted to look at the RCMP, particularly the change in corporate culture that would need to take place within the organization in order to address the numerous allegations of sexual harassment. That is why we support this bill at second reading. We absolutely want to examine it more closely and especially propose the necessary amendments to make it even stronger.

Although women have won a lot of rights in Canada, there are still far too many disparities between men and women. “Working in a man’s world” is an expression that is sadly used too much these days. A number of fields are unfortunately stigmatized: construction, forestry and even politics, to name just a few.

As a member of Parliament, I often have the opportunity to meet women who make a difference every day in their workplaces. I am thinking, for example, of all of the female corrections officers who work in our penitentiaries. There are three federal penitentiaries in my riding of Alfred-Pellan. We have a number of female corrections officers, and I am very proud of that fact. They themselves are very proud of their work and of their colleagues, on whom they can always count. They are involved in their union; they are mothers; they are real examples to follow, like many women who are looking

to make a difference through their dedication to and involvement in their communities.

Female RCMP officers are women who dedicate themselves every day to keeping Canadians safe, and we thank them for it. However, some of them have been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment is deplorable, no matter the workplace. What is regrettable about the RCMP response is the punishment for the guilty parties. Take the unfortunate and notorious case of a senior RCMP officer in Alberta who was found guilty of several counts of sexual harassment. The consequences were minimal: he lost a few days’ pay, was transferred to another part of the country, and kept his job. The consequences for him were minimal, but the impact on the victim is irreparable.

This does not solve the problem, far from it. First, the person who is transferred could reoffend. This reminds me of inmates who do not participate in any programs while incarcerated and who have difficulty reintegrating into society after they have served their sentence. All the experts agree that we must punish wrongdoers, but we must also ensure that they do not victimize anyone else.

Furthermore, ignoring a problem such as sexual harassment in the workplace by not punishing the offenders can have serious consequences for the victims. These women risk their lives every day to protect us and they deserve better. The lack of an internal mechanism for dealing with the misconduct of certain individuals does not improve the work environment and does not allow these women to trust a system that is supposed to protect their rights.

• (1355)

As a result of the allegations and what Canadians have learned about the internal operations of the RCMP, they no longer have faith in their national police force, which is huge.

This faith must be restored by changing the corporate culture within the RCMP. That is why it is so important that we have a closer look at this bill and study it carefully.

Bill C-42 simplifies the complex process that is currently in place to address problems and misconduct in the workplace, including the abuse of power, intimidation and harassment, by giving the commissioner the ultimate authority to determine the appropriate disciplinary action.

When the current RCMP commissioner, Mr. Paulson, took the job last November, he told his troops that harassment would not be tolerated in the workplace. I applaud that comment.

Currently, RCMP managers faced with having to address harassment issues have two different processes they must follow—one created under Treasury Board policy and the other under the RCMP Act. Since these processes do not always align, this can lead to confusion about rights, responsibilities and potential approaches.

Bill C-42 proposes giving the commissioner the power to establish a single comprehensive framework for investigating harassment and resolving these issues.

Statements by Members

While Bill C-42 gives the commissioner greater powers regarding discipline and the ability to create a more effective process to resolve harassment complaints, the fact remains that the bill does nothing to change the corporate culture within the RCMP, which is crucial to addressing the allegations of systematic sexual harassment, which we in the NDP strongly condemn.

With respect to changes, we believe that profound changes are needed and we must ensure that this never happens again.

The RCMP's current system cannot be transformed with such a bill, but we would like to emphasize the fact that the bill will give the RCMP commissioner the ability to create a more effective procedure for handling complaints of sexual harassment, and this is a big step in the right direction.

Bill C-42 is missing some other important elements. The government needs to create a completely independent monitoring agency that would report directly to Parliament. Such an agency could make binding recommendations and conduct a comprehensive civilian investigation of the RCMP.

In its current form, the bill would enable the provinces to give an investigative body or a police force the mandate to investigate incidents. However, the RCMP could run the investigation itself if no other organization were able to. The official opposition strongly opposes this proposal, and, based on what I have heard from my colleagues opposite who are looking for a clearer, more independent process, they do not like it either. I therefore suggest that they put forward amendments to change this part of the bill.

First, let us go back to the beginning and talk about whether the RCMP can investigate itself. That is part of why Canadians are losing confidence in their national police force. Moreover, this way of doing things will create an extremely piecemeal system by letting provincial organizations oversee a national police force.

The balance of power will differ from one province to the next. We must absolutely take this opportunity to create a fair, clear and transparent system that will go a long way toward building the confidence of the general public and of the women who work for the RCMP, in their national police force.

A number of reports and commissions have recommended implementing structural and organizational reforms within the RCMP that go well beyond what Bill C-42 proposes. For example, Justice O'Connor's report urged Parliament to create an RCMP oversight body. David Brown's 2007 report on the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP proposed changes that would make the RCMP completely independent from government with status as a separate employer.

Bill C-42 does not go far enough for women either. Women working for the RCMP have the right to safe access to a more open and transparent working environment.

• (1400)

The sad thing about this bill is that the current government had to be asked about it repeatedly in the House of Commons and in committee before deciding to draft it.

The RCMP needs a clear harassment policy. I will be proud to propose amendments and support Bill C-42.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

ELECTION OF THE PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois wishes to celebrate the election of a sovereignist government in Quebec led by the Parti Québécois and to congratulate Quebec's first female premier, Pauline Marois.

In previous Parti Québécois governments, Ms. Marois held the highest-profile portfolios: finance, education, health, industry, trade and social economy, as well as the position of deputy premier.

As leader of the Parti Québécois since 2007, Pauline Marois has demonstrated extraordinary resilience and staunch convictions. She has now ascended to the highest public office in Quebec.

Pauline Marois and the new Parti Québécois government can count on the Bloc Québécois to speak on behalf of the Government of Quebec here in Ottawa's Parliament. Should Pauline Marois and the Parti Québécois wish to promote Quebec's sovereignty, take control of employment insurance, maintain the gun registry, take full control of environmental policy or ensure respect for our jurisdiction over securities regulation, they will find a staunch ally in the Bloc Québécois.

Congratulations to the Parti Québécois. Congratulations, Pauline Marois.

* * *

[English]

THE MEMBER FOR PORTAGE—LISGAR

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform you, my colleagues and my constituents that I have decided to return to my birth name, Candice Bergen. This change will take place as soon as this statement concludes. I realize that many will associate that name with a popular actress, but it is in fact the name that my parents gave me and I am extremely proud and honoured to resume using the name Bergen, a name that it has a deep history and strong ties in my riding of Portage—Lisgar.

I am so grateful for the strong support I received from my constituents during election time and between elections, and I am very honoured to be referred to as their member here in the chamber. Although my last name is changing, I can assure my constituents I will continue to serve and represent them here in Ottawa and work for their families in the riding and for their interests.

If members hear on the Hill that Candice Bergen is here, it is not Murphy Brown people will be referring to. It will be me.

[Translation]

JÉRÉMY GABRIEL

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to tell my colleagues the rather extraordinary story of Jérémy Gabriel, a 15-year-old young man from my riding.

Jérémy Gabriel, from Charlesbourg, was born prematurely with major facial deformities caused by a rare congenital disease and was also deaf.

In 2003, he underwent surgery to implant a bone-anchored hearing aid. After the surgery, Jérémy became fascinated by sound and discovered that he could sing. He has undergone 17 surgeries in 10 years.

When he was nine years old, Jérémy sang for Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican and for Céline Dion in Las Vegas. On July 4 of this year, Jérémy Gabriel was named patient ambassador by the Shriners Hospitals for Children at the national convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. He took to the stage in front of more than 10,000 delegates from around the world to perform a song and share his story.

Bravo, Jérémy.

* * *

[English]

2012 OLYMPIC GAMES

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize Ottawa Valley girl and Canadian Olympic athlete Melissa Bishop.

Melissa Bishop represented Canada at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London in the 800-metre race. She earned the right to represent Canada by becoming only the third Canadian woman to break the two-minute barrier in the two-lap race in the qualifying rounds.

While Melissa is a native of Bonnechere Valley township, from deep in the heart of the upper Ottawa Valley, she carried with her the thoughts and aspirations of all the people in the Ottawa Valley. In turn, Ottawa Valley residents embraced Melissa, supporting fundraising events, buying T-shirts and giving her a hero's welcome with a homecoming parade.

Melissa shared with us her Olympic dream to be the best by competing with the best, running toward the dream. We will see her in Rio in four years.

* * *

• (1405)

ROSH HASHANAH

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at sundown last night Jews all over the world began their observance of Rosh Hashanah, the two-day holiday marking the Jewish new year. On Rosh Hashanah, members of the Jewish community gather to remember the blessings of the past year and to look forward to the promise of the future.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

It is a time to celebrate the rich traditions of the Jewish community and to give thanks for the mutual respect and understanding that define us as Canadians.

[English]

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and the Liberal caucus in Parliament, I wish all of those celebrating Rosh Hashanah a happy and prosperous new year.

Shana Tova.

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STONEGATE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Stonegate Community Health Centre on celebrating 20 years of service in Etobicoke—Lakeshore. Founded in 1992 by a group of Stonegate neighbourhood residents, Stonegate CHC is a service hub for the whole community.

Stonegate provides primary health care, including free blood pressure screening, flu vaccines and hypertension clinics; family programs, including prenatal programs, early years and nutrition counselling; and importantly, health promotion and community building, with programs like smoking cessation, staying fit for seniors, settlement services for newcomers and the wonderful Stonegate farmers market.

There are too many excellent staff and volunteers to recognize them all right now, but I wish to highlight two fine members of the Stonegate community: executive director Beverly Leaver, whose tireless leadership in the centre is appreciated by clients, staff and all community stakeholders; and Joan McKenzie, who has been with Stonegate CHC since its inception, managing human resources and finances. Joan's dedication of her time and talent is an inspiration to all of us.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I wrote to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, urging him to grant conscientious objector Kimberly Rivera permanent residency status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Like many of us here in Canada, Kimberly opposed the U.S. war in Iraq. Even the Prime Minister called the war an "absolute error".

Now Kimberly faces a deportation order and the real possibility that she will be jailed in the United States and separated from her children, two of whom were born here in Canada. This is just wrong.

In this morning's *Globe and Mail*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote:

During the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa, we were sustained by the knowledge of the support we had in the international community. Ms. Rivera has my support and the support of all those who desperately want humanity to move along a path of peace.

I again call on the government to do the right thing and let this family stay in Canada and stay together.

*Statements by Members***TIRE TAKE BACK DAYS**

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sometimes private individuals and business go way above and beyond when contributing to our society.

Today I congratulate and thank Woodbeck Auto Parts of Stirling, the Ontario Tire Stewardship and all the automotive recyclers who took part in this year's Tire Take Back Days.

Instead of unsightly heaps of discarded tires becoming a fire hazard, the Ontario Tire Stewardship has made its mission to make sure these tires are disposed of properly and safely.

Woodbeck Auto Parts and members of the Ontario Automotive Recyclers Association acted as a collection point for discarded tires during Tire Take Back Days. Canadians dropped off 139,000 tires at 72 locations across Ontario, with Woodbeck Auto Parts leading the way. As a result of this recycling, \$357,960 was raised for the Sunshine Foundation children's charity.

Woodbeck Auto Parts, Ontario Tire Stewardship and members of the Ontario Auto Recyclers Association are to be commended on their dedication to the well-being of our local communities.

* * *

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON OZONE LAYER

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago the world gathered in Montreal to address the issue of production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances. With Canada at the forefront both, then and now, this meeting led to the creation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, whose 25th anniversary we marked yesterday.

Canada has been a world leader in atmospheric ozone science for more than 50 years. Twenty-five years ago we contributed key scientific information that laid the groundwork for the development of the Montreal Protocol. Since that time we have continued to play a key role in research and restoration efforts, using a strong foundation of Canadian-made, Canadian-led science, such as the Canadian-developed Brewer ozone spectrophotometer.

Much work remains, and our government is committed to taking real action toward the restoration of the ozone layer, as well as reporting on its strength and health.

That is why Environment Canada will continue to collect the information necessary to monitor the ozone in the upper atmosphere, and will continue to operate the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre as part of this important global initiative.

* * *

● (1410)

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, welcome back to the chair. Unfortunately, while this is a new session, we have the same old problems created by the government.

Because of Conservative cuts to front-line service workers, we see an ever-increasing denial of help for Canadians. Call centres just are not doing the job.

Connie Walker tried for two months to help her learning-disabled brother, Daniel, attain his benefit statement and access code, only to find out that the option to speak with an operator had been removed due to the high volume of calls. Daniel does not have a computer, was hampered by a broken ankle and had had no income since June 22. The telephone was his only option.

The same situation applies to GIS. Last week alone, my office helped six seniors with GIS problems. Omar had been trying for three weeks to change his address with CIC, but could not get through to anyone.

What I would like to get through to the government is the unspeakable harm it has caused to the people it refuses to serve.

* * *

TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 73 years ago today and only 16 days after Nazi Germany declared war on Poland and invaded from the west, the Soviet Union invaded without warning from the east. We know well about the crimes the Nazis committed in the west. However, the brutality of the Soviet Union in the east was extensive, though this is less discussed in the history textbooks.

The Soviets did not recognize the Geneva conventions. They committed mass murder of military officers and civilians, deported hundreds of thousands to Siberia and imposed collectivization. In the end, the Soviets actively caused the death of millions in the area covering modern Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus that is now known as the Bloodlands.

I would like to encourage all Canadians to learn more about the crimes of communism and to support the important initiative led by the Tribute to Liberty to build a national monument to the victims of communism here in Ottawa.

* * *

PETER LOUGHEED

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this past week our nation lost a great Canadian.

Former Premier Peter Lougheed is remembered as a formidable advocate for provincial control of natural resources and for establishing a stronger place for Alberta in the federation, yet he contributed so much more on other fronts. He created the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, investing resource royalties toward health care and medical research. He established the first Alberta ministry of culture and set aside protected areas, notably Kananaskis Country. He enacted the Alberta Bill of Rights and contributed to the entrenchment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Recently, he raised concerns with the fast-paced development of the oil sands and called for greater attention to the environment.

In his own words, Peter Lougheed was a Canadian first, an Albertan second and a political partisan third. He left a lasting legacy, benefiting not only Albertans but all Canadians. We would do well to build on his legacy and his recent sage advice.

May he rest in peace.

* * *

[Translation]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP was busy over the summer promoting its carbon tax. Yes, the NDP and its leader want to impose a carbon tax that would kill jobs and raise the price of gas, electricity and nearly everything else.

Canadians have been clear about such legislation. Look what this issue did to the Liberal Party. While the NDP is doing whatever it can to see to it that Canadians pay even more at the pump, here on this side of the House, we will continue to focus on the economy, jobs and long-term prosperity.

Our government has been clear: we will oppose the NDP leader's proposed tax on almost everything, and we will continue to keep taxes low for families and job creators.

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

PETER LOUGHEED

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians mourn the loss of the late Peter Lougheed. He lies in state today in the Alberta legislature where he served with such distinction.

However his impact was truly national. His accomplishments were many: successful resource development policies; real concern for the environment; his long-term vision of a heritage fund; investments in medicine, science, the arts and recreation; his role in repatriating the Constitution; and much more.

However, three personal characteristics make him an endearing and enduring figure: first, he was always a gentleman who earned respect by being respectful of others; second, he sought to build bridges of inclusion, not drive wedges of polarization; and third, he always called himself a proud Canadian.

Unfailingly civil and decent, Peter Lougheed made us all better by the example he lived.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Jeanne, and their family.

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LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gas prices across the country are surging, yet the Leader of the Opposition has been travelling around the country to promote a

Statements by Members

tax on carbon. Hard-working Canadians across the country will suffer if the NDP brings forward a job-killing carbon tax that will increase the price of everything. Families will see the price of gas, groceries and electricity increase and become even more of a burden. The NDP leader's carbon tax scheme may have been endorsed by the president of Shell, but it is Canadians who will pay this tax, not big oil companies.

Why is the leader of the NDP advocating for another tax on Canadian families, one that it has been estimated will raise the price of gas by as much as 10¢ a litre?

Our government will continue to focus on creating jobs and economic growth across the country. We will not follow the lead of the Leader of the Opposition and burden families with reckless tax schemes.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since I arrived here in the House, I have seen my teammates opposite salivate over every labour dispute, all excited to be able to jump on the ice and impose special legislation. They have already scored a hat trick by passing three such bills.

Since interfering in labour relations has become a Conservative speciality, I hope that they will give 110% to dealing with the new lockout affecting Canada: the National Hockey League lockout.

Since the Conservatives love to rewrite collective agreements for no reason, the fact that the puck is no longer in play for millions of Canadian fans should be enough of a reason for them to get involved.

[English]

Now, let us just think about it. A special law to end the NHL lockout would make a really good chapter in the Prime Minister's mythical hockey book.

[Translation]

If the Conservatives have to stick their noses into labour disputes, they may as well do something useful for once and bring back our national sport, unless they are afraid of being bodychecked.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the opposition House leader changed his story. Some might say that he misled Canadians by claiming the NDP leader would not impose a carbon tax that would raise the price of everything. However, earlier this year the opposition House leader championed the idea of a carbon tax saying, “I’m more of a cap-and-trade kind of guy. I think it’s a much more accurate assessment of full cost but, again, the point of the exercise is putting a price on carbon”.

Cap and trade or cap and tax, a price on carbon is a tax on carbon. That makes it a carbon tax. Our government will continue to stand up against the NDP’s plan to impose a job-killing carbon tax on Canadians that would raise the price of everything, things like gasoline, home heating fuel and groceries.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada’s economy is still in difficulty despite the Prime Minister’s boasts. The Conservatives have set a new record with a trade deficit of \$50 billion. Hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs have vanished—high-quality, high-paying jobs. The artificially high Canadian dollar is hurting export industries. Household debt has never been so high and productivity has never been so low.

Does the Prime Minister realize that it is time to change his economic strategy?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the global economy is very fragile, but Canada has one of the best job creation records in the world with the creation of three-quarters of a million net new jobs since the recession.

We have more work to do, but we cannot create jobs by raising taxes, as the NDP proposes.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve better.

The Prime Minister’s well-connected friends may be doing perfectly well, but the young mother I met last week at an unemployment centre in Windsor, or the auto worker I met in Oshawa who is worried he could be the next to be laid off, or government workers all across the country trying to figure out why the Conservatives’ job strategy is to cut services to Canadians are struggling.

Does the Prime Minister have anything to say to the 1.4 million Canadians who are still unemployed? Could he name one specific thing he has done for them other than cut off their employment insurance?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have done no such thing. What we have seen in Canada since the end of the recession is the creation of over three-quarters of a million net new jobs. That is one of the best job creation records in the developed world. That is why people have such confidence in the Canadian economy in spite of the incredible uncertainty. We have more work to do.

What will not create jobs are the proposals of the NDP to raise taxes, to block our trade and to shut down industries. Those things do nothing.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian economy is facing unprecedented global risks. Despite a few positive steps by the European Union, the European economy is still in crisis. The United States is poised for another dangerous showdown over its debt, the so-called “fiscal cliff”. Rating agencies are warning of another downgrade and economists are warning of another recession. The global economy is in turmoil.

What specific actions has the Prime Minister taken in the last three months to protect the Canadian economy and protect Canadian jobs?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all those things are true about the uncertainty in the global economy, but what is interesting is that nobody is suggesting that Canada is the source of that uncertainty.

On the contrary, Canada is one of the few islands of stability in the developed world. The reason we are is because the Minister of Finance has created one of the broadest and most sweeping action plans in the history of this country, which we continue to move forward on, and also because Canadians and people across the globe know we have a government smart enough to reject dumb ideas like a \$20 billion carbon tax.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for years Conservatives have been downplaying the threats facing our economy, insisting, as the Prime Minister just did, that we are somehow an island of stability, fortress Canuck.

In an interview last week the Prime Minister let the truth slip. The Prime Minister admitted that he underestimated the “fragile state” of our economic recovery. He warned that economic turmoil in the United States and Europe should be considered “the new normal”.

If the Prime Minister now admits that the situation is worse than he thought, why is he still stubbornly refusing to take action?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I have been saying for five years now, in fact before the recession began, that we were on very uncertain economic times, that Canada had a lot of strengths that were envied around the world, but that we must keep our focus on the economy and doing good things for the economy to keep creating jobs and economic stability here.

That is why we try to increase trade, not try to shut it down. That is why we try to keep industries open, not try to shut them down. That is why we lower taxes. We do not raise them as the leader of the NDP proposes.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has finally admitted that Canada's economy is fragile, something that we have been telling him for years now. The Prime Minister is also saying that the economic turmoil in Europe and the United States is now the norm. He recognizes that he was wrong but refuses to change his approach.

I have a very simple question. Will the Prime Minister accept the invitation from his provincial colleagues? Will he attend the economic summit scheduled for November?

• (1425)

[English]

If he has finally understood there is a problem, why will the Prime Minister not meet with the premiers to discuss solutions?

[Translation]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for five years now, I have been saying that the global economy, of which Canada is a part, is uncertain. That is why we are focusing on the economy and we have one of the best economic track records in the world. We intend to continue to lower taxes to ensure job creation, not raise them as the NDP is suggesting.

[English]

There is not a single serious analyst in the entire world who thinks this economy would be anything but worse off if the leader of the NDP put his policies in effect. That is why we will keep expanding trade and keep lowering taxes.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, government boasting about the economy rings hollow for many Canadians, especially young Canadians who are left painfully behind in inequality. The monotone message about austerity, kneecapping the federal government into irrelevance, is no help to families who cannot afford to get their kids into university or college. It is no help for youth joblessness at recession-like levels near 15%, and that does not even count another 165,000 young people who have just given up.

Instead of empty spin, when will we see some real economic action to support young Canadians?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, in spite of international economic uncertainty, Canada has one of the best job-creation records in the world, and Canadians know that. That is why Canadians are supportive of the

measures in our economic action plan and want to see us continue to move forward, which we will.

The one difference between the NDP and the Liberal Party is at least the NDP brings bad ideas to this debate, whereas the Liberals bring none.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, smugness becomes him.

[Translation]

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation loans given to co-operatives are another example of this painful inequality. They sometimes have interest rates in excess of 13%. They cannot refinance without facing huge penalties imposed by the federal government.

Will the government help co-operatives refinance their projects under more reasonable conditions?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said many times, the economy remains our focus. This government is determined to continue to increase our international trade, promote opportunities for business owners and industries, and lower taxes. That is how Canada created one of the best job-creation records in the world. And we will continue doing so.

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we give him a specific idea and he does not understand it.

More than 60% of Canadians live on incomes below \$40,000. Fully one-third of Canadian tax filers earn incomes so low they cannot pay taxes. The median income in Canada is getting smaller, not larger. For the 5% of Canadians earning more than \$100,000, disposable incomes may be rising. However, for the other 95%, the hard truth is the opposite.

Does the government have any plan to tackle income inequality? Is there any plan for jobs in Canada's suffering manufacturing sector? Complacency does not work.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member talks about lower-income Canadians. That is one of the reasons why we lowered the GST for all Canadians, including lower-income Canadians, by 2 percentage points. It is why we brought in the biggest increase in the guaranteed income supplement in a quarter century and why we continue to pursue policies that create jobs for Canadians across the country, because they need those jobs. It is just disappointing to see the Liberal Party complain about these things and then vote against every policy to help low-income Canadians.

Oral Questions

● (1430)

*[Translation]***FOREIGN INVESTMENT**

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if a Chinese state-owned enterprise takes over Nexen, an oil sands development company, there could be serious consequences. Canadians are worried, but with the deadline just 26 days away, the Conservatives are refusing to hold public consultations. Moreover, they have been refusing to revise the Investment Canada Act or to define the notion of “net benefit” for the past two years.

Why are the Conservatives breaking their promise? Why are they hiding behind closed doors?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the transaction the member mentioned, we will certainly determine whether there is net benefit to Canada. We will be conducting a detailed review and will be looking at the matter very closely.

We have already made a number of amendments to make the legislation clearer and more transparent. The NDP, whose policies would halt all forms of investment in Canada, is certainly not in a position to teach us anything with respect to this matter.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know what is happening behind closed doors because the lobbyist registry shows extensive meetings between CNOOC lobbyists and the government. Canada's twelfth largest oil company is at stake and meeting with lobbyists is not consulting with Canadians. On this side, we believe Canadians must be consulted about this deal, about the impact on jobs and the economy and on our communities.

After the broken promises, fiascos and scandals of the government we understand that it is afraid of the public. I have a simple question: When will there be a public review of the Nexen takeover deal?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this transaction will be scrutinized very closely. Unlike the other side of the House, it is not the intention of the government to put the oil industry out of business.

We do not have any lessons to take from his party. What it advocates for would deter any form of investment in the country, and this is certainly not the path we will take.

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*[Translation]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about another file where the rules were never clearly set out.

Letters exchanged by the Auditor General and National Defence were recently made public by the NDP. They show how the government stubbornly objected to the devastating report by the Auditor General on its complete mismanagement of the F-35 file.

How can the Conservatives proclaim with a straight face that they accept the Auditor General's findings when just a few months ago they were demanding that the report be completely rewritten?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been made very clear by the government that it accepts the recommendations of the Auditor General, which is why it set up the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat, to ensure transparency and due diligence is done in the replacement of our CF-18s.

No money has been spent on the purchase of any new fighter aircraft and no money will be spent until the secretariat independently verifies the cost and the requirements necessary to replace the CF-18s. We await KPMG's report on the cost of the F-35, and, of course, that report will be made public.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives claim to be in full agreement with the AG report on the F-35, but since the Auditor General found that they did not “demonstrate due diligence” they have decided to rewrite the report. For this creative writing assignment they have hired the auditor to a major F-35 contractor, a contractor that is making everything from fuselages to weapons systems to the new pilot helmets, because the other ones do not work. Everyone sees the conflict here. Why do they not?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have no conflicts with the Auditor General's findings and his recommendations. We agree with him. We think that the Department of National Defence needs to update its cost estimates to Parliament and to the government. In fact, we would like them to be independently verified, which is why we set up the secretariat, to ensure this level of transparency and due diligence is done.

The secretariat has hired KPMG to do that particular portion of the seven-point action plan, which is to independently verify the cost of the F-35 and also look at the cost assumptions that the Department of National Defence has used.

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*[Translation]***ETHICS**

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Before the summer break, the Minister of Industry was being investigated for a number of concerns and the government was appointing its friends to the Senate. There will be no hockey this year, but the Conservatives will carry on their traditions. The Ethics Commissioner recently opened an investigation into the role of the Prime Minister's chief of staff in lobbying by his friends from Barrick Gold. This again shows that there is one set of rules for the Conservatives' friends and another for other people.

Will the Conservatives finally promise to follow the rules and restore a culture of ethical behaviour in their government?

Oral Questions

● (1435)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the chief of staff, Mr. Wright, is a man of integrity who has followed all the rules. The allegations made by the opposition are unfounded and seek to tarnish the reputation of a man of great integrity.

[English]

It is incredible audacity for a party that covered up \$340,000 in illegal donations. Those members had an opportunity to admit what they did after being asked time and time again. It is the biggest political donations scandal in Canadian history. The leader of the NDP knew about it and he covered it up. He should stand up and apologize for it.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to following election rules, the NDP has always conducted itself with integrity, but the same cannot be said for the Conservatives.

The situation is quite simple: Barrick Gold lobbied the Prime Minister's chief of staff. Nothing wrong to that point. But there is a problem when we consider all the personal relationships between the Prime Minister's chief of staff and Barrick Gold. That is suspicious, and we wonder if political decisions were influenced. This must stop. The Conservatives must assume their responsibilities and follow the rules.

Where is the Conservative plan to ensure that friends of the party will never again be given preferential treatment?

[English]

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I said it in French and I will say it in English. Mr. Wright is a man of unimpeachable integrity. He has followed all of the rules. There is no evidence whatsoever to the contrary.

What we know for certain is that the NDP has been caught and found guilty of accepting \$340,000 in illegal union money. We banned union donations because we did not believe that workers should be forced against their will to give to political causes they do not support. The NDP did not care. It was happy to rob workers blind. We will not stand for it.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, enough of the fantasy, let us look at the facts.

When Barrick Gold wanted to get the ear of the Prime Minister, it called its good buddy Nigel Wright. He of all people should understand the importance of conflict of interest, but he allowed himself to be lobbied not once, not twice, but three times in a classic case of “who you know in the PMO”.

Will the government recognize that it needs to clean up its act and work with us to bring in some real legislation with real teeth to close up this kind of backroom lobbying?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we already brought in such legislation. It is called the Accountability Act. It was our first priority and the first bill that we passed in the House of Commons. Happily all of our government, including and especially the Prime Minister's chief of staff, has been following it ever since.

The same cannot be said of the NDP, because that very same act banned union contributions to political parties. The NDP knew that because it voted to ban those contributions, but then proceeded to accept them and then cover it up. Even when they were asked how much was involved, they refused to admit it. It took a courageous NDP whistleblower to actually get the news out of what their leader was trying to cover up: \$340,000.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this issue is sticking to them like Skippy peanut butter. I would like to ask the member not to try and skip away from the ethical lapses, whether it be the slush fund in Muskoka or peddling off radio stations at basement fundraisers or having a secret bat phone for Barrick Gold into the PMO.

The Conservatives are challenged. Will they work with us to actually start cleaning up their act and bring in legislation that would stop this kind of backroom manipulation, yes or no?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question is not whether we will introduce such legislation, it is whether the NDP will start following it.

When we brought in a bill to crack down on excessive lobbying, the members of that party knew what was in the bill. They also knew that it included an explicit ban on union contributions. There is no ambiguity on that subject whatsoever, yet over the years they systematically accepted \$340,000 in illegal union money. They tried to cover it up. Canadians, particularly workers, will not stand for it.

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● (1440)

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the heels of Gomery, the Conservatives came to power promising frugality and transparency in spending on advertising. Instead of meeting deadlines, instead of being transparent, instead of frugality, the government has spent more and dragged its heels reporting. When asked why the delay in reporting on the last two years' advertising costs, the response was, “It's complicated”.

Accountability is only complicated when we are trying to avoid it. When will the government disclose the full costs of promoting the economic action plan?

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Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, this government will report in due course to Parliament, as we are obligated to do, when we have all the facts on the table.

Speaking of facts on the table, it is a fact that the party on the other side, her party, wanted to impose an additional \$20 billion on taxpayers throughout this country through its carbon tax scheme.

Why is she not talking about that and apologizing to Canadians about that?

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many Canadians, I took the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development at her word when she said changes would be made to benefit those who work while on claim to keep more of what they earn.

Whether or not she was aware, at the time, she said nothing about the new hidden disincentives to work. Clawing back wages from the first dollar made was a change that was never mentioned by the minister. I am sure she knows now these changes will hurt low weekly wage earners.

Will she admit today, in fact, there is a new hidden clawback and, further, will she commit to having it removed?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our role as the government is to create jobs and to let the economy grow. As we create those jobs, we need people to help fill those jobs. Therefore, we are taking away disincentives that were in the EI program that discouraged people from working when there was a job available to them.

We are working so that Canadians, when they are on claim and they have the opportunity to work, two, three, or four days of work, it is worth their while. We are supporting them and helping them connect with the jobs that are available to them.

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for EI wrongly claims new rules benefit those who accept additional work. That is not the case for claimants making less than \$264 per week.

Loretta Ward, from my riding, earned \$230 every two weeks, working part time at a school, but was forced to quit her job after the government clawed back \$115 from her paycheque. Factoring in work-related expenses, it no longer made sense for her to accept additional work.

When will the government stop attacking low-income earners and remove this financial disincentive to work?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it used to be the case when someone went on claim and they worked three or four days a week, their earnings would get clawed back off their EI, dollar for dollar. Every time they worked and got paid another dollar, they lost a dollar in EI, so they were discouraged from working.

We are changing that. Now they get to keep 50¢ on the dollars that they make. That is good for them, and it is good for their families and for their communities.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-38, the current government imposes new appeal and review procedures on employment insurance applicants. Applicants' files will now be reviewed by public servants, which effectively eliminates any legal challenge process.

Is the government trying to do away with the principles of judicial independence that have always guided the decisions made by previous governments?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want every claimant who appeals a decision to receive a fair and quick decision. We are making changes to the program to bring in full-time public servants who will specialize in the field and who will make fairer and more consistent decisions. These public servants will enable people to receive a decision in an efficient and fair manner.

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● (1445)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives had the entire summer to listen to Canadians and reconsider their decision to close the Experimental Lakes Area. They will be abandoning several years of investment in research, which helped ban phosphates and combat acid rain and could help us better understand the effects of exploiting the oil sands.

We know that the Conservatives do not want to understand, but why deprive Canadians of this expertise?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not closing the Experimental Lakes Area.

[English]

We have made it very clear to all stakeholders and interested parties that the intent is not to close the Experimental Lakes Area. Environment Canada will assist the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in finding a suitable organization or a consortium to manage operations so that research by the academic community can continue.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not going to work because we have had international scientists who say that this work cannot be replaced. However, the cuts to ELA are just part of a larger worrying trend because the Conservatives are on track to eliminate all funding for contaminants research across all government departments. This is a reckless policy that puts the health of Canadians at risk. Stopping the study of pollution is not going to make it go away.

When will the Conservatives stop acting like 1950s tobacco executives? When are they going to stop downloading the cost of environmental cleanup on the next generation?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, the assumption in that question is simply false.

Getting back to the experimental lakes program, Environment Canada is now using the very important science that we drew from that program to look at acid rain situations in other lakes in other parts of the country that are threatened by expanding development. As the responsible management decision, Environment Canada is now placing emphasis on other areas of potential negative impact, including acid rain and its impact on vulnerable lakes.

* * *

[Translation]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservative attacks on science do not stop at the experimental lakes.

Everyone in eastern Quebec has been very concerned because an unusually high number of baby belugas, fish and Northern gannets have been found dead in the St. Lawrence ecosystem.

While experts are looking for answers, the Conservatives have fired two-thirds of the scientists in the ecotoxicology department at the Maurice Lamontagne Institute, which studies marine polluters, and they want to shut down the entire department within two years, even though they were the ones who opened it in 2007.

Do the Conservatives not understand that their cuts to science are hurting the entire country?

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously science is the backbone of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and we are committed to maintaining our investments in science. Our record is solid. We have spent millions and millions of dollars since 2006 to ensure that our environment is protected, and our species are protected whether they be ocean or air.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Conservatives are attacking scientific funding and research right across the board. After getting rid of his science adviser, ending the Experimental Lakes Area and cutting Canada's ozone network, this summer the Prime Minister went on to give us the punchline to this sad joke:

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—things are evaluated on an independent basis, scientifically, and not simply on political criteria.

Could the Minister of State for Science and Technology name one policy decision where he was in fact guided by science and not politics?

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has increased support for science and technology, and research and development at every single opportunity we have had, including eight billion new dollars since 2006. Every single time the NDP has voted against it. In fact, I want to welcome the member to the science and technology file because none of this was in his party's election platform. Welcome to the 1990s at least.

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● (1450)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Iran continues to move forward with its nuclear ambitions while ignoring its international obligations. Its human rights record is atrocious and it has shown utter contempt for the Vienna Convention in the past.

Could the hardworking Minister of Foreign Affairs please update the House on the principled approach Canada has taken with its relations to Iran?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Iran continues to ignore its international obligations. It continues to ignore the United Nations. Its nuclear program is moving forward unabated. Iran continues to abuse the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people and, most importantly, it continues to ignore its responsibilities under the Vienna Convention to protect foreign diplomats.

As such, we have taken the difficult but necessary decision to remove our staff from Tehran and to expel Iranian diplomats here in Ottawa. We are also pleased to announce today that Italy has agreed to act as Canada's protecting power in Tehran and, as always, we strongly implore Canadians against travelling to Iran.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, severe moisture shortages coupled with record high temperatures have left many farmers in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada in dire straights.

The Conservative government's response is to offer little support and to ignore farmers altogether. For example, the recently announced livestock deferral program does not even cover all the drought affected areas and it does absolutely nothing for the horticultural growers.

Oral Questions

When will the government finally come forward with a balanced and robust response to this devastating drought?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the member has been fiddling over the summer, we have been doing exactly that.

We have held a number of round tables around Ontario, working with our provincial colleagues who do the initial assessment. They bring it to us, and we apply the science that is required to trigger the AgriRecovery program. Having said that, I am happy to report that the vast majority of Ontario producers have embraced crop insurance, some 75% to 80%, and of course the AgriStability program is there as well. We also have a robust system of cash advances under the AMPA program.

The NDP members of course have voted against every one of these. On top of that, the most detrimental thing to agriculture would be a carbon tax, and that is what the NDP keeps fanning.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many farmers' yields will be cut in half this year, yet the Conservatives do nothing. Between the loss of revenue and the high cost of feeding their livestock, the drought could lead to the demise of family farms. And now the Conservatives want to cut millions of dollars from business risk management programs.

Why do the Conservatives want to make cuts to programs that support farmers at such a crucial time?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote Allan Ling, the president of the Atlantic Grains Council, on the new robust suite of programs. He says:

—the changes to Ag Stability, like on negative margins for example, will help it to be more predictable so that as farmers we know more what our coverage is every year.

That is exactly what we are doing, making changes that make it more respectful of farmers who need more action. Those are the farmers who require the negative margin coverage. What we have done is beefed up the bottom end, taking some of the money from the top end and putting it back into a lot of new moneys for contributions on the non-BRM side, that is, for innovation and science and research. That is exactly what farmers need to move forward.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as usual there are lots of excuses but Canadians get few answers.

Last week another 1,700 workers were told they would likely soon be out of a job. These are hard-working federal employees who provide services the public relies on every single day.

Conservatives can find billions for corporate tax giveaways but have nothing left to help people with their employment insurance, old age security or CPP claims. In these shaky economic times, will the Conservatives now reconsider their reckless cuts?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, budget 2012, our economic action plan 2012, was about jobs and growth, and making sure our economy continues to build and continues to create wealth throughout the country.

We have found well-balanced, moderate savings that we have put into that budget, which was passed by this House to reduce the deficit, and which in fact means reducing the federal public service by about a fair and reasonable 4% over three years. We have indicated that over 70% of those savings will be found in-house in operational efficiencies. This is good for making sure that we can deliver quality service to Canadians, and at the same time make sure our economy continues to be protected.

* * *

• (1455)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives like to talk about reductions, duplications and increasing efficiency, but what they really mean is “cuts”.

I am having a hard time understanding how taking employees away from service counters and service centres will make services more efficient. I do not know how the Conservatives are going to explain to people that they will get more for their money, while the Conservatives continue to cut services.

Can the Minister of National Revenue explain to Canadians how the service reductions at the Canada Revenue Agency will benefit anyone?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in-person discussions between the agency and Canadians only account for about 2.5% of all the interactions that happen with Canadians.

More and more people are going on-line or accessing services on-line and are using the phone services. The way that Canadians file their taxes is changing, and we are changing to meet those needs.

Canadians can visit their local Service Canada location for assistance if they need to, and CRA will provide in-person meetings when issues cannot be resolved on the phone.

[Translation]

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, RMG is a company that contacts voters at the Conservative Party's behest. Former RMG employees signed affidavits stating that they were forced to call non-Conservative voters and direct them to the wrong polling station. The company says that it has recordings proving its innocence, but it is refusing to turn those recordings over to a Federal Court investigation. The integrity of our voting system is at stake.

What will the government do to ensure that RMG and the Conservative Party obey the law?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party always obeys the law. I would point out that the hon. member has produced no evidence. Quite the opposite, in fact.

I do admire the Liberal Party's nerve. Just one party was found guilty of breaking the law: the Liberal Party in the riding of Guelph. If the member wants to know more about what happened with robocalls during the last election, he should talk to his own colleague, because that is who broke the law.

The Conservative Party obeyed the law and will continue to do so.
[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Guelph provided all the information and co-operated with Elections Canada—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The member for Avalon has the floor.

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Speaker, he is the one who co-operated; the member for Peterborough has not. The member for Guelph has reported all of his expenses; the member for Peterborough has not. Elections Canada has closed the file on the member for Guelph and is seeking no enforcement measures. He messed up. He fessed up—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Avalon has a few seconds left to finish putting the question and then we will get the response.

The hon. member for Avalon.

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Speaker, the member for Guelph admitted he messed up. He fessed up and Elections Canada has closed the file. However, Elections Canada is still investigating all the Conservatives from coast to coast. When will they be accountable?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it took them all summer long to hand me a gift just like that.

In the robocalls controversy there is one person, one campaign, that has been found guilty of breaking the law. It is the hon. member

Oral Questions

for Guelph. However, worry not because he has promised to hold seminars now teaching all of us how to follow the rules. It is kind of like a vampire holding a seminar on becoming a vegetarian.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer I had the opportunity to meet with fishermen and fishing organizations throughout the east coast and the message has been clear. They want the government to back off its plans to get rid of the owner-operator fleet separation policy, which would be devastating to the inshore industry and coastal communities throughout Atlantic Canada.

I want to ask the minister this question because he and his colleagues have not been clear on this policy and what their intentions are. Will they back off on their plan to eliminate the owner-operator fleet separation policy, yes or no?

• (1500)

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government believes that Canadian fishers have a key role to play in contributing to our economy. Certainly, we entered into discussions and engaged with fishermen and Canadians across the country to get their input as to how they would improve the fisheries. Our government is listening to fishermen, not advocating any particular position, and we continue to be committed to the economic viability of the industry.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister still fails to commit on what his intentions are. The government released a policy document in the spring that said absolutely nothing about this plan. It received 10,000 submissions from fishermen, not only on the east coast but also the west coast where the industry was devastated as a result of the removal of the owner-operator fleet separation policy.

I ask the minister once again, will he clarify on behalf of fishermen and their families in coastal communities that the government will back off the policy to eliminate owner-operator fleet separation?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is exactly the case as to why there was nothing in the position paper that indicated that there was a plan. There was not a plan.

We are looking for honest feedback from fishermen and Canadians across this country on the fisheries and how we could improve the fisheries in this country. We will continue to listen to people and seek their input.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the summer I heard loud and clear from my constituents in London West that jobs and Canada's economic recovery must be the government's number one priority. They told me that they wanted their government to continue fostering a business environment that creates jobs and a government that keeps its taxes low.

Oral Questions

Would the government House leader update Canadians on his plans for the House this fall?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority is, of course, creating jobs, economic growth and long term prosperity. Canadians can expect us to continue focusing on keeping taxes down and creating jobs for hard-working Canadian families.

While we are focused on economic growth, we know that the leader of the NDP has as the cornerstone of his economic plan a carbon tax. He campaigned on it in the last election in black and white, with over \$20 billion in the platform of the NDP for a tax hike from carbon. In seeking the leadership, he said that he would go even further.

Canadians cannot stand that. That is not what they need, to slow our economy at a time when it needs support. That is why the NDP policies are so reckless for Canada today.

* * *

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Public Safety tell us if the government has begun destroying the data from the gun registry, with the exception of the data for Quebec, for example? In other words, are there now two classes of provinces in Canada, some whose registry data is intact and thus they are able to set up a provincial registry if they would like, and others that are just plain out of luck?

Has the level playing field been destroyed? Has the equality among provinces been undermined?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government does not support treating law-abiding hunters, farmers and sport shooters like criminals. We have consistently opposed this wasteful and ineffective measure which has done nothing to keep Canadians safe.

Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to end the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry once and for all, and that is exactly what we did and what we are doing.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station will put lives in danger, and the Conservatives know it.

A leaked email from maritime workers to DFO management says that the closure of the Kitsilano station was done without any consultation with them on safety. They say that the closure will lead to increased casualties.

The minister continues to say that there is no danger even when his own officials say that there is.

Why will the minister not listen to the people of British Columbia and his own staff and reverse this reckless decision?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first

and foremost goal of the Canadian Coast Guard is the safety of mariners.

We can say that the Coast Guard is confident that once changes to the search and rescue network in Vancouver have been completed there will be no negative impact on its ability to respond quickly and effectively to distress incidents in the water.

* * *

● (1505)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on creating jobs and economic growth all across Canada.

A key part of our plan is deepening and strengthening our relationships with the fast-growing economies of the Asia-Pacific. Our ongoing efforts in the region will bring tremendous benefits to Canada's exporters, including our energy sector.

Could the Minister of International Trade please update this House on how our government's ambitious pro-trade plan is creating new opportunities for workers and businesses in Canada's energy sector?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources is actually in Japan and Korea this week where he is promoting and diversifying our energy economy as the dynamic markets of the Asia Pacific create new opportunities for Canada's natural gas sector.

On the other hand, the NDP would impose a \$20 billion job-killing carbon tax that would raise prices on everything, including gas, groceries and hydro. Our government opposes these reckless plans and will continue to stand up for hard-working Canadians.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for centuries, lighthouses have been guiding the sailors along Canada's shores. Now, tourists are drawn to these national symbols, driving economies in communities across the country.

However, the Conservatives are allowing these heritage sites to crumble and fall, like the Mississagi Lighthouse that is in need of a new roof. Instead, their plan is to throw up a second tarp in as many years.

Will the Conservatives reconsider their temporary patch-up and truly commit to protecting our heritage lighthouses?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes the important role that lighthouses have played in our history and the important part they have played in local communities. We have been working closely with Parks Canada for the last two years in the implementation of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act and in the transfer of lighthouses to third party interests. That petitioning period is now closed and our focus will be on working with petitioning groups to facilitate transfers of surplus lighthouses.

* * *

[Translation]

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a week ago today, the Superior Court of Quebec sided with the Government of Quebec, which is calling for firearms registry data to be saved and transferred. Yet, in spite of repeated unanimous resolutions by the Quebec National Assembly, in addition to a harsh lecture from the court, which condemned the government's attitude, the Minister of Public Safety is still vague about Ottawa's intentions.

Will the minister stop dithering and announce that he will not appeal this case?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce today, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety, that the Government of Canada will appeal this decision.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I have the honour, pursuant to section 38 of the Access to Information Act, to lay upon the table the report of the Information Commissioner for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2012.

[Translation]

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

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS**NOTICE OF MOTION**

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83 (1), I wish to table a notice of a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Regulations.

[English]

This motion would enable the introduction of legislation to create a federal income support measure for parents of murdered or missing children. This new grant would provide income support to parents who must take time away from work to cope with the death or disappearance of a child as a result of criminal act.

[Translation]

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

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS**

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 109 and 32(1), I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled "Statutory Review of the Lobbying Act: Its First Five Years".

● (1510)

[Translation]

VETERANS

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs entitled "Improving Services to Improve Quality of Life for Veterans and their Families".

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 139 petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**CO-OPERATIVES**

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Special Committee on Co-operatives in relation to its study on the status of co-operatives in Canada.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

*Routine Proceedings**[Translation]*

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is proud to present its dissenting report, “Building Canada with Co-operatives”. We took into account the recommendations made by the witnesses who eloquently demonstrated the vitality of the co-operative movement in Canada. The Conservative government has abandoned the co-operative movement by abolishing the co-operative development initiative and dismantling the Co-operatives Secretariat.

The concrete recommendations made in our report demonstrate the NDP's commitment to contribute to the development and growth of co-operatives.

[English]

Contrary to the Conservatives, the NDP firmly believes in the co-operative sector and is proud to table six concrete recommendations that will support and ensure the development of this important sector of our economy because we know that building co-operatives is building a sustainable economy for Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the report tabled here today, the Liberal Party also tabled a supplementary report, but not a dissenting report. I invite anyone who reads the report to note the 16 recommendations we have made.

* * *

*[English]***COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE****APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Speaker: Following the vacancy that has occurred in the position of Deputy Speaker and chair of committee of the whole, I have consulted with the leaders of the recognized parties regarding the nomination to this position. I am now prepared to propose for the ratification of the House a candidate for the position of Deputy Speaker and chair of committee of the whole.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 7, I propose Mr. Joe Comartin for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to designate Thursday, September 20 as an opposition day.

* * *

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would advise that there have

been consultations and I believe you would find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, the House resolve itself into committee of the whole in order to welcome the Olympic and Paralympic Athletes; that the Speaker be permitted to preside over the committee of the whole and make welcoming remarks on behalf of the House; and, when the proceedings of the committee have concluded, or at approximately 3:15 p.m., the committee shall rise and the House shall resume its business as though it were 3 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1515)

*[Translation]***ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT**

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

That, having considered the nature of a request made of the Auditor General under the Access to Information Act, the House of Commons waives its privileges relating to all emails pertaining to the Auditor General appearing before a parliamentary committee from January 17 to April 17, 2012; and

That the Speaker be authorized to communicate to the Auditor General this resolution.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: Order, please. The House has just adopted an important motion in reference to the rights, privileges and immunities upon which the proceedings of the House and its committees are founded and I would like to make a statement at this time to clarify the situation that has given rise to this decision, particularly in view of some comments that have appeared in recent days.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

In June of this year, the House of Commons was advised by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada that they had received a request under the Access to Information Act for all emails pertaining to the appearances of the Auditor General before parliamentary committees between January 17 and April 17, 2012. The information in question consisted of email exchanges between the clerks or officials of five standing committees and officials of the Office of Auditor General.

[English]

The House was given third party notice of the request under section 27 of the Access to Information Act and provided 20 days to make any written representations to provide sufficient reasons as to why the information should be disclosed.

There followed several exchanges of correspondence between the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel and the Office of the Auditor General in which House officials questioned the release of the documents, given their concern that these documents related to committee hearings, which are protected by parliamentary privilege. This view was consistent with past practice which considered material that forms part of a parliamentary proceeding, whether that proceeding is in the chamber or in committee, to be protected by parliamentary privilege.

In the case at hand, the documents requested were directly linked to a parliamentary proceeding and the actions taken were fully in keeping with a long-established practice.

[Translation]

The privileges, powers and immunities of the House of Commons, as provided by section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and section 4 of the Parliament of Canada Act, include freedom of speech and debate as set out, among others places, in article 9 of the Bill of Rights, 1689, which provides

that the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament.

[English]

As Erskine May's 24th edition, at page 227, states:

—underlying the Bill of Rights is the privilege of both Houses to the exclusive cognizance of their own proceedings. Both Houses retain the right to be sole judge of the lawfulness of their own proceedings and to settle—or depart from—their own codes of procedure.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, at pages 91 and 92, explains that proceedings in Parliament include the giving of evidence before the House of Commons or its committees; the presentation of a document to either the House of Commons or its committees; the preparation of a document for purposes of or incidental to the transacting of any such business; and the formulation, making or publication of a document, including a report, by or pursuant to an order of the House. This has been seen to extend to all evidence, submissions and preparation for the participation by all persons participating in the proceedings of the House of Commons or its committees, all of which are protected by all the privileges and immunities of the House.

● (1520)

[Translation]

Since the House was adjourned when these discussions took place, House counsel requested that the Office of the Auditor General delay the decision to release the documents until September when the House was scheduled to resume sitting.

[English]

Notwithstanding this request, the Office of the Auditor General proceeded with its decision to release the documents in question, arguing that it had not identified parliamentary privilege among the exemptions or exclusions in the act that would allow a refusal to do so. This decision started the clock on the timetable provided by the act. Specifically, this meant that the House had the right to apply for a review of this decision pursuant to section 44 of the act, which imposes a strict deadline of 20 days from the day notice is given to file a notice of application in the Federal Court. In short, because attempts to have the Office of the Auditor General postpone this decision were unsuccessful, the House of Commons faced a deadline that had to be respected and so filed not an injunction but an application for a judicial review of the Auditor General's decision to release the documents. Had this filing not been made on or before September 10, 2012, the documents would have been released without the express consent of the House. This would clearly have been unacceptable so we acted to reserve for the House its long-standing primacy in decisions of this nature.

I want to stress that the steps taken in this case were undertaken for the sole purpose of safeguarding the rights and privileges of this House and to reserve for the House the final decision in the matter.

[Translation]

As noted at page 307 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition:

It is the responsibility of the Speaker to act as the guardian of the rights and privileges of members and of the House as an institution.

[English]

Whatever the circumstances, as your Speaker, I believe that my primary responsibility is to safeguard the rights and privileges of the House and its committees and to ensure that they are not inadvertently eroded.

[Translation]

Of course, while I am duty-bound to protect all of the House's privileges, I am also the servant of the House and thus entirely at its service in putting into effect its decisions.

As noted on page 307 of O'Brien and Bosc:

The Speaker is the servant, neither of any part of the House nor of any majority in the House, but of the entire institution and serves the best interests of the House as distilled over many generations in its practices.

The Speaker must ensure that the best interests of the House are upheld and that the House remains the master of its own proceedings.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

This is the principle that informed the decision to file an application for judicial review, respecting the strict deadline imposed by the act and allowing the House the opportunity to make its own determination in this matter.

The House has now made its decision on this matter. We are all aware that this decision applies only to this case at hand and it is not precedent setting. The House's rights and privileges have not been jeopardized by the House's resolution, nor has the House ceded any of its traditional rights or privileges, particularly as they relate to parliamentary committees.

However, it is likely that today's issue will not be the last of its kind. The Chair would therefore welcome a prompt and thorough review of the question by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, as House committees and their officials will most likely continue to be confronted with more requests of a similar nature. It would not be the first time the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs considered and reported to the House on a matter related to the nature and extent of parliamentary privilege, indeed it did so in November 2004 in presenting its 14th report. There are also other instances, notably in 2007 and 2009, where committees have seen fit to report to the House on aspects of parliamentary privilege in relation to issues with which they were confronted.

[Translation]

I trust this clarifies the context of the situation for the House. I would like to thank all honourable members for their attention in this important matter.

* * *

*[English]***PETITIONS****ABORTION**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand here on behalf of the thousands of Canadians, women and men, who oppose the Conservative Motion No. 312, a veiled attempt to reopen the abortion debate in Canada. Many Canadian women and men hope that, along with the front benches of the Conservative government, all members of the back benches will stand up and support a woman's right to choose, a right that was achieved decades ago and a debate that has happened in Canada.

We hope that the government will also pursue gender equality rather than turning the—

The Speaker: Order, please. I would remind hon. members that presenting petitions is not an opportunity to engage in debate, and also I see many members rising so I will have to be very tight with each member's time.

The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today a petition signed by a number of petitioners from the Kitchener-Waterloo and surrounding area.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons and Parliament to confirm that every human being, as recognized by Canadian law, is a human being by amending section 223 of our Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

RARE DISORDERS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two petitions today, one regarding rare disorders.

The petitioners call for a definition for a rare disorder and a national drug policy for rare disorders.

● (1525)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is regarding CCSVI. The petitioners call for the Minister of Health to consult experts actively engaged in the diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI to undertake a phase III clinical trial on an urgent basis at multiple centres across Canada and to require follow-up care.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents who join with over 70 organizations, city councils and mayors in support of a national transit strategy contained in my Bill C-305, which will be voted on this Wednesday.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition from approximately 50 of my constituents who have asked that the Criminal Code in section 223 be amended to recognize human beings.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition today with regard to the experimental lakes area. The decision of the government to close the EL research station is bad for our aquatic ecosystem.

The petitioners ask the government to reconsider its decision and reinstate this very important research that is critical to Canada's development as an environmentally friendly policy.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition from over 400 constituents from Kitchener Centre and nearby areas in support of a review of our Middle Ages definition of a human being and request the House of Commons to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law and no ideology requires otherwise.

I would also like to table a petition from the riding of my good friend and colleague the member for Cambridge North Dumfries to the same effect.

I also present a petition from the constituents from the riding of Durham to the same effect and two petitions constituting almost 200 constituents from the riding of Kitchener—Waterloo, all of whom believe that the Parliament of Canada should recognize the inherent worth and dignity of every human being.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling more petitions signed by people in Hamilton Mountain who are incensed about the government's increase of the age of eligibility for old age security to age 67. The petitioners point out that only 31% of Canadians have been able to contribute to RRSPs and that only 40% of Canadians have workplace pensions and the future of many of those pension plans are increasingly tenuous.

Since over one-quarter of a million seniors are now living in poverty and public pensions provide at most \$15,000 to the typical retiree, the petitioners call on the government to drop its ill-considered change to the OAS, maintain the current age of eligibility and make the requisite investments in the guaranteed income supplement to lift every senior out of poverty.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a number of petitions signed by more than 250 constituents who call on the House of Commons to confirm that every human being be recognized by Canadian law as human by amending section 223 of the Criminal Code.

LYME DISEASE

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

The first is from members of the community of Winnipeg, but they are writing in support of a private member's bill I put forward, which I hope members on all sides of the House will give consideration and support for a national lyme disease strategy.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from people within British Columbia who call on the House to protect the British Columbia coast from the threat of supertankers bearing bitumen crude. We want a tanker-free coast in British Columbia.

[Translation]

ABORTION

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians across the country who are opposed to the Conservatives' Motion No. 312, which is a thinly veiled attempt to reopen the abortion debate in Canada.

As the Prime Minister has often said, that debate is over. The government had promised not to reopen the debate, but that is clearly what it is trying to do by introducing Motion No. 312.

Canadians do not want that debate reopened. I am therefore presenting this petition on behalf of the hundreds of Canadians who are opposed to Motion No. 312.

Routine Proceedings

• (1530)

[English]

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present two petitions today signed by constituents from the beautiful riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming.

The first is a petition to the House regarding Motion No. 312.

JUSTICE

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with regard to Canadian Marc Emery's treaty transfer from the United States to Canada.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of Canadians who are concerned that Canada is the only OECD country that does not have a national public transit strategy. It is estimated that over the next five years there will be an \$18 billion gap in transit infrastructure.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to enact a Canada public transit strategy that would provide permanent investment, establish federal funding mechanisms, work with all levels of government and establish accountability measures to ensure we do indeed increase access to public transit.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am simply tabling exactly the same petition as was just presented by the hon. member of Parliament for London—Fanshawe.

[Translation]

ABORTION

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition signed by men and women from British Columbia and Quebec. They believe that an early defeat for Motion No. 312 in the House is very important, because it violates women's fundamental rights.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting petitions on behalf of thousands of Canadians who are opposed to Motion No. 312, which is an attempt to reopen the abortion debate. It is an affront: women have the right to do what they choose with their bodies.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present a petition signed by Canadians from all around the country. The petitioners are opposed to Motion No. 312, a thinly veiled attempt to reopen the abortion debate in Canada.

As the petitioners point out, the only person who can make conscientious and informed decisions on behalf of an embryo or fetus is the pregnant woman herself.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to present a petition calling for a national public transit strategy.

Routine Proceedings

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague from Trinity—Spadina, who introduced a bill about this.

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to present a petition calling for a national public transit strategy.

[English]

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition calling for the federal government to enact a national public transit strategy.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to present a petition calling for a national public transit strategy. This issue is very important to my constituents.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from constituents calling for a national transit strategy.

The OECD says that Toronto and the GTA have some of the longest commute times in the world and that this gridlock is a \$6 billion annual drag on our economy.

We are calling for a national transit strategy.

[Translation]

KATIMAVIK

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present two petitions today.

The first is from people in my region who are calling on the Minister of Canadian Heritage to reinstate the Katimavik program for young people, especially for future generations.

• (1535)

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for a national public transit strategy. I am sure that my constituents support this too.

[English]

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition calling for a national public transit strategy. This is something that mayors from across the country, including the FCM, have been calling for.

[Translation]

This is a very important issue in my riding too, particularly in Mirabel, where this is exactly what people are asking for.

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to table petitions signed by hundreds of constituents from my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River and from ridings across the country.

The petitioners are calling for the creation of a national public transit strategy as Canada is the only OECD country that does not have a national public transit strategy initiative as of now.

[Translation]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition about something that is important to many of my constituents: the need for a Canada-wide public transit strategy. This petition supports Bill C-305, which would establish a Canada-wide public transit strategy.

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of a national public transit strategy.

The time people spend getting to work, particularly on the Island of Montreal, is very costly to Montreal's economy. We are in serious need of a strategy like the one presented in this petition.

ABORTION

Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from across the country who are opposed to Motion No. 312 moved by the Conservatives, which is a veiled attempt to reopen the abortion debate in Canada.

Canadians had this debate decades ago and they do not want to reopen it. The public is ready to move on to other things. Many Canadian women have voiced their opposition and hope that the ministers on the front bench and also all of the members of Parliament will support a woman's right to choose, and that they will not bring back a debate that has already been resolved. Canadians want to move forward and not go backwards, to achieve true gender equality in Canada.

[English]

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the greater Toronto area loses about \$6 billion a year due to gridlock. That is why so many people from my city have signed a petition supporting a national public transit strategy.

I am honoured to table that petition in this House today.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 664, 670, 672-674, 676, 677, 679, 680, 682, 683, 686, 690, 694-696, 698, 699, 702, 704, 707, 710-712, 715, 716, 718, 721, 723, 725, 727, 728, 733, 736, 743, 744, 747, 750, 758, 762, 764, 767, 769, 773, 778, 779, 781, 782, 789-792, 795, 797, 801, 806, 808, 813 and 816 to 818.

[Text]

Question No. 664—**Mr. Pierre Jacob:**

With respect to ice wine: (a) when does the Canadian Food Inspection Agency intend to decide on the criteria for use of the name "ice wine" as part of amendments related to wine labelling; and (b) what were the reasons for reviewing the regulations concerning use of the name "ice wine"?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, anticipates that the criteria for use of the name “icewine” will be determined in the near future in order to meet the deadline for ratification of the World Wine Trade Group Agreement on Requirements for Wine Labelling, WWTG Agreement.

Once the criteria for the icewine standard have been determined, the CFIA will follow the normal process for regulatory amendments. This will include publishing in Canada Gazette, which would allow Canada to ratify the WWTG Agreement.

In response to (b), Canada is a member of the World Wine Trade Group, WWTG, and a signatory to the WWTG Agreement on Requirements for Wine Labelling. This agreement contains a definition of icewine. In order to place Canada in a position to ratify this agreement, an icewine standard must be regulated and certain wine labelling requirements in Canadian regulations need to be amended.

Question No. 670—**Mr. John Rafferty:**

With regard to the 2011-2012 budget for the regional development organization for Northern Ontario (FedNor): (a) what is the total amount of its budget; (b) what is the amount actually spent, broken down by FedNor program; (c) what is the amount of the budget that was not spent, and in which programs; (d) were any financial or non-financial incentives offered to managers and executives at FedNor, that were associated with, or dependent on, allocated money not being spent in the fiscal year in question; and (e) were any incentives as outlined in (d) actually awarded, and, if so, (i) to which managers and executives, (ii) what was the sum total of each incentive that was awarded?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the 2011-12 budget for the regional development organization for northern Ontario, FedNor, and in response to (a), the total amount of the budget is \$59.28 million, with G&C of \$49.25 million and O&M of \$10.03 million.

In response to (b) and (c), FedNor’s program expenditures for 2011-12 are just now being finalized with the close of the fiscal year and will be released through the public accounts as is normal.

In response to (d), the answer is no.

In response to (e), it is not applicable.

Question No. 672—**Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to the government’s ongoing plan to reduce the size of the federal public service and specifically the job cuts in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador: for each government department and agency, how many jobs have been eliminated or are planned to be eliminated from the beginning of fiscal year 2012-13 to the end of fiscal year 2014-15 including, (i) the title of the position, (ii) the town/city in which the position is located, (iii) the current wage/salary range for the position?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the exact number of job reductions in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador cannot be calculated until all affected organizations have completed their internal union and employee notification processes.

As indicated in budget 2012, federal employment is expected to be reduced by about 19,200 positions, or 4.8%, over a three-year period. Approximately 7,200 of these positions will be reduced through attrition, largely retirement or other voluntary departures.

The government is managing the impact of these spending reductions responsibly, and it will make every effort to manage the employment reductions resulting from the reduction in departmental spending in a manner that treats federal employees fairly and minimizes disruptions to Canadians.

Question No. 673—**Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to travel by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs between May 2, 2011 and May 2, 2012, for each of the Minister’s trips made in connection with his duties, what were the (i) dates, (ii) destinations and (iii) total expenses?

Hon. Peter Penashue (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office responds that, information regarding travel by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is made available, in accordance with proactive disclosure guidelines, on the following website: http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/di/departement_list.asp?id=54&cat=1&lang=eng.

Question No. 674—**Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to the ongoing discussions and negotiations concerning the Canada-EU Trade Agreement and the issue of tariffs on Canadian fish and seafood products: (a) what is the specific proposal put forward by the government concerning any changes to these specific tariffs; and (b) how is the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador represented with the federal government at negotiations concerning the Canada-EU Trade Agreement, including (i) how many representatives are involved from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, (ii) in what capacity do they function during the negotiation process?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA, with the EU is a key part of our pro-trade plan that is committed to deepening and broadening our trading relationships. This is critical as trade accounts for over 60% of our annual GDP, and one in five Canadian jobs is directly or indirectly dependent on trade.

The benefits of a Canada-EU comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA, are expected to be enormous. According to the EU-Canada joint study, a free trade agreement with the EU is expected to boost Canada’s economy by \$12 billion and increase two-way trade by 20%. This is the equivalent of creating almost 80,000 new jobs for hard-working Canadians, or increasing the average Canadian family’s income by almost \$1,000. It would also give preferential market access for Canadian workers and businesses to the world’s largest single common market, foreign investor and trader.

Routine Proceedings

A CETA with the EU would deliver commercial benefits across many goods sectors, including aerospace, chemicals, plastics, wood products, aluminum, fish and seafood, light vehicles and automotive parts, and agriculture products such as wheat, beef and pork.

Canada is seeking an outcome in the Canada-EU CETA negotiations that includes the elimination of all tariffs on Canadian fish and seafood. Duty-free access to the EU, the world's largest importer of fish and seafood products, would offer significant opportunities for Newfoundland and Labrador's fish and seafood industry.

Provinces and territories are unanimous in their support of a CETA with the EU as demonstrated in a February 28, 2012 joint federal-provincial-territorial statement. All Canadian provinces and territories, including Newfoundland and Labrador, are closely involved in the CETA negotiations. This involvement includes frequent meetings with the federal government on planning and strategy, as well as attending negotiating sessions with the EU in areas that fall in whole or in part under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Provincial and territorial officials involved in the CETA negotiations form part of the Canadian delegation. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has several representatives engaged in the negotiations. This includes not only the representatives who attend negotiating sessions with the EU, but also other government officials in various Newfoundland and Labrador government departments who are consulted on different aspects of the negotiations.

Question No. 676—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to the government's funding for the Community Access Program (CAP) that ended on March 31, 2012: (a) how many access sites will be affected; (b) what communities will be affected; (c) how many Canadians will lose access to the program; (d) what is the demographic makeup of the clients who used the sites; (e) what is the demographic makeup of the population that otherwise has limited access to the internet and will be most affected by the termination of the program; (f) how many Canadians will lose their employment as a result of the termination of the program; and (g) what is the total dollar amount that the government intends to save by terminating the program?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the government's funding for the community access program, CAP, that ended on March 31, 2012, and in response to (a) and (b), the community access program was launched in 1995 with the objective to encourage participation in the knowledge-based economy by maximizing the accessibility of computers and the Internet at public access points all across Canada. In 1995, only 40% of Canadian households had a computer and only about 10% of these had Internet access. In contrast, in 2010 about 79% of Canadians had access to the Internet at home. Today with the advent of smart phones, many Canadians have such access to the Internet in their hands.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of a nationally accessible digital infrastructure and views it as a crucial part of future efforts to ensure that Canada benefits from the global digital economy. In support of that, we have brought broadband access to nearly 218,000 households across Canada through the Broadband Canada: Connecting Rural Canadians program. Furthermore, federal funding will continue to support youth internships at community Internet sites. This will provide young Canadians with vital skills and work experience needed to make a successful

transition to the workplace. Former CAP-supported sites will continue to be eligible to benefit from this funding.

During fiscal 2011-12, there were 3,830 CAP sites in communities across Canada. As most CAP sites are not dependent exclusively on federal funding, the number of access sites and communities affected remains to be determined. Individual sites will determine the best way forward.

In response to (c), (d) and (e), this information is not available as Industry Canada does not capture usage data of this nature.

In response to (f), very few employees will be affected and Industry Canada is working with them to identify other suitable employment opportunities.

In response to (g), federal funding for the community access program, CAP, ended on March 31, 2012. The total federal funding available for CAP for 2011-12 was \$15 million: grants and contributions of \$14.1 million and operations and maintenance of \$900,000.

Industry Canada will continue to receive \$10.1 million in 2012-13 through the federal government's youth employment strategy in order to continue to fund youth internships. Former CAP-supported sites will continue to be eligible for this funding.

Question No. 677—Mr. Philip Toone:

With regard to proposed changes to the Fisheries Act outlined in Bill C-38: (a) what plans does the government have for consultation with First Nations on changes to the Fisheries Act, and what are the timelines for the proposed consultations; (b) how will the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) involve First Nations in consultations on any regulations or policies that will emerge from the proposed changes; (c) what resources will be made available to First Nations to enable them to participate in the consultation process; (d) what programs will be made available to facilitate the implementation of the amended Fisheries Act, and will any of these programs be specific to First Nations or other Aboriginal peoples; (e) will changes to the Fisheries Act be retroactively applied to projects currently under environmental assessment, or currently undergoing DFO authorization processes; (f) will there be a transitional phase following the establishment of new legislation, regulations, or policies; (g) what new regulations are planned by the DFO under the framework of the proposed Fisheries Act amendments; (h) how does the DFO intend to define "third-party stakeholders" in section 4.1(1) of the proposed amended Fisheries Act; (i) how does the DFO intend to define "Aboriginal fisheries"; (j) how does the DFO intend to define "serious harm" in section 35(1); (k) how does the DFO intend to determine conditions with respect to the "quantity or concentration" of deleterious substances in s. 36; (l) how does the DFO intend to define the situations under which a Minister may require plans and specifications for activities that are likely to result in serious harm to fish; (m) how does the DFO intend to define ecologically significant areas; (n) does the DFO intend to define "food," "social," and "ceremonial" fisheries; (o) how will the DFO engage with the Assembly of First Nations in order to jointly communicate, interpret, and define the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act; and (p) how will the DFO engage with the Assembly of First Nations to facilitate joint dialogues with First Nations communities?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to questions (a) through (d), (g), (o) and (p), on June 29, Bill C-38, the Jobs, Growth and Long-Term Prosperity Act, received royal assent. Amendments to the Fisheries Act were included in Bill C-38. When Bill C-38 was initially tabled in April 2012, Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided information sessions on the proposed changes to the Fisheries Act to provinces, non-governmental organizations, and aboriginal groups. During summer and fall 2012, officials from Fisheries and Oceans Canada will engage with these key partners and stakeholders to develop the regulatory and policy framework to support the new and focused direction set out by the changes to the Fisheries Act.

With respect to questions (e), (f), (h), (i), (j), (l) (m) and (n), while some terms, such as “serious harm to fish” in section 2(2), and “Aboriginal” fisheries, in section 2(1), are already defined in the amended Fisheries Act, others, such as “ecologically significant areas”, will be defined by regulations or clarified through policies. As various sections of Bill C-38 will come into force at a later date to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council, as indicated in section 156, there will be a transitional phase that will provide an opportunity for further work and engagement with key partners and stakeholders.

With respect to question (k), no changes are planned in the way quantity or concentrations are determined.

Question No. 679—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:

With regard to Canada Economic Development investments in the constituency of Pontiac: (a) how much funding was allocated to the constituency of Pontiac for fiscal years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012; (b) what projects were funded; (c) how many businesses from the constituency benefited from this funding; and (d) what were the amounts granted to each project?

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, in response to (a) and (c), the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec does not gather data by electoral district for most of its programs. The agency's financial systems do, however, generate data by city, by municipality or by regional county municipalities, RCMs.

A total of \$10,371,273 has been allocated to disclosed projects in the cities or municipalities of every RCM included, in total or in part, within the limits of the electoral district of Pontiac for the period of April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012. Note that the amounts are generally allocated to projects that go on for more than a year.

A total of 337 businesses benefited from this funding. This total includes businesses that benefited indirectly from this funding through the services provided by the project's recipients.

In response to (b) and (d), information on the projects financed by the agency can be found on its website at <http://www.dec-ced.gc.ca/eng/disclosure/grant-contribution-awards/quarters.html>.

Question No. 680—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:

With regard to the upcoming cuts to the public service: (a) how many public servants live in the constituency of Pontiac; (b) of this number, how many are affected by the cuts and are at risk of losing their jobs; and (c) for which departments and agencies do they work?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Treasury Board Secretariat cannot produce the requested statistics by riding.

Question No. 682—Ms. Hélène Laverdière:

With regard the government's decision to freeze assets of Ben Ali family members living in Canada: (a) on what date were assets of over \$2.5 million frozen; (b) under what names were these assets listed; and (c) since March 2012, have any additional assets been frozen, and, if so, (i) what is the nature and value of the additional assets, (ii) on what date were the additional assets frozen?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has taken strong action against the former Ben Ali regime, in particular through the passage of the Freezing Assets of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act. Bill C-61, introduced on March 3, 2011, gives the government new and more robust tools in our fight against corruption and the misappropriation of state funds by repressive foreign leaders. Under the leadership of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and with the support of all opposition parties, Bill C-61 received royal assent on March 23, 2011.

In response to (a), all the assets located in Canada and belonging to the persons listed in the Freezing Assets of Corrupt Foreign Officials (Tunisia and Egypt) Regulations became subject to freezing on the date the regulations came into force. To this end, 49 names were listed initially on March 23, 2011 and 74 additional names were added on December 16, 2011.

In response to (b), while the government cannot disclose the ownership information for each frozen asset in Canada as these are matters under investigation, the names of the 123 persons whose assets are subject to freezing under the regulations are public and available in schedule 1 of the regulations: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2011-78/page-2.html#h-6>.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (c), while the government cannot disclose the details of each case when it freezes assets lest it affect the integrity of investigations, it can confirm that it has disclosed the value and nature of all property frozen to date as previously stated in response to order paper question Q-409, 41st Parliament, First Session, tabled on March 12, 2012. While no additional properties have been frozen since March 2012, the legislative regime ensures that there is an ongoing process whereby assets can be identified, frozen and further investigated. In particular, the Freezing Assets of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, FACFOA, provides that financial entities as well as Canadians in Canada and outside Canada shall determine and disclose to the RCMP the existence of property in their control and possession that they have reason to believe is the property of a politically exposed foreign person who is the subject of an order or regulation under FACFOA. As such, the legal regime is not static. Assets may be identified and frozen for as long as persons are designated under the regulations.

Items (i) and (ii) are not applicable.

Question No. 683—Mrs. Maria Mourani:

With regard to the former military base in Saint-Hubert, including the airport: (a) did National Defence and the Canadian Forces use asbestos as insulation or for any other purpose on the former base; (b) has the asbestos been fully removed from these buildings; and (c) if not, which buildings still have asbestos?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), based on building standards of the time, the age of the buildings indicates that asbestos was used in the building construction, particularly in the plumbing for the steam heating systems. Following the relocation of personnel from Canadian Forces Base St. Hubert to Montreal in the 1990s, the Department of National Defence, DND, and the Canadian Forces, CF, disposed of several of the buildings. DND possesses the plans of the buildings still under its responsibility but these do not indicate the remaining areas where asbestos still exists. The policy at the Department of National Defence is to manage asbestos in place. Only when asbestos is disturbed by renovation, demolition or new construction does the department mitigate or remove the material. DND/CF carry out tests before work begins and, if special protection measures are required, they are applied to the letter. This procedure is designed to protect both the contractors and DND/CF employees.

In response to (b), a study is currently under way to identify the locations where contaminants exist, including asbestos, for all buildings at Montreal and St. Hubert garrisons. This study will not be completed for a few years. Pending its findings, the Department of National Defence makes it clear on tendering documents for the contractors and on its employees' work orders that certain areas may be contaminated. If an assigned task directly concerns an area that is likely to be contaminated, the Department of National Defence requires testing to be done before work can begin.

In response to (c), we are currently awaiting the findings of the study to determine where contaminants, including asbestos, exist.

Question No. 686—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to the Auditor General's Spring 2011 report pertaining to the Canadian Forces Reserve Force's pension plan and, in particular, the time required to process pension buyback requests: (a) when will the government act on the Auditor General's recommendations to (i) hire personnel, (ii) train personnel, to process the backlog of requests; (b) when will the government put administrative procedures in

place to reduce processing time to six months or less; (c) how will the government improve communication with reservists regarding its policies on pension buyback requests; and (d) what measures are in place to ensure a straightforward and transparent policy?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, in response to (a)(i) and (ii), since the audit, the Department of National Defence, DND, has obtained additional office space to allow for the hiring and training of staff who will be assigned to process these files. With this additional space, DND has doubled the number of staff processing the backlog of requests to a current staff of 73.

In response to (b), it takes approximately 100 hours to process a file if there are no delays from outside sources.

This response is based on the assumption that the question refers to the current processing time of approximately eight months after retirement for a Canadian Forces member to receive his or her first pension cheque, DND anticipates that the processing time will be reduced to six months or less by the end of fiscal year 2014-15.

It should be noted that the reduction in processing time does not relate to putting in place administrative procedures designed to streamline the process, but rather is a function of the amount of non-automated years a member wishes to buy back. It is anticipated that by the end of fiscal year 2014-15, all the buy-back files that have service buy-back requests from the 1970s will be completed. Service buy-back requests from the 1960s have already been completed. DND is currently moving ahead to process service buy-back requests from the 1980s and onward. These files can be processed on an average of 80 hours per file instead of the current 100 hours per file for files that go back to the 1970s. As a result, there will be a corresponding reduction in the buy-back backlog that will reduce the average wait time from eight months after retirement to a projected six months, with the eventual goal of two months after retirement once the backlog is eliminated.

In response to (c), DND is moving toward a web-based system of communications. This will allow the department to provide information to its client base in a more streamlined, logical manner that directly meets the needs of the client. It will also ensure that information is both current and relevant.

In addition to the web-based system, a call centre will continue to exist. The call centre is staffed by 10 people who are currently taking upward of 36,000 calls per year.

Moreover, there are many annual stakeholder meetings across the country for the reserves that provide updates on reserve force pension policy and administrative issues, including the buy-back process.

In response to (d), the purchase of prior service is defined by the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and its accompanying regulations. The necessary process information and forms to purchase such service is available on the department's Internet and Intranet sites. As referenced above, the department is moving toward a more streamlined, logical manner of web-based communications that provides current and relevant information to its clients.

DND recognizes the implementation and administration issues included in the Auditor General's spring report and has made progress toward addressing these issues, given the plan's complexity and higher than expected take-up rate within the reserve force. The department is committed to improving and modernizing the delivery of pension benefits to reserve members and has taken a number of steps to improve the current system, including hiring more staff and keeping CF members informed of the status of their files.

Furthermore, the department is proactively informing members of the challenge in processing retirement benefit requests, and that although there might be a delay in receiving benefits, all efforts are being made to accelerate the process.

Question No. 690—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:

With regard to the "Enabling Accessibility Fund – Mid-Sized Project Component": (a) what external construction firm handled the application of the Centre Jean Bosco in Maniwaki; (b) what were the names of the experts who handled the Centre's application; (c) what specific criteria and objectives did the Centre Jean Bosco not meet compared with others whose applications were selected; and (d) did the Centre Jean Bosco successfully pass all stages, including (i) the external construction expert stage, (ii) the internal review committee stage, (iii) the stage of acknowledgement and final decision by the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Hanscomb Limited was the external subject matter expert firm that handled the Centre Jean Bosco's application.

In response to (b), Paul Weatherby from Hanscomb Limited was the external evaluator for the Centre Jean Bosco's application.

In response to (c), the Centre Jean Bosco met all program criteria and objectives.

In response to (d), the Centre Jean Bosco's application underwent the following assessment process:

The application was screened for basic program eligibility requirements and for completeness. The Centre Jean Bosco's application was complete and met the basic program eligibility, and therefore, moved on to the assessment stage of the process.

The application was assessed by program officials against program objectives and other requirements. The Centre Jean Bosco's application met the minimum score and was sent to an external subject matter expert who specialized in construction to identify whether the costs and scope of the proposal were reasonable.

Routine Proceedings

Following the results from the external evaluator's assessment, the proposal was further reviewed by an internal review committee to verify the appropriateness of the scoring and outcomes of the overall assessment. As a result of the combination of both the internal and external assessment, the Centre Jean Bosco's application was not one of the top ranked projects and was therefore not recommended for funding.

In response to (i), the external assessment was part of the overall assessment process for applications that met the minimum internal score; it was not a stage in itself. Applications that were assessed by the external expert firm, including Centre Jean Bosco's application, did not pass or fail this particular aspect of the process. The outcome, rating, of the external assessment was counted as part of the final score of the project proposal.

In response to (ii), the internal review committee reviewed the scoring and outcomes of the overall assessment. As a result of the combination of both the internal and external assessment, the Centre Jean Bosco's application was not one of the top ranked projects. Applications did not pass or fail this stage of the assessment process. They were ranked based on the result of the assessment process, and funding recommendations were made based on the project score and availability of funding.

In response to (iii), only the top ranked projects could be considered for funding based on availability of program funds. As the Centre Jean Bosco's application was not one of the top ranked projects, it was not recommended for funding to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Question No. 694—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to government communications: (a) what was the cost of (i) producing, (ii) printing, (iii) distributing an insert concerning Old Age Security (OAS) policies, distributed with OAS cheques or stubs in the spring of 2012; (b) what was the purpose of the insert; and (c) was the distribution complete to all OAS recipients, and, if not, what was the geographical or other distribution, and how was that distribution determined?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, extraordinary efforts were made to communicate with Canadians regarding the old age security, OAS, age change given its importance. Communicating with Canadians is a fundamental responsibility of the Government of Canada.

Following the release of budget 2012, inserts to existing mail-outs and letters were sent to seniors and near seniors who will not be affected by the change to the OAS age of eligibility. The change to the age of eligibility represents a significant change to our retirement income system and needs to be well understood by all Canadians, whether they will be directly affected or not. By proactively communicating through these notices, the government wished to avoid creating needless apprehension among current OAS and Canada pension plan, CPP, recipients, as well as minimize the number of enquiries to Service Canada.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (a), two main products to communicate the OAS changes were sent to seniors and near seniors following the budget 2012 announcement.

A cheque insert was sent to ensure awareness among OAS/ CPP beneficiaries who receive their payment by mail that they would not be affected by the OAS age change. Inserts were printed and issued in May and June 2012, at a cost of approximately \$29,900. The inserts were a low cost distribution mechanism since they were included in existing mail-outs and therefore did not result in any additional distribution costs.

In addition to the insert in the question, in order to ensure that all OAS and CPP recipients were aware of the OAS age change, a letter from the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, HRSD, was sent immediately after the budget 2012 announcement to inform all OAS and CPP recipients of the increase to the age of eligibility and to reassure them that they would not be affected. Production and mailing of these letters cost \$4,384,750 and was sent to over 6.3 million Canadians. Only one letter was sent to people who receive both CPP and OAS.

In response to (b), the cheque insert and the letter were produced to proactively inform OAS and CPP recipients of the increase to the OAS age of eligibility from 65 to 67, including what it could mean for them. The products also pointed them toward the www.servicecanada.gc.ca/retirement site for more information on the proposed changes.

By proactively communicating with Canadians, the government wished to avoid creating unnecessary anxiety among those not affected and minimize the number of enquiries to Service Canada.

In response to (c), the cheque insert was distributed to approximately one million OAS/ CPP recipients who have opted to receive their payments by mail. The insert was sent to these individuals in both May and June with a total distribution of two million. This was sent as part of an already scheduled regular mail-out to approximately nine per cent of all OAS recipients and twelve per cent of CPP recipients.

The letter from the Minister of HRSD was sent to all OAS and CPP recipients, which is approximately 6.3 million individuals, to ensure almost 100% coverage of all current OAS and CPP recipients.

By using these two main distribution methods, the government ensured close to 100% coverage in informing seniors about the change.

Question No. 695—**Ms. Judy Foote:**

With regard to Library and Archives Canada (LAC): (a) what is the nature of LAC's participation, if any, in the 2012 Canadian Library Association's conference of May 30 to June 2, 2012, in Ottawa, Ontario; (b) how many LAC (i) librarians, (ii) other staff members attended the conference; and (c) if no LAC librarians or staff attended the conference, why was this the case?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), with regard to the 2012 Canadian Library Association's, CLA, recent annual conference in Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, LAC, was involved as the main Government of Canada partner for the event. More specifically, the Deputy Head and Librarian and

Archivist of Canada, Dr. Daniel J. Caron, was the keynote speaker at the conference's opening session. Other LAC subject matter experts took part in the event's broader technical program. LAC also was present at the conference trade show with its corporate kiosk. LAC also organized guided tours for CLA conference delegates who were given an opportunity to visit the Gatineau preservation centre in Gatineau, Quebec, and the nitrate film preservation facility at Shirley's Bay, Ottawa, Ontario. In response to (b), a total of 20 LAC staff members attended the conference.

In response to (b)(i), 11 were librarians or persons employed in library science related functions by LAC.

In response to (b)(ii), nine were LAC employees whose duties are broader within the library and archival aspects of the institution's mandate. Part (c) is not applicable.

Question No. 696—**Ms. Judy Foote:**

With regard to Library and Archives Canada (LAC), how many requests has LAC received from Senators, Members of Parliament, or their offices or staff representatives, since January 1, 2006, for: (a) research materials; (b) access to published library materials; and (c) access to archival materials?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the legislative provisions covering the collection and use of personal information, Library and Archives Canada does not compile data relating to the occupation of its clients. It is, therefore, impossible to respond to this question.

Question No. 698—**Hon. Wayne Easter:**

With respect to the negotiation of a tax treaty or tax information exchange agreement with Liechtenstein: (a) on what date did Canada enter into negotiations with Liechtenstein for this agreement; (b) what departments are responsible for negotiation and implementation of the agreement; (c) on what date will the negotiations be completed; (d) on what date will the agreement be implemented; and (e) prior to these negotiations, had the government ever approached Liechtenstein about negotiating a tax treaty or tax information exchange agreement?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), negotiations for a tax information exchange agreement (TIEA) with Liechtenstein commenced in July 2010.

In response to (b), the Department of Finance has the lead responsibility for the negotiation of Canada's TIEAs, in collaboration with the Canada Revenue Agency. The Department of Finance has the lead responsibility for the implementation of Canada's TIEAs, in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of Justice.

In response to (c), negotiations are ongoing. For an update on negotiations, please visit www.fin.gc.ca/treaties-conventions/tier-aaerf-eng.asp.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (d), in Canada, once a TIEA is signed, it must follow the government's policy on tabling of treaties in Parliament. Under this process, a TIEA is required to be tabled in the House of Commons for a 21 sitting day period. Since no other legislative or regulatory steps are required for Canada to meet its obligations under a TIEA, once that period is completed, Canada is in a position to notify the other state of the completion of its internal procedures for the entry into force of the TIEA. A TIEA usually enters into force when both states have sent such a notification.

In response to (e), Canada had notified Liechtenstein regarding its interest to negotiate a TIEA in 2009.

Question No. 699—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With respect to answers to written questions pertaining to possible tax evasion in Liechtenstein and Switzerland, why did provisions of the "Canada-France Income Tax Convention" preclude the government from answering written questions on the Order Paper regarding possible tax evasion in Switzerland, but the "Agreement Between Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany for the Avoidance of Double taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income and Certain Other Taxes, the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion and the Assistance in Tax Matters" did not prevent the government from answering identical written questions on the Order Paper regarding possible tax evasion in Liechtenstein?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada received information from the Government of France pertaining to accounts in Switzerland through an international treaty.

The information received regarding Canadians with offshore accounts in Liechtenstein was not received through such an exchange with the Federal Republic of Germany but through an avenue outside Canada's tax treaties and agreements.

Information is often provided to the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, from various sources on the basis that it cannot be further disclosed by the CRA. Where the CRA is at liberty to provide information, it will endeavour to do so. In other instances, it will be limited in this ability. The CRA has an obligation to follow confidentiality and privacy legislation closely.

In order to both respect confidentiality requirements and maintain harmonious international relations, the CRA must adhere to the requirements that international tax treaties and agreements impose on the disclosure of information received from Canada's treaty partners; to do otherwise could result in negative consequences to the effective exchange of information.

Question No. 702—Ms. Charmaine Borg:

With regard to the 700 MHz Spectrum Auction: (a) has the Minister of Industry announced his intent to set aside a portion of the auction proceeds to deliver high-speed Internet access to rural and remote regions; and (b) does the Minister have a plan to introduce measures that would provide for the health of Canadian telecommunications companies in the face of new regulations allowing foreign telecommunications companies with less than 10% of the market to enter the Canadian market for the first time?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, With regard to the 700 megahertz spectrum auction and in response to (a), proceeds from wireless spectrum auctions go to the government's consolidated revenue fund.

The government is applying specific measures, rollout requirements, in the 700 megahertz spectrum auction to see that Canadians

in rural areas have access to the same advanced wireless services as everyone else in a timely manner.

The government relies primarily on market forces to extend broadband Internet access to Canadians. The private sector continues to invest to expand and increase the speeds of broadband networks, with \$8.4 billion in capital expenditures in 2010. In areas where there has not been a business case for the private sector to deliver broadband Internet services on its own, the approach has been to use targeted initiatives to extend broadband to unserved areas. For instance, the broadband Canada program, BCP, contributed significant investments to projects to expand broadband service to nearly 220,000 unserved and underserved households. BCP projects are expected to be completed in the summer of 2012.

In response to (b), the government is reforming foreign investment restrictions in the telecommunications sector in order to provide greater access to capital and expertise for the companies that need it the most. This is especially the case for new wireless companies that are providing more choices to Canadian families and businesses. This reform is one component of the government's actions to sustain competition and strong investment in this sector, and the availability of the latest telecommunications technologies for all Canadians.

The three largest telecommunications firms that control more than 90% of the telecommunications sector will still be required to be Canadian controlled.

Question No. 704—Ms. Mylène Freeman:

With regard to the Maurice Lamontagne Institute: (a) how many jobs will be eliminated as a result of the recent budget cuts; (b) how much severance will the affected employees receive; (c) which departments did these employees work for; (d) how many employees will be transferred to another part of the country as a result of the recent budget cuts; (e) where will those employees be transferred to; (f) how much will the transferred employees receive in moving and other allowances; (g) what departments were these employees part of; (h) when was the Institute's work last evaluated or reviewed; and (i) what was the outcome of the evaluation or review?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, until departmental managers have had a chance to complete their review of the budget 2012 measures and consider the results on their programs, it is undetermined how many employees will receive surplus and opting letters. The department's goal is to address reductions to the greatest extent possible through attrition, deployment, planned retirement and other staffing mechanisms.

In response to (b), Fisheries and Oceans Canada will ensure that workforce adjustment provisions and relevant collective agreements are respected. .

In response to (c) and (g), these employees at Maurice Lamontagne Institute work for Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

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In response to (d), until managers have had a chance to complete their review of the measures and consider the results on their programs, it is unclear how many employees will receive surplus and opting letters. Further, it is not known whether employees from the Maurice Lamontagne Institute will need to be relocated.

In response to (e), as described above in the response to (d), decisions about relocating employees have not been made.

In response to (f), Fisheries and Oceans Canada will ensure that the Treasury Board Secretariat travel policies and National Joint Council Relocation Directive are respected.

In response to (h) and (i), the Office of the Auditor General and the department's evaluation directorate conduct evaluations of departmental programs. However, the institute's work is not evaluated on its own, as it supports various departmental programs.

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada produces a variety of reports and publications on behalf of the Auditor General and the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. For more information, please see the Office of the Auditor General website http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/rp_fs_e_44.html. Similarly, the department publishes audit and evaluation reports on the department's website: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ae-ve/evaluations-eng.htm>.

Question No. 707—**Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence's preparation for the Auditor General of Canada's 2012 Spring Report: (a) how many meetings were held on the issue of the F-35s; and (b) who attended these meetings and what are their (i) titles, (ii) responsibilities?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC) Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces searched calendar records of the deputy minister, associate deputy minister, and group principals responsible for aspects of the F-35 file and included information in this response based on those records. Records were searched from the time that the contents of the Auditor General's chapter 2 on the CF-18 replacement was provided to the department for comment to the date that the Auditor General's spring 2012 report was tabled on April 3, 2012. Records for approximately 67 meetings held on the F-35 were found.

In response to (b), no attendance was taken at these meetings.

Question No. 710—**Ms. Judy Foote:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' consolidation of six financial support offices to Fredericton, New Brunswick: (a) in what specific communities or cities are the six offices presently located; (b) when was the final decision to move the six offices made; (c) what was the specific rationale for each individual office's consolidation to Fredericton; (d) for each individual office, how much will it cost to consolidate to Fredericton; (e) for each individual office, what is the nature of the projected costs as identified in (d); (f) what specific costs versus savings led to the determination that \$2 million would be saved; (g) what type of assessment was done when deciding on the closures; (h) what consultations were held with the communities or offices affected; (i) what analysis was done of the impact this consolidation would have on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; (j) what is the impact on the regions affected; (k) how many jobs will be lost as a result of the consolidation; (l) what are the jobs that will be lost as a result of the consolidation; (m) what is the specific location of each job loss; (n) what are the jobs that will be moved out of each specific office; (o) how many current employees are expected to move to Fredericton; (p) how was Fredericton chosen to be the location

of the consolidation; and (q) what are the file numbers and titles of any files associated with the consolidation?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the department currently provides internal financial services from the national headquarters, based in Ottawa, and six regions including Newfoundland and Labrador, Maritimes, Gulf, Quebec, Central and Arctic, and Pacific Region. These regions have financial services employees in the following cities: St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Moncton, New Brunswick; Mont-Joli, Quebec; Québec, Quebec; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Burlington, Ontario; Parry Sound, Ontario; Prescott, Ontario; Ottawa, Ontario; Sarnia, Ontario; Vancouver, British Columbia; Victoria, British Columbia; and Kamloops, British Columbia.

In response to (b), the decision was part of Budget 2012.

In response to (c), as part of the government's commitment to reducing spending, the consolidation of internal financial services will be streamlining back-office services into one location.

In response to (d), (e), (f), (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), and (o), until departmental managers have had a chance to complete their review of the measures and consider the results on their programs, the department is unable to provide this information. The department's goal is to address reductions to the greatest extent possible through attrition, deployment, planned retirement, and other staffing mechanisms.

In response to (g), (h), and (i), assessments were performed to streamline back-office services to ensure efficiency and consistency of business processes. Consultations were held with the management team of the department which includes representation of the department in offices affected.

In response to (p), the location was selected with the following considerations: proximity to provincial government which could serve as a potential pool of qualified candidates; and a sufficient pool of bilingual workers.

In response to (q), this initiative is referred to as the Consolidation of Internal Financial and Administrative Services

Question No. 711—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With respect to the Department of Canadian Heritage: (a) what programs and services are operated by the department, broken down by fiscal year from 2002-2003 to present; (b) for each program and service identified in (a), what is the total budget allotted; (c) for each program identified in (a), what is (i) the number of applications received, (ii) the number of applications rejected, (iii) the number of applications accepted, (iv) the rationale for the decision to accept or reject each application; (d) for all applications identified in (c)(iii), what is the amount of funding granted and which services were offered to the applicant; (e) for each program and service identified in (a), what is the province or region affected; and (f) what is the current status of each of the programs identified in (a)?

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Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a complex request and the time needed to respond would entail research and analysis in the department's grants and contributions information management system, as well as in its financial system. The report produced would contain approximately 2,300 pages, and certain pages would require translation. We estimate that this request would require the services of four resource persons from both financial services and informatics services, for a total of eight weeks of full-time work, 300 hours, or \$11,940 in salary.

Information on grants and contributions greater than \$25,000, awarded from January 1, 2006 onwards, is posted on the departmental website at: <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pc-ch/dp-pd/sc-gc/index-eng.cfm> Information on Canadian Heritage programs and services can be found on the department's website at <http://www.pch.gc.ca>

Question No. 712—**Hon. John McCallum:**

With respect to the government's Strategic and Operating Review what, including detailed citations or references, is every rule, regulation, law, standing order or provision of a collective bargaining agreement that prevents the disclosure of the details of the Review?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government will use existing reporting mechanisms to report on both planned and actual savings at a whole-of-government and departmental level.

At the whole-of-government level, this includes information released through the budget, the estimates, and financial results released in the monthly Fiscal Monitor and the Public Accounts of Canada.

At the departmental level, the suite of reports includes planning information contained in the reports on plans and priorities, and actual expenditure information contained in the departmental performance reports and the quarterly financial reports.

Question No. 715—**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:**

With regard to the government's review and analysis of genetically engineered (GE) alfalfa: (a) what studies has the government undertaken or reviewed pertaining to the potential economic impact of the introduction of GE alfalfa in Canada; (b) what actions has the government taken as a result of these findings; and (c) is the government assessing whether to carry out a comprehensive study of the potential economic impacts of GE alfalfa on Canada's various agricultural and food sectors?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Canada has one of the most stringent and rigorous regulatory systems in the world, in which safety is the number one priority. This extends to crops or foods that are modified or contain genetic modification—all of which must undergo a comprehensive, science-based approval process involving both Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA. Canada's regulatory system for products of agricultural biotechnology is designed so that every possible precaution is taken. The safety of new products is carefully and cautiously assessed before these products can be cultivated by a grower, used in livestock feed, or made available to the consumer.

Genetically engineered, GE, Roundup Ready®, RR, alfalfa received food, feed, and environmental safety authorizations in 2005. However, other regulatory steps would be required before RR alfalfa could be fully commercialized in Canada. For example, all new varieties of alfalfa are subject to variety registration. To date, no variety of RR alfalfa has been registered in Canada.

Socio-economic factors, such as the potential market impacts of the introduction of these technologies, are not taken into account during the regulatory decision-making process. Once a GE crop has been approved for environmental release and other appropriate regulatory approvals are in place, it is considered to be like any other commodity crop.

In response to (b), as noted above, socio-economic factors, such as the potential market impacts of the introduction of these technologies, are not taken into account during the regulatory decision-making process. The government is committed to maintaining our rigorous, science-based assessment process to protect human and animal health and the environment while benefiting from the advances brought by these technologies.

In response to (c), the government is aware of and responsive to concerns expressed by various industry groups about market impacts should RR alfalfa be commercialized in Canada, and has provided support to the industry to help assess potential market impacts. For instance, in 2011, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provided funding through its Canadian agricultural adaptation program for a study entitled "Assessing the Potential Impact of Roundup Ready Alfalfa on Canada's Forage Industry". The study, commissioned by the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association, CFGA, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Forage Council, undertook an unbiased, fact-based assessment of the emerging issue of RR alfalfa. The intent of the report is to encourage dialogue concerning GE technologies in forages. The final report on this study was published on June 13, 2012, and is available on the CFGA website at <http://www.canadianfga.ca/research-projects/completed-projects/>.

The government is also dedicated to developing markets, and recognizes that co-operation throughout the value chain is a critical aspect of protecting markets. Commodity groups such as those representing canola and soybean have enjoyed tremendous success by working collaboratively, from product developer, to grower, to seed supplier, to grain handler, toward ensuring that segregation strategies are in place or importing markets are secured before seeking approvals for any new technology.

Routine Proceedings

Further, the government provides support to a series of industry-led, value chain round tables, VCRTs, to enhance Canadian competitiveness and profitability. The VCRTs are sector-specific and bring together industry representatives from across the value chain—from input suppliers, producers, and processors to retailers and traders—with federal and provincial government decision makers. The VCRTs focus on the individual needs of each value chain and are an important mechanism to share information, identify sector strengths and weaknesses, identify current and future requirements for the sector, and co-operate on long-term strategies.

The Government of Canada believes that industry is best positioned to understand and respond to market demands and opportunities. Members of various value chains, including those representing organics, seeds, and grains, are encouraged to engage in active dialogue to establish the best path forward for the commercialization of RR alfalfa.

Question No. 716—Mr. Alex Atamanenko:

With regard to the government's approval and analysis of the safety of genetically engineered corn for human consumption: (a) how does the government's policy address the need to restrict the use of genetically engineered (GE) traits to non-sweetcorn varieties and/or request a new data package submission in order to evaluate the safety of GE traits in sweetcorn, given the fact that GE traits were initially approved for use in corn before GE sweetcorn varieties were commercialized, and based on assumptions of consumption patterns dominated by processed corn products and animal feed, versus consumption of sweetcorn as a fresh vegetable; (b) what studies or analysis has the government undertaken or reviewed pertaining to the question of human health effects from eating GE sweetcorn; and (c) will the government carry out a re-evaluation of GE traits for use in sweetcorn?

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

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to protecting the health and safety of Canadians. To this end, Canada has one of the most stringent and rigorous regulatory systems in the world. Under the Food and Drugs Act, Health Canada is responsible for provisions related to public health, food safety, and nutrition. This includes the establishment of science-based policies and standards to ensure that all foods, including genetically modified, GM, or genetically engineered, foods are safe and nutritious. The Novel Foods Regulations require that notification be made to Health Canada by the company wanting to sell a novel food product, including food that is genetically modified or genetically engineered, prior to its marketing or advertising. This pre-market notification ensures that the safety of each novel food is assessed and verified before it can enter the Canadian marketplace.

GM foods are only approved after Health Canada's scientists are satisfied that the data provided by the applicant addresses all health and safety concerns and meets regulatory requirements. The safety assessment includes exposure estimates based on consumption of all food products derived from the GM variety. In the case of GM corn, this includes normal routes of exposure such as direct consumption of kernels. Should evaluators determine that the data is not sufficient, additional information and/or testing would be requested from the applicant in order to fully demonstrate the safety of the product. Only when all the scientists evaluating the GM food product agree that there are no safety concerns would the food be permitted in the Canadian marketplace. To date, all GM foods that have been approved in Canada, including all of the approved GM corn

varieties, were found to be as safe and as nutritious as their non-modified counterparts.

The specific criteria for the safety assessment of such foods are outlined in the Health Canada publication *Guidelines for the Safety Assessment of Novel Foods*. These guidelines are based upon scientific principles developed through expert international consultation with agencies such as the World Health Organization, WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD. This approach is also consistent with other regulatory agencies around the world including those of members of the European Union, Australia/New Zealand, Japan, and the United States.

It should be noted that sweet corn is from the same species as field corn, i.e., *Zea mays*. It only differs from field corn in that it has been bred to contain higher sugar content. Field corn, which usually undergoes processing prior to consumption, e.g., manufacturing of cornstarch, constitutes the majority of GM corn varieties approved in Canada. However, once a GM corn line has been approved in Canada, plant breeders may use the GM line in their breeding programs. Therefore, it is not unusual to transfer traits from field corn to sweet corn, given that they are the same species. However, if a "new" novel trait is introduced when an approved GM corn is bred with other corn varieties, including sweet corn, the developer is required to contact Health Canada; in other words, when the crossbreeding results in changes to characteristics that fall well outside the agronomic, nutritional, and compositional range expected for that variety. The onus is on the developer to ensure that no novel traits have been introduced into the plant, and to notify Health Canada in the event that a novel trait is produced as a result of their breeding programs. If such a trait were found, the new variety would need to undergo the pre-market assessment process as described above. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency ensures compliance with the Food and Drugs Act and its regulations including that only those foods, in this case, derived from GM crops, that satisfy the requirements of Division 28 of the Food and Drug Regulations, i.e., approved by Health Canada, are available for sale in Canada.

Routine Proceedings

Health Canada takes any new information related to regulated products very seriously. Scientists in the department are continually reviewing published studies to ensure the continued safety of the Canadian public. The decisions that the government has taken to date have stood the test of time. Since these products were introduced on the Canadian market, over 18 years ago, there has been no evidence which has necessitated a change. Please be assured that should Health Canada review any study or become aware of any information that demonstrates a health or safety concern with these products, we would take immediate action to ensure the safety of the Canadian food supply, including revocation of Health Canada's approval should the scientific evidence support such a decision.

Question No. 718—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the government's policy on seeking clemency for Canadians sentenced to death abroad: (a) under what circumstances will the government seek clemency; (b) when was the current policy adopted; (c) who proposed the current policy; and (d) how was it adopted?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), a Canadian citizen facing the prospect of the death penalty (or an authorized representative acting on his/her behalf) may apply to the Government of Canada for clemency intervention. Requests for clemency are assessed on a case-by-case basis using criteria based on Canadian values and international standards. A non-exhaustive list of criteria that may be taken into consideration is posted on the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada website: http://www.voyage.gc.ca/documents/clemency_clemence-eng.asp.

In response to (b), (c), and (d), as has been previously reported, the Government of Canada adopted the current clemency policy and it was applied as of July 2009.

Question No. 721—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With regard to the closing of Kingston Penitentiary, the Regional Treatment Centre and the Leclerc Institution, for each of these three facilities: (a) what is the estimated total savings in annual costs that occur as a result of the closure; (b) what methodology was used to arrive at the figure in (a); (c) what input data was used to arrive at the figure in (a); (d) how was this data collected; (e) what are the estimated costs for transferring the inmates to other facilities; (f) what are the estimated costs for transferring employees from the above institutions to new institutions, including but not limited to annualised capital costs of construction, staffing costs and operation and maintenance costs; (g) for those employees who will not be transferred, what if any retirement initiatives will be offered and what is the total estimated costs of these initiatives; (h) what are all the total estimated costs of incarcerating the inmates at other facilities who would have been held at each of the three facilities slated for closure; and (i) what are the true net savings to the government once the total costs of holding the inmates at other facilities are taken into account?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the closures of Kingston Penitentiary, including the Regional Treatment Centre, in Kingston, Ontario and Leclerc Institution in Laval, Quebec will result in an overall cost savings of approximately \$120 million per year.

In response to (b), (c), and (d), the closures of two federal prisons, Kingston Penitentiary, including the Regional Treatment Centre, in Kingston, Ontario and Leclerc Institution in Laval, Quebec will result in an overall cost savings of approximately \$120 million. More precisely, Correctional Service of Canada's, CSC, budget will be \$120 million less at the end of implementation. This reflects the

savings from salaries, operating, and maintenance, as well as savings realized from the addition of new cells.

In response to (e) and (h), CSC has a comprehensive plan to safely move offenders impacted by these closures to other institutions. Many institutions in the Ontario Region are undergoing infrastructure expansions to better manage the complex and diverse offender population.

Maximum-security inmates will remain maximum-security inmates and be placed in appropriate facilities at this level. The same will apply for medium-security inmates. The Ontario Region's Assessment Unit will be moved out of Millhaven Institution, thereby increasing the maximum-security capacity of this institution. Maximum-security inmates will be transferred either to Millhaven Institution or to a new maximum-security unit at Collins Bay Institution. Medium-security inmates currently incarcerated at the Regional Treatment Centre will be transferred to Bath Institution, a medium-security institution located on the same penitentiary property as Millhaven Institution. A new medium security unit is being built within the perimeter of Bath Institution (capacity 96 cells).

Where appropriate, CSC may consider voluntary transfers of offenders to other regions.

For security reasons, CSC cannot divulge details relating to a specific offender's movement. The transfer of these offenders will be done with the utmost consideration for the safety and security of the community. CSC is unable to comment on any associated costs during the transition leading to the closures of the institutions.

In response to (f), these initiatives will result in approximately 1,000 full-time employees being affected within Ontario and Quebec. However, the majority of affected staff will be redeployed to other facilities. Employees whose jobs are affected will be treated with fairness and respect, and in accordance with workforce adjustment agreements that have been negotiated with public sector unions. Pursuant to obligations under the Work Force Adjustment Directive, CSC is committed to maximizing employment opportunities for indeterminate employees affected by workforce adjustment situations.

CSC has a comprehensive plan to accommodate staff impacted by these closures to other institutions. However, during the transition leading to the closures of the institutions, CSC is unable to comment on the related estimated costs.

In response to (g), in July 2012, affected CX staff were met by CSC management and a union representative in order to select a location to be deployed to from the national vacancy list. Affected CX employees who intend to retire on or before October 31, 2013, and provide written confirmation of same will not be required to select a position from the vacancy list.

There will not be any incentives/options for retirement. CSC is dealing with each union individually.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (i), CSC's budget will be net \$120 million less at the end of the implementation of this reduction.

Question No. 723—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With regard to the Department of National Defence, how many reports were sent to the Minister and Associate Minister regarding the cost of the F-35 fighter jet and what are the names of those reports?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been two reports sent to the Minister of National Defence and/or the Associate Minister of National Defence regarding the cost of the F-35.

The titles of these documents are as follows: 2012 U.S. Government Accountability Office Report on the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)

Question No. 725—Hon. Gerry Byrne :

With regard to the Minister of National Defence, not including any activity that would be considered a cabinet confidence, since January 1, 2012: (a) what is the date, time, location and nature of all government business conducted by the Minister; (b) what means of transportation did the Minister use to attend each event; and (c) who accompanied the Minister to each event?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed a Federal Court decision concluding that a minister, unlike a public servant or Canadian Forces member, is not an officer of a government institution for the purposes of paragraph 3(j) of the Privacy Act. See *Canada (Information Commissioner) v. Canada (Minister of National Defence)*, 2011 SCC 25, [2011] 2 S.C.R. 306. As a result, information about the Minister of National Defence that appears on his agenda is considered personal information and is protected by section 19 of the Access to Information Act.

However, much information regarding government business conducted by the Minister of National Defence is made publicly available on the departmental website. News releases, media advisories, and statements can be found at the following web link: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/news-nouvelles-eng.asp>.

Information falling under the proactive disclosure policy relating to travel and hospitality expenses of the Minister of National Defence and those travelling with him, including the Associate Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, ministerial exempt staff, and senior-level employees at the deputy minister, chief of the defence staff, assistant deputy minister, and equivalent levels, is also in the public domain and can be accessed at the following link: www.admfincs-smafinsm.forces.gc.ca/pd-dp/index-eng.asp.

Question No. 727—Hon. Gerry Byrne:

With regard to the Minister of National Defence, how many Blackberrys have been issued to him since August 14, 2007?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence has not issued any Blackberrys to the Minister of National Defence since August 14, 2007.

Question No. 728—Hon. Gerry Byrne:

With regard to weapons-grade uranium (WGU), since February 6, 2006, to what countries has the government authorized the export of WGU and what quantities have been exported to each country?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC) Mr. Speaker, highly enriched uranium, HEU, is uranium enriched beyond 20% in the isotope uranium-235. HEU is only considered weapons-grade uranium when it has been enriched to 90% or above in the isotope U 235.

Canada does not produce HEU. Rather, it is imported for specialized civilian nuclear use and may be returned to its country of origin or exported in very small quantities. In keeping with Canadian nuclear non proliferation policy, these exports are solely for peaceful, non-explosive purposes. Canadian imports and exports of HEU have been for civilian use and have not been associated with a weapons program.

Since February 6, 2006, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has authorized the export of 50.4 kilograms of HEU. Only two countries were the recipients of this material: the United States of America and Austria, the location of the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, headquarters. The exact cumulative quantities sent to each country between February 6, 2006, and May 31, 2012, are as follows:

A total of 50.34 kilograms was sent to the U.S.A.: 4.33 kilograms contained within a spent fuel assembly from the McMaster University Research Reactor and the decommissioning of the Dalhousie University SLOWPOKE reactor were being returned for storage and surveillance; 46.0 kilograms of U.S.A. origin HEU were being repatriated as part of the global threat reduction initiative, originally imported to Canada for use in research reactor fuel assemblies; and 0.013 kilograms contained within fission chambers were sent for repair to the U.S.A.

A total of 0.064 kilograms was sent to Austria, IAEA: 0.0023 kilograms HEU contained within a fission chamber was being returned to Vienna following its use by IAEA inspectors in their safeguards program for Candu reactors; and 0.062 kilograms were sent as small samples selected by IAEA inspectors for verification and analysis following inspections of Canadian nuclear reactor facilities.

Question No. 733—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): (a) what is the current expenditure for wild Atlantic salmon in the categories of (i) management, (ii) research/assessment, (iii) enhancement/habitat, (iv) enforcement; (b) what is the detailed and complete breakdown of the \$12 million noted in the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy; and (c) what are the current expenditures for Atlantic salmon aquaculture, broken down for the east coast, Ottawa headquarters, and the west coast?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a)(i), fisheries management, \$931, 500 per year. This does not include figures for Quebec.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (ii), the following numbers are estimates for fiscal year 2011-12, given that the department's funding is often based on broader, horizontal programs rather than individual species, such as Atlantic salmon: \$4,547,000 for research and assessment; \$1,167,000 for species at risk.

In response to (iii), the habitat program is not managed on a species-by-species basis. Consequently, it is impossible for Fisheries and Oceans Canada to provide the current expenditures specific to wild Atlantic salmon (a)(iii) enhancement/habitat. The program does operate in all four Atlantic provinces and Quebec, where wild Atlantic salmon are found, and does carry on work to protect and conserve this species, along with other species of importance.

In response to (iv), \$5.7 million.

In response to (b), note that these figures were provided as working estimates during development of the policy and should not be considered complete or accurate. For fiscal year 2004-05, these are estimates of spending by DFO and do not include any provincial spending: management, \$200,200; international, \$198,100; research/assessment, including habitat science, \$6,216,200; enhancement/habitat, \$804,700; enforcement, \$3,177,700; aboriginal fisheries, \$684,000; species at risk office, \$7,400; real property, \$1,186,000. The total is \$12,474,300.

In response to (c), the department's financial tracking does not allow for species specific recording of aquaculture funding.

Question No. 736—Mr. Scott Simms:

With respect to the snowmobile protests that took place in Terra Nova National Park between January 2010 and December 2011 and all events and circumstances related to these protests, what are the details of all ministerial correspondence, letters, emails, internal recommendations, internal correspondence, internal action plans, briefing notes, or other written material pertaining to these events?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a breakdown of all ministerial correspondence, letters, emails, internal recommendations, internal correspondence, internal action plans, briefing notes, and other written material pertaining to the snowmobile protests that took place in Terra Nova National Park between January 2010 and December 2011 is as follows: 10 briefing notes, 218 emails, 20 internal action plans, 2 internal recommendations, 22 ministerial correspondence, 1 letter, and 12 other written material.

Question No. 743—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to Status of Women Canada: (a) in the recent federal budget, were there cuts to Status of Women Canada and, if so, did those cuts affect the Women's Program in terms of personnel or funding for projects; (b) are the PDF files of the reports of completed Women's Program projects still available on Status of Women Canada website and, if so, where are they, (i) if they are not available, why not; and (c) are the summaries of the results of the current and past Women's Program competitions still available on the Status of Women Canada website and, if not, why, (i) if yes, where are they?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), no cuts were made to Status of Women Canada as a result of the recent federal budget.

In response to (b), PDF files of final reports of completed women's program projects have never been posted on the Status of Women Canada website.

In response to (c), results of women's program calls for proposals are posted on the Status of Women Canada website as they become available either through news releases or through proactive disclosure of grant and contribution awards.

Question No. 744—Mr. Philip Toone:

With regard to the closure of and budget cuts at Fisheries and Oceans laboratories in Sidney, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Burlington, Ontario; Mont-Joli, Québec; Moncton, New Brunswick; and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia: (a) how many full-time, part-time and contract jobs were lost as a result of these closures and cuts, broken down by laboratory; (b) how much is being saved as a result of these closures and cuts, broken down by laboratory; (c) will the jobs referred to in (a) be transferred elsewhere in Canada; (d) what research will stop as a result of these closures and cuts; (e) will the laboratories' chemical pollution monitoring and research activities be carried out elsewhere in Canada, (i) if so, by which organizations and how much funding will those organizations receive, (ii) if not, what is the rationale for ending those activities; and (f) will research in ecotoxicology and environmental chemistry be carried out elsewhere in Canada following these closures and cuts, (i) if so, by which organizations and how much funding will those organizations receive, (ii) if not, what is the rationale for ending those activities?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), managers are continuing to analyze the results of the measures on their programs, including the human resource impacts. As a result, it is not yet clear exactly how many employees will receive surplus and opting letters. It remains the Department's goal to address reductions to the greatest extent possible through attrition, deployment, planned retirement and other staffing mechanisms.

With regard to (b), the forecasted savings for Fisheries and Oceans Canada as a result of the strategic and operating review are approximately \$79.3 million by 2014-15.

With regard to (c), in lieu of in-house research on the biological effects of contaminants, the department will establish an advisory group to ensure departmental priorities are met. The five-member advisory group will be located regionally, with three advisors in Winnipeg, Manitoba, one advisor on the east coast, and one advisor on the west coast.

With regard to (d), in lieu of in-house research on the biological effects of contaminants, the department will establish an advisory group.

With regard to (e) and (f)(i), the newly established advisory group will manage a research fund of close to \$1.4 million to obtain scientific information from academia and independent facilities on the biological effects of contaminants.

The advisory group will begin undertaking its functions over the course of this fiscal year. In the months ahead, advisory group members will begin engaging experts from the academic community and other independent facilities.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 747—Ms. Annick Papillon:**

With regard to the anticipated one-time costs of closing the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in Quebec City (MRSC Quebec), and the merger of MRSC Quebec with the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Halifax (JRCC Halifax) and the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Trenton (JRCC Trenton), what is the total cost of: (a) merging MRSC Quebec with JRCC Halifax and JRCC Trenton; (b) the new training that will be given at JRCC Halifax and JRCC Trenton, including language training and the overtime required to replace employees taking training; (c) moving to JRCC Halifax and JRCC Trenton; (d) the necessary upgrades to JRCC Halifax and JRCC Trenton; (e) payments to employees who decide to leave the public service because of the merger; (f) hiring employees to offer the services once provided by MRSC Quebec; (g) moving employees and project managers between JRCC Halifax, JRCC Trenton, MRSC Quebec and Ottawa as a result of the merger; (h) managing projects, including the replacement of the Regional Superintendent, Search and Rescue, to oversee the logistics of the merger; and (i) other requirements related to work force adjustment, such as making reasonable job offers to affected employees?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the consolidation and closure of both marine rescue sub-centres, MRSCs, in St. John's and Quebec is being administered as one project. MRSC St. John's was safely and successfully consolidated and closed on April 25, 2012. An approximate one-time cost of \$735,000 was expended in fiscal year 2011-12 in support of the consolidation of MRSCs St. John's and Quebec into joint rescue coordination centres, JRCCs, Halifax and Trenton. The Canadian Coast Guard, CCG, is working closely with the Canadian Forces, CF, on the consolidation of MRSC Quebec into JRCCs Halifax and Trenton. The total cost for MRSC Quebec is not available at this time, as the consolidation process is still under way.

In response to (b), to date, most of the technical training at JRCC Halifax has been completed. The amount and type of training required at JRCC Trenton is being finalized. Total costs are not available at this time.

In response to (c) and (g), there has been one employee relocation associated with the MRSCs' consolidation. The approximate cost for this move from CCG search and rescue, SAR, station Tobermory, Ontario, to JRCC Halifax is \$12,000, with additional estimated expenses of \$15,000. There have been no moving costs to date associated with JRCC Trenton. Approximately \$21,000 in travel costs have been expended in support of the MRSC Quebec component of this consolidation.

In response to (d), the renovation of JRCC Halifax was planned and funded prior to the announcement on the consolidation of MRSCs St. John's and Quebec. The only incremental upgrade cost was \$151,000 for the installation of telecommunications equipment. No further upgrade costs are planned for JRCC Halifax at this time, as the facility meets all requirements to assume the workload of MRSC Quebec. CCG continues to work with the CF to identify and finalize upgrade costs associated with JRCC Trenton. Total costs are not available at this time.

In response to (e), no employee has opted to depart the public service as a result of this consolidation.

In response to (f), new JRCC Halifax employees currently provide services to the former area of responsibility of MRSC St. John's and, later in the year, to the area of responsibility of the eastern portion of MRSC Quebec, Gulf of St. Lawrence, as consolidation progresses. In further support of the MRSC Quebec consolidation, additional

employees will be hired at JRCC Trenton. The total cost of this hiring is not available at this time.

In response to (h), most project management has and continues to be done in-house using existing personnel. Correspondingly, project management costs to-date have been minimal. In FY 2011-12 approximately \$250,000 of the total project cost of \$735,000, which includes travel, meeting and administrative expenses, and salary expenses for project management work, is linked to project management.

In response to (i), work force adjustment costs are not available at this time. The CCG is working with affected employees at MRSC Quebec to determine a career plan for each employee.

Question No. 750—Hon. Ralph Goodale:

With regard to the Police Officers Recruitment Fund's purpose to recruit 2,500 officers across the country: (a) how many police officers were hired in each province and territory as a result of the fund; (b) how many of those officers are still in active service on the streets, and where; (c) how much money remains in the fund; and (d) when will the government renew the fund?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, budget 2008 set aside a one-time allocation of \$400 million, allocated on a per capita basis and over five years, for the creation of the police officer recruitment fund to assist provinces and territories to recruit additional front-line police officers. All provinces and territories participated in the initiative.

The funds were structured in such a way as to give provinces and territories flexibility to use the funding to address their unique public safety priorities and policing needs, while at the same time respecting provincial jurisdiction for policing. Provinces and territories are responsible for accessing and allocating their portions of the funding to meet their public safety priorities. It is important to note that \$400 million represents a significant contribution to policing costs incurred by the provinces and territories for an area of jurisdiction in which they have responsibility.

Thus far, the police officer recruitment fund has contributed to increasing the number of police officers across Canada by more than 2,000 since just 2009.

Question No. 758—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to the decision to terminate the Office of the Inspector General of Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in Bill C-38: (a) when was the decision made; (b) who was consulted on the decision; (c) what provision has the government made to ensure that the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) will be able to replace all the functions of CSIS; (d) what provisions have been made to give SIRC the same investigatory powers that the Inspector General formerly had; (e) what plans has the government made to ensure that SIRC is able carry out these functions, in addition to its other responsibilities, despite a budget cut of \$800,000?

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Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Parliament voted to pass Bill C-38, the Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act, on June 29, 2012. Upon royal assent, the Office of the Inspector General of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's, IG-CSIS, core oversight responsibilities were transferred to the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC.

With regard to (b), the House of Commons debated Bill C-38 at length, and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance held 13 meetings on the budget bill. The Senate also debated Bill C-38 at length, and the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance held 20 meetings, including a pre-study, on the budget bill.

With regard to (c), the government has expanded SIRC's legislative mandate to include producing an annual certificate to the Minister of Public Safety on the CSIS director's annual classified report to the Minister of Public Safety, which was formerly the key function of the IG-CSIS. This legislative change ensures that SIRC will have the authority to examine the CSIS director's report. Like the IG formerly, in its certificate SIRC will state the extent to which it is satisfied with the director's report, as well as whether in its opinion any activities described in the report may not have been authorized under the CSIS Act, contravened ministerial direction, or were unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances, per subsection 38(2) of the amended CSIS Act.

SIRC already effectively has the IG-CSIS' other functions, namely monitoring CSIS' compliance with its operational policies and reviewing its operational activities, per sections 38 and 40 of the CSIS Act.

With regard to (d), SIRC has the same investigatory powers as the IG-CSIS had. Both have the power to access any information in CSIS' control, with the sole exception of cabinet confidences, per sections 31 and 39 of the CSIS Act. Bill C-38 does not alter SIRC's investigatory powers in any respect.

Like the IG-CSIS has done, SIRC uses these investigatory powers to review the compliance of CSIS activities with the CSIS Act and with regulations and directions issued by the Minister of Public Safety.

With regard to (e), SIRC will receive additional resources to ensure it has the capacity to fulfill its new responsibilities. The decision, as approved by Parliament, will result in a net savings of approximately \$785,000.

Question No. 762—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to the National Capital Commission (NCC): (a) what was the original timeline or schedule for its Interprovincial Transit Strategy; (b) was each proposed milestone in that timeline or schedule met; (c) if not, what was the reason for the delay; (d) what is the currently anticipated release date for the final report; and (e) what steps will the NCC take to follow up on the conclusions or recommendations of that report?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the interprovincial transit strategy is a collaborative effort led by its study partners, the National Capital Commission, NCC; the Société de transport de l'Outaouais, STO; and the City of Ottawa as funders, with the participation of the Ville de Gatineau. The study will propose a vision to achieve sustainable, seamless and

interconnected transit serving the Ottawa and Gatineau downtowns, supported by specific steps for how the partners could work collaboratively with wise investments in the near and long terms.

In response to (a), the study consists of a number of stages and milestones that included the following: study initiation, analysis of needs and opportunities, development of strategic pillars, selecting modeling method, and identification of scenarios. These milestones were interspersed with several stakeholder and public consultations and focus group sessions.

The joint study was initiated in spring 2009. The original timelines were these: phase I, April/May 2009, the benefits and challenges of interprovincial transit; phase II, June/August 2009, the process for selection of a solution; phase III, February 2010, confirmation and prioritization; and phase IV, June/July 2010, progressing the strategy.

In response to (b) and (c), the screening and evaluation of scenarios required more time and attention than anticipated, in response to requests by stakeholders for a broader spectrum of scenarios for medaling and detail consideration. This has required prolonged review and meticulous consideration by the study partners.

In response to (d), a final draft of the strategy report is currently being reviewed by the study partners, and is anticipated to be released in fall 2012.

In response to (e), the partners acknowledge the importance of the study as a blueprint for ongoing dialogue, collaboration and cooperation on interprovincial transit planning and service delivery that aims to increase ridership, reduce downtown congestion and cut emissions. Some of the study recommendations will require joint action over the coming years while others will need to be taken forward by each authority over different times.

Question No. 764—Hon. Denis Coderre:

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard: (a) what is the rationale for the closure or anticipated closure of the Marine Communications and Traffic Centres in (i) St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador, (ii) St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, (iii) Saint John, New Brunswick, (iv) Rivière-au-Renard, Quebec, (v) Montreal, Quebec, (vi) Thunder Bay, Ontario, (vii) Vancouver, British Columbia, (viii) Tofino, British Columbia, (ix) Comox, British Columbia, (x) Inuvik, Northwest Territories; (b) what is the rationale for the closure or anticipated closure of the Marine Rescue Centres in (i) St. John's, Newfoundland, (ii) Quebec City, Quebec; (c) what is the rationale for the closure or anticipated closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base; (d) what evaluations, studies, or assessments were made or conducted, and used to inform the decision with respect to the closure of each of those named facilities; and (e) what are the dates and file numbers of those evaluations, studies or assessments?

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Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the Canadian Coast Guard, CCG, consolidated 43 marine communications and traffic services, MCTS, centres into 22 centres between 1994 and 1999, and continued to provide the same high level of safety and traffic services. Building on its past consolidation success, CCG is consolidating 22 existing centres into 12 centres across the country. The consolidated centres will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology to maximize the efficiency of operations.

With regard to (b), the marine rescue sub-centres, MRSCs, are being consolidated into the JRCCs in Halifax and Trenton with no impact on service standards or public safety. The decision to consolidate the MRSCs located in St. John's and Quebec City with the joint rescue coordination centres, JRCCs, located in Halifax and Trenton will facilitate incident response coordination by co-locating both air and maritime personnel in a single rescue centre. Co-location will provide for closer communication between CCG and Canadian Forces personnel. As of April 25, 2012, maritime search and rescue coordination responsibilities of MRSC St. John's were successfully assumed by JRCC Halifax, and Canadians continue to receive the same level of service.

With regard to (c), the CCG has determined the most effective and efficient mix of federally funded resources for the Vancouver area to maintain current the level of service. These resources will include a new inshore rescue boat, which will be strategically positioned within Vancouver harbour and be operational during the busy summer period; the Sea Island hovercraft; a strengthened partnership with the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, as well as other emergency responders; and, as always, vessels of opportunity.

With regard to (d), the CCG continually strives to provide outstanding maritime services to Canadians and to improve our service delivery whenever possible. To this end, CCG continually evaluates program planning and delivery to ensure the most effective and efficient use of available resources.

With regard to (e), the files include Marine Communications and Traffic Services Levels of Service, May 2010; and Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centres Workload Analysis Recommendations Concerning Optimum Staffing, October 20, 2011.

Question No. 767—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to the Department of National Defence: (a) have the Canadian Forces or the Department of National Defence investigated the forest fire which broke out at CFB Goose Bay on or around May 25, 2012; and (b) if so, what was the outcome of the investigation, and what are the reference numbers or titles of any related files?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with reference to (a), the Canadian Forces conducted an investigation into the forest fire that broke out at 5 Wing Goose Bay on or around May 25, 2012.

With regard to (b), the investigation concluded that the fire was accidentally started by two members of the Canadian Forces who were conducting annual pyrotechnic refresher training when a flare ricocheted and landed in the nearby brush.

The reference numbers for the related files are as follows: 11300-1, wing explosives safety officer, Ammunition and Explosives Accident—Detailed Report, June 19, 2012; 5090-1, command post, Significant Incident Report—Forest Fire, May 25, 2012; 11300-1, wing operations, Ammunition and Explosives Accident—Preliminary Report, May 31, 2012; 2012-3576, 5 Wing, Bush/Grass Fire Report, signed by wing commander, June 27, 2012; CF 98, 5 Wing Fire Department log, May 25, 2012; 11300-1, A4 maintenance armament, commander of 1 Canadian Air Division response to Ammunition and Explosives Accident Report—5 Wing Goose Bay, 25 May 2012, July 2012; and 11300-1, A4 maintenance armament, briefing note for commander for Ammunition and Explosives Accident Report—5 Wing Goose Bay—25 May 2012, July 2, 2012).

Question No. 769—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to the closing of Kingston Penitentiary, the Regional Treatment Centre and the Leclerc Institution, for each of these three facilities: (a) what is the estimated total savings in annual costs that occur as a result of the closure; (b) what methodology was used to arrive at the figure in (a); (c) what input data was used to arrive at the figure in (a); (d) how was this data collected; (e) what are the estimated costs for transferring the inmates to other facilities; (f) what are the estimated costs for transferring employees from the above institutions to new institutions, including but not limited to annualised capital costs of construction, staffing costs and operation and maintenance costs; (g) for those employees who will not be transferred, what if any retirement initiatives will be offered and what is the total estimated costs of these initiatives; (h) what are all the total estimated costs of incarcerating the inmates at other facilities who would have been held at each of the three facilities slated for closure; and (i) what are the true net savings to the government once the total costs of holding the inmates at other facilities are taken into account?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the closures of Kingston Penitentiary, including the Regional Treatment Centre, and Leclerc Institution in Laval, Quebec, will result in an overall cost savings of approximately \$120 million per year.

With regard to (b), (c) and (d), the closures of two federal prisons—Kingston Penitentiary, including the Regional Treatment Centre, in Kingston, Ontario, and Leclerc Institution in Laval, Quebec—will result in an overall cost savings of approximately \$120 million.

More precisely, CSC's budget will be \$120 million less at the end of implementation. This reflects the savings from salaries, operating and maintenance, as well as savings realized from the addition of new cells.

With regard to (e) and (h), CSC has a comprehensive plan to safely move offenders impacted by these closures to other institutions. Many institutions in the Ontario Region are undergoing infrastructure expansions to better manage the complex and diverse offender population.

Maximum security inmates will remain maximum security inmates and be placed in appropriate facilities at this level. The same will apply for medium security inmates. The Ontario Region's assessment unit will be moved out of Millhaven Institution, thereby increasing the maximum security capacity of this institution. Maximum security inmates will be transferred either to Millhaven Institution or to a new maximum security unit at Collins Bay Institution. Medium security inmates currently incarcerated at the Regional Treatment Centre will be transferred to Bath Institution, a medium security institution located on the same penitentiary property as Millhaven Institution. A new medium security unit is being built within the perimeter of Bath Institution with a capacity of 96 cells.

Where appropriate, CSC may consider voluntary transfers of offenders to other regions

For security reasons, CSC cannot divulge details relating to a specific offender's movement. The transfer of these offenders will be done with the utmost consideration for the safety and security of the community. CSC is unable to comment on any associated costs during the transition leading to the closures of the institutions.

With regard to (f), these initiatives will result in approximately 1,000 full-time employees being affected within Ontario and Quebec. However, the majority of affected staff will be redeployed to other facilities. Employees whose jobs are affected will be treated with fairness and respect, and in accordance with workforce adjustment agreements that have been negotiated with public sector unions. Pursuant to obligations under the Work Force Adjustment Directive, CSC is committed to maximizing employment opportunities for indeterminate employees affected by workforce adjustment situations.

CSC has a comprehensive plan to accommodate staff impacted by these closures to other institutions. However, during the transition leading to the closures of the institutions, CSC is unable to comment on the related estimated costs.

With regard to (g), in July 2012 affected CX staff were met by CSC management and a union representative in order to select a location to be deployed to off the national vacancy list. Affected CX employees who intend to retire on or before October 31, 2013, and provide written confirmation of same will not be required to select a position from the vacancy list.

There will not be any incentives or options for retirement. CSC is dealing with each union individually

With regard to (i), CSC's budget will be net \$120 million less at the end of the implementation of this reduction.

Question No. 773—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to National Historic Sites: (a) in calendar year 2011, for each National Historic Site, what were the (i) season opening and closing dates, (ii) hours of operation; and (b) in calendar year 2012, for each National Historic Site what are or will be the (i) season opening and closing dates, (ii) hours of operation?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2011 national historic sites under the administration of Parks Canada were generally open from the Victoria Day weekend to the Thanksgiving weekend. In 2012 Parks Canada is aligning and

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reducing the duration of operating seasons and hours in national historic sites to match peak visitation periods and to minimize off-season requirements. The majority of national historic sites have maintained similar opening and closing dates for 2012; however, some sites opened on June 1 and will close on the Labour Day weekend.

Question No. 778—Ms. Hélène Laverdière:

With regard to the Canada-Honduras Free Trade Accord concluded in August 2011 and the technical assistance provided by the Canadian government to the Honduran government for the purposes of drafting a new mining law in Honduras: (a) what is or will be the nature of technical assistance provided, facilitated or funded by the government to the Honduran government; (b) which Canadian government department developed the agreement with Honduran authorities to provide technical assistance; (c) which Canadian government department is the source of funding for this technical assistance; (d) who has been contracted to provide the technical assistance; (e) what are the terms of reference for this contract; (f) what objectives does such technical assistance seek to meet; (g) what is the time frame for the full execution of this technical assistance project; (h) what is the expected final product or outcomes of this project; and (i) how will these outcomes be made available to the public in Honduras and Canada during or following completion of this initiative?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the nature of the technical assistance to be provided to the Government of Honduras is as follows: first, as part of a needs assessment, to undertake a review of Honduras' proposed mining legislation to identify any and all sections of the draft legislation that would require revision to bring them into compliance with international norms and standards of best practice in the extractive sector. Advice of Canadian experts will be limited to identifying areas of compliance and non-compliance with international norms and will not propose specific text.

Second, to assess the priority needs of the Government of Honduras in order to bring its governance and regulatory capacity up to international norms and standards of best practice in the extractive sector. This would include assessing the current situation in the sector; the current and envisaged regulatory framework, including institutions and their roles; private sector and other stakeholders; key issues and challenges in the sector; and priority needs for capacity-building.

Third, to develop a work plan, which will include the results of the review of the proposed legislation and capacity needs assessment components above, and map out for the Government of Honduras the priority investments that Honduras should make to equip itself to govern and regulate the extractive sector in Honduras according to international norms. The work plan shall include a brief description of each proposed activity, recipient partners in Honduras, estimated level of effort and budget and expected timeframe for the activity's implementation.

Fourth, to deliver technical assistance to Honduras to implement the work plan upon approval of the work plan and identification of appropriate resources to deliver the technical assistance.

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With regard to (b) and (c), no formal agreement was developed between the Government of Honduras and the Government of Canada to address the request by the Government of Honduras. However, CIDA consulted with the Government of Honduras in advance of providing assistance. CIDA is providing the funding for the technical assistance to the Government of Honduras via the Deployment for Democratic Development, DDD, project, which is implemented by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, IPAC.

The DDD is a recruitment and deployment mechanism for Canadian expert resources in democratic governance. Deployments respond to requests from CIDA's country partners and contribute to the expected results of CIDA's country programs. The DDD has supported 82 initiatives to date, deploying 200 experts, of whom 63 were women and 137 men.

Examples of results include developing a human resources manual with Ghana's Public Service Commission, training Peru's Office of the Ombudsman in results-based management, establishing the Guyana Media Proprietors Association through which private media organizations can advocate for greater media freedom, providing an expert to the Honduras Truth and Reconciliation Commission and advising Mongolia's Civil Service Council to help design amendments to the Law on Civil Service.

With regard to (d), IPAC is contracted by CIDA for the management of the DDD and uses a competitive process under this project to select Canadian expert resources who are providing the needed expertise to undertake the needs assessment and develop a work plan.

With regard to (e) and (f), the terms of reference and objectives for the needs assessment component via IPAC are outlined in (a) above. Terms of reference, including objectives, for the next component of technical assistance, which is implementing the work plan, will be determined after the work plan is approved by CIDA.

With regard to (g), the exact timing is dependent on the content of the final work plan, but it is generally expected to be completed by the end of June 2013.

With regard to (h), the final expected product from the needs assessment is a work plan, with an annex that will report the findings of the review of the proposed mining legislation. The final expected outcomes resulting from implementation of the work plan depend on the final work plan content, currently being developed under the needs assessment component.

With regard to (i), IPAC maintains a website, <http://democratic-development.ca>. IPAC reports to CIDA on progress against expected outcomes. CIDA publishes DDD project results annually online at <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/cpo.nsf/vLUWebProjEn/796ED78AE5A03EA48525763A00372312?OpenDocument>.

Question No. 779—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With regard to government Web sites: (a) when did the Supreme Court of Canada change from a “.ca” to a “.gc.ca” Web domain suffix; (b) what was the reason for the change; and (c) who initiated the change?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of

Canada has used the “.gc.ca” subdomain since it launched its website in 1988.

On the other hand, to facilitate the public's access to its website, the Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada has registered additional addresses that will redirect to its official website of www.scc-csc.gc.ca, as follows: coursupreme.ca; coursupremeducanada.ca; coursupremeducanada.com; coursupremeducanada.net; coursupremeducanada.org; supremecourtcanada.ca; supremecourtcanada.com; supremecourtcanada.net; supremecourtcanada.org; cour supreme du canada.ca; cour supreme du canada.com; cour supreme du canada.net; cour supreme du canada.org; supreme court of canada.ca; supreme court of canada.com; supreme court of canada.net; supreme court of canada.org; lacoursupremeducanada.ca; lacoursupremeducanada.com; lacoursupremeducanada.net; lacoursupremeducanada.org; thesupremecourtcanada.ca; thesupremecourtcanada.com; thesupremecourtcanada.net; thesupremecourtcanada.org; scc csc.ca; scc csc.com; scc csc.net; scc csc.org; and scc csc.gc.ca.

Question No. 781—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With respect to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade: (a) for which specific countries do Canadian embassies provide human rights reports to the government; (b) in which specific countries do these reports include a report on religious freedom; and (c) for any report on religious freedom since January 1, 2006, what was the date of the report and the country to which it pertained?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), over the last 13 years, Canada has prepared human rights reports on the 134 countries listed hereafter. It should be noted that not every country has been covered every year.

The countries include the following: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia, Brazil, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, West Bank and Gaza, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, South Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

With regard to (b), this year's human rights reporting guidelines instructed Canadian missions abroad to include a section focused specifically on religious freedom. Prior to this, it was at the missions' discretion to include a section on freedom of religion in their reports. Human rights reports for this year that have been received to date and that include a specific section on freedom of religion are listed below. Not all reports have been finalized. Assessments provided in these sections can be positive and/or negative.

These human rights reports are on the following countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, , Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

With regard to (c), since 2006 no formal stand-alone reports on religious freedom have been solicited by the department's human rights division, which manages the annual human rights reporting process. Missions may, however, choose to report on religious freedom where and when warranted. Examples of such reports received over the last six months include a report on a conference on religious freedom in China, a report on negotiations between Greek Catholics and the Orthodox Church in Romania, a report on the promotion of pluralism in Pakistan, a report on the U.S.-led Istanbul process to combat intolerance based on religion or belief and periodic situational reports on Egypt.

Question No. 782—**Mr. Justin Trudeau:**

With respect to Overseas Development Assistance: (a) what amount of money has been earmarked for fiscal year 2012-2013 for (i) democracy promotion projects, (ii) good governance projects; and (b) which Canadian organizations have been granted funding for democracy promotion and good governance projects in (i) Egypt, (ii) Tunisia, (iii) Libya?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), international assistance funding administered through the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, is not typically earmarked by sector or theme, such as democracy promotion or good governance. The agency's budget is allocated first by delivery channel—bilateral, multilateral, partnership—and then by program. Once CIDA's budget has been allocated, project-level disbursements can be filtered through a system of codes developed by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, to code donor activities so that donor governments can report on and compare how much they are spending to achieve their development results.

Over the last five years from 2007-08 to 2011-12, CIDA spending on good governance has averaged \$465 million per year. This figure was calculated based on the following DAC codes: public sector policy and administrative; public finance management; decentralization and support to sub-national government; anti-corruption organizations and institutions; legal and judicial development; democratic participation and civil society; elections; legislatures and political parties; media and free flow of information; human rights; and statistical capacity-building. Of this amount, spending for democracy promotion has averaged \$220 million per year. This

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figure was calculated based on the following DAC codes: legal and judicial development; democratic participation and civil society; elections; legislatures and political parties; media and free flow of information; and human rights.

In fiscal year 2012-13, CIDA has disbursed to date, as of August 31, 2012, \$85.15 million for good governance, of which \$32.25 million has been for democracy promotion.

With regard to (b), to date the following Canadian organizations have received funding in fiscal year 2012-13 for projects that include democracy promotion and good governance activities: for Egypt, Foundation for International Training, Aga Khan Foundation Canada, Agriteam Canada and YMCA Canada; for Tunisia, none; for Libya, none.

In addition to projects in democracy promotion and good governance, the Government of Canada is providing additional support in the region. On March 2, 2011, the Prime Minister announced that Canada would deliver up to \$5 million in humanitarian aid to help address urgent medical requirements, basic humanitarian needs and the repatriation of people displaced into Tunisia and Egypt. As well, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced on March 16, 2011, that Government of Canada would contribute \$11 million over five years toward the creation of economic opportunities for young Egyptians and for the development of democratic institutions in Egypt and the broader Middle East and North Africa region.

Question No. 789—**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): (a) what are the details (including the name of each organization represented, and of each individual present) of all meetings held from June 1, 2011, to June 1, 2012, with any and all external stakeholders, by (i) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, (ii) the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, (iii) the Chief of Staff to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, (iv) the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans; and (b) what are the details of all travel and associated expenses incurred from June 1, 2011, to June 1, 2012 by (i) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, (ii) the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, (iii) the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, including the reason for the travel, the organizations met with, and detailed accounts of all expenses incurred?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), (a)(ii), (a)(iii) and (a)(iv), it should be noted that the department does not maintain a list of external stakeholder meetings for Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the chief of staff to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans or the deputy minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Additional information on deputy minister and ministerial meetings with stakeholders can be found on the website of the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada at https://ocl-cal.gc.ca/eic/site/012.nsf/eng/h_00000.html.

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With regard to (b)(i), (b)(ii) and (b)(iii), the details of all travel and associated expenses incurred by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the chief of staff to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the deputy minister of Fisheries and Oceans are available on the Fisheries and Oceans proactive disclosure for travel and hospitality website at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/dthe-dfva/index-eng.asp>.

Question No. 790—**Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to Service Canada, and more specifically the Canada Pension Plan Post-Retirement Benefit (PRB): (a) what is the projected revenue from employees and employers contributing to the PRB in calendar year 2012; and (b) what are the amounts projected to be paid out to PRB recipients in calendar year 2013, broken down by province and territory?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the projections used in this response were provided by the Office of the Chief Actuary, OCA, which is responsible for providing projections for the Canada Pension Plan, CPP.

With regard to (a), using the assumptions from the 25th Actuarial Report on the Canada Pension Plan, the OCA has projected that \$576 million will be paid in contributions toward CPP post-retirement benefits, PRBs, in 2012. Contributions to the plan by working retirement pension recipients are mandatory for working beneficiaries between the ages of 60 and 64 and their employers, and voluntary after age 65, until age 70. The estimated contributions to CPP PRBs are based on the assumption that 50% of working beneficiaries aged 65 to 69 will choose to continue making contributions.

With regard to (b), projections are only available for the CPP as a whole because the OCA does not make projections by province and territory. Using the assumptions from the 25th Actuarial Report on the CPP, the OCA has estimated that \$42 million will be paid in PRBs in 2013.

The amount of a single year's PRB will be less than what the individual contributed the previous year; however, each PRB is payable until death and is fully indexed to the cost of living. The PRB represents a net gain for the vast majority of individuals and is intended to offer additional security in retirement as a stable and fully indexed benefit. In addition, the PRB amounts are not subject to the normal rules for maximum benefits, allowing individuals to continue to build their retirement income, even if they are already receiving the maximum CPP retirement or combined benefit amount.

Question No. 791—**Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence, what is the cost of all press releases issued by the department between January 1, 2012, and May 1, 2012 inclusively?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence searched through its contracts with Marketwire and found that the cost of the 100 press releases that it issued between January 1, 2012, and May 1, 2012, is \$9,074.55. This includes information for the Communications Security Establishment Canada, Military Police Complaints Commission, Canadian Forces Grievance Board, Office of the Communications Security Establishment Commissioner, National Search and Rescue Secretariat and the Department of National Defence Canadian Forces Ombudsman.

Question No. 792—**Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence, in preparation for the Auditor General's (AG) 2012 Spring Report, how many draft responses were sent between the department and the AG's office concerning F-35 aircraft?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence Canadian Forces provided five written and official responses to the Office of the Auditor General concerning the draft audit reports entitled "Replacing Canada's Fighter Jets".

Question No. 795—**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With respect to studies Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has undertaken or commissioned on workforce mobility: (a) under which HRSDC official's direction did HRSDC commission Sage Research Corp to study what type of migration incentives could encourage EI clients to accept a job that requires a residential move; (b) what was the rationale to undertake this study; (c) what are the details of the study; (d) what was the cost of the study; (e) what is HRSDC's response to the study; (f) what are the details and costs of other similar studies conducted or commissioned by HRSDC in the last six years; and (g) is HRSDC planning further studies on incentives for workforce mobility through the EI system?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the official was Stephen Johnson, director general of the evaluation directorate, strategic policy and research branch.

With regard to (b), this study was undertaken to support the employment insurance, EI, monitoring and assessment report tabled to Parliament. Specifically, section 3 of the Employment Insurance Act assigns the Canada Employment Insurance Commission with the following mandate: "The Commission shall monitor and assess the impact and effectiveness, for individuals, communities and the economy, of the benefits and other assistance provided under this Act, including (a) how the benefits and assistance are utilized by employees and employers, and (b) the effect of the benefits and assistance on the obligation of claimants to be available for and to seek employment and on the efforts of employers to maintain a stable workforce."

With regard to (c), the report describes the findings from eight focus groups conducted with frequent EI clients in four cities: Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec; Corner Brook, Newfoundland; Miramichi, New Brunswick; and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. In each city, there was one focus group with younger participants, younger than 45 years of age, and one focus group with older participants, 45 to 60 years of age. There were eight to 10 participants in each focus group, and a total of 75 participants overall.

The following questions were to be addressed with this study: What factors influence geographic labour mobility, that is, the decision to accept a job that requires a residential move, temporary or permanent, within the country? To what extent does EI eligibility and generosity affect geographic labour mobility? What type of migration incentives, such as relocation grants or travel grants, might encourage EI clients to accept a job that requires a residential move? Does migration lead to an improvement in the economic and social situation of migrants and their families?

With regard to (d), the amount paid for this contract was \$52,000.

With regard to (e), since this study was not a formal evaluation report, no recommendations were made and no response was prepared by the department. The study adds to a body of evidence summarized in the 2011 EI monitoring and assessment report in the following way on page 158: “A number of studies in the past decade have looked at the determinants of labour mobility and whether EI plays a role in the decision to migrate for employment. Results of these studies indicate that factors such as personal and labour market characteristics, as well as moving costs, play a key role in mobility decisions, while EI generosity does not seem to affect mobility decisions. Another recent study has suggested that EI does not discourage workers from being mobile. EI recipients were found to be more likely than non-EI recipients to commute 30 kilometres or more to go to work and more likely to work outside their census subdivision of residence. Also, following a job loss, EI recipients were more likely than non-EI recipients to move more than 100 kilometres away. Furthermore, a study estimated that eliminating regional EI extended benefits and regional EI differences in the Variable Entrance Requirement (VER) would increase the volume of migration by less than 1%. In general, the available evidence suggests that EI is generally not a barrier to mobility.”

With regard to (f), other similar studies conducted or commissioned by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, HRSDC, in the last six years include the following:

Employment Insurance and Labour Mobility: A Critical Review of the Literature. The study was completed in June 2007 by Dr. David Gray, University of Ottawa, and Dr. James Ted McDonald, University of New Brunswick. The cost was \$16,500. The costs to HRSDC, including translation and publishing, were approximately \$20,000.

The Impact of EI Regional Boundary Revisions on Mobility in New Brunswick: Evidence from the LAD. The study was an econometric analysis using the Statistics Canada longitudinal administrative databank, LAD, linked with EI administrative data. The cost consisted of HRSDC salary expenditures and \$7,500 for analysis from the LAD.

Commuting and Mobility Patterns of Employment Insurance (EI) Recipients and Non-Recipients. The methodology used the 2006 census to study the relationship between EI receipt in 2005 and commuting patterns, meaning job location versus residential location, in 2006. The 2004-2009 Canadian Out of Employment Panel Surveys were used to examine the relationship between EI receipt and mobility decision after a job loss and to examine time

trends in mobility choices of job separators. The cost consisted of HRSDC salary expenditures.

With regard to (g), in support of the 2012 monitoring and assessment report, the Canadian Out of Employment Panel Survey and EI administrative data will be further analyzed in Impact of EI on Regional Labour Mobility. The cost will consist of HRSDC salary expenditures.

Question No. 797—**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to government funding for the Canadian Museum of Civilization's archaeological work on Baffin Island and in northern Labrador dealing with the interactions between the Norse of Greenland and the indigenous peoples of Baffin Island, Labrador, and Québec in the 11th and 12th centuries: (a) what is the current status of funding for the Museum of Civilization, for the current year and coming years; (b) what is the current status of this archaeological project and what field and laboratory work is planned for the next 3 years; (c) when will a report on this project be released; (d) are the local indigenous people involved, consulted, and informed on the work of this project, specifically the people of Nunavut, Nunavik, Québec, and Nunatsiuk, Newfoundland and Labrador; (e) has the government or the Museum of Civilization considered raising public awareness of projects like this; (f) has the government or the Museum of Civilization considered an exhibit, including the possibility of a travelling exhibit; (g) has the government considered cooperation with the government of Denmark on this project in view of the shared interest; and (h) are there any publications on this project or other archaeological projects of the Museum of Civilization that could be useful to brief Members of Parliament on the Museum's activities?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), archaeological research is one of the activities that is normally funded through annual appropriations.

With regard to (b), this project is currently under review as part of a broader review of museum research priorities.

With regard to (c), at this time there is no plan to release a report on this project.

With regard to (d), the local indigenous people were involved, consulted and informed of the work of this project as required.

With regard to (e), the Museum of Civilization regularly raises public awareness of projects like this through different means, including academic journals, books, lectures, exhibits, websites and public programs.

With regard to (f), the museum has exhibited material from this project in the past, and there are no plans at this time to create a travelling exhibition.

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With regard to (g), the Canadian Museum of Civilization, as a crown corporation, will often work with other museums on projects of common interest. The museum is not aware if the Government of Canada has considered co-operation with the Government of Denmark on this project.

With regard to (h), extensive information concerning this particular project can be found on the museum's website, annual reports and corporate plan summaries.

Question No. 801—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

What costs were incurred by the government with respect to the "Sandbox Project" event held on Sparks Street in Ottawa in June 2012, and which departments or agencies incurred those costs?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government congratulates The Sandbox Project, the member for Simcoe-Grey and all other parliamentarians who participated in the event held in Ottawa last June aimed to foster collaboration and knowledge to ensure Canada becomes the healthiest place in the world in which to raise children.

As this event was privately funded, the government did not incur any expenses.

Question No. 806—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to government employment levels, for each of the federal electoral districts of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, Nipissing—Timiskaming, Labrador, Yukon, Richmond—Arthabaska and Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière: (a) what is the current total number of federal employees in the riding; and (b) what is the total number of anticipated job reduction in the riding for fiscal years (i) 2012-2013, (ii) 2013-2014, (iii) 2014-2015?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Treasury Board Secretariat cannot produce the requested statistics by riding.

Question No. 808—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to cultural heritage: (a) what measures has the government taken to protect the petroglyphs at Qajartalik, Nunavik, Quebec; and (b) what are the details (dates and file numbers) of any reports, studies, or other records in the government's possession concerning (i) the petroglyphs themselves, (ii) vandalism or other threats to the petroglyphs, (iii) measures taken or proposed to be taken for their protection?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), cultural heritage protection falls within the responsibility of the provinces and territories under their respective heritage legislation.

With regard to (b), the relevant report is "Screening report: Qajartalik Petroglyphs", file number 991, dated February 18, 2009.

With regard to (b)(i), in December 2008 Parks Canada received a nomination to recognize the Qajartalik petroglyphs as a national historic site. The nomination, file number 991, was recommended for the consideration of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, HSMBC. Parks Canada is currently producing a submission report for the consideration of the HSMBC at its earliest convenience.

With regard to (b)(ii), no reports, studies or other records concerning vandalism or other threats to the petroglyphs exist in Parks Canada's possession.

With regard to (b)(iii), no reports, studies or other records concerning measures taken or proposed to be taken for the protection of the petroglyphs exist in Parks Canada's possession.

Question No. 813—Hon. Bob Rae:

With respect to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Office of Religious Freedoms: (a) what meetings has the government taken in 2011-2012 regarding the development of this office; (b) what are the details of the briefing notes, reports, or other documents that were prepared for these meetings, specifically the titles or files or reference numbers of those documents; (c) what are the specific responsibilities of this office; (d) in what document are those responsibilities set down; (e) what is the proposed number of employees to work in this office; and (f) what is the proposed job title, job description, qualifications, and salary range for each position?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the promotion and protection of human rights is a key component of Canada's foreign policy, and the Government of Canada strongly believes in the ability of all people to be free to practise their religion of choice. Canadians enjoy the rights and privileges that come with living in a free and democratic society in which human rights are respected. The government is also keenly aware of the struggles that religious minorities face around the world. That is why, during the most recent Speech from the Throne on June 3, 2011, and again at the United Nations General Assembly, the government committed to creating an office of religious freedom. Since being appointed in May 2011 as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I have met both domestically and internationally with a wide variety of individuals, organizations, like-minded countries, religious leaders and academics to discuss the protection of religious minorities. This includes, but is not limited to, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, the Aga Khan, the Eastern Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch, the Secretary General of the Baha'i International Community, Ahmadiyya religious leaders, ambassadors and many others.

With regard to (b), the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, DFAIT, has prepared briefing material on this issue for the minister, but in accordance with section 19 of the Access to Information Act, DFAIT cannot disclose details of the documents. For the October 2011 stakeholder consultation meeting, a one-page briefing note providing an overview of the office of religious freedom was provided. The brief outlines the genesis and rationale for making religious freedom a foreign policy priority, the state of play on the creation of the office and the broad objectives of the mandate. In addition, remarks were prepared for the meeting chair, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for use at the meeting, primarily to thank participants, introduce panellists and broadly frame the discussion.

With regard to (c) and (d), it is expected that the office will focus on areas such as advocacy, analysis, policy development and programming related to protecting and advocating on behalf of religious minorities under threat; opposing religious hatred; and promoting Canadian values of pluralism and tolerance abroad. These areas of focus are set down in a memorandum to cabinet and a Treasury Board submission.

With regard to (e) and (f), no formal announcement has been made on the office, and work is ongoing. Other than confirming that the head of the office will be an ambassadorial appointment from outside the public service, it would be premature to confirm the full staffing structure of the office, including the titles, work descriptions, qualifications and salary ranges. The government will have more to say on this important initiative shortly.

Question No. 816—Hon. John McKay:

With regard to Public Works and Government Services Canada, what were the legal costs incurred by the government with respect to the case *Halifax Regional Municipality v. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, – and – City of Toronto, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Association of Canadian Port Authorities and City of Québec*, decided as Supreme Court of Canada docket 33876, distinguishing costs incurred: (a) pre-trial; (b) related to proceedings at the Federal Court of Canada; (c) related to proceedings at the Federal Court of Appeal; (d) related to proceedings at the Supreme Court of Canada; and (e) other costs, specifying the nature of those costs?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to the extent that the information that has been requested is protected by solicitor-client privilege, the federal crown asserts that privilege and, in this case, has waived that privilege only to the extent of revealing the total amount of money spent, which is approximately \$565,634.13.

Question No. 817—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to audio-video monitoring and recording by the Canadian Border Services Agency: (a) how much has the federal government spent on the equipment and installation of that equipment to date; (b) under what legal authority has the audio monitoring equipment been installed; and (c) what provisions have been made to handle the information gathered from airport surveillance?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the CBSA cannot give an accurate estimate, as some equipment has been included in overall project costs and cannot be isolated.

With regard to (b) and (c), the CBSA has heard concerns from Canadians regarding the privacy impact of this practice. As the Minister of Public Safety has stated, the CBSA welcomes the Privacy Commissioner's study of this policy. The Minister of Public Safety has directed the CBSA to halt audio monitoring, with the exception of recorded interviews, until a privacy impact assessment can be submitted and recommendations from the Privacy Commissioner can be reviewed by the government. Neither the CBSA nor the Government of Canada provided specific direction to enable the monitoring or recording of audio. It is important for agencies tasked with protecting Canadians to have the right tools to catch smugglers and keep criminals and other unwelcome individuals out of Canada. It is equally important that these tools do not infringe on individuals' privacy in a way that is unjustified or unnecessary to ensure security.

Question No. 818—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With respect to the repair and divestiture of the seawall at Advocate Harbour, Nova Scotia, as referred to in the February 24, 2011, Department of Fisheries and Oceans press release and previous releases about this property: (a) has the government deemed this property surplus and, if it has, (i) when did it do so, (ii) what was the rationale behind this decision, (iii) does a property deemed surplus require automatic divestiture and, if so, what are the related regulations or policy, (iv) what is the full divestiture process for this property, (v) at what stage of the divestiture process is the property now, (vi) what is the relevant government department's strategy to ensure the property is fully divested, (vii) has any government departments been offered the property and, if so, what was their response, (viii) has the province of Nova Scotia been offered the property and, if so, what was its response, (ix) has the local municipality been offered the property and, if so, what was its response, (x) has

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any community groups or private individual or entity been offered the property and, if so, what was their response; (b) what is the justification for funding repairs to this property if it is deemed surplus and/or to be divested and is this normal practice; (c) from which specific program do the repair funds come; (d) what is the criteria for the program from which the repair funds were accessed; (e) how much money did the government spend on plans and repairs of the Advocate Harbour Seawall from January 2006 to date and what future costs are anticipated, broken down by (i) cost item, (ii) date incurred or to be incurred, (iii) from which funding program the funds were, or planned to be, received; (f) has a fair market value been determined and, if so, what are the details of the assessment; (g) was the investment in the repair to the Advocate Harbour seawall solely to protect local infrastructure, agricultural land and private property, (h) what was the rationale for the government funding the 2012 assessment, as referenced by the May 21, 2010, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency press release; (i) did any funds for the repairs to the Advocate Harbour seawall come from a mechanism known as "invest to divest" which the government can use to facilitate the Treasury Board's directive on the divestiture of surplus property and, if so (i) how much and (ii) by what rationale; (j) what are the specific guidelines for the government to use the mechanism known as "invest to divest"; and (k) in what instances in the last six years did the "invest to divest" mechanism been used but the property not been divested?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the property in West Advocate has not been declared surplus, but it is intended that it shall be declared surplus once the investment in the property is completed. Questions (a)(i) to (a)(x) are only answerable after the property is declared surplus, with the exception of (a)(iii): deputy heads are responsible for ensuring that the real property surplus to program requirements is not retained. Disposal by sale or transfer is completed in conformance with the Treasury Board directive on the sale or transfer of surplus real property.

With regard to (b), the justification for funding repairs to this property is to facilitate the divestiture of this property. It is normal practice when divesting of surplus property to invest in the property.

With regard to (c), the funding program is entitled "Equipment and other moveable assets centre of expertise, vote 5, Fisheries and Oceans capital expenditures".

With regard to (d), the program criteria that funded this project, deemed a major capital project, requires the project to be valued at over \$1 million and to be included in the capital plan.

With regard to (e), money spent on plans and repairs includes \$146,000 in 2010 for which the Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association developed the project plans; \$360,000 in 2011-012 for which the Canadian Coast Guard tendered and completed the phase 1 repairs. There is a \$600,000 budget in 2012-13 for the phase 2 repairs, which complete the project with no future costs anticipated. Funding was received from the program entitled "Equipment and other moveable assets centre of expertise, vote 5, Fisheries and Oceans capital expenditures."

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (f), the property's fair market value, in its current condition, has not been determined.

With regard to (g), the investment was not made solely for this reason. While a justification for funding repairs to this property was to facilitate the divestiture of this property, as stated by Minister Shea in a press release February 24, 2011, the improvements will also "serve to protect local infrastructure, agricultural land and private property".

With regard to (h), the rationale was to undertake an engineering assessment of the adequacy of the area's sea barrier and underlying soil conditions prior to developing solutions to facilitate the divestiture of this property.

With regard to (i), the invest to divest program did not fund or form any part of this project.

With regard to (j), the invest to divest allocation model forms the specific guidelines used by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's real property, safety and security directorate to administer the invest to divest program.

With regard to (k), since fiscal year 2006-07, invest to divest project funding has been allocated to the following surplus properties that have yet to be divested: Annandale lighthouse, Prince Edward Island; Baccalieu Island lighthouse, Newfoundland and Labrador; Baccaro Point lighthouse, Nova Scotia; Belyea's Point lighthouse, New Brunswick; Cap des Rosiers lighthouse, Quebec; Cap Bon Désir lighthouse, Quebec; Cap Chat lighthouse, Quebec; Cap de la Madeleine lighthouse, Quebec; Cap D'Espoir lighthouse, Quebec; Cap de la Tête au Chien lighthouse, Quebec; Cape Bonavista lighthouse, Newfoundland and Labrador; Cape St. Mary's lighthouse, Newfoundland and Labrador; Chantry Island lighthouse, Ontario; Cheewat Field Camp, British Columbia; Dartmouth Coast Guard base, Nova Scotia; Cape Jourimain lighthouse, New Brunswick; Long Eddy Point lighthouse, New Brunswick; Low Point lighthouse, Nova Scotia; North Cape lighthouse, Prince Edward Island; Partridge Island lighthouse, New Brunswick; Pilier de Pierre lighthouse, Quebec; Point Amour lighthouse, Newfoundland and Labrador; Pointe Beaudette, former range site, Quebec; Port Daniel lighthouse, Quebec; Îles du Pot à l'eau-de-vie lighthouse, Quebec; Prim Point lighthouse, Prince Edward Island; Red Bay lighthouse, Newfoundland and Labrador; Selkirk Coast Guard base, Manitoba; Sherbrooke Lake, former aid site, Nova Scotia; Sheringham Point lighthouse, British Columbia; and Sainte-Marthe-de-Gaspé lighthouse, Quebec.

* * *

● (1540)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

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, furthermore, if Questions Nos. 659-663, 665-669, 671, 675, 678, 681, 684, 685, 687-689, 691-693, 697, 700, 701, 703, 705, 706, 708, 709, 713, 714, 717, 719, 720, 722, 724, 726, 729-732, 734, 735, 737-742, 745, 746, 748, 749, 751-754, 756, 757, 759-761, 763, 765,

766, 768, 770-772, 774-777, 780, 783-788, 793, 794, 796, 798-800, 802-805, 807, 809-812, 814 and 815 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 659—**Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With respect to the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the processing of complaints since the Commission was established, broken down by year and by each provision of the Act under which a complaint was filed: (a) what is the total number of complaints filed with the Commission; (b) what is the average amount of time, in days, allocated to resolving a complaint; (c) what percentage of complaints have been resolved in favour of the complainant; (d) on average, how many complaints has the Commission denied per year; (e) what percentage of complaints have been withdrawn by the complainant before they were resolved; (f) what percentage of complaints were dismissed by the Commission; and (g) are there recurring grounds for dismissal?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 660—**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to projects in the Northwest Territories under the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan, since its inception to the present, broken down by year, and providing details including, but not limited to, location and scope of work carried out: (a) what projects have been funded; (b) for each project, what other organizations (public and private) were involved; (c) how much federal money was provided to each project; (d) for each project, how much money was provided by other organizations; (e) what is the current status of these projects; (f) what projects are being considered for future years; (g) for each of the projects being considered for the future what is the estimated federal expenditure; and (h) for each future project what other organizations are expected to be involved, and what are their contributions expected to be?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 661—**Mr. Jack Harris:**

With regard to Canada's CF-188 Hornet aircraft fleet, since the CF-188 has been in operation by the Canadian Forces: (a) how many incidents of single engine failure have occurred in CF-188 aircraft; (b) how many incidents of a single engine failure in a CF-188 aircraft have resulted in a Significant Incident Report (SIR); (c) what is the title of each of these reports; (d) what were the findings of each of these reports; (e) what were the causes of each engine failure; (f) how many incidents of avian ingestion by a CF-188 engine have occurred, broken down by year; (g) how many incidents of avian ingestion have resulted in the failure of a CF-188 aircraft engine, broken down by year; (h) how many incidents of avian ingestion have compromised the normal functioning of a CF-188 aircraft engine, broken down by year; (i) how many incidents of avian ingestion by a CF-188 engine have resulted in a SIR; (j) what is the title of each such report; and (k) what were the findings of each of these reports?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 662—**Mr. Raymond Côté:**

What is the total amount of government funding allocated within the constituency of Beauce between the fiscal year 2006-2007 and the current fiscal year, broken down (i) by department or agency, (ii) for each department or agency, by initiative or project?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 663—Mr. Sean Casey:**

With respect to the Budget 2006 commitment to begin arming border guards: (a) how many Canada Border Services Agency officers have been trained and equipped with firearms as of April 23, 2012; (b) how much money was spent on related personnel, training and support programs in (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011, (vi) 2011-2012; (c) how much was spent on related infrastructure and equipment in (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011, (vi) 2011-2012; (d) how much has the total program cost to date; and (e) how much does the government expect to spend over the next four fiscal years on (i) training and support programs, (ii) infrastructure and equipment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 665—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:

With regard to Canada's Economic Action Plan 2012, within the Heritage portfolio: (a) with respect to Library and Archives Canada, (i) where will positions be cut, broken down by branch, by division and by role, (ii) which programs and which services will be cut or eliminated; and (b) with respect to the Federal Libraries Consortium, (i) which federal libraries will be cut or eliminated, broken down by location, (ii) what will be done with the collections formerly maintained by any eliminated federal libraries?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 666—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:

With regard to government employment levels: (a) what is the current total number of federal employees in each province and territory, and outside Canada; and (b) what is the total number of anticipated job reductions in each province and territory and outside Canada for the fiscal years (i) 2012-2013, (ii) 2013-2014, (iii) 2014-2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 667—Mr. Paul Dewar:

With regard to the procurement of temporary personnel services by the government over the last five years: (a) what are the total government expenditures for such services, for the five year period and also broken down by year; (b) what amount is spent by each department, broken down by year; (c) how much was spent annually, broken down by department or agency, in the National Capital Region alone; (d) what is the breakdown by province for such services; (e) which companies received contracts to provide temporary personnel services; (f) what is the annual combined total of all contracts awarded to each company; (g) how many people were hired by temporary employment agencies to work for the government, nationally as well as in the National Capital Region, for the five year period and also broken down by year; and (h) how many employees were hired on a temporary basis, nationally as well as in the National Capital Region, broken down by year and by department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 668—Mr. Paul Dewar:

With regard to Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (NAP): (a) what progress has been made on each indicator, from 1-1 to 21-2, of the NAP, broken down by department; (b) how many meetings of the interdepartmental working group on the NAP have been convened between October 5, 2010, and April 30, 2012, broken down by date; (c) for each of the fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, how much funding has been allocated to the implementation of the NAP, broken down by department; (d) what unit within each department is responsible for the implementation of the NAP; (e) for each of the fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, how many full-time employees' job descriptions include the implementation of the NAP, broken down by department; (f) for each of the fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, how many full-time employees worked part-time on the implementation of the NAP, broken down by department; (g) what information is publicly available with regard to progress of implementation of the NAP, and where can this information be found; (h) with regard to the interim review of the NAP, including consultations, and broken down by department, (i) when will the review take place, (ii) what is the timeline, (iii) what is the process; (i) will the results of the review be made public; (j) when is the annual reporting period; (k) has

an annual report been produced and, if so, where will it be made publicly available; and (l) will the annual report be tabled in Parliament?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 669—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to funding for CRC Sogema and its projects by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), for how many and for what projects has CIDA directly and indirectly funded CRC Sogema for the fiscal years from March 2009 to March 2012, broken down by project name, country involved, description, year, client and any other relevant details?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 671—Mr. John Rafferty:

With regard to the Local Initiative Fund (also referred to as the Local Initiative Grant program) administered by the regional development organization for Northern Ontario (FedNor), for each budget year from 2005-2006 to 2010-2011 inclusively: (a) what was the sum awarded to each federal riding; and (b) what was the name of each individual recipient and the amount awarded to that recipient, in each riding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 675—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and more specifically the DFO Regional Office in Newfoundland and Labrador (White Hills): what official(s) at the regional office met with Mr. Loyola Sullivan of Ocean Choice International between June 1, 2011, and May 10, 2012, including (i) function and title of the official, (ii) date of the meeting(s), (iii) location of the meeting, (iv) topic(s) discussed, (v) any briefing notes or other materials prepared for or used at the meeting?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 678—Hon. Ralph Goodale:

With respect to the National Archival Development Program: (a) what is the name and location of each organization which received a grant or contribution under this program since March 31, 1999; (b) what was the amount of each such grant or contribution; (c) what was the purpose, scope, or intent of the work to be carried out using the funds provided by that grant or contribution; and (d) what is the rationale for the termination of the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 681—Mr. John Rafferty:

With regard to the "Enabling Access Fund" administered by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, for each fiscal year of the program's existence, what are: (a) the program criteria and any evaluation method used to determine which programs will receive funding, including any changes to the criteria from year to year; and (b) details about each applicant, including (i) applicant's name, (ii) riding where the project is located, (iii) amount of funding awarded, (iv) criteria, both quantitative and non-quantitative, on the basis of which the applicant was evaluated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 684—Mrs. Maria Mourani:

With regard to federal contaminated sites in Quebec: (a) what is the name and location of each contaminated site that has been classified as a high priority by the departments responsible; (b) how long has each of these sites been classified a high priority; (c) what contaminants have been identified at each of these sites; and (d) what is the timeline for the action required for each of these sites?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 685—Mrs. Maria Mourani:**

With regard to the contaminated federal sites in Quebec classified by government departments as being closed: (a) what is the name and location of each of these sites; (b) what are the required decontamination procedures that have been carried out on these sites to date by the department responsible; and (c) on which dates were these actions taken?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 687—Mr. Pierre Nantel:

With regard to Canadian Heritage youth programs: (a) concerning the Exchanges Canada program, over the last seven fiscal years, (i) what was the number of applications received per year, (ii) what was the number of applications accepted for each of these years, (iii) what was the number of applications rejected for each of these years, (iv) what were the bidding organizations whose proposals were accepted, (v) what was the value of the funding that these organizations received and for which period, (vi) for each of the organizations funded under this program, what was the number of participants, broken down by year, (vii) for each of the organizations funded under this program, what was the number of participants, broken down by province and territory, (viii) what are the budget estimates for 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, (ix) what was the program's total budget over the last seven fiscal years, including 2011-2012; and (b) concerning the Youth Take Charge program, (i) what was the number of applications received per year since its creation, (ii) what was the number of applications accepted under this program for each year since its creation, (iii) what was the number of applications rejected under this program for each of these years, (iv) what were the bidding organizations whose proposals were accepted under this program, (v) what was the value of the funding that these organizations received and for which period, (vi) for each of the organizations funded under this program, what was the number of participants, broken down by year, (vii) for each of the organizations funded under this program, what was the number of participants, broken down by province and territory, (viii) what was the program's total budget since its creation, broken down by year, including 2011-2012, (ix) what are the budget estimates for 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 688—Mr. Pierre Nantel:

With regard to Library and Archives Canada (LAC): (a) for each fiscal year from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 inclusively, what was, or is projected to be, the number of items of archival material digitized by LAC for reference and access purposes; (b) for each fiscal year from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 inclusively, what percentage of LAC's collection was, or is projected to be, digitized; (c) for each fiscal year from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 inclusively, what were, or are projected to be, LAC's internal costs for digitization and digital access; (d) for each fiscal year from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 inclusively, what was, or is projected to be, the expected number of born digital records, both government and private, that will be acquired by LAC; and (e) for each fiscal year from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 inclusively, what was, or is projected to be, the number of analogue records, both government and private, acquired by LAC?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 689—Mr. Alain Giguère:

With regard to government funding allocated to the riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin: (a) what is the total amount of funding, since fiscal year 2006-2007, up to and including the current fiscal year, listing each department or agency, initiative and amount, including the date the funding was allocated; (b) how many jobs within the riding were directly created by this funding, listing each department or agency, initiative and the number of jobs created within the riding; and (c) how many jobs outside the riding were directly created by this funding, listing each department or agency, initiative and the number of jobs created outside the riding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 691—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With respect to the Canadian Forces Reserves: (a) what is the amount spent by the government on the Reserves, broken down by province and territory, for fiscal years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012; (b) what is the number of full-time reservists, broken down by province and territory, for the same periods as in (a); and (c) what is the number of part-time reservists, broken down by province and territory, for the same periods as in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 692—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With respect to certain personnel at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), namely, Mary Chaput, Associate Deputy Minister; James Gilbert, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Communications and Commemoration; Keith Hillier, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery Branch; Heather Parry, Assistant Deputy Minister; and Peter Yendall, Director General of Communications, for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012: (a) what does VAC provide for each individual in terms of salary range; (b) how much did each of these individuals claim for (i) food, (ii) travel, (iii) hotels, (iv) hospitality, broken down by fiscal year for the period requested; (c) what were the itemized amounts and descriptions of each individual's individual expenses as identified in the answers to (b); (d) how many trips were taken by each of these individuals in each fiscal year for the period requested, broken down by (i) dates, (ii) destination(s), (iii) purpose(s); (e) for each trip in (d), what expenses were claimed, broken down by (i) transportation, (ii) accommodations, (iii) per diems, (iv) meals, (v) any and all hospitality; and (f) how many days in each fiscal year for the period requested did each of these individuals work in (i) VAC headquarters in Prince Edward Island, (ii) Ottawa?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 693—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to the National Archival Development Program: (a) what is the name and location of each organization which has received a grant or contribution under this program since March 31, 1999; (b) what was the amount of each grant or contribution; (c) what was the purpose, scope, or intent of the work to be carried out using the funds provided by the grant or contribution; and (d) what is the rationale for the termination of the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 697—Ms. Christine Moore:

With regard to the Canadian Forces (CF) recruiting centres: (a) which CF recruiting centres does the Department of National Defence plan to close; (b) when was the final decision taken to close these centres; (c) what type of assessment was done when deciding on the closures; (d) what consultations were held with the communities affected; (e) what analysis was done of the impact these closures would have on CF regional recruitment rates for the regular force, the reserve and cadet corps officers; (f) how many jobs will be lost as a result of the closures; (g) how many new recruits did each of these recruiting centres generate in 2011; and (h) what was the proportion of anglophone and francophone recruits for each of these centres in 2011?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 700—Ms. Mylène Freeman:

With regard to government funding for building, repairing or upgrading septic systems or waste water treatment systems in the last 10 years, what is: (a) the name of the project or program; (b) the city, town or community in which the project or program took place; (c) the amount allocated to the project or program, broken down by (i) grant or contribution, (ii) interest-free loan, (iii) repayable loan, (iv) non-repayable loan; (d) a description of each project or program; (e) the government department or agency from which the funding originated; and (f) the total amount of funding allocated, broken down by (i) city, town or community, (ii) province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 701—Mr. Brian Masse:

What is the total amount of government funding since January 1, 2009, up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Windsor West, specifying each department or agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 703—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to recreational ski and snow sport helmets: (a) has Health Canada recommended listing helmets that do not meet the Canadian Standards Association Z263.1-08 standard for helmets under the Hazardous Products Act; (b) are helmets being inspected by Health Canada; (c) is the safety of helmets tested by Health Canada and, if not, why not; (d) if these helmets do not meet safety standards, are they denied entry into Canada; (e) does Health Canada track the number of these helmets imported; (f) what amount of money is spent each year beginning in 2004-2005 on (i) helmet safety, (ii) brain injury awareness, (iii) promotion of helmet use; (g) what is the estimated cost to the health care system and the Canadian economy for brain injuries resulting from failure to wear a helmet; and (h) are there any joint federal/provincial/territorial partnerships to encourage helmet use?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 705—Ms. Christine Moore:

With regard to the Canadian Heritage Cultural Capitals of Canada program: (a) who were the candidates and winners for each of the three categories, identified by year, for every year since the program began; (b) for each of these years, who was on the expert advisory committee; (c) for each of these years, what recommendations did the expert advisory committee make for the recipients of the awards; (d) for each of these years, how many times did the Minister of Canadian Heritage at the time follow the recommendations of the expert advisory committee, and how many times did the Minister ignore them; (e) for the decision to name the 2012 Cultural Capitals of Canada, on what opinions and recommendations did the Minister of Canadian Heritage base his decisions; and (f) apart from the expert advisory committee, what other studies and consultations were carried out to help the Minister of Canadian Heritage make his selection for the 2012 Cultural Capitals of Canada, and what were the results?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 706—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to the use of government-issued credit cards by Ministerial exempt staff, for each Minister since February 6, 2006: (a) how many Ministerial exempt staff failed to pay the amount owing within the required time frame; (b) for each case identified in (a), (i) what is the name of the Ministerial exempt staff member, (ii) what was the amount owing; (c) how many Ministerial exempt staff used government-issued credit cards for non-governmental business; (d) for each case identified in (c), (i) what is the name of the Ministerial exempt staff member, (ii) what specific transactions were made and for what amounts; (e) how much has the government had to pay to cover the delinquent accounts of Ministerial exempt staff; and (f) of the amount in (e) how much has the government recovered from the relevant Ministerial exempt staff members?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 708—Mr. Peter Stoffer:

With regard to the categorization in the Main Estimates of all information technology spending under the heading "Internal Services", what is a more detailed breakdown of those aggregate expenditures for the fiscal year 2012-2013, specifically, hardware costs and software costs, including application software, operating system software, data management software, and security software, for: (a) Shared Services Canada; (b) Justice Canada; (c) the Department of National Defence; (d) Public Safety Canada; (e) Public Works and Government Services Canada; (f) Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; (g) the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; (h) Treasury Board Secretariat; (i) the Department of Finance; (j) Citizenship and Immigration Canada; (k) Industry Canada; (l) Department of Canadian Heritage; (m) Transport Canada; (n) Health Canada; (o) Department of Fisheries and Oceans; (p) Environment Canada; (q) Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; (r) Natural Resources Canada; and (s) the Canada Revenue Agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 709—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to Canadian soldiers participating in nuclear testing in the United States: (a) what was the purpose of sending Canadian soldiers to participate in nuclear testing in the United States; (b) what, if any, disclosures were provided to participating Canadian soldiers outlining the risks and dangers of exposure to nuclear testing either before or after they participated in this testing; (c) what was date and

year in which the government, including but not limited to the Department of National Defence, the Privy Council Office and Veterans Affairs Canada, received its first inquiry from a Canadian soldier seeking information as to why he or she participated in nuclear testing; (d) what was the date and year when the government, including but not limited to the Department of National Defence, the Privy Council Office and Veterans Affairs Canada, first provided advice to Ministers about possible exposure to financial liability as a result of sending Canadian soldiers to nuclear testing sites; (e) what is the total amount of money spent by the government, including but not limited to the Department of National Defence, the Privy Council Office and Veterans Affairs Canada, opposing any compensation to Canadian soldiers who participated in nuclear testing in the United States; (f) what is the amount of money paid to soldiers as compensation for participating in nuclear testing to date; and (g) what date and year did the government, in any internal document or disclosure provided to Ministers, receive advice, either before or after the nuclear testing in Nevada, that exposure to nuclear testing in Nevada or at any other place or time, might result in a diagnosis of cancer?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 713—Hon. John McCallum:

With respect to any program related to support for affordable housing, what is: (a) the name of the program; (b) the program activity the program falls under; (c) the annual spending for fiscal years (i) 2008-2009, (ii) 2009-2010, (iii) 2010-2011; and (d) the forecast spending for fiscal years (i) 2011-2012, (ii) 2012-2013, (iii) 2013-2014, (iv) 2014-2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 714—Mr. Alex Atamanenko:

With regard to the horse slaughter industry in Canada: (a) how soon after killing must condemned carcasses or dead-on-arrival horse carcasses be rendered; (b) has the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) determined a maximum size (weight, backside width, and height) for horses permitted for slaughter at all Canadian plants slaughtering equine; (c) what specific changes have been instituted at Les Viandes de la Petite-Nation since the CFIA became aware of July 2011 investigation evidence showing issues within the plant; (d) what procedures are in place regarding thoroughbreds and/or standardbreds and/or other branded/tattooed horses and/or horses accompanied with registration papers, to ensure that these horses have been legitimately consigned to the slaughter plant; (e) were any carcasses condemned at Les Viandes de la Petite-Nation between July 11 and July 20, 2011, (i) what were the circumstances/reasons for condemning the carcasses, (ii) on what dates did this occur, (iii) what were the identification (tattoo/tag) numbers on the horses in question; (f) in the period from June 1, 2005, to June 1, 2012, inclusively, on what dates were inspections carried out at Viandes Richelieu, Bouvry Export Calgary, Canadian Premium Meats, Les Cerfs de Boileau and Les Viandes de la Petite-Nation to ensure that these operations comply with federal laws and regulations governing the environmental effects of horse slaughter operations on the air, ground, and water in surrounding areas, (i) what findings were included in inspection reports; (g) on what dates were environmental inspections conducted on all Canadian equine feedlots or holding areas, (i) what were the findings included in inspection reports; (h) what reports or evaluations exist regarding the adequacy of the screening, testing, identification, and treatment histories of horses slaughtered in Canada for human consumption; (i) on what dates in the period from June 1, 2005, to the present did the government inspect Natural Valley Farms (Natural Meat Company) for suspected violations of environmental laws and/or regulations, (i) what were the findings included in each inspection report; (j) what guarantees does the government require from United States authorities regarding the accuracy of the Equine Identification Document for horses imported by Canada to be slaughtered; (k) on what dates were discussions or negotiations held between Canadian government officials and United States authorities regarding the European Union's Final Audit Report of December 6, 2012, (i) what agreements were reached as a result of these negotiations; (l) what substances are banned in Canada for use in horses to be slaughtered for human consumption, (i) how is the ban enforced, (ii) how many violations or infractions has the government issued penalties for in each of the years between 2005 to the present; (m) what are the titles and dates of all government-commissioned reports and evaluations regarding the adequacy of the screening and testing, identification, and treatment histories of horses slaughtered in Canada for human consumption between 2005 to the present; and (n) what guarantees does the government require from United States authorities regarding the accuracy of Equine Identification Documents for horses imported by Canada destined for slaughter for human consumption?

Routine Proceedings

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Question No. 717—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the Minister of State for Science and Technology and the Minister of Industry: (a) what are the mandates or instructions given by the Ministers to the following institutions, (i) National Research Council, (ii) Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, (iii) Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, (iv) Canadian Institutes of Health Research; (b) what files, records, documents, materials and information, directives, policies or other information were provided to the Ministers in order for them to give the instructions to the institutions in (a); and (c) what files, records, documents, and other materials, regarding or containing ministerial instructions, directives, policies or other information, were provided by Minister of State for Science and Technology or the Minister of Industry to the various departmental heads, personnel and officials of the institutions in (a) regarding or containing procedural or instructional directives?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 719—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the representation of First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians employed by Correctional Service Canada (CSC): (a) broken down by province and territory and by calendar year from 1990 until 2012, (i) what was the number of CSC employees, (ii) how many of CSC's employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians, (iii) what percentage of CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians; and (b) broken down by province and territory and by calendar year from 1990 until 2012, (i) what was the number of management-level CSC employees, (ii) how many management-level CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians, (iii) what percentage of management-level CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 720—Ms. Sgro (York West) :

With regard to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012: (a) how many Temporary Resident Permits have been issued for individuals suspected to be victims of human trafficking; (b) how many Temporary Resident Permits have been renewed for individuals suspected to be victims of human trafficking; (c) how many Temporary Work Permits have been issued to individuals who are exotic dancers; and (d) how many Temporary Work Permits have been renewed for individuals who are exotic dancers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 722—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With regard to the Department of National Defence's Headquarters, for each fiscal quarter since 2006, how many bottles of water have been purchased and what is the cost of these acquisitions?

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Question No. 724—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With regard to the moving of responsibility for the F-35 purchase from the Department of National Defence (DND) to an F-35 secretariat in the Department of Public Works and Government Services (PWGSC): (a) how many people will be affected by this move; (b) when will this move take place; and (c) what is the total cost of transferring oversight of this project to PWGSC from DND?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 726—Hon. Gerry Byrne:

With regard to the Minister of National Defence, since August 14, 2007: (a) how many gifts has the Minister received; and (b) for each gift, what is (i) a detailed description of the gift, (ii) the name of the person or organization that gave the gift to the Minister, (iii) the value of each gift?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 729—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to the regulatory requirements for off-label use of a medical device and the special access program: (a) what are the federal regulations that control off-label use of a medical device already approved in Canada; (b) when a device such as a "stent" is proposed to be used by a licensed Canadian surgeon or interventional radiologist for the treatment of a medical condition not originally approved by the Medical Devices Bureau, (i) is there a requirement for a separate set of clinical trials or does such use fall under provincial jurisdiction and their practice of medicine guidelines, (ii) and if off-label use falls under provincial jurisdiction, why did the federal government intervene regarding the new procedure for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI); (c) what are the regulatory requirements for the special access program that allows practitioners to request access to drugs or devices that are not currently approved for use in Canada for patients with serious or life threatening conditions, (i) why did the procedure for chronic CCSVI fail to meet the specified requirements on a compassionate or emergency basis when conventional therapies have failed, are unsuitable, or are unavailable, (ii) how did kidney denervation meet the specified requirements; (d) how many CCSVI procedures worldwide have been performed to date, (i) how many positive and negative peer-reviewed CCSVI studies have been published to date, (ii) how many Canadians are estimated to have had the procedure for CCSVI since January 2010, and how many of them have been followed to date, (iii) how many phase II and phase III clinical trials for CCSVI are currently underway internationally, (iv) in light of the safety findings reported on 1375 patients studied in eight recently published clinical trials on CCSVI, why is Canada beginning with a phase I study; and (e) how many procedures worldwide have been performed for kidney denervation, (i) how many positive and negative peer reviewed studies have been published to date, (ii) had the procedure been assessed through a double-blind trial with a placebo group when the procedure was approved in Canada, (iii) how many safety studies have been published to date, and what is the complication rate, (iv) what phase clinical trials are currently underway internationally, (v) will Canada be undertaking phased clinical trials?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 730—Mr. Glenn Thibeault:

With regard to Health Canada's Consumer Product Safety Directorate, since 2005-2006, broken down by fiscal year: (a) how many product safety tests have been conducted; (b) how many product safety tests have resulted in consumer product recalls; (c) how many field inspections have been conducted; (d) how many field inspections have resulted in consumer product recalls; (e) how many product safety tests have resulted in fines; (f) how many inspections have resulted in fines; (g) what is the total monetary value of each fine levied; (h) what is the value of each product seizure which resulted from product safety tests; (i) what is the value of each product seizure which resulted from field inspections; (j) what is the average number of inspections conducted per inspector; and (k) what is the ratio of physical inspections to administrative inspections?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 731—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With respect to the multiple sclerosis (MS) drugs, Tysabri and Gilenya: (a) before these drugs were approved for use in Canada, what detailed processes were undertaken to ensure safety, efficacy and quality and historically, (i) how many drugs have been reviewed, (ii) how has the review process been resolved, including, but not limited to, (iii) how many drugs have been pulled from the market, (iv) how many drugs have been given new prescription criteria, (v) how many drugs have been put back on the market; (b) when (start month and year to end month and year) and where (company/research facility and country) did the phase I clinical trials take place for each drug, (i) how many MS patients were enrolled for each trial, (ii) for each trial, how many controls were used, (iii) for each trial, which variables were controlled, (iv) which medical specialists monitored the patients during each trial and afterward, (v) how was a safe dosage determined for each drug, (vi) what was the safe dosage range for each drug, (vii) what side effects were identified for each drug, (viii) why was it decided to move ahead to a phase II trial for each drug; (c) what, if any, other information was reviewed beyond the phase I trial for each drug; (d) when (start month and year to end month and year) and where (company/research facility and country) did the phase II clinical trials take place for each drug, (i) how many MS patients were enrolled for each trial, (ii) for each trial, how many controls were used, (iii) for each trial, what variables were controlled, (iv) which medical specialists monitored the patients during each trial and afterward, (v) what was the safe dosage range for each drug, (vi) what evidence was there that each drug was safe, (vii) what evidence was there that each drug was effective, (viii) why was it decided to move ahead to a phase III trial for each of the drugs; (e) what, if any, other information was reviewed beyond the phase II trial for each drug; (f) when (start month and year to end month and year) and where (company/research facility and country) did the phase III clinical trials take place for each drug, (i) for each trial, how many MS patients were enrolled, (ii) for each trial, how many controls were used, (iii) for each trial, what variables were controlled, (iv) which medical specialists monitored the patients during each trial and afterward, (v) what was the safe dosage range for each drug, (vi) what evidence was there that each drug was safe, (vii) what evidence was there that each drug was effective, (viii) what side effects were identified for each drug, (ix) how did the two drugs compare to commonly used treatments, (x) what information was collected that would allow the two drugs to be used safely, (xi) why was it decided to move ahead to market both drugs; (g) what, if any, other information was reviewed beyond the phase III trial for each of the drugs; (h) Tysabri was known to cause progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML), a rare brain disorder that usually causes death or severe disability, (i) what was the benefit/risk profile for the drug, (ii) why did Health Canada choose to fast-track the drug, (iii) did the MS Society of Canada support the fast-tracking of Tysabri, (iv) why did Health Canada not make monitoring mandatory, as was done in the United States, (v) was the decision regarding monitoring ever changed and, if so, when, (vi) how does 252 confirmed cases of PML and 52 deaths fit with Health Canada's benefit/risk profile; (i) Gilenya was known to slow a patient's heart rate down, especially after the first dose, but the heart rate usually returned to normal within one month, (i) what was the benefit/risk profile for the drug, (ii) did anyone die during clinical trials and, if so, how many people, (iii) what evidence was provided regarding the source of deaths, (iv) how was risk assessed; (j) based on the information in (i), was there any group identified who should not take the drug, (i) particularly those with cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular disease; (k) what percentage of MS patients have cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular disease, and (i) when did the information in (k) become known; (l) were Canadian physicians involved in the phase I-III clinical trials for Tysabri/Gilenya and, if so, (i) did they receive financial assistance from Biogen Idec or Novartis, (ii) did they provide support or recommendation for either of the drugs to the government, (iii) did they ever serve on any expert panel to the government regarding MS; (m) what assistance has Biogen Idec and Novartis provided to the MS Society of Canada or any of the Society's funded scientists, (i) was there an involvement from the MS Society of Canada in the phase I-III clinical trials for Tysabri and Gilenya and, if so, (ii) did they receive any financial assistance from Biogen Idec and Novartis, (iii) did the Society or any of its board members, scientists or other members provide any support or recommendation for the drugs to the government, (iv) did the Society or any of its board members, scientists or other members serve on any expert panel to the government regarding MS; (n) what phase IV clinical trials have been undertaken for drugs in (i) Canada and by whom, and (ii) internationally; (o) when were the drugs first marketed in Canada, (i) when were the drugs first available in Canada, (ii) when were problems or signals first identified for each drug in Canada and internationally; (p) what do adverse reaction reports in Canada and internationally show for each drug, and what is the (i) Canadian and (ii) international data for each drug; (q) which countries have placed either of the two drugs under review, and for each drug, identify the start date of the review for each country; (r) did Health Canada put Gilenya under review on February 28th, 2012, because (i) safety concerns were identified, (ii) causal relationships were established, (iii) serious adverse events, including 11 deaths reported internationally, or (iv) of

other reasons, and, if so, (v) identify the reasons; (s) for what reasons is the continued prescribing of Gilenya permitted despite the incidence of deaths internationally, and have any further deaths occurred since the drug has been under review; (t) what, if any, monitoring takes place to ensure that healthcare professionals are following the Health Canada advisory urging them to continue to follow Gilenya's labelling instructions closely, particularly with respect to patient monitoring; (u) while Gilenya has been under review in Canada, have other medical agencies internationally provided any additional evidence and warnings, and, if so, what are the details, including whether Canada has followed suit; (v) what are the details of all actions taken by Health Canada to monitor the safety of Tysabri and Gilenya while the drugs have been on the market, including (i) adverse reaction reports in Canada and internationally, (ii) post-market studies, (iii) published data, (iv) international safety data, (v) collaboration with international counterparts; (w) what are the details of all information about Tysabri and Gilenya that has been obtained by Health Canada through (i) adverse reaction reports in Canada and internationally, (ii) post-market studies, (iii) published data, (iv) international safety data, (v) collaboration with international counterparts; (x) what, if any, collaboration takes place between Health Canada and Biogen Idec and Novartis to ensure that the safety profile of the drugs is monitored on an ongoing basis; (y) what are the details of the drug review process in the case of Gilenya, including (i) start and end date, (ii) Canadian and international information to be reviewed, (iii) reviewers, (iv) international partners, (v) benefit/risk profiles and thresholds, (vi) milestones, (vii) other relevant information; (z) what timeline does the government's policy provide to communicate any new safety information that may arise concerning Gilenya; and (aa) what actions does Health Canada plan to take following the review of Gilenya?

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Question No. 732—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the anticipated arrival of debris on Canada's west coast from the 2011 Japanese (Tohoku) earthquake: (a) how has the government prepared for the arrival of the debris on the west coast of Canada; (b) does the government still expect a 2014 arrival date; (c) has the government created a contingency plan and, if so, what is it; (d) what are the current best estimates for the total cost of implementing this plan; (e) which federal departments or agencies are involved or are expected to become involved in this matter; (f) has an environmental impact assessment of the debris hitting the west coast (i) been conducted or (ii) currently being conducted or (iii) is there a plan for such an assessment in the works; (g) which provincial counterparts has the government been consulting with; (h) has the government liaised with the US federal government and/or any US states for coordinating a response plan and, if so, which states; (i) has the government allocated funding towards this problem and, if so, what is the amount; (j) which departments and other entities will be allocated these funds; and (k) does the government anticipate the arrival of any radioactive debris and, if so, what is its plan for mitigating the potential dangers of this debris?

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Routine Proceedings

Question No. 734—Mr. Alex Atamanenko:

With regard to genetically modified seeds, crops and food: (a) what were the findings or conclusions in the reviews conducted by the government on each of the following scientific studies and reports, (i) Aziz Arisa, Samuel Leblanc. "Maternal and fetal exposure to pesticides associated to genetically modified foods in Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada". *Reproductive Toxicology* (2011), doi:10.1016/j.reprotox.2011.02.004; [http://www.uclm.es/Actividades/repositorio/pdf/doc_3721_4666.pdf], (ii) T. Watanabe, T. Iwase. "Developmental and dysmorphic effects of glufosinate ammonium on mouse embryos in culture". *Teratog Carcinog Mutagen* 1996;16:287-299; [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9178451], (iii) G.S. Johal, D.M. Huber. "Glyphosate effects on diseases of plants". *European Journal of Agronomy* (2009) 31:144-152; [http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoas/services/huber-glyphosates-2009.pdf], (iv) Aaron J. Gassmann, Jennifer L. Petzold-Maxwell, Ryan S. Keweshan, Mike W. Dunbar. 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(Return tabled)

Question No. 735—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With regard to the attendance at public events of ten government Ministers on June 4, 2012, as listed in the Media Advisory from the Department of Natural Resources entitled "Harper Government Ministers Participate in Events from Coast to Coast to Highlight the Importance of Responsible Resource Development to Canadians" and dated June 3, 2012: (a) for each Minister's travel, what was the (i) itinerary of their flight, including the departure city and destination, (ii) number of people travelling with each Minister and their title or position, (iii) travel itinerary for each person travelling with each Minister including their departure city and destination, (iv) cost for each flight for each of the Ministers and all persons travelling with each Minister, (v) costs for all ground transportation, per diems, and accommodations for each Minister and for each person travelling with each Minister, (vi) calculated greenhouse gas emissions for all flights and ground transportation; (b) what related press releases were sent to any media outlets from any department, agency or crown corporation; (c) what are the costs associated with consultants (i.e. non-governmental employees) that provided any service before, during or after the listed events of June 4, 2012, and what are the costs of any associated public opinion polling; (d) for each announcement or speech, what was the (i) cost for room rental, audio-visual equipment, room setup, and related personnel, (ii) announcement/speech, (iii) number of people in attendance, (iv) number of media in attendance, (v) number of local "media hits", (vi) the number of national "media hits"; (e) what was the total cost to taxpayers for each event; and (f) what was the total estimated greenhouse gas emissions for each event?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 737—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to federally run correctional institutions within the province of Ontario: (a) for each institution and broken down by year, what is the allotment of federal funds budgeted towards each of the following items from 2000 until the present year, and what was the amount of funds actually spent on each of the following items, from 2000 until the present year, (i) Institutional Management and Support, (ii) Institutional Security, (iii) Institutional Services (excluding Exchange of Service Agreements (ESA)), (iv) Offender Case Management (excluding Aboriginals), (v) Community Engagement, (vi) Community Management and Security, (vii) Community Based Residential Facilities, (viii) Management and Oversight, (ix) Public Policy, (x) Human Resources (training), (xi) Supply Chain Management, (xii) Facilities/Asset Management, (xiii) Legal Services, (xiv) Public Affairs/Communication, (xv) Evaluation Services, (xvi) Other Support Delivery Services, (xvii) Institutional Services (ESA), (xviii) Offender Case Management (Aboriginal), (xix) Spiritual Services, (xx) Correctional Integration Program, (xxi) Offender Education, (xxii) Employment and Employability, (xxiii) Community Management and Security, (xxiv) Human Resources (excluding training), (xxv) Finance, (xxvi) Institutional Health Services, (xxvii) Community Health Services, (xxviii) Human Resources (training), (xxix) Informational Management, (xxx) Information Technological Services, (xxxi) Other Support Delivery Services, (xxxii) Full Time Equivalents, (xxxiii) Salaries (excluding overtime), (xxxiv) Overtime Conversion Cost, (xxxv) Operating, (xxxvi) Exchange of Service Agreement, (xxxvii) Crown Asset- O&M, (xxxviii) Grants and Contributions, (xxxix) Minor Construction, (xl) Capital Equipment, (xli) Total TB (Treasury Board) Operating Allotments, (xlii) Total TB Capital Allotments, (xliii) Total Institutional Allotment; (b) what requests for funds for construction projects were made by each institution for each year from 2000 to the present, broken down by year and by institution; (c) what construction projects were undertaken by each institution for each year from 2000 to the present, broken down by institution and by year; (d) for each of the construction projects listed in (c), (i) what was the amount of funding requested by the institution for each project, (ii) what was the allocated budget for each project, (iii) what was the actual amount of money spent on each project; (e) what future construction projects, if any, have already been approved and agreed to and what funds have been allocated for this purpose; (f) what requests for funds for maintenance projects were made by each institution for each year from 2000 to the present, broken down by year and by institution; (g) what maintenance projects were undertaken by each institution for each year from 2000 to the present, broken down by institution and by year; (h) for each of the maintenance projects listed in (g) (i) what was the amount of funding requested by the institution for each project, (ii) what was the allocated budget for each project, (iii) what was the actual amount of money spent on each project; and (i) what future maintenance projects, if any, have already been approved and agreed to and what funds have been allocated for this purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 738—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to the debris from the tsunami in Japan in 2011: (a) has the government evaluated the environmental impact, and, (i) if yes, what are the results of this evaluation, (ii) if no, why has no evaluation been done; (b) has the government evaluated the impact of this debris on the Canadian economy, and, (i) if yes, what are the results of this evaluation, (ii) if no, why has no evaluation been done; and (c) what are the titles of the documents, studies or reports that have been prepared for the government that address this event, in whole or in part?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 739—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to the case of Mr. Robert Bolden, a Canadian citizen on death row in Indiana, United States of America: (a) when was the government first informed of this case; (b) by whom was the government informed; (c) how was the government informed; (d) which Department of Justice officials have been appointed to work on this case; (e) which Foreign Affairs officials have been appointed to work on this case; (f) what forms of consular assistance have been provided to Mr. Bolden; (g) on what dates has Mr. Bolden been visited by Consular officials; (h) what forms of consular assistance will be provided to Mr. Bolden in the future and which officials are responsible for providing this consular assistance; (i) have any Canadian government officials been present at hearings or meetings regarding this case, (i) who are these officials, (ii) when did these hearings or meetings take place; (j) have any Canadian government officials made any written or oral statements or presentations during the hearings or meetings referred to in (i); (k) what was the content of said written or oral statement as referred to in (j); (l) what steps has the Canadian government taken to verify whether Mr. Bolden is a Canadian citizen, (i) who was responsible for this verification process, (ii) what have been the results of this verification process; (m) what steps have been taken to monitor the status of Mr. Bolden's health and the maintenance of basic needs; and (n) what representations have been made to US authorities regarding Mr. Bolden's case, (i) by whom, (ii) on what dates?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 740—Hon. Irwin Cotler:

With regard to the recent job cuts at the Department of National Defence (DND): (a) what is the current number of DND employees working to address the mental health of soldiers and veterans and how has this number changed since 2000; (b) how many current members of the Canadian Forces have a diagnosable mental health condition; (c) how many veterans of the Canadian Forces have a diagnosable mental health condition; (d) how many veterans of the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan have a diagnosable mental health condition; (e) how many veterans of the Canadian Forces mission in Bosnia have a diagnosable mental health condition; (f) how have the numbers in (b) and (c) changed since 2000; (g) who at DND is responsible for decisions on cuts concerning mental health personnel; (h) who is responsible for recommending and executing job cuts at the DND's Deployment Mental Health Research Section as well as at the DND's epidemiology section; (i) what criteria are used by the individual(s) referred to in (h) to evaluate the need for job cuts and the subsequent impact of those cuts on mental health service delivery; (j) are the individuals referred to in (g) required in any way, when they recommend cuts, to consider year-to-year changes in rates of Canadian Forces members who exhibit Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms or suicidal ideation; (k) who at DND is responsible for formulating projections of future mental illness rates upon the return to Canada of Canadian Forces members currently deployed abroad; (l) what sources of information and what criteria are used to formulate the projections referred to in (k); (m) what is the average wait time for a Canadian soldier stationed in Petawawa, Ontario to see a psychiatrist or psychologist; (n) after the current round of cuts takes effect, how does DND project the wait time referred to in (m) will be affected (expressed in units of time); (o) what were the criteria used in formulating the decision to close the National Defence Health Services Centre; (p) where will DND be referring patients of the National Defence Health Services Centre when it closes; (q) what is the role of the Chief of the Defence Staff in addressing mental illness among soldiers and veterans; and (r) who is responsible for evaluating the performance of the Chief of the Defence Staff in fulfilling the role referred to in (q)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 741—Hon. Irwin Cotler:

With respect to Canadians victimized abroad: (a) who serves as the point of contact for information regarding resources that are available to Canadian citizens; (b) what information is provided to Embassies and Consulates abroad with respect to medical evacuation and the Canada Victims Fund; (c) what measures are in place to ensure Embassy and Consular staff inform Canadian citizens victimized abroad about medical evacuation and the Canada Victims Fund; (d) with respect to medical evacuation, (i) how does one apply for this, (ii) who reviews applications, (iii) what criteria are used for evaluating applications, (iv) who is responsible for informing applicants of a decision, (v) what process is used to determine the decision, (vi) what is the average processing time for applications, (vii) what is the average delay for informing applicants of the decision, (viii) how many applications are received each year, (ix) how many of the said applications are approved, (x) what cost limits are in place; and (e) with respect to the Canada Victims Fund, (i) how does one apply for this, (ii) who reviews applications, (iii) what criteria are used for evaluating

applications, (iv) who is responsible for informing applicants of a decision, (v) what process is used to determine the decision, (vi) what is the average processing time for applications, (vii) what is the average delay for informing applicants of the decision, (viii) how many applications are received each year, (ix) how many of the said applications are approved, (x) what is the amount for which an applicant is eligible and how is this determined?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 742—Hon. Irwin Cotler:

With respect to the War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Program: (a) since its inception, how much funding has been committed to the program for each fiscal year; (b) for each fiscal year since its inception, which portion of the funding has come from (i) the Department of Justice, (ii) the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, (iii) Citizenship and Immigration Canada, (iv) the Canada Border Services Agency; (c) what is the total funding projected for the program for each of the ten next fiscal years; (d) for each of the next ten fiscal years, which portion of the funding is projected to come from (i) the Department of Justice, (ii) the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, (iii) Citizenship and Immigration Canada, (iv) the Canada Border Services Agency; (e) since its inception, how many employees have been assigned to the program each year; (f) how many prosecutions have been initiated since the program began; (g) how many files are currently under review; (h) how many cases have been referred to the program; (i) what criteria does the program use to evaluate cases; (j) what programs and measures are in place to educate the public about the program; (k) what programs and measures are in place to educate the respective departments involved about the program; and (l) how often are each of the responsible ministers briefed on the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 745—Mr. Philip Toone:

From fiscal year 2010-2011 to the current fiscal year, what is the total amount of funding that the government had provided, each year, in the riding of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, by department or agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 746—Ms. Annick Papillon:

With regard to the estimated timeline and costs for the reconstruction of the Quebec City Armoury: (a) what was the estimated timeline for the preliminary work and the reconstruction of the Armoury when the federal government issued a call for tenders regarding the preparation of architectural designs on October 25, 2010; (b) what was the total estimated cost of the preliminary work and the reconstruction of the Armoury when the federal government issued a call for tenders regarding the preparation of architectural designs on October 25, 2010, broken down (i) by fiscal year when the expenditures were to be committed, (ii) by phase of the reconstruction project; (c) what is the most recent estimated timeline for the preliminary work and the reconstruction work; (d) based on the most recent timeline, what are all the phases of the reconstruction process; (e) which federal departments or agencies are responsible for overseeing and managing the preliminary work and reconstruction work; (f) which federal departments or agencies are responsible for awarding contracts for the preliminary work and reconstruction work; (g) which service contracts for the preliminary work of consultation, cleaning and preservation have already been awarded; (h) which service contracts for the reconstruction work have already been awarded; (i) what is the total cost of all service contracts awarded in relation to the preliminary work and reconstruction work, including consultation, planning, cleaning and preservation costs; and (j) what will be the total cost of the reconstruction of the Armoury based on the Department of National Defence's most recent preliminary estimate, broken down (i) by fiscal year when the expenditures were to be committed, (ii) by phase of the reconstruction project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 748—Ms. Annick Papillon:

What is the total amount of government funding allocated within the constituency of Québec from the 2006-2007 fiscal year to the current fiscal year, broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative or project, for each department or agency?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 749—Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

With regard to criminal record checks and vulnerable sector checks performed by the Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP): (a) which RCMP detachments have digital fingerprint scanners and which do not; and (b) how many scanners does the RCMP plan to add in each province and/or territory in the future, at what locations, and when?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 751—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With regard to government announcements made by and associated with meetings or events attended by the following individuals in the following locations on or around April 27, 2012, related to the proposed Canada-European Union trade agreement, what were the travel and accommodation costs, including those of staff members or other government employees, associated with the announcements, meetings and events, and what were all other costs associated with the announcements, meetings and events for (i) the Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), in Edmundston, New Brunswick, (ii) the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade in Halifax, Nova Scotia, (iii) the President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario in Huntsville, Ontario, (iv) the Minister of Labour in London, Ontario, (v) the Minister of Natural Resources in Toronto, Ontario, (vi) the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons in Waterloo, Ontario, (vii) the Minister of Canadian Heritage in Vancouver, British Columbia, (viii) the Minister of Health, (ix) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in Cap-Pelé, New Brunswick, (x) the Minister of State (Finance) in Calgary, Alberta, (xi) the Hon. Rob Merrifield, P.C., M.P., in Spruce Grove, Alberta, (xii) the Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture) in Québec City, Québec, (xiii) Senator Pierre Claude Nolin in Montréal, Québec, (xiv) the Minister for Public Safety in St. Boniface, Manitoba (xv) the Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, (xvi) Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P., in Regina, Saskatchewan, (xvii) the Minister of National Revenue in New Annan, Prince Edward Island, (xviii) the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada in St. John's, Newfoundland, (xix) the Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway in Ottawa, Ontario, (xx) any of the persons named in (i) through (xix) in any other location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 752—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With regard to government advertising: (a) what is the overall budget for the print advertising campaign which has appeared in newspapers or other print media outlets concerning Old Age Security, under the heading "Placing Old Age Security on a Sustainable Path"; (b) who did the creative work on these ads; (c) if the answer to (b) is an outside party or agency, who was the outside party or agency; (d) what was the cost of the creative work; (e) what media outlets did the ad appear in, and, for each, on which date or dates was the ad inserted; (f) what was the cost of each individual insertion; (g) who determined the colour scheme for the ads; and (h) what was the rationale for the colour scheme?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 753—Mr. Craig Scott:

With respect to the Afghan Detainee Document Review (ADDR) submitted on April 15, 2011, by the Panel of Arbiters (PoA) under the June 15, 2010, Memorandum of Understanding signed by three party leaders in Parliament: (a) have the documents referred to in paragraph 30 ever been provided, unredacted, to any Canadian government law-enforcement investigators for purposes of tracing the detainees named in the documents in order to determine whether any suffered mistreatment after transfer to Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS), if not, why not; (b) has the government ever provided compensation to any person or family of any person transferred to Afghan authorities, or sought out a person or family with compensation as the purpose; (c) with regard to the public-domain research (regular reviews of credible media reporting, government reports and reports of international organizations) conducted by the PoA's staff referenced in paragraph 36 of the ADDR, was this public domain research handed over to the government, if not, where is it located, and, whatever its location, will the government release any bibliographies generated by this research or any documents archived by the research that fall within the categories of "credible media reporting, government reports and reports of international organizations"; (d) with regard to the PoA's review of documents redacted on the basis of national security confidentiality ("NSC"

documents), national defence and international relations whereby the PoA reviewed between 1450 and 2300 pages of documents (paragraphs 52-54) while releasing 113 NSC documents (paragraph 56), will the government release those documents that were not yet ready for release with the ADDR because the Department of Justice had not yet had time to complete the technical process of preparing the documents for release after the PoA had finished its reviews and determinations (paragraphs 54 and 55), and how many PoA-reviewed documents remain unreleased because the technical process of preparing the documents remains incomplete; (e) with regard to the 15 documents for which the government had initially claimed solicitor-client privilege (paragraph 63 and page 1 of the ADDR annex called "Documents subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege Claims") but later withdrew the claim, in each case, (i) what were the bases on which privilege was initially claimed, (ii) why did the government change its view; (f) with regard to the 117 documents for which the PoA upheld the government's solicitor-client privilege claim (paragraphs 64 and 65; pages 2-7 of the ADDR annex called "Documents subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege Claims"), will the government waive the solicitor-client privilege to the limited extent of revealing the subject matter of each of the 117 documents; (g) in the ADDR annex called "Documents subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege Claims", why are the large majority of documents described with the acronym PoA (presumably, Panel of Arbiters) while some are specifically indicated as being DFAIT (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) documents?

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*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 754—Mr. Craig Scott:**

With respect to the answer of the Minister of the Environment in the House of Commons on June 13, 2012, that “[a]t this point my officials have advised me that none of the triggers required to spark a federal intervention have been, or are likely to be, tripped” with respect to the application of 3191574 Nova Scotia Company, operating as The Highland Companies, for a 2,316 acre open-pit limestone quarry to be situated on lands they own in Melancthon Township, Dufferin County, Ontario: (a) what government units are the source of this advice and on what date or dates was this advice received; (b) does this advice concern (i) federal environmental law in force as of June 13, 2012, (ii) prospective federal environmental law as it will stand once changes in the Budget Implementation Act, Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, enter into force, or (iii) both (i) and (ii), (c) what is the significance of the Minister’s proviso “at this point,” and does the advice given “at this point” concern the planned quarry or only current use of the land by the owners of the land; (d) what are the reasons that current federal environmental law environmental assessment provisions are viewed as not being triggered; (e) will environmental assessment under federal environmental law as it will be changed by Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be triggered with respect to use of the land as a quarry, and, if not, why not; (f) what form did the advice received by Minister Kent take; (g) considering Minister Kent’s reference to the future with the word “likely”, will further advice be provided to the Minister in the future, and, if so, what will determine when and how this advice is given; (h) within any of the advice so far provided, what view was taken on each of the following as potential reasons for federal environmental assessment, (i) the fact that the area is the headwaters for five rivers, (ii) the fact that those rivers empty into the Great Lakes system, (iii) the fact that waters pumped out of the below-water-table quarry will be pumped back into the water table, with possible resultant contamination, (iv) the status of much of the land as amongst the most arable land in Canada, with corresponding relevance for national and global food security, (v) the fact that the area is the source of a high percentage of potatoes for the Toronto area and that loss of this source of potatoes will likely increase the distance which replacement potatoes have to travel, thus increasing transportation use with a knock-on impact on carbon emissions, (vi) the existence of trout in some or all of the rivers, (vii) the area as habitat for undomesticated animal and bird species, (viii) the impacts on humans living in or adjacent to the area; (i) in what ways will impending changes to environmental law affect the advice given as per the answers to (h)(i) through (h)(viii); (j) with respect to (h) and (i), what sources of information did the advisors to the Minister rely upon and did any of that information come from (i) proponents of the quarry, identifying the entities or persons, (ii) opponents of the quarry, identifying the entities or persons; (k) has the federal government consulted with the government of Ontario with respect to whether or not federal environmental law applies, and, if so, when did the consultations occur and what was the position taken by Ontario; (l) has the government received any factual or other data relevant to the lands and project in question from the government of Ontario, and, if so, what is the nature of this data; (m) has the government had any interaction with 3191574 Nova Scotia Company, operating as The Highland Companies, or any person or organization advocating or lobbying on its behalf and, if so, what was the subject matter and outcome of such interactions; (n) is there any foreign ownership of 3191574 Nova Scotia Company, operating as The Highland Companies, and, if so, are there any implications for Canadian foreign investment law of acquisition and use of the land for purposes of operating a quarry; (o) assuming that conversion of the land in question from arable food-producing land to quarry land will have impacts on interprovincial and/or international trade and commerce, does the government have jurisdiction to legislate in order to prevent or limit conversion of arable to non-arable uses; and (p) in the event that the loss of arable land to other uses is deemed to have an impact on national and global food security, does the government have any jurisdictional basis for the to legislate to preserve arable land?

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Question No. 756—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to the government’s Program Activity Architecture: (a) identified by department, what is the name of each program activity and what was the total spending for each for fiscal years (i) 2008-2009, (ii) 2009-2010, (iii) 2010-2011; (b) identified by department, what is the planned spending for each program activity for fiscal years (i) 2011-2012, (ii) 2012-2013, (iii) 2013-2014; (c) identified by department, what are all the singular programs that form part of each program activity; (d) for each program identified in (c), what was the total spending for that program for fiscal years (i) 2008-2009, (ii) 2009-2010, (iii) 2010-2011; and (e) for

each program identified in (c), what is the planned spending for fiscal years (i) 2011-2012, (ii) 2012-2013, (iii) 2013-2014?

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Question No. 757—Hon. John McCallum:

With respect to the legislative mandate for the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO): (a) how many legal opinions has the government drafted on the legislative mandate of the PBO and for each opinion (i) when was the opinion asked for, (ii) when was the opinion drafted, (iii) was the opinion produced by public servants or an outside consultant; and (b) how much has the government spent drafting these legal opinions?

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Question No. 759—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to the backdrops used by the government for the announcements from February 2, 2011, to present, for each backdrop purchased, what was: (a) the date (i) the tender was issued for the backdrop, (ii) the contract was signed, (iii) the backdrop was delivered; (b) the cost of the backdrop; (c) the announcement for which the backdrop was used; (d) the department that paid for the backdrop; and (e) the date or dates the backdrop was used?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 760—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to ongoing litigation between the government and any other Canadian government (provincial or municipal): (a) what is the citation of each case; (b) what is the summary of each case; and (c) what is the total amount of money the government has spent to date on each case?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 761—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to cultural property: (a) what is the total number of (i) gifts of cultural property, (ii) charitable gifts of property other than Canadian cultural property, (iii) Crown gifts of property other than Canadian cultural property, received in each fiscal year since 2001-2002 inclusive, by each of Library and Archives Canada, including the former National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada; the National Gallery of Canada, distinguishing the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography; the Canadian Museum of Civilization, distinguishing as well the Canadian War Museum; the Canadian Museum of Nature; the National Museum of Science and Technology, distinguishing both the Canada Agriculture Museum and the Canadian Aviation Museum; the Canadian Museum for Human Rights; and (b) what was the total value of each gift?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 763—Hon. Denis Coderre:

With regard to the payments made to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and his former chief of staff, Sandra Buckler, for passports and expenses incurred on October 1, 6 and 10, 2011: (a) what is the specific breakdown of the costs expended; and (b) in relation to what travel or anticipated travel were the passport expenses incurred?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 765—Hon. Denis Coderre:

With respect to the three programs supported by the Global Peace and Security Fund (i.e., the Global Peace and Security Program, the Global Peace Operation Program and the Glyn Berry Program), for each of these programs: (a) what was the final budget for fiscal year 2011-2012; (b) what specific projects were approved in fiscal year 2011-2012; (c) what is the budget for 2012-2013; and (d) what projects have been approved so far for fiscal year 2012-2013

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 766—Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With respect to the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START): (a) what was the final budget for fiscal year 2011-2012; (b) what specific projects were approved in fiscal year 2011-2012; (c) what is the budget for 2012-2013; and (d) what projects have been approved so far for fiscal year 2012-2013?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 768—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to the Correctional Services Canada's (CSC) Prison Farm Program at the Westmorland, Frontenac, Pittsburgh, Rockwood, Riverbend, and Bowden Institutions: (a) for each of the institutions (i) what line items are taken into account when calculating yearly revenue, (ii) what amount did each of these items contribute to the total revenue, yearly for the past 6 years; (b) for each of the institutions, (i) what line items are taken into account when calculating the cost of goods sold, (ii) what amount did each of these items contribute to the total cost of goods sold, yearly for the past 6 years; (c) for each of the institutions, (i) what items are taken into account when determining yearly value of goods sold, for the last six years, (ii) what amount did each of these items contribute to the total earnings from goods sold; (d) what were the values of each of these components (in dollars) for each of the past six years; (e) what was the value of food produced at the institutions that was donated to charitable causes broken down by institution, for each of the past six years; (f) if resources were shared between the CORCAN Agribusiness and CSC at these three institutions, how were costs allocated for each of these three institutions; (g) if resources were shared between the CORCAN Agribusiness and CSC at these three institutions, which party indirectly subsidized the other and by what amount; (h) if internal transactions were made between the CORCAN Agribusiness and any other part of the federal government, how were the prices for these transactions determined; and (i) what was the recidivism rate of prisoners who had participated, for at least three months, in the prison farm program, compared to the general recidivism rate for prisoners released from the federal institutions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 770—Mr. Craig Scott:

With respect to the government's investigation of potential human rights abuses related to the transfer of Afghan detainees from the custody of Canadian Forces to the government of Afghanistan, especially the National Security Directorate (NDS): (a) do the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister automatically receive either copies of or briefings on the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)'s annual human rights reports on Afghanistan; (b) if so, has this practice of automatically receiving copies or briefings always existed; (c) if not, when did this practice start; (d) once knowledge of human rights abuses within the NDS became known, did the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and/or the Minister of Defence order copies of or briefings on the DFAIT annual human rights report on Afghanistan; (e) if not, does the practice of not reading or being briefed on the DFAIT human rights report on Afghanistan continue to this day; (f) following the April 23, 2007, *Globe and Mail* article by Graeme Smith on transferred detainees as victims of mistreatment within NDS facilities, did the government seek to verify the alleged experiences of the people interviewed by Smith and, if so, (i) what precise measures were taken, (ii) by whom, (iii) for how long and until when did these measures last; (g) consistent with the book *The Savage War* by Murray Brewster (page 276), did lawyers representing the government while simultaneously representing military police involved in the Military Police Complaints Commission's hearings on Afghan detainees "[take] their direction from senior levels inside the civil service", and, if so, (i) did this include one or more officials within the Privy Council Office (PCO), (ii) is this normal practice, (iii) what are the guidelines for how Department of Justice lawyers receive direction from outside the Department of Justice, particularly from PCO officials; (h) in relation to Afghan detainee issues, have government lawyers ever received instructions, directions or representations from staff, at any level, within the Prime Minister's Office; (i) did Amnesty International suggest to NATO and/or the government that one way to ensure no torture of detainees would occur would be to embed soldiers or military police in Afghan facilities and, if so, (i) was this option considered (ii) why was it not adopted if it was considered; (j) why did the government decide to approach the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) to start monitoring transferred detainees under the December 2005 arrangement, leading to the February 20, 2007 agreement with AIHRC; (k) did the government do an assessment of AIHRC's capacity to engage in this role and, if so, what were the results of this assessment; (l) with respect to the testimony of David Mulroney before the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan that Canada could not find evidence of former Kandahar Governor Khalid having a detention facility in or next to his compound,

exactly what efforts were undertaken to investigate this matter, (i) by what actors, (ii) using what methods, (iii) on how many occasions; (m) did the government of Canada ever receive information from the AIHRC conveying a belief that Khalid operated a private jail and, if so, did the AIHRC also convey a belief that mistreatment of prisoners took place there; (n) for what reasons was the government of Canada unable to verify whether such a jail existed; (o) when the head of the AIHRC, Canada's partner in monitoring detainees, "estimated publicly... that approximately one-third of the prisoners handed over ended up being tortured" (Brewster, *The Savage War*, page 67), (i) what was the government's response to this information, (ii) was this deemed a credible estimate and, if not, why not; (p) after the statement in (n) was made, was it the government's policy that it was lawful to transfer detainees; (q) did any communications occur within the Canadian Forces or the government about the concerns expressed by military police official Major Kevin Rowcliffe about the torture of detainees and what actions did the government take in response to Major Rowcliffe's testimony before the Military Police Complaints Commission; and (r) has either DFAIT or PCO ever conducted an analysis or assessment of the NDS and, if so, what was the subject-matter of the analysis or assessment?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 771—Mr. Craig Scott:**

With respect to the recently published document *Building Resilience against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy* ("the Strategy") and the testimony on June 2, 2012, of the Minister of Public Safety and two of his officials before the Public Safety Committee on the Strategy: (a) what was the process by which the Strategy was planned and generated, from date of conception (i.e. when it was decided to produce a strategy document) to the date of release, including (i) which unit, branch or agency within the Department of Public Safety took the lead, and what other units, branches or agencies of the Department were closely involved, (ii) were other departments consulted and, if so, which units, branches or agencies within those departments were involved; (b) did the planning process for the Strategy include conducting 'lessons learned' or similar reviews or studies of counter-terrorism policy and operations since September 11, 2001, including with respect to intelligence policy and operations in Afghanistan, and/or were reviews or studies that were done outside the Strategy's own planning process drawn upon in formulating the Strategy, including with respect to Afghanistan; (c) with respect to studies and reviews mentioned in (b), (i) what are their names or titles, (ii) on which dates were they conducted, (iii) what were the authoring governmental units, branches or agencies responsible for the said studies and reviews; (d) have there been reviews or studies of lessons learned from the Afghanistan experience that will be used for future counter-terrorism policy, notably with respect to how counter-terrorist intelligence interacts with military operations and imperatives; (e) did the reviews and studies referred to in (d) include a review or a study of the lessons learned with respect to the interaction of CSIS operatives who were in theatre with Defence Intelligence, Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC) and other intelligence operatives who were also working in theatre; (f) has the Security and Intelligence Review Committee conducted reviews and studies on the role of CSIS in Afghanistan including, but not limited to, reviews and studies relevant to CSIS relations to the National Directorate of Security concerning transfer and interrogation of detainees; (g) what was the nature, timing and process of each review or study identified in (f), and what are the details regarding the relevant documents or summaries; (h) has the government conducted a review to identify what can be learned concerning what the Strategy identifies as the challenge of "increasing interaction with non-traditional partners" (p. 17) as a result of the interactions of CSIS, Defence Intelligence and CSEC with Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS), and, if so, what are the lessons learned or conclusions of any such review; (i) with regard to the recommendations in the recent Concluding Observations of the UN Committee against Torture, will the government implement any aspects of Justice O'Connor's Arar Inquiry report with respect to oversight of intelligence agencies, including RCMP intelligence, in addition to measures already taken, and (ii) if so, which aspects, (iii) if not, why not; (j) given that on page 9 of the Strategy "environmentalism" is listed as one advocacy area that can generate "extremism" leading to terrorism, has the government concluded that any environmental group currently present in Canada is "extremist" in this sense; (k) does the mandate of the integrated national security enforcement team include the protection of the Canadian oil and gas industry and its employees from environmental "extremism" that turns into terrorism, as described in the Strategy; (l) in its planning process for the Strategy, did the government study how Bill C-304, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (protecting freedom), and specifically its clause to repeal section 13 of the Canada Human Rights Act, could affect the Strategy's goal of establishing "stronger laws against ... hate propaganda" (p. 32), and, if so, what were the government's conclusions; (m) is Bill C-30, An Act to enact the Investigating and Preventing Criminal Electronic Communications Act and to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts, an important part of Canada's counter-terrorism strategy, and, if so, why was it not included in the Strategy; (n) is Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, the Marine Transportation Security Act and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act, an important part of Canada's counter-terrorism strategy, and, if so, why was it not included in the Strategy; (o) will further legislation be put forward to implement the Strategy and, if so, on what matters and with what purposes; (p) with respect to the the Strategy's statement concerning the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the importance that the group is "not allowed to rebuild in Canada in order to engage in terrorist activities," (p.8), (i) why does the Strategy refer to conduct that predated the end of the civil war in 2009 (i.e. the 2008 conduct of an LTTE fundraiser, for which he was convicted after the war in 2010) to illustrate the concern about the LTTE rebuilding, (ii) does the government possess information that suggests that the LTTE is in the process of rebuilding in Canada for purpose of terrorist activities; and (q) has Canada ever accepted communications intelligence from one of the traditional "Five Eyes" allies mentioned in Minister Toews' testimony from June 5, 2012, where that intelligence consisted of communications that took place between persons both or all of whom were within Canada at the time the communications occurred?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 772—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to Library and Archives Canada: (a) what were the total accessions of (i) government records, (ii) private records in each year since 2000, inclusive, giving the total number of fonds accessioned, and the total amount of material, distinguishing textual, audio-visual, photographic, documentary art, electronic, and other records; and (b) how many unsolicited offers of donations of private records has Library and Archives Canada received in each year since 2000, and in particular (i) how many offers were accepted, (ii) what was the general nature or subject-matter of each such donation, (iii) what was the total amount of material, distinguishing textual, audio-visual, photographic, documentary art, electronic, and other records, (iv) how many such offers were declined, giving the reason for each?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 774—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to veterans' affairs, in each year since 2006 inclusively: (a) how many requests for assistance were made to the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral and Burial Program; and (b) of those, how many in each year were accepted, and how many were rejected?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 775—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to the Department of Veterans Affairs, what were the legal costs incurred by the government with respect to the case of *Manuge v. Canada*, decided as Supreme Court of Canada docket 33103, broken down by: (a) pre-trial costs; (b) costs related to proceedings at the Federal Court of Canada; (c) costs related to proceedings at the Federal Court of Appeal; (d) costs related to proceedings at the Supreme Court of Canada; and (e) other costs, specifying the nature of those costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 776—Mr. Joe Comartin:

With regard to the CBC/Radio-Canada, the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission, and the Ministry of Heritage concerning the French CBEF station in Windsor, Ontario: (a) how many complaints have been received regarding the loss of the French analogue television transmitter; (b) how many people in Windsor, Ontario (i) watch CBC/Radio-Canada's French television programming, (ii) listen to CBC/Radio-Canada's French programming; (c) how much funding has been cut from the CBEF station, broken down by year, between 2006 and 2012; (d) who was consulted regarding the decision to cut CBEF's funding; (e) was there a strategic review detailing why French radio and television programming received cuts provided to the CRTC or the Ministry of Heritage; (f) if the government has been lobbied on the issue of francophone broadcasting in Windsor, Ontario, what are the details of (i) lobby groups, (ii) the dates of the meetings, (iii) the locations of the meetings, (iv) the names of the people present at the meetings, including but not limited to political/federal public servants and registered lobbyists; and (g) what has CBC/Radio Canada done to ensure that cable/satellite providers are providing affordable services to Canadians who no longer have access to minority language programming?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 777—Mr. Guy Caron:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) Small Craft Harbours Program: (a) what is the complete list of ports (in the province of Quebec) targeted for divestiture by DFO under the Divestiture Class Grant Program (SCH-DCGP) and the planned or desired timeframe for the divestiture; (b) has the Rimouski Wharf already been considered under the Program (SCH-DCGP), and why; (c) what are the criteria used to determine which port facilities qualify under the Divestiture Class Grant Program; (d) generally speaking, what are the definitions of "core fishing harbour", (ii) "non-core fishing harbour", (iii) "recreational harbour", (iv) "multi-purpose harbour"; and (e) under what law or regulations does DFO classify a port facility using these definitions?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 780—Mr. Justin Trudeau:

With respect to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade: (a) how many employment positions for locally-engaged staff at Canadian embassies and consulates have been terminated in fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, specifying which embassy or consulate; and (b) how many locally-engaged employees at Canadian embassies and consulates have had their employment terminated in fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, specifying which embassy or consulate?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 783—Mr. Wayne Marston:

With regard to intelligence-gathering policies and practices, and Canada's past policy and practice of transferring Afghan detainees to the government of Afghanistan, especially the National Security Directorate (NDS): (a) was interest, by the Afghan authorities in an Afghan individual, one of the Canadian Forces' (CF) criteria for detaining that person, and, if so, what was meant by "interest in the individual"; (b) did Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) officials, Department of Foreign Affairs and International (DFAIT) officials, or other non-Canadian Forces officials ever take part in, or provide information with respect to, Canadian Forces determinations as to whether the Afghan authorities had an "interest in the individual"; (c) if CF, with or without CSIS or DFAIT assistance, engaged in tactical questioning and collection of evidence related to a detainee, and no useful information was acquired, would such detainee still be subject to transfer to NDS and, if so, for what purposes; (d) did CF ever transfer someone to NDS without CF or CSIS having first engaged in its own questioning and collective of evidence, in order that NDS would be able to engage in the first questioning of the person; (e) when Canada received intelligence from NDS, (i) did it ask or require NDS to indicate whether that intelligence came from interrogation of any Afghans who had been transferred to NDS by Canada, (ii) did its intelligence services operate standard procedures for assessing whether such intelligence received from NDS was, or may have, been secured as a result of mistreatment, notably torture, and, if so, what consequences did such assessment have for use of the provided intelligence; (f) if Canada continues to receive intelligence from NDS, do its intelligence services operate standard procedures for assessing whether such intelligence received from NDS was or may have been secured as a result of mistreatment, notably torture, and, if so, what consequences do such assessments have as concerns the use of the provided intelligence; (g) since 2001, have NDS officials ever visited Canadian government officials in Canada, and, if so, when and with what government departments and departmental units or branches; (h) considering that the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC) operated in Afghanistan, did Canada ever provide CSEC signals intelligence to NDS and, if so, does it continue to do so; and (i) was a review of CSIS' activities ordered after it was revealed that CSIS officials had taken part in the interrogation of Afghan prisoners, and, if so, (i) who or what entity conducted this review, (ii) what were the results of this review?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 784—Mr. David McGuinty:

With respect to the United Nations Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan: (a) when was the Minister of International Cooperation first informed of the corruption within the fund and what briefing notes were prepared for the Minister regarding the situation; (b) which additional Cabinet Ministers were informed of the corruption within the fund and what briefing notes were prepared for the additional Cabinet Ministers regarding the situation; (c) what steps did the government take upon hearing of the corruption within the fund; (d) what Canadian oversight measures were in place to ensure that Canada's financial contribution to the fund was used in an accountable manner since 2002; and (e) what meetings have been held concerning the fund, and what was the date and location of those meetings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 785—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to government libraries: (a) since January 1, 2012, which departments or agencies have closed, or will be closing, their departmental or agency libraries; (b) what is the rationale for each closure; (c) what evaluations, studies, or assessments were conducted and used to make the decision to close; (d) what are the dates and file numbers of those evaluations, studies, or assessments; (e)

what are the plans for the disposition of the holdings of the libraries; (f) what evaluations, studies, or assessments were conducted and used to make decisions concerning the disposition of holdings; and (g) what are the dates and file numbers of those evaluations, studies, or assessments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 786—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to federal real property, what is the name and file number of any report, study, or other documentation, prepared since January 1, 2006, concerning practices with regard to (i) the naming or re-naming federal government buildings, properties, facilities, structures, institutions, establishments, or ships, (ii) the naming or re-naming of any particular federal government buildings, properties, facilities, structures, institutions, establishments, or ships?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 787—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to government announcements, what were the: (a) travel and accommodation costs, including those of staff members or other government employees; and (b) other costs, associated with the following meetings or other events, held on or around June 4, 2012, concerning the "Plan for Responsible Resource Development," namely those meetings or events held by (i) the President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario in Thunder Bay, Ontario, (ii) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in Halifax, Nova Scotia, (iii) the Minister of Finance in Toronto, Ontario, (iv) the Minister of Industry in Montreal, Quebec, (v) the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, (vi) the Minister of State (Democratic Reform) in Edmonton, Alberta, (vii) the Minister of Public Works and Government Services in Calgary, Alberta, (viii) the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in Surrey, British Columbia, (ix) the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada in St. John's, Newfoundland, (x) any of the persons named in (i) through (ix) in any other location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 788—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit: (a) what drugs, dental care services, vision care services, medical supplies and equipment, mental health services and medical transportation benefits coverage were provided through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program each year between 2006 and 2012 inclusively, broken down by (i) the specific drugs, procedures, medical supplies, equipment, mental health services, and transportation services covered each year, (ii) the specific drugs, procedures, medical supplies, equipment, mental health services, and transportation coverage provided within each province, territory, Inuit, and First Nation community; (b) how much was spent through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program on drugs, dental care services, vision care services, medical supplies and equipment, mental health services and medical transportation services benefit coverage each year between 2006 and 2012 inclusively, broken down by (i) the specific drugs, dental care services, vision care services, medical supplies and equipment, mental health services and medical transportation services covered each year, (ii) the specific drugs, dental care services, vision care services, medical supplies and equipment, mental health services and medical transportation services coverage provided within each province, territory, Inuit, and First Nation community; (c) how many benefit claims were denied through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program each year between 2006 and 2012 inclusively, broken down by (i) the specific drugs, dental care services, vision care services, medical supplies and equipment, mental health services and medical transportation services benefit claims denied, (ii) the province, territory, Inuit, and First Nation community; and (d) how many appeals of denied claims were made between 2006 and 2012 inclusively, broken down by (i) the specific drugs, dental care services, vision care services, medical supplies and equipment, mental health services and medical transportation services claim appeals filed, (ii) the level of appeal for each specific drug, dental care service, vision care service, medical supply and equipment, mental health service and medical transportation service claim appeal filed, (iii) the result of each appeal filed, (iv) province, territory, Inuit, and First Nation community?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 793—Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With respect to the following personnel at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), namely Mary Chaput, Associate Deputy Minister; James Gilbert, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Communications and Commemoration; Keith Hillier, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery Branch; Heather Parry, Assistant Deputy Minister; and Peter Yendall, Director General of Communications, for the period April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2012: (a) what does VAC provide for each individual in terms of salary range; (b) how much did each of these individuals claim for (i) food, (ii) travel, (iii) hotels, (iv) hospitality, broken down by fiscal year for the period requested; (c) what were the itemized amounts and descriptions of each individual's individual expenses as identified in the answers to (b); (d) how many trips were taken by each of these individuals in each fiscal year for the period requested, broken down by (i) dates, (ii) destination(s), (iii) purpose(s); (e) for each trip in (d), what expenses were claimed, broken down by (i) transportation, (ii) accommodations, (iii) per diems, (iv) meals, (v) any and all hospitality; and (f) how many days in each fiscal year for the period requested did each of these individuals work in (i) VAC headquarters in Prince Edward Island, (ii) Ottawa?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 794—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to government announcements: (a) what were the travel and accommodation costs, including those of staff members or other government employees, and (b) other costs, associated with the following meetings or events, held on or around April 27, 2012, concerning the proposed Canada-European Union trade agreement, namely those meetings or events held by (i) the Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), in Edmundston, New Brunswick, (ii) the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade in Halifax, Nova Scotia, (iii) the President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario in Huntsville, Ontario, (iv) the Minister of Labour in London, Ontario, (v) the Minister of Natural Resources in Toronto, Ontario, (vi) the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons in Waterloo, Ontario, (vii) the Minister of Canadian Heritage in Vancouver, British Columbia, (viii) the Minister of Health; (ix) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in Cap-Pelé, New Brunswick, (x) the Minister of State (Finance) in Calgary, Alberta, (xi) the Hon. Rob Merrifield, P.C., M.P., in Spruce Grove, Alberta, (xii) the Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture) in Québec City, Québec, (xiii) Senator Pierre Claude Nolin in Montréal, Québec, (xiv) the Minister for Public Safety in St. Boniface, Manitoba (xv) the Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, (xvi) Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P., in Regina, Saskatchewan, (xvii) the Minister of National Revenue in New Annan, Prince Edward Island, (xviii) the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada in St. John's, Newfoundland, (xix) the Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway in Ottawa, Ontario, (xx) any of the persons named in (i) through (xix) in any other location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 796—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With regard to the closure of the Kingston Employment Insurance (EI) processing centre as a result of Service Canada's EI modernization plan: (a) what are the current EI processing centre hubs in Ontario; (b) what criteria determine whether a processing centre is an EI processing centre hub in Ontario; (c) what were the relevant factors in determining which Ontario EI processing centres were deemed EI processing centre hubs; (d) if the Kingston EI processing centre is not currently an EI processing centre hub, was it ever designated an EI processing hub, and if so, (i) when was it so designated, (ii) for what reasons was it so designated, (iii) on what date did it cease to be a hub, (iv) what are the reasons it is now no longer a hub; (e) what was the rationale for the decision to close the Kingston EI processing centre and to consolidate services to the Sudbury EI processing centre, and how do both locations compare in terms of the following Service Canada consolidation criteria, namely (i) existing EI staff and accommodations to minimize fit-up costs, (ii) close proximity to EI Call Centre to facilitate recruitment and career development opportunities, (iii) co-location with other business lines to decrease overhead costs associated with accommodation, operational and administrative services, (iv) bilingual capacity, (v) opportunities for lower cost leases, (vi) proximity to post secondary institutions to support recruitment, (vii) high speed telecommunications capacity to support EI modernization strategy, (viii) labour force availability; (f) what is the current staffing level at the Sudbury EI processing centre; (g) what is the anticipated staffing level at the Sudbury EI processing centre as a result of the centre becoming a consolidated site, broken down by (i) new hires, (ii) relocated/transferred

existing Service Canada employees; (h) what are the anticipated costs of (i) training the new hires at the Sudbury EI processing centre, (ii) relocating/transferring existing service Canada employees to the Sudbury EI processing centre; (g) given that the Kingston EI processing centre currently handles all of the mail for Northern and Eastern Ontario, (i) where will these services be performed after the Kingston centre's closure, (ii) what is the anticipated cost to relocate this service; and (h) given that the Kingston processing centre processes interstate and overseas EI benefit claims, (i) where will these services be performed after the Kingston centre's closure, (ii) what is the anticipated cost to relocate this service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 798—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) what is the location of each (i) regional enforcement office, (ii) field enforcement office; (b) how many fisheries officers are based in each office; and (c) for each office, is the office location owned by government, or rented?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 799—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to government travel, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many times has a Minister or exempt staff member incurred a fine, fee or charge for damage or cleaning costs in respect of the use of a hotel room, including fines or charges related to smoking in a designated non-smoking room; and (b) what are the particulars of any such occurrence, including (i) date, (ii) amount of the fine, fee or charge, (iii) the name and location of the hotel, (iv) the name of the person who incurred the fine, fee or charge?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 800—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to land development, since January 1, 2002, has any department or agency of government, or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, applied any federal statute, regulation, or policy in respect of the Southlands development or proposed development in St. John's, Newfoundland?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 802—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With respect to violations or contraventions of the Fish Inspection Act, the Canada Agricultural Products Act, the Meat Inspection Act, the Canada Agricultural Products Act, the Foods and Drugs Act, the Health of Animals Act, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act: (a) what is the total number, broken down by each Act for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, of (i) indictable offence charges laid against an individual, (ii) summary conviction offence charges laid against an individual, (iii) indictable offence charges laid against a corporation, partnership or organization, (iv) summary conviction offence charges laid against a corporation, partnership or organization; (b) for the answer to each part of (a)(i) and (a)(ii), broken down by each Act for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, what is the total number, (i) found guilty of an indictable offence, (ii) found guilty of a summary conviction offence, (iii) found not guilty of an offence having established the exercise of due diligence to prevent the commission of the offence, (iv) of charges stayed, (v) of charges withdrawn; (c) for the answer to each part of (a) (iii) and (a)(iv), broken down by each Act for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, what is the total number, (i) found guilty of an indictable offence, (ii) found guilty of a summary conviction offence, (iii) found not guilty of an offence having established the exercise of due diligence to prevent the commission of the offence, (iv) of charges stayed, (v) of charges withdrawn; (d) for the answer to each part of (b)(i) and (b)(ii), broken down by each Act for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, what was (i) the amount of the fine for each guilty judgement, (ii) the imprisonment duration for each guilty judgement, (iii) the total amount of fines; (e) for the answer to each part of (c)(i) and (c)(ii), broken down by each Act, for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, what was (i) the amount of the fine for each guilty judgement, (ii) the imprisonment duration for each guilty judgement, (iii) the total amount of fines?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 803—Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With respect to Employment Insurance benefits and the Employment Insurance Board of Referees (EIBR), broken down by each Employment Insurance economic region and by fiscal year between from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012: (a) how many Chairpersons of the Employment Insurance Boards of Referees (EIBR) have been appointed; (b) for the answer to part (a), for each of the appointed Chairpersons, what (i) are their names, (ii) is the region each is/was responsible for, (iii) is the date of the appointment, (iv) is the expiry date of the appointment, (v) are the number of appeal hearings presided over, (vi) is the total amount of remuneration paid to each; (c) how many members chosen from employers or representatives of employers have been appointed to the Employment Insurance Boards of Referees (EIBR); (d) how many members chosen from insured persons or representatives of insured persons have been appointed to the Employment Insurance Boards of Referees (EIBR); (e) what is the number of Employment Insurance benefit applications; (f) for the answer to part (c), how many Employment Insurance benefit decisions have been appealed to the Employment Insurance Boards of Referees (EIBR); and (g) for the answer to part (f), how many of the Employment Insurance benefit decisions initially denied were (i) overturned by the Employment Insurance Boards of Referees (EIBR), (ii) upheld by the Employment Insurance Boards of Referees (EIBR)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 804—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With respect to the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security Act, broken down by fiscal year from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012: (a) how many decisions made by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada have been appealed for (i) Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits, (ii) Old Age Security (OAS) benefits; (b) for the answer to part (a)(i), how many of the CPP benefit decisions initially denied were (i) overturned, (ii) upheld; and (c) for the answer to part (a)(ii), how many of OAS benefit decisions initially denied were (i) overturned, (ii) upheld?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 805—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to all vehicle procurements by the government, broken down by fiscal year from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012 and by department, agency and government institution: (a) for every vehicle purchased, what is (i) the year, make and model description of each vehicle, (ii) the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) of each vehicle, (iii) the final purchase cost of each vehicle, (iv) the contract number of each vehicle purchased, (v) which vehicles were dealer stock purchases, (vi) what is the dealership name and address from which the vehicle was purchased; (b) for every vehicle leased, what is (i) the make and model of each vehicle, (ii) the VIN of each vehicle, (iii) the dealership name and address from which the vehicle was leased, (iv) the final lease cost of each vehicle, (v) the contract number of each vehicle leased; (c) for every vehicle purchased for Ministers, Ministers of State, Deputy Ministers and Agency heads, what is (i) the make and model of each vehicle, (ii) the VIN of each vehicle, (iii) the final purchase cost of each vehicle, (iv) the contract number of each vehicle purchased, (v) which vehicles were dealer stock purchases, (vi) what is the dealership name and address from which the vehicle was purchased; (d) for every vehicle leased for Ministers, Ministers of State, Deputy Ministers and Agency heads, what is (i) the make and model of each vehicle, (ii) the VIN of each vehicle, (iii) the dealership name and address from which the vehicle was leased, (iv) the final lease cost of each vehicle, (v) the contract number of each vehicle leased; and (e) for the answer to each part of (a), (b), (c) and (d), (i) what is the cost of maintaining, repairing and operating each vehicle, (ii) what is the accumulated cost of fuel for each vehicle, (iii) what is the log book identification number, or other appropriate tool used to monitor vehicle use, for each vehicle?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 807—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to literacy programs: (a) what is the total amount of all estimated funding in all departments and agencies for literacy and essential skills, for fiscal years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012; (b) what are the federal programs in all departments and agencies that will be supported by literacy and essential skills funding in fiscal years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012; (c) what was the total amount of all funding in all departments and agencies for literacy and essential skills, for fiscal year 2005-2006; (d) what were the federal programs in all departments and agencies that were supported by literacy and essential skills funding, in fiscal year 2005-2006; (e) what is the breakdown by province for literacy and essential skills funding for fiscal year 2010-2011; (f) what was the breakdown by province for literacy and essential skills

funding for fiscal year 2005-2006; (g) who were the funding recipients under the 2010-2011 Office of Literacy and Essential Skills Call for Concepts, broken down by province; and (h) who were the funding recipients under previous Office of Literacy and Essential Skills Calls for Concepts, broken down by year and by province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 809—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to content removal requests issued to Google Inc.: (a) how many such requests have been government issued, and what is (i) the date of the request, (ii) the originating department, agency, or other government body, (iii) the detailed reason for the request, (iv) the outcome or disposition of the request; and (b) is there a government-wide policy concerning requests for removal of content posted on the internet by third parties and, if so, what is the date and file number of the document in which the policy is set forth?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 810—Hon. Bob Rae:

With regard to proactive disclosure, from fiscal year 2004-2005 to the present fiscal year inclusively: (a) how many proactive disclosures have been corrected, amended, varied, or changed in any way after having already been disclosed in the case of (i) travel and hospitality expenses of Ministers or exempt staff, (ii) contracts, (iii) grants and contributions over \$25,000; and (b) for each such instance, what were the particulars of each correction, amendment, variation, or change to the disclosure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 811—Hon. Bob Rae:

With regard to government travel, since January 1, 2006: (a) which ministers of the Crown have used rented limousines while on official business, within Canada or elsewhere; and (b) for each such use, what was (i) the date of the rental, (ii) the location of the rental, (iii) the nature of the official business, (iv) the cost of the rental?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 812—Hon. Bob Rae:

With respect to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade: (a) how many departmental officers are serving in positions that are below their substantive level; (b) how many departmental officers are serving in positions that are above their substantive level; and (c) what are the additional salary costs to the Department of officers over-filling positions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 814—Hon. John McKay:

With regard to the commemoration of the War of 1812: (a) what are all grants and contributions by any department or agency in connection with this event, specifying (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the date of the grant or contribution, (iii) the file number, (iv) the location of the recipient, (v) the nature of the activity or purpose associated with the grant or contribution; and (b) what are all contracts for the supply of goods or services in connection with this event, specifying (i) the vendor, (ii) the date of the contract, (iii) the dollar value, (iv) the file number, (v) the nature of the goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 815—Hon. John McKay:**

With regard to the government-owned aircraft, since September 20, 2011, to present: (a) by fiscal quarter, what is the number of times government aircraft have been used by a minister, including the Prime Minister, or a minister's, including the Prime Minister's, exempt staff; and (b) what is every aircraft on which a minister, the Prime Minister, or a minister's or the Prime Minister's exempt staff have flown and, for each aircraft, what is (i) the tail number, make and model of the aircraft, (ii) the average hourly cost to operate the aircraft, (iii) the average hourly cost for food and beverages while the aircraft is in use, (iv) the department with tasking authority for the aircraft, (v) the title of the person with tasking authority for the aircraft, (vi) the number of times the aircraft has been used by a minister or the Prime Minister, (vii) the number of times the aircraft has been used by a member of a minister's or the Prime Minister's staff without the minister or the Prime Minister being on board the aircraft?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCREASING OFFENDERS' ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VICTIMS ACT

Hon. Jim Flaherty (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate at second reading of Bill C-37, the Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act, concerning victim surcharges.

Bill C-37 would make offenders more accountable by doubling victim surcharges for offenders and by ensuring that surcharges are applied automatically in all cases.

Clearly, the Conservative government is keeping its promises with respect to the concerns of victims of crime.

[English]

I am pleased to be here today to speak on Bill C-37, Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act. The bill would make convicted offenders more accountable to victims of crime by doubling the victim surcharge that offenders must pay and ensure that the surcharge is automatically applied in all cases.

The underlying philosophy of the federal victim surcharge in subsection 737(7) of the Criminal Code is that the surcharge is imposed for the purpose of providing assistance to victims of offences. As I will explain, surcharge revenues fund a wide variety of programs and services to assist victims of crime.

Our government, in its electoral platform, committed to amending the Criminal Code to double the victim surcharge and make it mandatory in every case, without exception. The Speech from the Throne reiterated this commitment.

The victim surcharge was first enacted in 1989, and at that time it was called a victim fine surcharge. The surcharge was set as a maximum amount, and in many cases very low amounts were imposed. Research was conducted by the Department of Justice in the early 1990s in British Columbia and Ontario to review the impact of the new surcharge provisions at the time. The research reports revealed that in many cases the imposition of the surcharge was ignored or forgotten, particularly where the disposition was something other than a fine. In situations where a jail term was imposed, judges often relied on the undue hardship provision to waive imposition.

In addition, the imposition of the surcharge where a term of imprisonment or other non-fine disposition was imposed was criticized as disproportionate to the gravity of the offence. Another reason cited explaining the lack of acceptance of the surcharge included the perception that surcharge revenue would be deposited into general revenues with no guarantee that existing services for victims would be expanded or new services developed.

In summary, the low revenue from the federal surcharge was attributed to a few key factors, including lack of awareness, concerns regarding the use of surcharge revenue and some lack of clarity in the amount set out in the code.

In 1998, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights tabled a report entitled, "Victims' Rights - A voice, not a veto", following its review of the victim's role in the criminal justice system. The committee noted the problems with the original surcharge provisions, including the inadvertent failure of judges to impose the surcharge and non-aggressive enforcement and collection initiatives. The report affirmed that additional resources were needed to provide adequate victim services across the country and that increasing the victim surcharge would be a reasonable way to generate more revenue, particularly given that the maximum surcharge amounts had not increased since 1989.

In 2000, two amendments were made to the surcharge provision. The surcharge became a fixed amount and became automatic unless the judge ordered a waiver because of undue hardship to the offender. The term "fine" was also dropped to avoid the interpretation that it was only applied in addition to fines.

In 2006, the Department of Justice published the "Federal Victim Surcharge in New Brunswick: An Operational Review". The objective of this research project was to develop a better understanding of the challenges and possible solutions to the federal victim surcharge regime in the province of New Brunswick, to identify challenges that are present in the current process and to generate possible solutions to circumvent impediments in maximizing the effectiveness of this process.

Government Orders

Despite the fact that imposition of the surcharge is supposed to be automatic unless the offender can convince the sentencing judge that it would cause undue hardship, the victim surcharge is not being applied in cases even where the offender would have the ability to pay. The research has shown that the victim surcharge is not being applied in all appropriate cases for several reasons, including, as previously noted, a presumption that an offender who is sentenced to jail time will not have the means to pay, and a lack of awareness of how the money from the victim surcharge is used. Under the current victim surcharge regime, offenders who are not able to pay the victim surcharge without incurring hardship are simply exempted from making the payment. This bill would address many of these issues.

• (1545)

The amount of the victim surcharge has not been increased since 2000. The new proposed surcharge would be 30% of any fine imposed on the offender. Where no fine is imposed, the surcharge would be \$100 for offences punishable by summary conviction and \$200 for offences punishable by indictment. In addition, the judge would retain the discretion to impose an increased surcharge where the circumstances warrant and the offender has the ability to pay.

As the surcharge money is used by the provincial or territorial government where the crime occurred to help fund their services to victims of crime, raising the victim surcharge amounts will benefit victims of crime in general and make offenders more accountable.

As I noted earlier, under the current law, sentencing judges have discretion to waive the victim surcharge when it can be demonstrated that its payment will cause undue hardship to the offender, or his or her dependents. This bill would remove the waiver option to ensure that the victim surcharge is applied in all cases, without exception.

Because failure to pay a surcharge could ultimately result in an offender being incarcerated, the Criminal Code would also be amended to allow offenders who are unable to pay the surcharge to participate, where such programs exist, in a provincial fine option program. This would allow an offender to satisfy the payment of the surcharge by earning credits for work performed in the province or territory where the crime was committed.

The surcharge amendments will result in an increase in services and assistance in all provinces and territories for victims of crime. All of the money paid to the victim surcharge is collected and retained by the provincial and territorial governments. The surcharge is put into a provincial or territorial fund, usually called a victims fund. The money is used to help fund programs, services and assistance to victims of crime in the province or territory where the crime occurred.

Most provinces and territories have also enacted their own legislation to impose a surcharge on provincial and territorial offences. Revenue from such provincial or territorial surcharges is also deposited in a special victims fund along with the federal surcharge revenue and is used to provide services directly to victims.

The imposition of a provincial or territorial surcharge is automatic. In other words, it is added to the fine imposed for the provincial or territorial offence. Payment is usually enforced by the non-renewal of licences. For example, a parking ticket will include the surcharge

amount, and the payer is obligated to pay the whole amount or risk not having their driver's licence or other permits renewed or issued.

As I noted earlier, raising awareness among criminal justice system personnel about the benefits of the surcharge is challenging. It is often regarded as simply another tax to raise money for unknown benefits. The Criminal Code clearly requires that the revenue be used to provide assistance to victims of crime. Provincial and territorial victim legislation has the same requirement for surcharge revenue.

If anyone doubts the need for victim services and the need for this revenue to be used to support such services, let me spend a few moments providing some concrete examples of how this revenue can be and is used. Surcharge revenue may be used to provide direct services to victims of crime, such as information on the criminal justice system and court processes, referrals for counselling to assist victims in dealing with the trauma of being victimized, court preparation, court support for vulnerable persons, assistance in preparing victim impact statements, victim notification of offender release from provincial institutions, victim notification of reviews and outcomes in cases where the accused has been found not criminally responsible, and compensation programs for victims of crime.

I could provide a coast-to-coast view of victim services, but the following examples will provide a good sample.

• (1550)

New Brunswick has victim service coordinators in 15 offices, who are responsible for direct service programs. The New Brunswick victim services program offers a court-based victim/witness assistance and court-support program. Coordinators assist victims of crime through the provision of a number of services, including providing direct support in crisis situations, completing safety assessments for domestic violence cases, liaising with police and other community agencies providing victim services to ensure a continuum of care and, since 2007, specialized victim services for the pilot domestic violence court. Surcharge revenues also provide funding for the New Brunswick trauma counselling program, which is available to assist victims of crime in dealing with the therapeutic needs arising from the criminal offence or the trauma of disclosure that often impedes victims from testifying in court. The New Brunswick court-support program is another example of programs funded by provincial and federal surcharges.

Government Orders

In Ontario, surcharge revenue funds a wide range of services provided to victims of crime. There are 39 sexual assault and rape crisis centres, including centres that provide French-language services. They provide a 24-hour crisis and support line; group and one-on-one counselling; accompaniment to hospital, court or police; information and referral services; and public awareness sessions. The Ontario victim crisis assistance and referral services provide short-term assistance on a 24/7 basis to victims at the scene of a crime and make referrals to community services for longer-term assistance. With the consent of the victim, the police can call a highly trained team of volunteers to the scene. More than 50 victim crisis assistance and referral services sites are located throughout Ontario to deliver the victim quick response program. Surcharge revenues help to fund the Ontario victim support line, which provides a province-wide, toll-free information line in English and French. Surcharge revenues also fund the Ontario child witness project, which provides specialized preparation and support to child victims and/or witnesses and their caregivers. They work closely with the victim/witness assistance programs in their communities.

Revenue from the surcharge is put to good use in Saskatchewan where the Victim Services Branch directly delivers several programs including: the victims compensation program to provide payment for reasonable expenses resulting from violent crimes; the restitution program to increase the amount of restitution collected from adult offenders and paid to victims in a timely manner; and victim/witness service programs to assist children and other vulnerable witnesses who are required to testify in court. The surcharge revenue also makes it possible for the Saskatchewan Victim Services Branch to support community agencies and municipal police services to assist victims of crime. For example, there are 18 police-based victim service programs to provide support, information and referrals to victims of crime and tragedy. There are six aboriginal resource officer programs that work with local police-based victim services programs to assist aboriginal victims and their families. There are seven aboriginal family violence programs, and there are eight "children who witness violence" programs, which work to assist children and help prevent them from entering the cycle of violence as victims and offenders.

These examples demonstrate concretely how surcharge revenue is used by provinces and territories to fund victim services and why it is so important.

While the goal of this bill is to ensure the accountability of offenders to victims by strengthening the victim surcharge provisions in order to provide more resources for victim services, the reality is that some offenders will never be able to pay the surcharge. In light of this, members may question how the goals of the surcharge can be accomplished.

Allowing offenders who are not able to pay the victim surcharge to participate in fine option programs is consistent with the goals of this legislation, because working off the surcharge would remind offenders of the harm that their actions have done to their particular victim, to all victims of crime and to the larger community. The fine option program within each province or territory determines the rate at which credits are earned for the work performed by the offender. For example, if the provincial or territorial fine option program determines that one hour of work equals \$10, the offender would

need to work 10 hours to pay a \$100 surcharge penalty or 20 hours to pay a \$200 surcharge penalty.

● (1555)

In Manitoba, for instance, the fine option program provides that a person who has been fined can register at a local community resource centre and will be assigned community work. Centres are located throughout the province and at several sites in Winnipeg. They determine the number of hours of work needed at the Manitoba minimum wage rate to pay the fine and assign and monitor the work to its completion. Work may include repairs or maintenance to churches, schools, halls, seniors residences, parks and other community sites. Failure to complete the assigned task would result in a warrant being issued.

The introduction of the bill builds on the government's previous actions to ensure that victims of crime have a greater voice in the criminal justice system and more access to available services.

In 2007, the government announced the federal victims strategy and committed \$52 million over four years to respond to the needs of victims of crime. This funding was renewed at \$13 million per year in 2011.

We created the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime to provide victims with information regarding programs and services available from federal organizations and statutes. The office works to ensure the needs and concerns of victims are taken into account by federal corrections institutions and identifies important issues and trends that may negatively impact victims of crime.

In her recent special report, "Shifting the Conversation", the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime recommended that payment of the victim surcharge be made automatic. Other victims advocates have made that same recommendation.

Our government has a strong track record of responding to the legitimate concerns of victims. These responses have included a range of criminal law reforms to improve public safety and make offenders more accountable.

For example, the Safe Streets and Communities Act includes important changes strongly supported by victims of crime, such as increasing penalties for sexual offences against children, as well as creating two new offences aimed at conduct that could facilitate or enable the commission of a sexual offence against a child; imposing tougher sentences for serious drug offences; eliminating the use of conditional sentences or house arrest for serious and violent crimes; enshrining a victim's right to participate in parole hearings and enhancing inmate accountability, responsibility and management under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act; extending the ineligibility periods for applications for record suspension, previously called a pardon, to five years for summary conviction offences and to ten years for indictable offences; and allowing victims of terrorism to sue perpetrators and supporters of terrorism, including listed foreign states, for loss or damage that occurred as a result of an act of terrorism committed anywhere in the world.

These changes reflect concerns we have heard from victims and victims' advocates and, indeed, from Canadians of all walks of life.

When our government came to power in 2006, we told Canadians that we would work hard to make our streets and communities safer by addressing the needs of victims. We sought to ensure that victims' voices were heard. We wanted to increase offender accountability. I am very proud of the progress this government has made in improving how victims participate in the corrections and criminal justice system in a meaningful way.

The amendments to the Criminal Code proposed in the bill continue that important work. The victim surcharge would directly benefit victims of crime and make offenders more accountable for their actions.

• (1600)

[Translation]

I urge all honourable members of the House to support this bill because we have to make opportunities available to victims of crime in order to support their recovery.

[English]

I urge all members of this House to support the bill and to refer it to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for study.

[Translation]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her speech.

I have two questions. Were the provinces and territories consulted before this bill was drafted? Can the government provide assurances that the money from these surcharges will really go to the victims' groups that need it?

[English]

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asks a good question and one that gets right to the point of what I have been talking about today.

As my colleague knows, we have ongoing dialogue with the provinces and territories on justice issues. As I mentioned in my speech, there are actually territorial and provincial surcharges that are levied along with federal ones. The difference is that provincial

and territorial ones are automatic. The federal ones have not actually been implemented, as was originally perceived.

We are looking forward to this going ahead and have this be a more certain element of the justice system to help victims.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talked about some excellent programs across Canada that victims of crime surcharges help fund. She did not pretend for a second, and fairly so, that these programs are completely funded by the revenue that is generated by victims of crime surcharges or the increased revenue that would be generated as a result of this.

Given the repeated downloads from the federal government on to the provinces, not just in the justice field but in other areas, does the parliamentary secretary not think there is a real risk that the increase in victim surcharges will simply free up money for the provinces, money that they are now putting into these programs, and put it toward something else where the government has caused their costs to go up with respect to the administration of justice in the respective provinces?

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I reject the assumption underlying that question that we have raised those costs. We are talking about bringing into force of a mandatory and automatic victim surcharge that will not go into general revenue. One of the problems I highlighted is of people wondering what it is really for, does it go into general revenue or does it really go to help those who need it most.

These are victim surcharges. They are meant to hold offenders accountable, meant for them to think on what they have done in terms of hurting the life in some way of their victims and to go directly to their services, many of which I detailed.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, members of the New Democratic Party care about victims and believe that they should be the priority. However, we wonder whether imposing this measure and removing judges' power to waive these surcharges suggests a certain lack of confidence.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, as I set out in my speech, there have been several studies done to understand why the victim surcharge machine, which has been in place for some time, does not seem to raise the revenue needed for the victims and the services they need in an adequate way. Those studies, both in the provinces, like New Brunswick specifically, but also federally through the Department of Justice, have shown that the idea of an offender not having to pay the surcharge perhaps because they could not afford it seems to have been lost. Even where offenders can afford it, it is often not imposed.

Yes, we are trying to build consistency across the country in terms of the imposition of these victim surcharges to benefit victims or, if someone cannot afford, then he or she can work toward the work credits to help the community in a more general way.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the issue of consistency. The member made reference to the Manitoba fines option program. Across Canada there is a wide variety of different programs to assist victims. I and many others would argue that there is a stronger role for the national government to look at these programs for some commonality or best practices where what is working well in one area might work well in another area of the country.

What role does the member believe the government has to play in demonstrating leadership and ensuring that there are services being provided that have some equality among the provinces?

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, it is our experience that victims are in great need. Sometimes the effects of criminality will last a lifetime. There are many different types of programs that can be of assistance. All of these programs that are available are doing good work and we want to ensure they are properly funded both from territorial and provincial surcharges as well as federal. Our government created the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime precisely to look at what victims need in Canada and what we can do to provide the services they need on a national basis.

• (1610)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is important to provide support for victims. There are many programs that I have advocated for in the past.

A victim surcharge makes sense, but I worry about the removal of judges' discretion to waive this surcharge when they can see that the person before them would suffer undue harm. The current legislation which is being changed says that where there is undue hardship on the person being convicted or on their dependents or family, for which I think there will be more sympathy, in that case the judge would have the discretion to say that he or she would not apply the surcharge.

That is the question I would ask my friend. Even if there is community service made available, what happens to dependents of that convicted criminal in cases where the payments to the victims would mean that the family would face undue hardship?

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, that is the whole idea behind the fine option program. Where a judge has the discretion to determine that there is undue hardship on offenders or their dependents,

if a judge finds that to be the case, then the offenders will be given the opportunity to work for credits to benefit the community in order to substitute for payment.

There is an amount established. The amount equals a certain number of hours that would be put into that community service, and that is for the benefit of all.

I think that answers my friend's question, that this is contemplated. If the judge feels the offenders can afford the fine, the surcharge will be imposed. If they cannot, then there is that other option.

[Translation]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak about section 737 of the Criminal Code.

First, I would like to welcome everyone. I hope that we are all returning with the attitude needed to try to work together, particularly on bills such as Bill C-37 to amend the Criminal Code, entitled the Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act.

We are at second reading and we have to determine whether we will vote to send the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for more in-depth study.

I hope that everyone has come back with a good attitude because I still believe that this is doable and that we are here to try once again to ensure that the best bill possible comes out of this chamber, regardless of the party to which we belong. I will always say the same thing in all of my speeches.

What is Bill C-37? I really enjoyed my colleague's speech. In fact, I would like to tell her publicly just how much I enjoyed working with her this summer on the work pertaining to the Supreme Court appointments. This showed me that we are capable of working in a non-partisan way when we want to. I hope that we can do the same with regard to Bill C-37, which proposes to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code on victim surcharges. It seems like a good thing when we say it like that. It seems simple. It seems to say that no one can be against motherhood and apple pie.

I can say right away that the members of the New Democratic Party will support this bill at second reading so that it can go to committee.

The parliamentary secretary explained in her speech that the purpose of a victim surcharge is to help victims. That seems like a good thing, but it is important to understand that this is an additional sanction imposed when an offender who has been found guilty is sentenced. In theory, no one can be against such action because the person who committed the crime is paying the price for doing so.

Government Orders

When this was added to the Criminal Code, there were some jurisprudential debates. At the time, it was said that this was a little-used punishment, that it might not fall under federal jurisdiction, and that it was a hidden tax, because this surcharge was designed to be used to fund victims' assistance programs. The courts ruled that this clearly fell under federal jurisdiction. However, it is seen as an additional punishment. That must obviously be clear in people's minds.

The surcharge is collected and kept by provincial and territorial governments. It serves to fund programs and services for victims of crime in the province or territory where the crime was committed. Once again, I do not think that anyone would necessarily disagree with that.

Some colleagues asked the parliamentary secretary some questions. When we learned that the government would introduce this bill, we conducted a study and it was obviously a question that immediately came to mind. Organizations that support victims of crimes and the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime clearly explained that there is a huge need for funding. Many individuals have spoken publicly about how victims are often forgotten.

I would like to make an aside, simply because, in light of an answer that the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism gave today in this House, I am not even sure that the government that introduced Bill C-37 is sufficiently concerned about the opinions of victims. The government announced in this House that it was appealing the decision rendered by Justice Blanchard in Quebec last week regarding the long gun registry, a tool supported by victims' groups, not only in Quebec, but across Canada.

It does not seem as though the government is listening to victims, in all cases, but when it comes to having more financial resources, the message was received.

• (1615)

My main concern is that, once again, research has shown that not all of the money reaches victims' associations. I will be able to expand on this position before the committee, if the bill passes second reading.

This is one of the NDP's concerns. We believe that being there for victims, tackling crime and rehabilitating criminals really mean something. These are not simply idle expressions, said just to make the headlines or simply to look good for a five-minute media scrum. These are important factors, because this is what is truly needed and what must be done.

Unfortunately, this government seems to react to media attention. My colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher asked a question that touches on a crucial point regarding Bill C-37: the lack of confidence this government has in the Canadian judiciary. I am absolutely amazed by this every time. We have heard about certain isolated cases during call-in radio shows, for instance. I have taken part in call-ins; I used to host a radio program and a television program. We have all read stories in the newspaper about people who served part of their sentence, were released from prison and then committed another crime. However, what the story does not relate is that for every one such person, a hundred others behaved appropriately, and the sentences were appropriate.

We need to strike a balance between the desire for immediate results and measures that can have a real impact. Will surcharges achieve the desired goal, which is to help the victims of crime? I hope to find answers to these questions during the committee's examination.

It must be understood that the bill amends the provisions pertaining to the amount of the surcharge, which, under subsection 737(2), would increase from 15% to 30% of any fine imposed on offenders. If no fine is imposed, the surcharge would increase from \$50 to \$100 in the case of an offence punishable by summary conviction and from \$100 to \$200 for an offence punishable by indictment.

There is another aspect, which concerns the discretion of the judge. When a judge is considering a criminal case, he does not do as he pleases. He must consider certain rules, principles and concepts before making a decision. The government cannot be constantly implying that judges are simple puppets who make decisions without thinking. I do not believe that. I have a legal background. I have been involved in many cases and I have seen how seriously judges take cases every day. They try to deliver justice in a fair and balanced way by considering that every case is unique.

That is often the problem with the Conservatives. They take a one-size-fits-all approach without considering that every case is unique.

We have to be realistic. I will give the example provided by a lawyer to support one point of view. A young man commits a Criminal Code offence. He pleads guilty to drawing graffiti here and there. He will be automatically ordered to pay a surcharge. If convicted of 12 counts of the offence, he will have to pay 12 times the surcharge. Will he be able to do so? The member for Delta—Richmond East, whom I greatly respect, seems to be saying that he can work if he is unable to pay.

• (1620)

The problem is that the provincial-territorial program does not apply across Canada. That is one more problem with Bill C-37. We cannot simply rely on the discretion given to the judge under subsection 737(5) because it will be removed or repealed by Bill C-37. People are claiming that this is not serious and that people who cannot pay will have to work so that they can pay the amount. But this will not necessarily be the case everywhere.

The other point that is often raised is this: in some areas of the country, aboriginals are often hauled before the courts and are unable to pay. There will be some imbalance in that respect. Some people are saying that it is not serious because "if you commit the crime, then you pay for the crime". Perhaps, but if we believe in a balanced approach, one that punishes and ensures that the person will not reoffend, rehabilitation must come into play.

I do not want to see people so hardened by prison that they become a threat to public safety. We cannot keep people in prison for life when the offences they committed are not as serious as murder, say. We have to understand that these people will leave prison one day. What condition and what mood will they leave in?

Government Orders

If, as was done this summer, you increase the number of inmates per cell for a few weeks—the inmates are serving a minimum sentence because the judges do not have a choice anymore—that gives you some idea of the type of society that is being created.

The government claims to be in favour of law and order and public safety, two things that go together. But for law and order to reign, we need laws that hold up.

Now, Parliament is passing laws that are being challenged one after another before the courts. These laws reverse positions and thwart the work done by the committees. What is more, the committee members clearly told the government that some provisions made no sense. And measures are now being taken that are making people feel insecure.

A person who receives a fine or sentence of imprisonment and who has a debt of \$2,000 will have further debt upon leaving prison.

By the way—often the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing—this week, another bill will make an appearance: Bill C-350. I encourage the members of the House to assess the impact of Bill C-350 in relation to that of Bill C-37. Bill C-350 will prioritize fine payments and criminals' taking responsibility and ensure that this surcharge is the third priority.

Sometimes it is not the criminal that is in one hell of a mess—if you will pardon my language—but the criminal's family. All of these aspects need to be considered. I encourage the members opposite to study the bill closely.

We all agree on helping the associations that help the victims themselves, that have always asked us for our help. Among others, I am thinking of CALAS, the Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions sexuelles de l'Outaouais, which is doing extraordinary work in my community.

Every time I talk to the directors of these organizations, they always say the same thing, which is that there needs to be greater awareness. They are performing miracles with very little.

Victims always say that, no matter how much they are paid, they will never be in the position they were in before the crime was committed. We can forget that. The rest is pure nonsense and is just for the cameras, which is unfortunate. If the government really believed in helping the victims, it would walk the talk and ensure that the victims have the support they need.

• (1625)

Sometimes, it is not just about money. Sometimes, resources have to be available to the victims so that they can receive the services they need.

I urge hon. members to support the bill at second reading, but to be realistic. We need to get serious answers to a lot of questions before we can give our final seal of approval to this bill. We need an answer to the following question: what is being done in the provinces and territories where there are no programs that give the option of working instead of paying the surcharge? We need to make sure that the money is really going to the victims, that it is not floating around somewhere or that it is not being used for something else.

Another hon. member pointed out the issue with costs. The government does not admit it, but legal associations—be it the Canadian Bar Association or the Barreau du Québec—from coast to coast will tell you that there are justice issues. A society must have a justice system that holds up; a society is founded on justice. Yet we see what this country needs in terms of legal aid and our society does not seem to be concerned. In terms of prisons, we are talking about increasing the number of inmates, closing some prisons and building others. There is something illogical about this, which raises concern when we are faced with these types of bills.

We will need to get some serious answers. My hope is that the committee will be able to work with a view to getting answers to those questions to be able to come back here and say to the rest of the hon. members that yes, the bill can get the seal of approval, that yes, it is a good bill for victims and that it will fulfill the purpose for which it was designed. It will not try, once again, to divide us by saying that they support victims and we support criminals. That is absolutely not the case.

So we will vote in favour of the bill, hoping that the committee will do the serious work that it is mandated to do.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the member's last comment indicating that the NDP is looking at voting in favour of the bill. I listened to her concerns regarding the bill. Are we to take it that it is actually the principle of the bill that NDP members support, or do they support the bill going to committee at this stage?

• (1630)

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I would say it is a bit of both in the sense that we ran and have always run on behalf of victims in Canada.

We have always said we wanted to be there for victims, and it is a question of finding how we can better be there for them. In itself it is not a bad idea that the bill is based on the fact that it is supposed to be money to help victims and associations for victims.

That being said, we also want to make sure, before we give our final seal of approval, that we get the answers to all the questions we have, and there are serious questions on Bill C-37. For example, are we sure the money would go to victims? Would the discretion be removed that judges used to have when somebody has an incapacity to pay the surcharge? Also, if there is a province or territory that does not have these programs, what do we do? Would it be fair for these people? Is it just? We have a few questions that I hope will be answered in committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the hon. member clarify something for me? I apologize for my ignorance, but I am not sure about something.

Is the victim surcharge based on a person's income? Take for example someone who earns \$1 million a year. Will that person receive a higher fine—because they have a higher income to pay it—than someone who makes \$10,000 a year?

I would greatly appreciate it if the hon. member could clarify that for me.

Government Orders

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. The idea is that the surcharge is the same for everyone. Having said that, a section in the Criminal Code allows a judge to impose a higher surcharge on someone deemed to be able to pay it. In that case, it would be possible to impose a higher surcharge. It is the same surcharge, but it is already set out in the Criminal Code.

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will trust the hon. member, because I know that she is a lawyer. I am sure that she knows these crime issues inside out.

Is the government relying on studies or statistics showing that surcharges imposed on criminals reduce the crime rate? I am trying to establish a link. We all have a common goal here: to reduce crime and to ensure that our criminal justice system works well.

In practical terms, what are the arguments or the facts that support the government's measures?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: That is a good question, Mr. Speaker, and we will be sure to ask it during the committee meetings.

Honestly, I did not hear in the speech of the hon. member opposite, the member for Delta—Richmond East who spoke on behalf of the government, that the government used major statistics to conclude that imposing a surcharge would reduce crime. I will not justify the government's position on that. Personally, I do not think that it will have a compelling effect on criminals. Having to pay a surcharge will not prevent them from committing a crime. I do think that a minimum sentence will make a criminal stop and think before he commits a crime that he will have to serve a minimum prison sentence.

The purpose of the bill is to find ways to get more money to help the victims of criminal offences, which is what the federal ombudsman for victims of crime has always been after. The NDP has always been at the forefront in this respect. Now, surcharges will help fund these programs and that is what they should be used for. It remains to be seen if that, in fact, will be the case.

• (1635)

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about the statement by the member for Delta—Richmond East. I was somewhat struck by her statement that the idea of withdrawing the discretionary power of judges was based on the fact that supporting figures show that we have not managed to accumulate the basic funds required to help victims.

I find it somewhat convoluted to take away the discretionary power from judges for the sake of money. That money could come from elsewhere, could it not?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, that is quite right, it could come from elsewhere. Quite often, organizations or victims do not turn to the surcharge program alone.

I found the answer very strange and interesting at the same time, and it certainly warrants further study in committee. The Conservative government seems to interfere wherever there is discretion, whether in sentencing or in the matter of surcharges. Discretion must take into account the factors mentioned. The same thing applies to discretion used in imposing a surcharge. Judges did not impose a surcharge based on whether or not they liked the

person. It did not work like that. The judge had to hear all the arguments proving that the offender could not pay. He would not base that decision on a yes or no answer. Furthermore, he had to put his decision in writing.

If we want to examine this in depth, I am sure that we could look at all the sentences where the judges set aside the surcharge based on subsection 737(5) and stated their reasons in writing under subsection 737(6). It would be interesting to see what reasons the court gave in support of the decision.

If we want to do serious work in committee, we could approach it intelligently in order to determine whether the only reason the Conservatives want to eliminate discretion is to ensure that the money is paid to the program and can be distributed to the victims. We shall see.

Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if she believes that the provinces and the territories were consulted before this bill was drafted and why consultation is important.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for the question because it is exactly the same question, word for word, that I asked the member for Delta—Richmond East to which I am not sure I received an answer. The government tells me it is still consulting. From what I have heard from the ministers of justice of the provinces and territories that I have spoken to, whether on this subject or on other things, I am not convinced that the lines of communication are quite so open. I am not convinced that in Quebec, where the party in power before the last election was federalist, the lines were really open. There are still a lot of answers to be given and a lot of questions to be asked.

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, I am a relatively new member here, representing the people of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, which also happens to be the birthplace of Canada. I believe we live in one of the best countries in the world, and yet, something is wrong in Canada today.

Today we are speaking on a bill that would increase fines given to convicted criminals, the so-called “victims of crime surcharge”. As with many of the crime bills tabled in the House of Commons, it is a bill that on its face seems easy to accept. However, it is not acceptable. The politicization of the Criminal Code is in full swing, and I suppose that is the point in this day and age.

In today's Conservative Canada we now have a permanent political campaign. What was once thought of as an American political trait has now been imported into Canada. No longer will we have a justice system that is just and fair; the Conservative approach is not balanced or proportional. We now find ourselves in a situation where good public policy is traded for political marketing.

However, today I want to speak about poverty in Canada. I want to speak about the widening gap between those of us who have and those who have not. I want to speak about the intersection between poverty and crime.

Government Orders

As I mentioned previously, we know crime rates, particularly rates of serious crimes, have come down over the past several decades. Those facts are not in dispute among those who respect and value evidence. It is therefore a massive moral failure on our part to de-link crime from poverty.

● (1640)

[Translation]

Allow me to take a few moments to explain what I mean.

Poverty is a very serious social, economic and political problem in Canada. It is a problem that calls for us to take action that is worthy of our country and our strong moral tradition.

As Canadians, we are all concerned, as we also are about the fact that poverty persists in Canada. Poverty, and the widening income gap, are a serious threat to social cohesion in Canada. Combating and eradicating poverty calls for an effective approach to be taken, to make Canada a better, more egalitarian and more just society.

Let us compare this with what we see in Canada today. These days, politics dominates everything. Division and extreme partisanship are the watchword in our political discourse now. We have a government that sees only one solution when it encounters a complex social problem like poverty and its links with crime: put more people in prison.

Those of us who respect the past know that history has lessons to teach us. In the past, when Canada encountered a serious, nationwide problem, we did what Canadians often do: we investigated the facts and looked for the truth. We were not afraid of the facts, because we used them to shape public policy, not vice versa.

Poverty is one of those problems, and it should transcend political and jurisdictional divisions.

[English]

I will give a few examples of Canadians coming together to tackle tough issues. When Canadians faced and confronted terrorism in the Air India bombing, we acted. We established an inquiry led by the hon. member for Toronto Centre. We sought answers, reasons, remedies and solutions, and we sought to bring closure to those families affected by that tragedy.

When we as a country began struggling in the 1980s with implications of new and emerging technology on reproduction, we struck a royal commission to assess the moral, ethical and legislative implications of those new technologies.

When Canadians were confronted with the tainted blood scandal that affected to many Canadians, we struck an inquiry to discover what happened and find remedies and solutions.

When Canadians were confronted with the decision to have economic ties with the United States, we created a free trade inquiry called the Macdonald Royal Commission. We did so to get the facts, to hear from people and to use those facts to guide our decisions.

In times past, we confronted great challenges, not with slogans and silly appellations for parliamentary bills but by deploying our best and brightest in search of facts that would lead to meaningful and realistic solutions.

The growing gap between those who have and those who have not, the persistence of poverty and its relation to crime are real and present dangers to social cohesiveness in Canada.

We cannot afford to stand aside and do what we are doing, which is little. We cannot dismissively say that poverty is a provincial matter, as the Prime Minister said in 1995, while at the same time suggest with one eye closed that the only solution to the consequence of poverty is to incarcerate more people. It is immoral to give any credibility to that approach. In fact, we should consider a royal commission on poverty in Canada.

It is astonishing to me that with all of our successes, for all of our difficulties, for all of our wealth, for all of our modernity, a country with a first world economy and a country whose heart is as big as the land it inhabits, is still a place where poverty exists and at levels that are unworthy of us all. It requires us to be bold, to do what is right and to bring all Canadians together to fight poverty.

With the greatest respect to my colleagues on the other side, it is not right or just for any prime minister from any political party to suggest, as our current Prime Minister has, that poverty is a provincial problem, end of story. That is not who we are. That is not the Canadian way.

The world is big and yet we are more and more connected and interdependent than in any other period in history. This is not only true of the world but here in Canada. We can ill-afford to put ourselves in jurisdictional straitjackets and say that it is someone else's issue. Poverty is a problem that we all have a responsibility to combat.

I will now address the link between poverty and crime. I believe poverty is the engine that drives crime in Canada. Poverty limits hope, poverty limits an individual's full potential and poverty at its core ghettoizes communities. It is poverty that forces women who, in attempting to raise a child with no money or no hope, to turn to prostitution. It is poverty that causes a young man who comes from nothing to turn to drugs to find solace and to escape reality. Poverty is a vicious circle and one that must be broken.

All of us here today have our own story but we are here today not only because of our own doing but with the help and support of family, friends and our communities. However, our stories are so much different than the millions of Canadians confined to a state of poverty that in most instances goes back generations. We cannot turn a blind eye to poverty and say that it is not our problem.

The 18-year-old who woke up this morning and who has lived a life of abuse, has mental health issues, comes from a broken family and whose life has been wrapped up in poverty will not be making plans as many of us will here today deciding on which restaurant we will go to this evening. That 18-year-old does not have that choice.

It is they, the poor, the marginalized, those on the periphery of success and opportunity, who see the world not as we see it but something quite different. It is poverty that is the engine that is driving crime.

In a recent article in one of our leading newspapers, anti-poverty advocate and Conservative senator Hugh Segal said the following:

While all those Canadians who live beneath the poverty line are by no means associated with criminal activity, almost all those in Canada's prisons come from beneath the poverty line. Less than 10 per cent of Canadians live beneath the poverty line but almost 100 per cent of our prison inmates come from that 10 per cent. There is no political ideology, on the right or left, that would make the case that people living in poverty belong in jail.

● (1645)

Can we honestly say with unburdened hearts that the only solution to these difficult and complex issues is to find more ways to put them in jail. Is that the best we can do? Is that what Canada has become?

Yet, today, we are contemplating a bill that would increase monetary penalties and remove the ability of a convicted criminal to seek relief from those financial penalties. Why? It is because for most of them they simply do not have the money. The vast majority of people convicted of a crime in Canada can trace their circumstances to poverty. Under this bill, they would be required to pay even more, even though they can ill-afford to do so.

We should never condone or excuse criminal behaviour but we should also be open to explaining it. Again, it is poverty that drives crime.

How can we, as parliamentarians claiming a conscience, stand idly by when we know that aboriginals, who make up just 4% of our population, represent 20% of our prison population? That percentage would increase with the new crime measures imposed by the government. It is the lifting of people out of poverty that will further reduce crime rates.

I will take a few moments to highlight some statistics. If I am unable to convince colleagues of the social justice implications here, perhaps I can convince people that it makes economic sense to lift people out of the cycle of poverty.

The cost of poverty to Canada has been estimated at \$72 billion to \$86 billion per year, or about 5% to 6% of GDP. Almost 900,000 Canadians used food banks each month in 2010 and 38% of them were children. Three point one million households pay more than 30% of their income on housing, making them housing insecure. There are 150,000 to 300,000 visible homeless.

A recent study found a 21-year difference in life expectancy between some of the poorest neighbourhoods and the wealthiest neighbourhoods in some parts of Canada.

Poverty costs Canada's health care system \$7.6 billion per year, according to the Ontario Association of Food Banks.

One in three, or 33%, of low-income children had at least one parent who worked full time through the year in 2008 and still lived in poverty.

In 2010, 59% of Canadian workers lived paycheck to paycheck and indicated that they would be in financial difficulty if their cheque were delayed by a week.

Government Orders

In 2009, per capita household debt in Canada was \$41,740, which is two and a half times higher than it was in 1989.

In 2009, the average annual income, \$6.6 million, of Canada's best paid CEOs was 155 times higher than the average worker's income.

A third of all income growth in Canada over the two past decades has gone to the richest 1% of Canadians, with 3.8% of households controlling 67% of total household wealth.

Those are staggering numbers. The correlation between poverty and crime is not fiction and it is not a Liberal idea.

A recent study conducted by the *Toronto Star* and referenced by Conservative Senator Segal found the following: More than 70% of those who enter prisons have not completed high school; 70% of offenders entering prisons have unstable job histories; and four of every five arrive with serious substance abuse problems. Sending more people to prison, appearing tough on crime, or enacting legislation that is punitive at its core will not solve the problem of crime in Canada. Poverty is at the root of crime in Canada.

I will close with this compelling quote, again from Conservative Senator Segal. He said:

In a modern, competitive and compassionate society like ours, these numbers are unacceptable. If Canadians want to wage an effective war on crime we must first reshape the debate. If crime abatement is the goal, it is time for all Canadians and their governments to become tough on poverty. By doing so, the outcomes we all want — safer communities and diminishing prison populations — will follow.

● (1650)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we go to questions and comments, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, Health; the hon. member for Manicouagan, Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. friend's comments and, with all due respect, I found them very insulting to Canadians who live on low incomes. It is almost as if people who have low incomes are automatically guaranteed to commit crimes, which is appalling.

In my constituency, there are many low-income constituents, people who get along very well on what we would consider low incomes and yet the crime rate in my constituency is very low. Why is that? I would argue that those people have the right values.

What role does my hon. friend think people's values play, regardless of their incomes, in terms of their propensity to commit crimes? How important does he think an individual's values are?

● (1655)

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that one's values are at the very core of what makes up a person. However, a question of that nature, once again, absolutely and unequivocally ignores the evidence. The evidence is indisputable that poverty drives crime and that our prisons are overrepresented with people who have low incomes.

Government Orders

Quite frankly, if people live in poverty, the odds are stacked against them. This bill would not help but exacerbate that.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP supports families and victims of violence. In the past, many of us have worked with victims of violence who have gone to groups. It is important to increase funding to help those people. We are 100% for that approach.

Obviously, removing judicial discretion poses a problem. The problem, as rightly stated before, is this: if you are caught speeding—which has nothing to do with the problem at hand—you receive the same fine, whether you earn \$300 a week working in a convenience store or \$1 million a year. A judge with discretionary power would be able to step in.

The hon. member for Charlottetown has done a fine job of demonstrating that the poorest are affected. We know that, in our prisons, we often find the poorest in society, because they have a lot of problems, such as dropping out of school. The poorest members in our society will get higher penalties, because judges will no longer have the discretionary power to reduce the penalty.

Does the hon. member not think that the cycle of poverty will become bigger and that those people will be trapped in a vicious circle from which they will not be able to escape?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. It is true that this bill will make poverty problems in our society bigger. It will not reduce the crime rate, and the cycle of poverty will continue.

[English]

I am in complete agreement with the premise of the question. I share the hon. member's concerns with respect to the removal of judicial discretion. There are fine people appointed as judges in this country and they should be allowed to do their jobs. This bill would remove an element of judicial discretion that is critical in assessing the individual circumstances of each offender and would only serve to worsen the circumstances of those most vulnerable.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the hon. member for his thoughtful speech. It bore some echoes to a couple of town halls that I held in my riding in the last few months. What are called the Danzig shootings happened in my riding and I had a couple of town halls. I canvassed the area three times and started to get a feel for the concerns of the constituents.

First, they bitterly resented outsiders coming in and their community being labelled a crime community.

The second thing they mentioned speaks to the issue that the hon. member raised, namely jobs and opportunities. There is a lot of regrettable unemployment in this particular area with people who have time on their hands.

The third thing they said was that they wanted a police relationship, not just a police presence, and therein lies a huge difference.

The fourth thing they said was that they did not need any more laws, but they did need evidence. The police and the community agreed that the laws were fine. What they needed was the evidence

to prosecute fully, within the meaning of that phrase, under the Criminal Code.

Without my having had any direct conversation with him, his speech eerily relates to and reflects what I heard at community hall meetings this summer.

● (1700)

Mr. Sean Casey: I have a couple of points arising from that, Mr. Speaker. On Prince Edward Island there is an institution called the Addictions Research Centre, and one of its roles is to examine and study the link between addictions and crime. That is something that would provide evidence and research to that point. The government has decided to close it.

The other point I want to make with regard to evidence is that under this scheme, in order for the revenues generated from the victims of crime surcharge to fund programs, it is necessary for the crimes to be reported, for them to be prosecuted and for there to be successful conviction and collection.

If the government were serious about funding programs for victims of crime, it would not make them contingent on all of those things but would fund them outright.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments by the member for Charlottetown. I could not agree more that the government's record on poverty reduction has truly been a national disgrace.

I can tell by the way he framed his comments that he is quite sincere about wanting to join in the fight against poverty in a passionate and serious way. I will not hold it against him, since he is new to the House, that the Liberal government itself did not have a particularly good record over its 13 years in office in dealing with the very issues he outlines as now being the problem.

There was no national child care policy. There was the gutting of the national housing strategy and the theft of the now up to \$54 billion out of the EI fund. There was no living wage policy, and in essence the Liberal government at the time laid its deficit on the backs of the most vulnerable. I would suggest that maybe for purposes of debate this afternoon, we actually stick to the bill that is before us, which is Bill C-37.

Yes, there is indeed a link between crime and poverty, but by removing the discretionary power of the judge to increase the surcharge, are we not in some cases making this measure excessively punitive? It speaks to what he was saying, because I think it is particularly true in cases for low income offenders or offenders who suffer from mental illnesses.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the slack being offered to me as a result of my juniority.

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As the hon. member went through the list of perceived wrongs of previous Liberal governments, the one that did stick out for me, not because I was here because I was not, was the national child care policy. I remember working very hard on the leadership campaign of Ken Dryden, who introduced a national child care policy. While I cannot speak to that long list, and I am sure I will not be allowed to do so, I do have a distinct recollection of that.

With regard to the direct question, the member absolutely does make a point. The suggestion in the bill that the undue hardship defence be eliminated is quite simply wrong-headed, and judges should be trusted to exercise their discretion based on the evidence they hear in the courtroom, and that defence should continue to be available.

I would also point out that it seems as though the justification for the removal of that is that there is a fine option program and defenders could be allowed to work it off. A fine option program does not exist in all provinces, so it will be available to some but not to all.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the second reading debate on Bill C-37, the Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act, which concerns victim surcharges.

As hon. members are aware, the government is determined to help victims of crime and make offenders accountable for the harm they have caused victims and law-abiding citizens.

Bill C-37 would help make offenders accountable by doubling the amount of the victim surcharge to be paid by offenders and making sure that the surcharge is imposed automatically in all cases.

The government is continuing to deliver on its promises regarding the concerns of victims of crime. In our electoral platform, we made a commitment to make amendments to the Criminal Code that would double the amount of victim surcharges and make their imposition mandatory in all cases, without exception. The government reaffirmed this commitment in the Speech from the Throne, and we have done exactly what we promised to do.

Victim surcharges form part of an offender's sentence and they are consistent with the sentencing principles in the Criminal Code. They provide reparations for the harm done to victims and to the community and promote a sense of responsibility in offenders.

The amount of the victim surcharge has not increased since the year 2000. Moreover, we know that the surcharge is not imposed in all appropriate cases. This is unacceptable, and our government is determined to make offenders accountable to their victims.

The bill aims to remedy these shortcomings in a number of ways. First, it proposes doubling the amount of the federal victim surcharge by making it 30% of the fine imposed on the offender for the offence. If no fine is imposed, the surcharge will be \$100 in the case of an offence punishable by summary conviction and \$200 in the case of an offence punishable by indictment.

I would like to underscore the fact that the sentencing judge also has the discretionary authority to impose an even higher surcharge if circumstances warrant and if the offender has the means to pay it.

Second, the bill removes the discretionary authority of the sentencing judge to waive payment of the victim surcharge if it constitutes undue hardship for the offender or his or her dependents. However, the bill allows offenders to pay the surcharge under fine option programs in provinces and territories where such a program exists.

Fine option programs for adult offenders have been set up in all territories and in all but three provinces. Fine option programs for young offenders exist in two territories and in all but four of the provinces. This type of program enables offenders to pay their fine by working at the minimum wage.

In her most recent report entitled "Shifting the Conversation", the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime recommends that the victim surcharge be mandatory in all cases, without exception. Other victims' rights advocates have made the same recommendation.

The proposed amendments to the Criminal Code would make it possible to ensure that all convicted offenders are given a sentence that makes them accountable to the victims of crime and the members of communities.

As hon. members are no doubt aware, provincial and territorial services providing assistance to victims are partly funded by money coming from federal victim surcharges. The amount that is collected and held by provincial and territorial governments is used to defray the costs of the program and to provide the victims of crime with support services in the province or territory where the crime was committed. The federal government receives no money from federal victim surcharges.

The introduction of this bill builds on previous actions by the government to ensure that victims have a stronger voice in the criminal justice system and that they have better access to the available services.

In fact, doubling the victim surcharge is intended to complement the other measures taken by the government to help the victims of crime.

In budget 2011, the government renewed the annual \$13 million funding for the federal victims strategy. In budget 2012, the government made a commitment to grant additional funding to the victims fund. On April 23, the Minister of Justice announced an additional \$7 million over five years for the victims fund.

●(1705)

The federal victims fund now amounts to some \$11.6 million a year that goes to provincial and territorial governments, to victims support agencies and to other partners in order to provide support for services, projects and initiatives that promote access to justice and a greater awareness of the services available to the victims of crime and their families.

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Under the victims fund, the following activities and projects, to name just a few, will be carried out in Canada: in Newfoundland and Labrador, it will be easier for victims to attend sentencing hearings and to present victims' impact statements.

The courtrooms will also be adapted for children in order to help the most vulnerable victims and witnesses to crime when they take part in legal proceedings.

In New Brunswick, the parents of child victims of sexual assault will have access to better services; public legal education and information resources will be updated and widely distributed in order to help children and other vulnerable victims; and access to services for adults who were sexually assaulted in childhood will be improved.

In Saskatchewan, law enforcement personnel will receive training that will enable them to recognize the victims of hate crimes and provide them with assistance; and the province's courtrooms will be endowed with devices making it easier for children and other vulnerable witnesses to provide evidence.

In Yukon, victims who live in rural areas will have better access to assistance providers in communities served by circuit courts.

In Alberta, access to assistance services by victims living in remote rural areas will be improved.

In Prince Edward Island, the protocol for dealing with sexual assault of children will be updated and the officers working directly with children and young victims will be given training. Solid relationships will be established with the child advocacy centre at the Izaak Walton Killam health centre in Nova Scotia in order to improve support for child victims and their families.

Public legal education and information material will be drafted and published in 18 languages in the various communities in Manitoba.

Specialized training to deal with the trauma and crime victimization that is specific to Nunavut will be developed and distributed and new ways will be sought to help the victims of crime in the community.

In Ontario, victims of crime in remote communities will have better access to a wide range of specialized services.

These are only a few examples of the excellent work being done throughout Canada to provide assistance to the victims and improve their experience with the criminal justice system.

In addition to the funding granted by the victims fund, the money from victims surcharges will also make it possible to help provinces and territories provide services to the victims under their jurisdiction. This is an excellent example of federal, provincial and territorial co-operation on issues of very great importance to all levels of government.

I would also like to draw the members' attention to the 2012 National Victims of Crime Awareness Week that was held from April 22 to 28 this year. This year's theme was "Moving Forward" and it focused on the devastating impact of crime on the lives of victims

and their need to be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity.

The theme also underlined the work accomplished by the various levels of government as well as by the dedicated professionals and volunteers who provide services to the victims to help them move forward and rebuild their lives.

● (1710)

The federal victims fund provides funding to victims' services organizations in all provinces and territories in order to hold more than 160 important events during National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

I hope the honourable members were able to take part in the activities that were held in their riding in support of the important work being carried out by victims' services organizations and to see first-hand the courage and resilience of victims of crime.

I urge all members in this House to support this bill, because we must help the victims of crime in every way possible in the hopes of facilitating their recovery.

● (1715)

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague for his speech. I would also like to emphasize that, as my colleague from Gatineau stated earlier, the NDP will support this bill at second reading so that it can go to committee because there are still a lot of unanswered questions about it. I hope that the committee's work will give us a chance to get those answers.

I would like to ask my colleague a question about the judge's discretionary power to waive the surcharge for a particular individual if the judge believes that it would cause harm to the individual and if the judge knows the individual is truly incapable of paying it. Currently, the judge can use his or her discretionary power, but this bill will eliminate that option.

The purpose of this bill is to make more money available to help victims. When a judge is forced to levy a small surcharge from a very poor person, the court will have to try to collect that money. Might it cost more than the amount of the surcharge itself to collect the surcharge that the judge had no choice but to impose? If so, this will not make more money available to victims.

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question, but I cannot answer it since the circumstances of each case are different. Will it cost more or not? I would be speculating if I tried to answer that. For a long time now, the focus has been on the offenders and on trying to rehabilitate them. This bill focuses on helping victims. Will this solve all of our social problems? Definitely not, but this is an attempt to help victims. Unfortunately, no system is perfect.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the member would stand up on a couple of counts. One is to articulate his opinion and thoughts on the legislation, knowing full well that there is not unanimous support for this bill. There is a lot of concern in regard to the way in which the government wants to approach the issue of victims across Canada, and how we can compensate and provide good-quality victim assistance programs. The answer goes beyond just inserting levies on fines. There needs to be a commitment from the government, one, to demonstrate leadership across the country and, two, to ensure that there is ongoing sustainable funding that actually originates from the government general revenues. This is something that needs to be debated inside this chamber, and it leads me to the second point, which is why it is that the government is moving so quickly to try to limit debate inside the chamber by moving a motion to call the question. What is the hurry? Why does the government not recognize the value of allowing for members of Parliament to contribute to the debate on this important bill even prior to going to committee?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. Victims have waited a long time for their go at having fair compensation for acts that are imposed upon them and for which they are not responsible. The cost of crime has been evaluated at \$99.6 billion and the victims bear 83% of that. This is an attempt to help these victims who basically have not asked for what has been inflicted upon them.

• (1720)

[Translation]

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as an hon. member said, we want to fund programs for victims. It is a very legitimate objective and we support it. But now, the government claims that if offenders do not have the financial ability to pay, they can register for a program in provinces that have one. First, if the surcharge is doubled, demand for existing programs will increase. In provinces and territories that do not have a program, one will have to be created. So the provinces will have to spend money once again.

In a few years, will we have to triple the surcharge to again fund programs that will have to be created or for which demand is too high?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, saying that it would be tripled, doubled or cut in half would be speculation. We do not have the data to be able to answer that question.

What I know is that we will have to continue to work with the best practices in all the provinces, particularly those that do not have a system where offenders can work. We must not forget the work those people do. Usually, they do community work, and their work goes back into the community, so it is beneficial for everyone.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is very little in this bill that the opposition cannot support. The bill aims to intervene to help criminals change their behaviour. It also proposes ways to help victims and groups that support victims.

Our party will support this bill, but why not make an even greater effort and discuss this a little longer in order to come up with something that we could all totally agree on?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is no shortage of debate in the House. Clearly, in this case, victims have waited long enough for compensation and for their concerns to be addressed.

In other contexts, we can continue to work not only for victims, but also on other aspects of crime, such as poverty.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to ask another question.

I would like to come back to my first question, in which I asked if it will not eventually be more costly to try to recuperate money and if, in the end, none of that money will be passed on to victims anyway. The hon. member replied that every case is unique and that this would merely be speculation.

So, yes, every case is unique and one must take the time needed to examine each individual situation and make a logical, thorough decision. Judges have developed the skills needed to be able to make a ruling based on the logic of each situation and based on the individual case.

Why, then, would we play around with the discretionary power of judges, when even the government acknowledges that each case is unique?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, the Criminal Code concerns public order and, ultimately, it is parliamentarians who establish the parameters of public order. For first degree murder, there is a mandatory 25 year sentence. In a different context, parliamentarians set the priorities to be imposed on judges. They still have a great deal of leeway in other areas.

This government has responded to Canadians' request to provide protection for victims. That is what this bill is all about.

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly interested to see this bill and proposal come forward. As we have indicated, we will support moving it forward to committee for further review.

I do not think there is any question in the minds of most Canadians that the NDP supports the victims of crimes and their families. We certainly respect the recommendations of the ombudsman for victims of crime, and I have some knowledge of this issue from the time I was in Nova Scotia. The services that are provided to the victims of crime are extremely timely and important if properly administered.

I want to say to the parliamentary secretary that I am somewhat concerned. I know this is an extremely important issue and one we need to move forward on, but I am concerned with the closure motion that was introduced. There are concerns here with the further infringement on the latitude of judges and with other possible implications of the fines on offenders. We need to make sure we strike the right balance, get this done and get it done right so that it does not come back here in a year or two in order to correct a problem caused as a result of haste.

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● (1725)

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's concerns are noted.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I start I believe it is my duty to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

With that, I would also like to welcome everyone back from a long summer, where we hopefully had some time to sit back, rest with our family, recharge the batteries and of course help our constituents at the same time.

This afternoon I will be speaking to Bill C-37, which proposes to amend section 737 of Canada's Criminal Code in order to double the amount offenders must pay when they receive their sentence, while making the surcharge mandatory for all offenders.

First let me begin my comments by going through some of the history of victim surcharges before I proceed into why New Democrats believe this legislation merits passage at second reading and closer scrutiny at the justice committee, where I am hopeful all the necessary changes will be agreed to by all parties.

A victim surcharge is an additional sanction imposed at the time of sentencing to offenders found guilty of a crime. It is collected by provincial and territorial governments and used to provide programs and services for victims of crime in the province or territory where that crime was committed.

Specifically, Bill C-37 proposes to first amend the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to the amount of the victim surcharge, to double the amount. Under this proposal, the surcharge would be equivalent to 30% of any fine imposed on the offender or when no fine is imposed would be \$100 for summary conviction offences and \$200 for indictable offences.

The bill also removes the ability of a court to waive the victim surcharge if the offender can show that paying the surcharge would result in undue hardship to his or her dependents, for example. This is an important aspect of the bill, which deserves to be studied further as there are certainly cases where the imposition of the victim surcharge could indeed cause unnecessary hardship, while removing the ability of the judiciary to apply discretion is a troubling trend we are seeing across all the justice bills that the government has introduced.

Although judges' discretionary powers have been removed in terms of waiving the surcharge, under this bill as it is currently proposed judges would retain the discretionary power to increase the victim surcharge if they believe that circumstances so warrant and that the offender is able to pay. Therefore, on one hand, the bill removes the discretionary power of judges, while keeping some discretionary powers intact.

From my perspective, maintaining the discretionary power of the judiciary under both circumstances would seem to make sense as indeed there are many extenuating circumstances in which forcing an offender to pay the surcharge would have an unnecessarily harsh effect. When I mention this, I am particularly concerned about offenders who have a clear history of mental illness and may be unable to pay that surcharge. This is one aspect of the bill that has

raised alarm bells for important organizations, like the Elizabeth Fry Society and the John Howard Society. This underscores the need for more intensive study of the component when the bill reaches the justice committee.

One positive aspect of the bill, which seems to offer respite for individuals as mentioned above, is the inclusion of a mechanism that allows offenders who are unable to pay the surcharge the opportunity to participate in a provincial fine option program, where these programs are in place. They allow offenders to pay their fines by earning work credits in the province or territory where the crime was committed. Ensuring that these programs are in place in all 13 jurisdictions across Canada seems necessary to ensure that it is possible to apply this provision equally and fairly to offenders, regardless of the province where they reside.

Another important piece of this proposal, which to my mind needs to be mentioned, is the fact that increasing the victim surcharge will have a direct impact on providing services to victims who would therefore directly benefit from increased victim surcharges. This is important to note because I have heard from victims within my community of Sudbury who have had difficulty accessing these services. An increase in the funding, which these programs receive, would certainly address some of the shortfalls that have been brought to my attention by both victims themselves and victims rights groups within my riding.

● (1730)

Let me sum up some of the remarks by mentioning the economic impact that crime has on communities right across our great country and how increasing the victim surcharge might act as a meaningful deterrent, particularly in cases of vandalism. According to statistics collected in 2003, crime costs Canadians around \$70 billion on an annual basis. Of this, \$47 billion was assumed by the victims, representing a total of 70%. We have heard some other statistics, such as 83%, and I am sure there are a few others other there, but it is still too high.

One local example of this economic impact should serve as an excellent example of why exploring the idea of increasing the surcharge is, in fact, beneficial, especially in cases involving small businesses forced to deal with senseless vandalism. Back in June in my great riding of Sudbury, the owners of Azian Cuisine were forced to pay out over \$6,000 in cleanup costs, for a second time, to remove targeted graffiti, which has become a major problem for business owners across my riding.

Although increasing the victim surcharge would not directly address targeted acts of vandalism like this, if perpetrators of these crimes were aware that there was a mandatory monetary penalty in addition to any fines waiting for them, it may act as a deterrent against committing these acts in the future. It is also my hope that with increased moneys for victim programs, the provinces may in fact establish programs to assist small business owners, like those at Azian Cuisine in Sudbury, who are forced to deal with repeated acts of vandalism against their businesses.

Let me be clear. The NDP staunchly supports victims of crime and their families and respects the recommendations of the Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, and any assertions otherwise are utterly false.

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With that being said, we continue to have concerns about this bill, which merits further study, discussion and witness testimony in committee, particularly regarding the decreased discretionary powers of judges to decide if paying a surcharge would cause undue hardship. We in the NDP believe in the importance of the discretionary powers of judges, and the autonomy of judges is restricted within this bill.

While the withdrawal of the undue hardship clause and the provisions seeking to double the surcharge amount could be problematic for low-income offenders, this is offset by the fact that this bill provides people with the option of paying their fines by working for the provincial fine option program. I support having this balance studied further in committee hearings in order to ensure that it is indeed appropriate, especially for provinces and territories where this program is not yet in place.

With that, I look forward to questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, I was somewhat surprised at what seems to be, in principle, the support that the official opposition has decided to give this particular bill. My question is in regard to the whole issue of sustainable funding for victims. This is something that we, within the Liberal Party, are very strong advocates for. We understand and appreciate the importance of victim programs. We would have liked to see the government being more proactive in trying to build a stronger system throughout Canada that has a little more consistency within the different provinces. Many provinces have different types of services, and some of those services would benefit if they were more universally applied across the country.

My questions for the member are, first, to what degree does he believe that the Government of Canada itself has an obligation through, for example, general revenues to make a commitment to support victims of crime. Second, does he believe that there needs to be more leadership in Ottawa in working with different levels of government to try to find out where we can look for best practices in providing services for victims? I like to think that we all want to do what we can to support victims.

• (1735)

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of talk initially about what the Liberals were or were not supporting. They had 13 years to make sure that victims actually had services and they did not do anything. Now we have a government that is not doing as much as we would like to see on this side of the House. Therefore, New Democrats are preparing for 2015, when we become government, to actually stand up for victims.

That being said, one of the things he spoke about in his points was what we are going to see from the provinces. Those are concerns that we in the NDP have. We have some concerns that the government did not consult with the provinces and territories. That is something we would like to see, so we can question the government at the committee level to find out how much consultation was done with the provinces and territories to ensure that they are on board with this.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while we do understand that there needs to be victim surcharges or victim redress and that we need to address these issues,

we also recognize that there needs to be ample discussion with the relevant parties on what is appropriate, whether they are the provinces, the territories, the judiciary or others involved.

One of the issues that we have is with causing undue hardship on those who are least likely to be able to pay. When we look at who is in the system, who is in jails across the country, we often find it is those who either have a mental issue, an addiction or some problem, or who suffer from low income.

I am wondering if the member could comment on whether this bill addresses what I would say is the fundamental or root cause of why these people are in the system in the first place, and how we could appropriately address how to get those folks reintroduced into society in a meaningful way.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I agree that we need to be able to find programs and ways to ensure that those who have offended do not reoffend. I think that is one of the things that we hear from victims groups and victims all the time: “We need compensation and we would like to see offenders serve their time, but we want to ensure that they do not come back and reoffend”.

That is one of the things that we have been talking about here in the House. Right now we have taken away the discretionary powers of the judges. To be able to say that an offender can pay x amount or cannot pay x amount should be in the judge's hands. If we put undue hardship on someone who has a mental illness or who has no money, are we making it easier for them to come out and feel like they could be part of society or are we making it more difficult for them?

What we need to do is ensure that this surcharge can be applied correctly and leave that in the hands of the judges. Right now this bill is not doing that, and that is why we want to study this more at committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for this bill at second reading, because it is a bill that is worth examining in greater depth.

It is really worth examining this bill in greater depth because the basic idea seems to be a good one. The idea of doing more to help victims is a principle we can all agree on. That said, the bill as it now stands has a number of flaws, or gives rise to a number of questions. That is why I think it really calls for detailed and in-depth study in committee.

The biggest problem is perhaps that it limits judges' power to waive the surcharge in certain cases. Unfortunately, I do not know whether the committee will be able to explore that issue thoroughly. This power is already provided in section 737. In some cases, when a judge believes it may cause undue hardship to the person or their dependants, the judge may grant an exemption to the surcharge.

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There are two aspects to this problem. There is a problem that is one of principle. Once again, they are trying to stop judges from judging. A law cannot cover every specific case. That is why we have judges, and why we call them judges: because they are capable of demonstrating judgment, and in certain specific situations, of saying that it would perhaps be better to do something else. That is why we appoint the cream of our law societies and our lawyers to the bench.

Obviously, however, this government is trying, with bill after bill, to limit the powers of judges, as if this government somehow did not trust the judicial branch. So it is a fundamental problem, a problem of principle, that we are seeing in numerous cases. It is also a practical problem, because it means there are potentially people whom it would be appropriate to exempt from the surcharge, not just for them, but also for their families, their dependants.

We know the rule is that support has to be paid first and all that, but we are not always talking about support payments. We are often talking about people who live in very difficult and distressing socio-economic conditions, for whom it would present enormous problems to pay the surcharge. I will not offer a specific example. That is precisely why we have judges, to judge, and this is what they would be able to decide.

The second problem this bill raises relates to the provision that the money from the surcharge must be used by the provinces to fund services to victims of crime. Again, the basic principle seems to be a good one. I applaud the idea of helping victims of crime, but again, this idea raises a problem we could almost call philosophical.

Last week, in my riding in Montreal, Denis Blanchette was killed. I went to the vigil and to Mr. Blanchette's funeral. Unquestionably, his close family are the primary victims. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to them. However, there is also the entire artistic community, and the entire city of Montreal. Someone wrote on my Facebook page that one person was killed, but eight million were wounded. The victims are a very broad group. That is why we need social solidarity. But I am on a different track, one that is much more technical and specific, in this case.

● (1740)

The goal is to give money to victim assistance services. One of the problems is that the programs are not always at the same level in the provinces and territories. They are not uniform. How will we be able to develop a degree of synergy, or uniformity, in these services? Are they going to start telling a province that because it does not have the program they would like it to have, they are not giving it any money?

How will it work? The question may seem a little superficial, but it is particularly important in that we do not even know whether the provinces and territories have been consulted in this process. The expression that fits well here is that they are putting the cart before the horse. The first step might be to consult the provinces, to see how things can be arranged, together, and then put a system in place after that. The system should provide assurances that the money from the surcharge will truly go to victims and victims' groups. That aspect is not very clear. An essential step has been skipped, and I hope the committee will be able to deal with that before the bill comes back to us for third reading.

There is also the issue of the lack of funding to help victims and victims' groups, which a number of my colleagues have raised today. This is one way of increasing funding, but are there others? Have the possible avenues been compared? This is the kind of thing we need to think about beforehand, rather than after the fact. There again, let us hope that the committee will do its job.

So that the committee can do its job, I will support this bill at second reading, despite all the flaws mentioned. I think it is very important to help victims. However, I cannot pass up the opportunity to say that, although it is important to help victims, it is just as important, if not more so, to prevent people from becoming victims.

This is called prevention, which requires long-term measures. But the government does not seem to understand much about long-term measures and prevention. It is prevention and education. As one of my hon. colleagues mentioned, it is also the fight against poverty, which is a major factor in the development of criminal behaviour.

It is affordable housing. When a child has an appropriate place to play or study, there is much less risk that that child will drop out or end up on the street, and the probability that the child will associate with criminal groups drops accordingly. It is health and, obviously, gun control. In fact, it is solidarity in communities, mutual support, not everyone for themselves. It is investing in people and in a healthier society.

● (1745)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member a question with regard to this whole sense of co-operation.

When the parliamentary secretary stood, she talked about how in different provinces there were all sorts of different types of programs being provided. I would argue that ultimately the federal government should have a stronger role to play in trying to provide more consistency across Canada.

We might have a program in the province of Quebec that works well or a program in Manitoba that works well. We need strong leadership coming from Ottawa. If we really want to try to assist our victims of crime, then one of the things we can do in Ottawa is show strong leadership for all the provinces.

Would she not agree that would be a benefit for victims of crime?

● (1750)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I personally believe that the first step is really dialogue. It really is important to sit down with the provinces, talk and discuss the various experiences, listen to what the provinces and territories have to say and listen to what civil society, which often works in this area, has to say.

True leadership—I am personally and firmly convinced—is being able to listen. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a government that is not naturally inclined to listen. Listening is not its strong point.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment for my colleague rather than a question.

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I completely agree with everything she said. I think that prevention is very important; however, it is not something that the other side of the House considers very often.

I also wanted to say that I found it very regrettable to hear the comments made earlier by a Conservative member who was twisting the words of a Liberal member out of sheer partisanship.

I completely approve of my colleague's comments.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's regret about some of the comments that have been made.

In my opinion, saying that poverty is a factor that has a significant impact on crime is not an attack on people who are in more difficult socio-economic circumstances. In actual fact, it recognizes an objective and scientifically proven reality. Once again, this is not one of the current government's strong suits.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her speech. I think she hit the nail on the head with regard to many of the precursors of the problem.

I would like to ask her how optimistic and confident she is about the democratic co-operation that will take place during the meetings of the committee that will examine this bill.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, my dream is that we will sit down and discuss real issues to enhance the well-being of all Canadians and to help our country progress. Clearly, the things I have experienced since coming to the House of Commons do not make me very optimistic, but I am going to continue to dream.

[English]

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member talked earlier about the root causes, the reasons why some people found themselves in the system and needing assistance. This bill addresses victims' surcharges moving from 15% to 30%. It looks at increasing funding to deal with programs that would assist people who find themselves incarcerated.

A comment was made about low income. When we look at the facts across the country and who is in our jails, we will find people of that economic status are overrepresented. About 70% or more of the individuals in jail are either low income or have some kind of addiction, whether it is a mental health problem or substance abuse. That means they need to be addressed.

Could my hon. colleague comment on whether this bill addresses that need?

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, the bill does not address that issue at all. In fact, the government does not address the issue at all. The main point is that it is good to help victims or groups of victims, but the first thing we should do is prevent crime, prevent there being victims to begin with.

We talk about socio-economic factors. I was also talking about housing. I visited social housing in my riding this summer. The kids do not have a playground, so what do they do? They end up on the street and with nothing to do, they think of getting into mischief. A lot of us could have fallen into that category if we had been in the same situation.

Those are the root causes and they are multiple and they are complex. They are not easy to deal with but it has to be done.

• (1755)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Along with my colleagues, many of us have said that we encourage this bill to be the source of great discussion and deliberation at committee. Therefore, our side of the House will ensure it goes in that direction. However, we have pointed to some very serious issues that are in the bill but are also recurring issues in the bills the government has put forward with respect to crime.

One of those main issues we have is the way the bill could allow for decreased discretionary power on the part of our judges. We know that judges do critical work, not only as part of our justice system but really as part of our society. Their side of work is one of those key pillars on which Canadian society and Canadian democracy are built. Unfortunately, that is something the Conservative government has tried to chip away at, the work that judges do, that important part around discretionary power that they have bestowed upon them and use with great care and sensitivity day in and day out.

The other piece we do not support is the increased pressure, the hardship that this legislation would put on so many victims, people who have already fallen through the cracks of society, who are among the poorest of the poor, who in so many cases have lived a life of poverty and immense challenge financially. The bill would do nothing to address that reality which so many people face in the justice system.

I also want to speak to the extent to which this and so much legislation put forward by the government when it comes to crime really points to the hypocrisy in its tough on crime agenda. Where we can see that best is in a constituency like the one I have the honour of representing. Just last week, the chief and council of Lac Brochet along with the Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak and the Denesuline First Nation in northern Manitoba came together and talked about the atrocious conditions people who were arrested in their community faced simply because the community had nowhere to put them. This is because the RCMP has closed the one holding cell that exists in the community and will only allow it to open if somebody with proper training can manage it.

The kicker is that there used to be a program funded by the federal government to ensure that people from Lac Brochet and northern communities could have the training to police their communities and to ensure that people who were apprehended would be in a safe space. The federal government has cut that funding. This program no longer exists for training and the end result is people have been taken to the arena of the community, have been chained to a door on the floor of that arena and treated with the kind of ignorance and offence that we cannot imagine in Canada. That is because this community has said it wants to ensure the public safety of individuals, it wants to ensure these people are away in a place where they will not harm anybody and themselves and the federal government is nowhere at the table to ensure they have a dignified way of doing so. Unfortunately, the government has turned around and absolved itself from any responsibility when that is not the case.

Government Orders

We are dealing with yet another bill where the government is claiming to want to do something to ensure our communities are safer and that victims are protected, but when communities in northern Canada want to do that very same thing, they do not have the support from the federal government to do so.

• (1800)

On the topic of prevention, the bill talks about fining criminals, but where is the money to make sure we do not have criminals to deal with or to reduce the number of people who end up falling through the cracks into a life of crime or on the other side of the tracks?

In communities like those I represent, and I will speak to The Pas, gang prevention funding has come to an end. A very successful program in the inner city run by The Pas Family Resource Centre has been told that its funding will not be renewed and it has no ability to service children above six years old to prevent them from joining a gang.

Is this the response that the federal government truly wants to show to a community that has struggled with gang violence in recent years? Are we going to wait for a shooting to happen, a death or another young person to be thrown into jail before that gang prevention money comes back to that organization?

Why is the federal government shutting out organizations like The Pas Family Resource Centre? Why is the federal government saying no to communities like Lac Brochet that want to prevent more criminals coming into our system? Why is the federal government not working especially with aboriginal communities that are often the source of so many people falling through the cracks, especially in northern Canada, and ending up in our correctional system?

If only that kind of passion for eliminating crime was infused into prevention, rehabilitation and supporting safer communities, then we could see a genuine approach to dealing with crime. Rather, there are half-baked bills like the one we have here and the rhetoric we see in the media where leaders in aboriginal communities have said that public safety and victims' rights are the very things they are concerned about, but when it is about partnering with the federal government, it is nowhere to be found.

I also want to point out that when we are looking ahead to try to truly deal with preventing and cutting down crime in our country we are in the best position to do that by looking at the evidence, listening to the advocate organizations that are on the ground and to the victim organizations that are on the front line, such as Elizabeth Fry or the John Howard Society. We should be listening to correctional workers who are increasingly concerned about what legislation like Bill C-10 would mean. We should be listening to the concerns of people who work with victims and to what the people within the justice system are saying.

Let us follow their lead. Let us follow the evidence-based research that indicates prevention and rehabilitation are the way to go. That is where the investments need to be made in order to truly cut down and eliminate crime and, at the end of the day, make our communities safer.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question.

I want to begin by saying that I agree with supporting this bill at second reading so that the committee can improve it. It could certainly use a lot of improving. I also want to say that the NDP recognizes the importance of supporting judges' discretionary powers. The NDP also supports victims of crime and their families. However, I also agree with my colleague when she says that true prevention means improving quality of life within the social fabric of the community involved.

I would like to ask my esteemed colleague how we can improve quality of life in communities instead of imposing surcharges. What impact would that have on prevention and on victims? True prevention means preventing people from becoming victims.

• (1805)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Clearly, investing in prevention will result in lower crime rates. Research proves that. We know that when the government stops investing in programs for youth, in education and in opportunities for young people, for example, the crime rate goes up. Unfortunately, this government keeps talking about its crime reduction strategy, but its actions belie that message. Those are the outcomes Canadians want but are not getting from this government.

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with jaw-dropping amazement to the comments from the member for Churchill as she blamed the federal government for every ill in Manitoba. I hate to break it to her, but there is an NDP government in Manitoba right now that is responsible for the high crime rate that is in Manitoba right now. Winnipeg is the violent crime capital of Canada. If the NDP government cared about victims, cared about citizens, it would do something about it. The NDP government of Manitoba is implementing the policies that the gang across the way would want to implement. We have seen what the results are.

I would like her to comment on the Manitoba government, a government with which she has some familiarity. I would like her to comment on the abysmal failure of the NDP policies in Manitoba in curbing and controlling violent crime.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I might be bursting the member's balloon but the reality is that first nations are under federal jurisdiction, so when I talk about Lac Brochet, it is actually the federal government that is not at the table to help the community.

Let us be clear about the level of government that he is a part of and the fact that it is nowhere to be seen when it comes to working with first nations to ensure their communities are safer. Actually, he might know from the first nations he represents, who face very similar challenges to the ones I represent, that unfortunately the federal government is not part of the solution. What we are seeing as a result of legislation from his government is an expected increased incarceration rate for the aboriginal people he represents and I represent, something that is unacceptable in a country like Canada in the year 2012.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague thinks. When a surcharge is imposed without taking into account the circumstances a judge could invoke in deciding to waive it, and when there are children involved, are those children not being victimized by a system that does not allow judges any discretion?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has raised an excellent point. This brings us to one of the NDP's major concerns, the attack on judicial discretion. It is an attack against the very essence of the legal system and against the respect Canadians must have for the very foundation of our democratic system.

It is the Conservatives' preferred target and we are against this attack.

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill, which we support at second reading. Obviously, we cannot be against virtue or against the victims, even though the members opposite claim that we are. We care about communities, Canadians and victims. We also care about the families of victims, and the families of criminals, which are sometimes blameless.

We will support this bill at second reading so that it can be studied in committee and because we still have questions about it. Some changes are required in order for it to be acceptable.

I will provide some context. First, Bill C-37 would amend provisions of the Criminal Code and double the amount of the surcharge. The surcharge would total 30% of any fine that is imposed on the offender, or \$100 if no fine is imposed. The fine would be \$100 for offences punishable by summary conviction and \$200 for offences punishable by indictment.

Is that really a solution for the victims? I am not absolutely sure about that. Instead of taxing people even more, other things could be done. In addition, this bill eliminates the court's ability to waive the surcharge if the offender proves that it would create hardship for himself or his family. It is worrisome because the power of judges is being eroded. Judges are there to judge; what more can I say.

Rulings will always be given on a case-by-case basis, and that is why we have judges. As my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie stated, judges are the elite of our lawyers. They are brilliant and capable of making appropriate rulings, and we can trust them. If all their powers are taken away, as the government seems to enjoy doing, then it is difficult for them to do good work in specific situations. I am especially worried about this. We are taking away judges' powers and we are not proceeding on a case-by-case basis.

Government Orders

I would like to list a few stakeholders that share our position. The Elizabeth Fry Societies are concerned about the impact of additional fines on the disadvantaged aboriginals who do not have the means to pay. Once again, it will be the criminal's family that will become a victim. I side with society and do not think that we want to make the children, brothers and sisters, and parents of the criminals pay. This is no way to do things. It is something that can happen, but it is not what we want. The government should not aggravate things.

The John Howard Society does not necessarily have a problem with the fines, but it is afraid that, under this system, the fines will sometimes be disproportionate to the crimes. We are dealing here with a wide range of crimes. It would be worthwhile to move ahead more gradually.

The Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has long fought for better funding of services for victims of crime. Is this how we are going to do it? I am not convinced.

I have a few interesting statistics. In 2003, crime cost about \$70 billion. That is a big number. Victims took about \$47 billion of that, or 70%.

● (1810)

That is another major problem. A 2004 study estimated the pain and suffering of victims at \$36 billion—another major problem.

A significant number of eligible victims do not claim compensation, often because they do not even know that they are entitled to it. We are talking about costs and amounts, but victims are not necessarily well compensated. Is it really by going after small amounts here and there that we will be able to adequately compensate those individuals?

I have a hard time putting myself in the shoes of a victim, because I have never been a victim of crime or anything else. I am really lucky, knock on wood. I hope that this does not happen to me or my family. I do not think that an amount of money would fix things. It is more about getting help. Money can sometimes help in seeking assistance, but it would be better if we came up with a more helpful measure for victims.

I have a few quick questions for the government. Perhaps I might get an answer. Bill C-37 overlaps with another private member's bill, Bill C-350, which also seeks to increase offenders' accountability. How will those bills overlap? Will they complement each other? I do not know. I am just wondering.

With the removal of the discretionary power of judges to waive the surcharge, does this measure not become excessively punitive in some cases? I am referring to low-income offenders or people with mental health problems. We know those people exist. I am not saying this to minimize the suffering of victims, but we have to think about offenders with mental health problems.

Government Orders

I am wondering once again how we will ensure that the money really goes to victims' groups that really need it. I also feel that the government should consult with organizations working with victims on the ground. I think that would be very useful. In my riding, for instance, we have the sexual assault centre CAVAS that does an outstanding job with little money. The hon. members opposite must surely have similar organizations in their ridings. It might be worthwhile to go talk to those groups that work on the ground in our communities to see how we can fix all this.

In conclusion, I would like to come back to what my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie was saying earlier. When we talk about crime, we need to think about prevention, first and foremost, which comes before punishment. Education and fighting poverty are also important. Wealthier societies have less crime. Wealth does not solve all problems, but it can help considerably. I would be remiss if I did not mention affordable housing, since that is an important issue for me. When people have suitable housing and can eat three meals a day, that helps reduce crime rates significantly. So why not make that our first priority?

• (1815)

[English]

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was with the RCMP for just over 20 years. Part of the member's statement was that paying the surcharge may cause undue harm to the accused or the family of the accused. I am a little taken aback by that. The way I look at it is that if offenders do not want to pay the victim surcharge, maybe they should not commit crimes. That might be a fairly simple way of dealing with this.

Is the member saying that those convicted of crimes should not be accountable to the victims of crime with a victim surcharge?

• (1820)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer this question, because I really do not appreciate it when people try to put words in my mouth.

No, I do not believe that criminals have absolutely no accountability to victims. That is not at all what I said. I simply said that perhaps there are other solutions to consider before imposing a surcharge on offenders and taking away judges' discretionary powers. That is what I said. I want to make this clear to the member.

I simply cannot agree with a philosophy that tends to adversely affect offenders' families, as the gentleman mentioned, or with a philosophy that makes someone else pay for their parents', their brother's or sister's mistakes. This only makes victims out of the family members of people who commit crimes or break the law. They are the ones who end up paying, not the criminals themselves.

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech.

All afternoon, I have listened to debates and questions. I am asking myself a question about this bill. Does this bill really help victims? Does it not, rather, seek to take a little more revenge on those who have committed crimes?

My question for my colleague is this. Will this bill really help victims or is there not a better way to help them?

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting question. If this bill helps victims, then that is a good thing. However, in my opinion, this is not the ultimate solution. This bill might create a small budgetary surplus for some victims organizations, but I do not think that anything special can be done for victims with \$100.

In my opinion, the government is using victims to seek revenge on offenders and criminals. Yet, in the end, victims do not have much to gain.

I cannot emphasize this enough: we need to fight poverty; we need to focus on prevention; we need to provide housing for the homeless; we need to make sure that people have enough to eat. I believe that these types of solutions are the ones that will really help to combat crime.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative member made a comment giving the impression that this victim surcharge could prevent crimes from happening.

Is the member as convinced as I am that having a victim surcharge will not actually prevent crimes from happening? I do not think we will have criminals worrying that they will need to pay an extra surcharge if they commit a crime.

With very little imagination we could come up with a lot of programs that would be effective in preventing crimes from taking place but this is not one of them. Is that a fair assessment?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, I am not in the shoes of an offender, but I think that someone who commits mischief is not even thinking about the likelihood of being fined in the future. I do not think that a \$100 fine is going to dissuade anyone from committing any type of crime.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before I give the floor to the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, I will remind her that the period for government orders will end around 6:30 p.m. and I will have to interrupt her at that time.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

• (1825)

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak to this bill. I will share my time with the member for Laval—Les Îles tomorrow, unfortunately.

Over the course of the debates, I have had some questions about some of the answers I have received. The first question has to do with victim fine surcharges. I asked whether there were any adjustments in relation to income. For the same crime, does someone with a much higher income pay a much higher surcharge? The answer was that it was possible, but not mandatory. That is a general question I have about the surcharge.

Take, for example, someone who caused an accident while driving drunk. Say that he injured someone; therefore, there would be victims of this crime. If the driver earns a seven-figure income, compared to someone who struggles to earn an income of more than four figures, we would have to explore the possibilities in committee. We must be logical. If we want to hold offenders accountable, then we must ensure that the punishments are consistent. The surcharge that someone with a lower income pays must not be the equivalent of the cost of a pack of gum for someone with a higher income. The committee must examine that, and I hope that people will be able to delve into that aspect a little deeper.

I also have questions about discretionary powers for judges. As I explained, I am a little concerned about that. For example, a judge could use his discretionary power to say that it would cause harm, that it is obvious that the person does not have money and that if he has to pay a surcharge, it would cause harm. The judge could say that. That it would not cause harm to the individual in question, but to his children. The judge knows that if he imposes this surcharge, the person would not be able to pay it or would be forced to go without, and in the end, it might be the children who would not eat that week. Judges have the ability to reflect and to question. I do not think they do it as a rule. They can do so in situations where it is very much appropriate. I am concerned about this discretionary power being eliminated.

We need to be logical about this. If the court imposes a \$100 surcharge and it costs \$350 to have the bailiff or someone else collect that money, that is a \$250 loss. Could that \$250 not be given directly to victims? That would be much simpler. More money would go to victims instead of having the court pay \$350 to collect \$100. In the end, victims could end up with nothing.

That is another aspect the committee will have to take a very close look at to ensure that the system is efficient. It would not make sense to remove judges' discretionary power while leaving victims empty-handed.

I would like to raise one final point about this bill. The Elizabeth Fry Society has expressed concerns about the impact of surcharges on poor aboriginals who cannot pay. I am a nurse, and I often work with these people. I spend a lot of time in my communities. In many cases, the children of adults offenders will bear the brunt of these surcharges. They may not eat that week. I would like the committee members to take some time to think about that.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to express these concerns. I hope that the committee will discuss them.

• (1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue will have five minutes to complete her speech and five minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this motion.

Adjournment Proceedings

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

HEALTH

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to take the opportunity to revisit my question about health care spending in the budget. We are all well aware that this is an issue that is constantly ranked as very important to most Canadians.

It is also well known that the funding formula for the Canada health transfer is an ongoing concern for the provinces that, for the most part, deliver health care. The role of the federal government has traditionally been to provide leadership to foster uniformity in the service that is experienced by Canadians.

[Translation]

Recently, there has been an increasingly obvious difference between Canada's provincial health care systems. We also know that the experiences of rural communities and northern communities are quite different than what is happening in the rest of Canada. Furthermore, the gap between health care provided to first nation Canadians and that provided to everyone else is also growing.

[English]

Federal leadership is required now more than ever to ensure Canadians have access to quality health care across the country. These are facts that frame this debate. Yet, when I asked the minister about downloading more of the costs for delivering health care on the provinces and the plan to limit the Canada health transfer in the near future, I received a response that relied on a single talking point, stretched to unbelievable lengths. It was that this budget contained record amounts of health care spending. This answer dismissed the meat of the issue and the fact that the provinces were not happy with health care funding in the budget.

The minister also brushed aside my reminder that the Conservatives had promised they would not touch health transfers.

It is clear the government missed an opportunity to strengthen health care.

The bigger concern seems to have been getting the right talking point when it should have been finding a way to stabilize and improve health care delivery, which is inseparable from funding.

Canada is changing and stability for the Canada health transfer would help the provinces and allow them to develop longer-term plans. As our population both grows and ages, we need to ensure our public health care system is able to match these trends. When one considers regional challenges and persistent challenges, such as the struggle for many to find a family doctor, it is clear that this is no time to rest on our laurels.

Adjournment Proceedings

Yet, when we raise the concerns of the provinces in question period, the government tells us it has allocated record amounts, which actually turn out to be incremental increases that leave the provinces struggling to maintain services and, in some cases, are forcing cuts that are felt at the very front line.

Worse yet, the plan to tie the transfer to GDP-based averaging means the shortfalls would become more acute.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has told us that the federal share of Canada health transfer will decrease to the point that the provinces will be short-changed by \$31 billion in just 12 years. The problem then becomes one that it is shouldered increasingly by the provinces. As the money transferred to provinces shrinks, the leadership role and authority of the federal government to ensure a certain level of service for most Canadians shrinks with it. In places like rural northern Ontario the prospect of simple things like providing enough family doctors becomes less certain despite promises to reverse this trend.

Given the opinion and experience of the provinces as well as the overwhelming desires of Canadians, surely the better option for the government is to commit to a funding formula that, at a bare minimum, maintains service.

Is it not time to reconsider the plan for GDP averaging for the Canada health transfer and commit to stable funding that protects health care?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to elaborate on the response offered by the Minister of Health on March 30.

Our government plays an active role in health, while respecting provincial and territorial responsibility and jurisdiction. Our universally accessible health care system is a source of pride for people across this great country. We recognize that Canadians expect the health care system to be there when they and their families need it, both today and into the future. This is why our government has maintained an unwavering commitment to continue the publicly funded health care system that Canadians have come to expect.

Unlike previous governments that balanced their books on the backs of the provinces and territories, we have committed to long-term stable funding that will see health transfers reach historic levels by the end of the decade. Health transfers from Ottawa to provinces and territories have grown by nearly 35% since we formed government. For the next five years, federal health transfers will continue to increase by 6% per year. This rate of increase is well above what provinces and territories are spending on health care. As the Canadian Institute for Health Information's data shows, federal transfers are projected to grow faster than average provincial spending on health care.

[Translation]

Federal transfers for health are increasing at a much higher rate than provincial and territorial health care spending.

[English]

This increase in transfer payments would provide provinces and territories with the ability to reform the health care system and make it more sustainable. Our investments will help preserve Canada's

health care system so it is there when Canadians need it. Provinces and territories have recently identified health care innovation as a priority. Our government applauds the collaborative work by provinces and territories on issues of common concern.

[Translation]

Our government is investing over \$1 billion annually to support innovation through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canada Health Infoway and other programs.

[English]

Our government is engaging with provinces and territories on ways in which we can continue to support their efforts to improve health care and promote the long-term sustainability of the health care system through existing federal initiatives.

We recently announced that we will invest over \$238 million in the Canadian Institute for Health Information over the next three years to support the collection and reporting of objective information on health system performance. This will result in more and better information about the state of health care in Canada and the overall health of Canadians. If we cannot measure how the system works, then it is hard to know how to improve it. That is why performance measures and reporting is increasingly used across leading health systems internationally to drive system change.

In closing, this government remains committed to building on our effective publicly funded health care system. By continuing to provide sustainable and predictable funding and working with our provincial and territorial counterparts, we will continue to support our universally accessible health care system so that it meets the evolving needs of Canadians.

● (1835)

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mr. Speaker, I say hogwash to that. It is not just the Canada health transfers that show the government's hesitant support for health care. There were many measures in the omnibus budget that point to this: the \$310 million cut to Health Canada; the complete gutting of groups that provided research and services specific to women and first nations; and the seeming abandonment of the accountability mechanism proposed for the Canada health transfer committed to in the 2003-04 health accord. This completes the picture of a government that seems nowhere near as concerned with Canada's health care system as it should be.

Instead of treating the federal government as a business, the government needs to remember it serves the people of Canada first and foremost, those same people who value health care and like to have peace of mind knowing that help is available to them regardless of their ability to pay. We need to start building the next generation of health care in our country.

Why are the Conservatives not looking at areas where we can control costs, such as bulk drug purchasing, and move on reforms from the Romanow report and the 2003-04 health accord designed to improve our system? That is my question.

Mr. Colin Carrie: What is hogwash, Mr. Speaker, is that the member obviously did not listen to my speech.

This government understands the importance Canadians place on maintaining a high-quality health care system. That is why we have continued to increase health funding to record levels and set it on a sustainable path for the future. We are providing long-term, stable funding arrangements with the provinces that will see transfers reach the historic level of \$40 billion by the end of the decade.

● (1840)

[Translation]

[English]

Moving forward, our government is exploring potential partnerships to support provinces and territories in their pursuit of innovative health reforms and to demonstrate results to Canadians. We look forward to working with our provincial and territorial partners and all Canadians to make Canada's health care system the best it can be.

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to kick off the adjournment debate and also the return of Parliament under the banner of the incompatibility of the Conservative program with the realities of the communities in my riding.

Although the purpose of the original question put to the Minister of Indian Affairs —this minister's title has changed a number of times, but I am a traditionalist—was to expose this government's lack of respect for environmental and aboriginal socio-cultural imperatives, I must say that this attitude also extends to all of my constituents.

Like my colleagues, I was called to travel in my riding on a number of occasions during the summer to give speeches and make public appearances. Each time, I made a point of emphasizing the fact that the Conservative members were probably doing damage control. In other words, a number of concrete legislative measures that were adopted and implemented over the course of the year were received with trepidation and curtailed enthusiasm throughout the country.

I come from a riding where natural resources play an important role. We have a growing forestry industry and some mining is also taking place. The fishery, and its associated economic value, has also recently made some gains.

It is important to understand that we are seeing people throughout the world take a stand. This is not something that has been happening only in the past year; rather, it is an ongoing trend. My riding is no exception. People are taking a stand, in both word and deed, that often goes against the current government's agenda.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ordinary citizens are becoming more aware of the fact that the exploration and use of resources at all levels are likely to be harmful and to have a negative impact on their quality of life. I am going to make a distinction between corporate citizens and ordinary citizens in this speech.

That being said, I would like to point out that, any time I speak in public, I emphasize the fact that this government should invariably reconsider many of its positions, particularly in terms of the environment, if it wants to maintain the small amount of public support it has for its legislative measures and the action it is taking.

With regard to this small amount of public support, the focus of the Conservatives' agenda is first and foremost to please industry and the corporate machine. Often, these measures promote economic growth. However, social and cultural growth, as well as environmental considerations, are often left by the wayside in the measures that this government is planning and using. Now, the Conservatives will likely have to reconsider their position because, in the end, the corporate citizen has only a very small influence when it comes to exercising the right held by every ordinary citizen, and that is the right to vote.

The next general election in 2015 will be decisive; the current government will have to reposition itself and reassess its actions to ultimately respond to the expectations of ordinary citizens.

● (1845)

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the question from the hon. member for Manicouagan.

I assure the hon. member that our government takes its legal duty to consult with aboriginal groups very seriously. Not only is consultation an important part of good governance, sound policy development and decision-making, but Canada has a legal duty to consult aboriginal groups where appropriate. For example, consultation with aboriginal people is an important pillar of the responsible resource development initiative that was announced recently. This initiative is our government's plan to modernize our regulatory system so that Canada's natural resources are responsibly developed for the benefit of all Canadians.

In 2010, natural resource sectors employed over 760,000 workers in communities throughout the country. In the next 10 years more than 500 major economic projects, representing over \$500 billion in new investments, are planned across Canada. Unfortunately, major economic projects in Canada are currently subjected to long, unpredictable and potentially endless delays because of a needlessly complex and duplicative approval process.

Adjournment Proceedings

That is why our government is taking action in the economic action plan to streamline the review process for major economic projects. Our government will put in place a system of one project, one review in a clearly defined time period. We propose to do this by enhancing consultations with aboriginal peoples and by making reviews of major natural resource projects more predictable and timely. We also want to reduce duplication in the review process and strengthen environmental protection. Streamlining the approval process for major economic projects will result in the creation of good, well-paying and skilled jobs while still protecting the environment.

I would also add that our government takes a whole of government approach to consultation to ensure that meaningful consultation is carried out on resource projects and other activities. Meaningful consultation also supports aboriginal peoples in their efforts to improve social well-being and economic prosperity and develop healthier, more sustainable communities. These consultations also support aboriginal people to participate more fully in Canada's political, social and economic development.

Our government continues to work in concert with aboriginal peoples because we want informed decisions to be made to meet today's needs and those of future generations.

[Translation]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the problem.

The member on the other side of the House said that consultations had been carried out in the communities, and that there was also a fiduciary relationship.

I think that is *pro forma* because if you think about it, there is always a possibility.

When they talk about consulting the communities, there is a chance that a community says no, the equivalent of stonewalling, but that cannot be true for every project. However, it is a possibility. During a consultation, it is possible to oppose a project.

Now, they are trying to limit debate here. They simply talk about an obligation to consult our country's aboriginal communities. I

would say that there is an obligation to consult all Canadians because this will ultimately have repercussions for all Canadians.

The government is trying to be divisive, to keep people in a vacuum. It says that it will look at what is going on in aboriginal communities in the country, that it will speak to them independently. It is dividing and conquering.

That is what we are seeing. In my own community, they say that we should not go talk to the people of Natuashish. They are not the same. We must not talk to the people of Mashteuiats, because they are not the same as the Innu of Uashat. The government is trying to be divisive. I would say that this is in order to prevent people from opposing and objecting. Public approval is needed to move forward with—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, our government takes its consultation obligations seriously.

As the hon. member for Manicouagan knows, our government has a legal duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate aboriginal groups if it has been determined that treaty and aboriginal rights could be impacted.

That is why our government meets its legal duty to consult through meaningful and direct consultation with aboriginal communities. We want their views to be taken into consideration when making decisions on projects that could adversely affect their rights. This meaningful consultation supports the Canadian economy by moving projects forward.

I will repeat again: meaningful consultation is a priority for our government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:49 p.m.)

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