



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

HUMA • NUMBER 010 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

—

Chair

Ms. Candice Hoeppner

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Candice Hoeppner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC)): I would like to call to order the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The orders of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), are the main estimates, 2010-11, votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 under Human Resources and Skills Development, referred to the committee on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, and, pursuant to Standing Order 81(7), the report on plans and priorities, 2010-11, of the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development.

We are very pleased to welcome two ministers today: the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, and the Honourable Lisa Raitt, Minister of Labour.

We are so pleased to have you here today.

We also want to welcome the officials who are with you. We have with us officials from the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development as well as officials from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Thank you for being here.

We look forward to hearing from you. I will just let you know that we'll have your presentations and then we will allow the members to ask you questions.

If it's all right, Minister Finley, we can begin with you.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development): Sure. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Merci beaucoup.

It's a real pleasure to appear before this committee once again, this time to present the 2010-11 main estimates and also the report on plans and priorities for Human Resources and Skills Development and for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which outlines our government's plans for the year ahead.

Let me begin, if I may, by putting these plans in context. Last year, the world experienced the worst economic downturn since the Second World War. Although Canada has fared better than many other countries, Canadian families were significantly affected by the global recession.

That's why our Conservative government took action through our economic action plan. This comprehensive plan provided invest-

ments to help those who were hardest hit by creating and maintaining jobs and by helping Canadians prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.

Madam Chair, we can often get bogged down by the numbers, but what Canadians care about most are results. So what impact is our action plan having on them and on their families? Well, I am proud to say that the results so far show that our economic action plan is working.

[Translation]

First, Canadians who have lost their jobs and are having a hard time getting back to work are receiving support through our enhancements to the employment insurance system.

To date, over 580,000 unemployed Canadians have received an extra five weeks of EI benefits.

• (1535)

[English]

In addition, the extra support we've extended to long-tenured workers will help up to 200,000 Canadians who have worked hard, paid premiums for years, and now need some extra help.

We've made sure that Canadians are receiving their benefits in a timely manner. Despite a very large spike in EI claims last year, we were able to maintain our service standards, and Canadians received the benefits in the same timeframe that they did before the global downturn took hold.

Second, we're helping Canadians get the training and work experience they need to transition to the jobs of tomorrow. This is part of our government's commitment to have a workforce that is the best educated, most skilled, and most flexible in the world. Close to one million Canadians received skills training in the last year alone, thanks to our government's unprecedented investments.

[Translation]

We know that older workers often have difficulty finding a new job because they have limited skills. That's why we increased investments in the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers by an additional \$60 million.

Keeping older Canadians in the work force is becoming increasingly important due to the demographic challenges our country is facing and because of their invaluable knowledge and mentoring abilities.

[English]

We're also encouraging Canadians to pursue the skilled trades and to complete their apprenticeship training. Over 140,000 Canadians have received the \$2,000 apprenticeship incentive grant since it was introduced in January 2007. Close to 20,000 Canadians have already received the \$2,000 apprenticeship completion grant since it was introduced less than a year ago.

Our government is committed to helping Canadians receive a post-secondary education. We have significantly improved student financing. For example, over 265,000 students received grants this year under our new, improved program. That's money that they don't have to pay back. And that's 120,000 more students than benefited under the old program.

Third, we are creating and protecting jobs. The enhanced work-sharing program has been a huge success right across the country. In fact, to date, over 255,000 Canadians' jobs have been protected. This means that these Canadians can continue to put food on their table for their families and that businesses can keep their skilled workers.

In addition, we froze EI premiums last year and this year. This means that Canadians are able to keep more of their money when they need it most and employers are able to maintain their skilled workforce.

Furthermore, our investments in housing are providing Canadians a hand up while they are creating tens of thousands of jobs right across the country.

We know that youth employment was particularly hard hit this past year. Our infusion of an extra \$10 million in the Canada summer jobs program last year resulted in almost 40,000 jobs being created for students last summer. This year the program will again receive an additional investment of \$10 million that we expect will produce the same results.

Madam Chair, the results so far make it very clear: our economic action plan is working. It's creating jobs and it's helping Canadians get back to work. Now we're seeing several positive signs of economic recovery. In January we saw the largest monthly increase in GDP since December 2006, and the fifth consecutive month of economic growth. In March, employment increased by 17,900. This was the sixth month of job gains in the last eight months. Since July 2009, about 180,000 net new jobs have been created.

The global accounting firm KPMG recently ranked Canada the most competitive industrialized country for job creation. Just last week, the OECD predicted that Canada's economic growth will lead all G7 countries this year by a wide margin.

This is good news for Canadians and for the Canadian economy, but we cannot become complacent. Our economic recovery is fragile. It's imperative that we continue with the implementation of year two of our economic action plan.

• (1540)

[Translation]

That is what the Main Estimates and the Report on Plans and Priorities are all about. They confirm our commitment to creating jobs, helping Canadian families and continuing our unprecedented

investments in training to help Canadians transition into a new career and to ensure Canadians have the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow.

[English]

It's important to note that the main estimates and RPP do not include the smart investments made in budget 2010. Budget 2010 reaffirms our commitment to year two of the economic action plan, and even builds upon those investments.

For example, budget 2010 extends the enhanced work-sharing program so that Canadians can keep their jobs. It includes significant investments to help students obtain employment and work experience. It provides additional support to Canadian families, including the families of our armed forces members. It also includes funding to educate seniors to protect them against financial abuse. It adds to our government's unparalleled support for persons with disabilities by encouraging their full participation as well as their financial security.

[Translation]

The stimulus was necessary and it is delivering results. However, it was short term and targeted and will soon come to an end. Once implementation of our Economic Action Plan is complete, our government will focus on returning the budget to balance.

[English]

Canadians work very hard for their money and they expect their government to use it wisely and in a prudent manner. We believe that, just like Canadians, government should live within its means. We believe this is important because, over the long term, a balanced budget means better jobs and stronger growth. It's also the best way to ensure that Canada's social infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

But just as important as what we will do is what we won't do.

We will not raise taxes on hard-working Canadian families or on small and medium-sized businesses that are integral to job creation.

We will not cut transfers like the previous Liberal governments did.

We will not engage in massive new spending programs that Canadians are not asking for and cannot afford.

Madam Chair, our Conservative government's number one priority remains the economic recovery. Canadians and members of the committee can rest assured that our government will remain vigilant.

[Translation]

We will stay the course and focus on the task at hand of implementing year two of our Economic Action Plan to help sustain Canada's economic recovery. We are focused on maintaining Canada's economic advantage now and for the future.

[English]

Thanks to the investments in the economic action plan, along with the hard work and ingenuity of Canadians and Canadian business, I am confident that Canada will emerge from this recession stronger than ever before.

Merci, Madam Chair.

After the remarks of my counterpart, the Minister of Labour, I will be happy to answer your questions.

The Chair: *Merci beaucoup, Minister Finley.*

We'll now go to Minister Raitt please.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour): Madam Chair and everyone, thank you for having me here today. I am extremely pleased to be here along with my colleague, the Honourable Diane Finley, to meet you all, to have an opportunity to talk to you a little bit about the labour program, and to highlight how its mandate and activities are really there to support hard-working Canadians as well as successful Canadian businesses.

Federally regulated enterprises are the ones that we in the Ministry of Labour oversee. They are represented in some key economic sectors, so ensuring their health and prosperity is essential to our economy. As well, doing so strengthens Canada's innovation and makes Canada a destination of choice for new business investment.

There's no question that Canadians spend a lot of time at work. There are very few things as important to a Canadian's quality of life as a safe, encouraging workplace and a dependable source of income. A well-functioning workplace also allows workers and managers to focus on productivity and innovation. A strong working relationship between workers and managers will help, in the end, to contribute to Canada's economic vitality.

This underscores the key role of the labour program, which is to promote a safe, innovative, productive, and cooperative workplace. It's within this balanced framework that the partners can and do thrive.

I want to start by reminding members of and picking up on what Minister Finley said: that our government's top priority is to complete year two of Canada's economic action plan. Through this economic action plan, our government took decisive steps to protect incomes, create jobs, ease credit markets, and help workers and communities get back on their feet.

Within this context, I want to highlight for you some of the activities that the labour program implements to support this renewed prosperity and well-being for the benefit of all Canadians.

First, the wage earner protection program, or WEPP, is an initiative that has been a tremendous success in responding to the economic downturn. This program supports workers at a really difficult time in their lives. It provides timely compensation for

wages, vacation pay, severance pay, and termination pay when their employers go bankrupt.

Since our government implemented this program in July of 2008, and with its expansion in Canada's economic action plan, the program has played an important role in supporting workers who were owed money by bankrupt employers. In the past fiscal year, over 16,000 Canadians have benefited from the program, with some \$36 million in compensation having been paid.

Another important area of activity is the mediation and conciliation services that are provided to federally regulated employers and unions that are engaged in collective bargaining. These services encourage the resolution of differences without a work stoppage. That's an outcome that is important not only to the parties but also to the Canadian economy on the whole.

Of the approximately 650 collective agreements reached in the federal jurisdiction in the last four years with the assistance of federal mediators and conciliators, over 95% were settled without a strike or a lockout. This is an impressive record and it has remained intact even in this economic climate.

Now, going forward, we'll continue with this strong track record by pursuing proactive interventions, including preventative mediation, which is designed to improve overall labour relations and reduce the likelihood of major labour disputes.

In the second phase of Canada's economic action plan, our government reaffirmed its dedication to the successful completion of free trade and to making progress on concluding new free trade agreements. The labour program plays a key role in this area by supporting the government's international trade agenda through negotiation and implementation of labour cooperation agreements, or LCAs. These accompany each free trade agreement. The government is committed to pursuing labour relations with international partners that respect labour standards and to ensuring that human rights and increased economic activity both are emphasized during these negotiations.

I am very pleased to report that LCAs have been signed with Peru, Colombia, and Jordan. Negotiations are ongoing with other key trading partners. Not only do these agreements reflect and promote the values that we as Canadians cherish, but they also serve to ensure that level playing field for Canadian companies working in the global economy.

● (1545)

On the domestic front, employment standards play a key role in defining responsibilities for workplace partners as they relate to such things as leave, hours of work, and, of course, pay. As well, occupational health and safety legislation ensures that employees are safe from injury and occupational illness, because, fundamentally, safe workplaces mean more efficient work environments and of course higher productivity.

When these standards are not respected, the labour program plays an enforcement role. In other words, the program is responsible for making sure that the ground rules for safe, fair, productive workplaces are understood and followed. That benefits everyone involved.

Similarly, it's essential to ensure that the rules under which we expect workplace partners to operate are effective and efficient, that they contribute to positive results, and that they continue to meet the needs of all the parties. So, during 2009, the labour program consulted with stakeholders and the public on how federal employment standards can be modernized. We all recognize that the 21st century workplace is vastly different from the workplaces in the past.

We know that Canadians need support in balancing their work, their family, and their civic responsibilities and that employers need flexibility in managing their workforce and their business. Currently we are assessing the results from the consultations and we're taking a view to ensuring that we're providing the necessary flexibility to support the needs both of the employees and of the employers in the current economy.

Madam Chair, the final area I'd like to highlight is our government's employment equity programs. These encourage the establishment of working environments that are free from barriers for four designated groups in Canada: women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.

Our efforts in this area include ensuring that employers understand and meet their obligations under the Employment Equity Act, and that helps promote equitable workplaces for all Canadians. By identifying barriers to the designated groups, gaps in representation are defined and steps can be taken to reduce these hurdles.

To give you an example, CIBC has a women's network and a mentoring circle for women in the workplace. Telus has implemented a "mapping your path to balance" program, which helps women find a work/life balance. I'm sure there are a lot of women around this table who would like to subscribe to that program.

For aboriginal peoples, considerable work is under way in many federally regulated companies to ensure that there is an open and inclusive workplace. Alliance, for example, has put in place a full-time aboriginal relations lead at its Calgary headquarters, while CTV sends its job postings to various aboriginal associations, such as Quebec Native Women Inc.

We also support the racism-free workplace strategy, which helps us to foster inclusive workplaces that can take full advantage of the skills and talents of all Canadians. Immigration can contribute greatly to Canada's growth over the next 20 years, and new immigrant workers, along with the increase in the aboriginal population, account for all of the growth in the labour force.

So with a growing labour market, it is essential that we foster inclusive workplaces that welcome Canadians of all backgrounds, not only because this makes Canada a more just society and better able to attract talent from abroad, but because it also allows employers to take full advantage of the varied range of abilities across the Canadian work pool. This makes our economy stronger and benefits all Canadians.

The full and fair participation of all members of Canada's workforce will become increasingly important. These programs that I've mentioned play an important part in supporting that key objective.

In 2009 the labour program undertook a strategic review of its activities to ensure that its programs remain relevant and that Canadians are receiving value for money. The outcome of that review, which was announced under budget 2010, will generate some \$7.3 million in savings by fiscal year 2012-13.

The strategic review process confirmed the continuing importance of the labour program's mandate to foster fair, productive, safe workplaces and cooperative work relations. It demonstrated that our activities fall squarely within the defined roles and responsibilities of the federal government and also allowed us to bring enhanced focus and clarity to the longer-term vision for the organization. I am confident that the labour program will be a stronger, more focused organization as a result of its strategic review process.

This is the overview of the labour program, Madam Chair, demonstrating how we're helping to build and maintain a strong, adaptable economy by ensuring our workplaces are safe, fair, healthy, and productive. I look forward to responding with my colleagues to questions from the committee.

● (1550)

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We will begin our first round of questions for the committee members. I'll just remind all members that this first round of questioning is seven minutes long, which will include your questions and answers.

We will begin with Mr. Savage, please.

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ministers, for taking the time to be with us.

Minister Finley, why did you not refund CCL?

Hon. Diane Finley: The Canadian Council on Learning, as you're probably aware, was set up several years ago with a very defined five-year lifespan for the funding. That was the way it was established. We did extend some funding for a year because they hadn't used it all, but there was always a defined term for the funding.

We've identified that we do need a broader range of labour market information. Quite frankly, with the labour market situation as it is, with labour and skill shortages in many cases, we need a broader range of information. We've worked with the provinces and territories on identifying some of those gaps. We need more international information.

We've consulted with employers. They agree with us. We are working with the provinces and territories to develop information that is going to be more timely and more responsive to the needs of employers, post-secondary institutions, and the provinces and territories.

● (1555)

Mr. Michael Savage: This work is exactly what CCL was doing so well, according to everybody from Don Drummond to the secretary-general of the OECD. In fact, CCL's model, the composite learning index, is now being adopted by the OECD nations, it's that good, and nobody can understand why CCL was de-funded.

You were here last February. In testimony, you indicated the following: "The funding for that"—CCL—"has been extended to the end of next year. There will be discussions about the future".

How many times did you meet with Dr. Paul Cappon of CCL or the board of directors to discuss that funding?

Hon. Diane Finley: My officials met with them on an ongoing basis, particularly since the extension of the funding, which I did approve a year ago. But what we've identified, in consultation with the stakeholders, many of whom are key users of labour market information, is that there were other needs that weren't being met. We wanted to explore those.

We need more than data that is already available so we are working with the provinces and territories—with the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, as an example—to find ways that will better meet all of the needs of those who are looking for jobs, those who are trying to prepare students and others for jobs, and employers who are looking to find people.

Mr. Michael Savage: Thank you.

Now, I understand that the CCL has asked to meet with you on a number of occasions and you have not met with them. Is that what you're telling me?

Hon. Diane Finley: The decision is past. It's done. The funding has ended.

Mr. Michael Savage: Did this ever go to cabinet, this possibility of extending the funding for CCL?

Hon. Diane Finley: I couldn't discuss cabinet conversations.

Mr. Michael Savage: Was this a political decision?

Hon. Diane Finley: I could not discuss cabinet conversations whether they did or did not exist.

Mr. Michael Savage: Your officials indicated...and I have a letter that you sent to Robert Giroux of CCL on May 8 of last year wherein you indicate that officials are in fact discussing with CCL "stabilizing strategies for the organization".

It seems pretty clear that CCL was blindsided by this loss. They asked to meet with you as the minister and you would not meet with CCL to discuss this.

Hon. Diane Finley: The fact is that when the previous Liberal government set up the funding arrangement with CCL, it was for a defined term of five years, and five years only. There were no renewal clauses in it.

After the five-year period, or near the end of it, CCL did approach us, saying that they hadn't spent all five years' worth of the money, and could they have that money still, to continue for another year? We did agree to that, but it was in full recognition that it was the end of the funding. There were no promises made of any future funding.

During that period of time we listened to our stakeholders. We listened to the people who were looking for—

Mr. Michael Savage: Well, Minister, with respect, I'm hoping that your answers would be—

Hon. Diane Finley: —learning information that they could use and we responded to their request.

Mr. Michael Savage: —approximately as long as my questions. I don't think there are many stakeholders—in fact, I don't think there are any—who would say that CCL hasn't done a fabulous job. If you need more information, you might build onto them.

In fact, there's a former senior person from Statistics Canada who indicated that it would cost them \$25 million over and above CCL to do the kind of work that CCL was doing. That doesn't make any economic sense.

Hon. Diane Finley: There's a question of quality, there's a question of quantity, and there's a question of relevance. Many of the employers with whom we spoke, many of the people who use learning information to formulate their plans for their industry, their sector, and their educational institution, wanted a more global perspective. They indicated that to us.

We have been and are working with the provinces and territories to develop information and information sources that will meet the needs better than they were being met.

Mr. Michael Savage: When do you expect that you would have a new CCL?

Hon. Diane Finley: Well, we're not looking to make a new CCL, as you put it. What we're looking for is timely, responsive labour market information—

Mr. Michael Savage: When will you have that? You've cancelled this.

Hon. Diane Finley: —and that's not a simple process. Nor may it be just one program or organization; it may be a series of them. That's what we're discussing. We're looking at all the alternatives at this point.

Mr. Michael Savage: Why was CCL not allowed to keep the \$2 million that was left in its fund as of April 1?

Hon. Diane Finley: I'm sorry?

Mr. Michael Savage: Why was CCL not allowed to keep the \$2 million that it had left?

Hon. Diane Finley: The funding was given to them to spend over five years. They had six years in which to spend it. They didn't. That was taxpayers' dollars to apply to a certain project. Obviously they didn't need the funding for that project, so we claimed those taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Michael Savage: A letter was sent to you asking for an extension and a letter was sent to the Prime Minister, so why were they not allowed to extend that \$2 million past this year?

Hon. Diane Finley: The arrangements had been made over a year ago—

Mr. Michael Savage: Okay, okay. So there was no reason.

On the enabling accessibility fund, can you tell me what is the status of the two \$15-million projects that were the major projects of the last tranche of EAF?

•(1600)

Hon. Diane Finley: The enabling accessibility fund has been a great success. There are well over 300 projects taking place across Canada. The two of them to which you refer are both proceeding. There have been a couple of delays, for different reasons with each one.

Mr. Michael Savage: So is that money gone, the same thing as CCL? I assume that money goes back, does it? Or do those organizations get to keep the \$15 million?

Hon. Diane Finley: No, as with the CCL, the money has been extended so that they can complete the projects.

Mr. Michael Savage: I see. It is an important project, enabling accessibility. Is your constituency office accessible?

Hon. Diane Finley: Unfortunately, no. We've made many efforts to do that. The funding system through the House of Commons has not made that possible, much to my dismay.

Mr. Michael Savage: Well, my constituency office is accessible—

Hon. Diane Finley: Good. I'm glad to hear that.

Mr. Michael Savage: I think most of us would make sure that we had accessible offices for people. I would think it's particularly important for the minister.

Hon. Diane Finley: It is. It's very important.

Mr. Michael Savage: Are you saying the House of Commons should pay for that, for you to have your office to be...?

Hon. Diane Finley: And I have made approaches and I have been denied.

Mr. Michael Savage: Approaches?

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now go to Monsieur Lessard, *s'il vous plaît*.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair. I would also like to thank the ministers for being here with their staff today.

I'm going to waste no time since I have seven questions. With the little time I have, you won't be able to answer all seven. So I'm going to read them all at once, and I'd like to get some answers in writing to those you can't answer today.

My first question concerns Canada Summer Jobs. The process for granting summer jobs is currently underway. This involves a budget of \$107 million for the third year. It has been \$107 million for the past three years. It hasn't budged. I'd like to understand one thing.

The cities, like Montreal, had a specific budget for summer jobs. This year in Montreal, the jobs that were taken over by the city were directed to the constituencies. That means that for each of the constituencies, approximately 30 jobs encroach on the budgets of the constituencies concerned, that is between 30 and 35 jobs. I'd like to know whether you have cut the city's budget. Will these jobs have to be taken into account by the constituencies? If so, will it be acknowledged that this is a major cut to the budgets, since the city's budget has been cut?

My second question concerns the New Horizons for Seniors Program. Budget 2010 provides for an additional \$10 million for this program. And yet, when we look at the situation, the total budget is \$26 million, which was already the case. Are we talking about an additional \$10 million, or is that amount already included in the total of \$26 million? I'd like someone to give us an answer to sort out this issue. Again with regard to the New Horizons for Seniors Program, the budget allocated for Quebec represents 17% of the overall budget. Is there a reason why Quebec does not have a share of the budget proportionate to its population, that is to say approximately 23%? That's six percentage points less than the percentage that should be allocated to it.

There's something else. There are three major items in this budget, one of which concerns awareness. Only 4.3% of the amounts in this budget are allocated to Quebec. I'd like to understand why so little is being allocated to Quebec.

My fourth point concerns the Guaranteed Income Supplement. It will be remembered that, last summer—this probably also occurred in your own ridings—a number of citizens contacted us to say their Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits had declined by 4% to 20%. That was directly related to an increase on January 1, 2008. Are we to understand that the funds allocated to the Guaranteed Income Supplement declined as a result of a planned increase in the CPP and QPP in 2010? This is in your \$200 million budget in 2009 under the Main Estimates. This is like the rising tide lifting all boats. I'd like you to inform us about that.

With regard to the Accessibility Fund, the Main Estimates grant nothing to that fund. As we understand it, you are terminating it. Would it be possible for you to provide us with a list and all the information concerning the constituencies that have received funding under this fund and to indicate to us the nature of the projects? A number of projects were not forwarded to us on the ground that they were not being carried out, but I now believe we are in our third year and the budgets authorized should be in the process of implementation.

•(1605)

With regard to the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, it appears the budget was only \$7.8 million in 2009, in the middle of the economic crisis. Do you have the figures on the number of workers we were able to help with that amount?

I will conclude my questions with this one. What are we to understand of the restriction measures that you are applying to programs for illiteracy and essential skills enhancement? We're trying to analyze the causes of poverty and we know that the illiteracy program is one of the measures that can help people emerge from poverty. In 2007, the budget was \$48 million and it was cut to \$28 million, and now you are preparing to cut it to \$21.5 million in 2010. How are we to understand this kind of measure when we are in a process of committing to helping people emerge from poverty? I'll stop there for the moment, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: You've actually left only 30 seconds for the minister to answer your questions.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: Madam Chair, I also asked for the answers that can't be given to me today to be provided in writing within a fairly brief period of time.

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Minister. Do you want to respond to that very briefly?

Hon. Diane Finley: I will, if I may.

[Translation]

I would prefer to have the opportunity to answer here so that everyone can have good answers and good explanations.

Mr. Yves Lessard: Pardon me, minister, but there's often only one answer and she is at times very evasive.

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Lessard—

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: We have to have the right answers.

[English]

The Chair: We'll let the minister respond and then we will go to the next committee member.

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Finley: Thank you. We are making decisions regarding summer jobs. We have received a number of applications. We are evaluating them and no decision has been made at this time.

With regard to the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, there is indeed money. Approximately 7,000 individuals have already received funds under that program.

There are a number of ways to provide money for literacy efforts, an issue you have addressed. This is indeed very important, as you just said. To have well educated people, they must be literate. So there are programs like the gifts. There are also programs with the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. There are a number of ways to offer programs to help people learn to read.

As regards the Guaranteed Income Supplement, there have been no cuts to that program. I will be very happy to explain that in a written response.

●(1610)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Mr. Martin, please.

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Thank you very much. I appreciate your being here today, both of you. I have a few questions.

You're aware that we've been undergoing a fairly extensive study of poverty for the last two years in this committee. It's working very well. We've travelled across the country and have heard a lot of good input. It's as much about trying to find answers as it is to see if there is poverty or to define it or anything else.

A number of issues keep coming up and will probably be key in the report that will be tabled within the next few weeks to you and to the House. One of them is in the area of housing. It's a huge issue wherever poverty is concerned.

I know from the reports that I get, and in fact from a meeting I had just last week when I was back in my constituency, that the folks who are out there working on homelessness and tapping into the homelessness partnership fund are really working hard. They are providing some absolutely fundamental and necessary services to some of the people in our communities who are most at risk and vulnerable.

Ottawa released a report just a week or so ago from the Alliance to End Homelessness that outlines some of the work they're doing and indicates that the demand is actually increasing in Ottawa for the kind of shelter and support they're giving.

In my own community of Sault Ste. Marie, I met with the folks who operate that program as well, and they've indicated that it's staying fairly even, but that the effort they're making, for example, to move people from homelessness to housing... In 2008 they moved 68 people, and in 2009 the numbers dropped to 38, but they said there are still people out there whom they need to work with.

Their concern—and I think you probably know what question is coming—is that there's no commitment past 2011 for the homelessness partnership fund. And what I've raised before when you've been before the committee is the issue of core funding, so that they can spend more of their time creating more success in moving people to housing and into employment and training, which they're doing. The effort is nothing short of spectacular, but there's still a huge need there.

They're asking me to ask you what the plans are past 2011 and whether there is any hope at all of their getting, at some point in your tenure, some core funding.

Hon. Diane Finley: The issue you raise is definitely an important one. Unfortunately, there are Canadians who are in need of our assistance for housing, and indeed, particularly during this global recession, we've seen those numbers increase.

That's one of the reasons that a big part of our economic action plan included an additional \$2 billion to go toward social housing, \$1 billion of it in renovations of our own existing stock, but there were also moneys for new facilities: \$400 million for new sites for seniors, \$75 million for homes for the disabled, and \$200 million in the north. That's just part of it, but going forward... That's for now—

Mr. Tony Martin: The homelessness partnership fund...?

Hon. Diane Finley: But I'm trying to address the global problem. Going forward, we are in the unusual situation of having five years' worth of funding in the fiscal framework, with only two years of policy authorization. So over the course of the last year, I've been working closely with my provincial and territorial counterparts because, as you know, many of them play a very active role in providing homelessness and affordable housing solutions.

We've been working together. We've had a federal-provincial-territorial meeting to discuss this very issue. What is the best way to go forward to take care of these needs, not just in the short term, but in the long term? They have submitted reports to me. I am reviewing the variety of reports I've received. We're trying to develop the best way to go forward with this so that we can help as many people as possible.

• (1615)

Mr. Tony Martin: Another issue that's raised with me by people working in the affordable housing sector is the very low number of units and the very low amount of money actually allocated to providing housing for the physically and mentally disabled. Apparently, 5% of the stock is for physically disabled and 2.5% is for the recently homeless and victims of family violence. A very small percentage of the allocation is going to those groups that are very at risk and very vulnerable.

Are there any plans to increase that? Or why is it that we're not recognizing the need for more of that kind of housing?

Hon. Diane Finley: I think it's important to recognize that those aren't caps—they are minimums as opposed to maximums—and that other facilities can be made available to these individuals. They're not precluded from using other facilities.

It's also, in part, a question of how the various provinces approach their particular challenges. This varies from province to province. As you know, the federal government is responsible for delivery of service in some areas, but not in others.

We are working with the provinces and territories, and what you're talking about is part of what we discuss. What are the needs of the whole? How can we build and make sure that we have the most flexible accommodations to help these people, not just sectorized off group by group, but so that we can look after as many people as possible with as great a flexibility as possible?

Mr. Tony Martin: The other thing that comes up fairly regularly in our hearings is the question of literacy. I note from the estimates that spending on literacy will go down \$1.3 million from 2009-10 to 2010-11, and then it's going to go down again in 2011-12. Literacy is another of those core issues that we need to look at and do something with if we're going to lift people out of poverty, and yet the funding is going down.

Hon. Diane Finley: If I may, I'll provide some clarification there. The numbers appear to be going down, except that last year's numbers include a carry-forward from the previous year, so they are artificially high.

It's also important to recognize the number of ways in which we fund literacy programming and projects. Funding through the grants and contributions is a key way; there is no question about that. But Citizenship and Immigration has significantly increased their efforts in the area of literacy and developing literacy among newcomers. We have other programs that include literacy as well. They're not all in just one line item.

In fact, if you look at the total numbers, if it's possible to pull it all together, we are investing more because we want a workforce that is the best educated, most flexible, and most skilled. Literacy, as you point out, is certainly essential to that.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister.

We'll go to Mr. Komarnicki, please.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll have a question for Minister Raitt and a couple of questions for Minister Finley.

Minister Raitt, I was listening to you and reading the report with respect to the workplace. You've indicated that "very few things are as important to a Canadian's quality of life as a safe, encouraging workplace and a dependable source of income". You say that in turn "a well-functioning workplace also allows workers and managers to focus on productivity and innovation". Certainly, it's a good place for their energies to be expended.

I was particularly impressed with the fact that of about 650 collective agreements, more than 95% were settled without a strike or lockout. I would like to ask you, Minister, what you attribute that to and what your thoughts are going forward with respect to ensuring that those kinds of percentages are maintained.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Thank you very much.

What I attribute it to actually has a lot to do with getting the conciliation and mediation services within the labour program into the workplace on an early basis. Usually the employer, or the workers, if they're in a unionized environment, will ask for help to come in for mediation. That's really what it's about: having the framework and the capacity for an outside neutral third party with the skills and training that allow the parties, in a very safe environment, to put aside what possible differences there may be to get to the ultimate goal, which is to continue working and to achieve the collective agreement.

That's what I ascribe it to. It's a very good process. In my previous life, I actually used the conciliation services to avoid a strike situation. I've always been very pleased with the work there, so it's a great honour to be part of the team now.

• (1620)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: it certainly seems that if you provide the supports that are necessary and if you have a good work environment, many of these don't need to be confrontations that would end up costing the economy and the country a lot of dollars.

Is there anything we can do in a proactive way that would be helpful? I see you intend to carry on with mediation and conciliation in a proactive way.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Absolutely. In specific cases, when you see that there may be a difficulty in upcoming negotiations, you have the ability to be proactive in helping with mediation. That's what we've done in the case of British Columbia ports, knowing that in order to have the economic lifeblood continue to flow through the ports out there it's incredibly important that we help the parties.

I should also mention that when I talk with the Canadian Labour Congress and the employers' associations, they're very open to having help and mediation. They recognize the value of the federal government in that situation.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Those were impressive records. It's certainly good to maintain them.

Students have certainly been affected fairly significantly by the global recession. It was good to see the budget deal in a significant way with providing substantive and substantial financing for various projects.

You mentioned, Minister Finley, that an additional \$10 million was added for the Canada summer jobs program and that various other areas were covered as well. The particular program I'm interested in is the Skills Link program.

When I was in the constituency last week, I had the opportunity to observe about 18 young people who are facing various barriers to employment. They were actually providing a dinner; they were involved in the tourist industry. I know that the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council partnered with the community, the Government of Saskatchewan, and us to provide some basic skills and a working environment for them.

I can tell you that just by interacting with them I could sense the confidence they had, just from the little time they had spent on this, and eventually they are going to spend an additional five months at work. Can you explain and just talk about the government's commitment of \$30 million to the Skills Link program?

Hon. Diane Finley: The commitment is actually in addition, on top of our base funding. These are additional funds to help us get through this tough time. We know that youths are having a particular challenge finding work just because of the nature of this recession.

The Skills Link program actually focuses its efforts on helping young people who face a variety of challenges to find work. These may be social or developmental challenges or the background from which they come. It helps these young people learn a variety of things. It might be something as simple as how to dress when you go to work. It might be the importance of being on time, how to look for a job, how to handle the interview, or how to conduct yourself within the work environment once you land a job. In some cases, it's to help

them develop the skills they need to go back and continue or even complete their education.

These are young people at risk. The Skills Link program has been extremely successful in adapting itself to the varying needs of these young people and getting them into the workplace or back to school. It has been a real success story. That is why we are investing an extra \$30 million in it—because we know these young people need help and we want to be there to provide it for them.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: This will be a quick one. I know that we allocated another \$30 million that we allocated to the career focus program and \$10 million to the Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

Then again, we had the apprenticeship completion grant. That related to the Red Seal training programs and specifically allowed those who wanted to enter into the journeyman area not only to undertake their apprenticeship program but to complete it. Can you tell us a little about the progress you've seen with that particular program and how it's working?

• (1625)

Hon. Diane Finley: The apprenticeship completion grant has been a great success. As I referred to in my opening comments, the apprenticeship incentive grant is where students are eligible for \$1,000 in each of the first two years if they're in a Red Seal designated training program.

What we found was that too many were not completing their education. We needed to do that for their sake, because when you're looking at future mobility, their ability to work wherever they choose in the country, and to have their skill sets recognized, it's important to get their journeyman's ticket. We brought in the completion grant. That was first launched last July, and already we have over 20,000 students who have received that apprenticeship completion grant.

So far, over 140,000 have benefited from the incentive grant. We hope that these incentives, along with the spotlight that we're putting on the need for people to go into skilled trades—such as hosting the world skills competition last year, which I had the great honour to do with the Prime Minister—really let young people, and indeed people of all ages, know what great career opportunities there are and what a good living can be made by going into the skilled trades.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister.

We will begin our second round now. There will be five minutes for questions and answers.

We'll begin with Madam Minna, please.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

That means I have less time, so I'll be shorter with my questions, and I hope the answers are too. I have a question for both Minister Finley and Minister Raitt.

Minister Finley, I will start with you. With respect to the poverty study we're doing, I don't think it should surprise you that a major part of it is the issue of child care. To my question to you in the House, you responded that the reason you were not increasing the amount is that you're giving families choices, out of \$250 million, when, under the former Liberal program that was cancelled, there was \$254 million for Ontario alone in that allocation.

One of the mothers who came to see me about a week ago in my riding has lost her job and her child care. She couldn't get child care. She couldn't get another job because she had nowhere to put her children. She is now on welfare. That is not a choice, Minister. Can you tell me if you intend some time soon to increase the amount of money for child care spaces?

Hon. Diane Finley: When we developed the new program, the universal child care plan and the universal child care benefit, it was a two-part approach. Rather than invest all of the money in child care spaces our belief was—and this has been supported by Canadians across the country—that parents should have the choice of whether to put their children into child care or to stay at home with them. That's the funding we've provided. We have provided \$250 million to the provinces to help them create the spaces—

Hon. Maria Minna: Minister, I understand that argument. I apologize, but I've heard that argument before. For families where parents can afford to stay at home, yes, this is extra money and it's great, but we're pitting those stay-at-home parents with parents who have to work, and that's not fair, because you know full well that the \$1,200 does nothing for the parent who has to go to work. Fifty dollars a month or a hundred dollars a month does not give them a choice in spaces. It gives them absolutely no opportunity to find child care.

But I'm just going to move on because I think this issue is really hot and you and I are going to have a long discussion about it some other time in this committee.

Hon. Diane Finley: But could I just respond? In fact, the provinces have announced over 84,000 spaces that they're creating—

Hon. Maria Minna: That they're creating, but not—

Hon. Diane Finley: Because that is their jurisdiction and we respect their jurisdiction.

Also, I would beg to differ, in that I met several families, even in my riding, who have many children, two or three under the age of six, and they've thanked me. They say the universal child care benefit has made the difference for them. One of them can now stay home with the child and that was their goal.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm sorry... Maybe it does help some families, Minister, but you know it's not a solution.

I want to move to Minister Raitt.

Minister Raitt, congratulations on your appointment.

I was looking at employment equity, which is part of the area that you're responsible for. There's supposed to be a report done every five years, a parliamentary report that is to go to committee. It has been eight years since the last parliamentary review.

Has there been an assessment on this that the department has received? If so, what does it say? And when do you intend to send it for parliamentary review, since it's three years overdue as it is?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Thank you very much for the congratulations. I'm very much enjoying the portfolio and I'm enjoying the discussions that I've had, not only with you, Ms. Minna, but with the other critics as well.

With respect to the Employment Equity Act review, you asked about the current status. A motion was adopted on April 22, 2009, referring the review of the Employment Equity Act to the House standing committee on human resources. That would be this committee. Because the committee didn't deal with the motion prior to prorogation in January, a new referral motion will be required.

As you indicated, the Employment Equity Act contains a requirement for review every five years by a committee of the House of Commons. The assessment of advances in employment equity in the federal jurisdiction, presented each year in my annual report to Parliament, has demonstrated, however, that there's been progress in all four of the designated groups that I mentioned in my speech.

Since 1987 representation of aboriginal peoples has more than doubled and particular improvements are seen in the representation in crafts and trade supervisory occupations. Since 1987 representations of visible minorities in the federal jurisdiction has tripled and their representation has increased in all occupational groups since 2001.

As has been noted in the press, actually, in the last two days, before the creation of the Employment Equity Act, women accounted for only 5% of executive jobs in the public service. Now they're at 43% of executive positions.

I think these are wonderful accomplishments.

Just to finish, persons with disabilities, they're represented in private sector senior management and supervisory positions. The banking sector in particular has made some striking gains, including for persons with disabilities.

But in the interim, to answer the question on the review, the next annual report, to be tabled in Parliament in June, will report on progress for 2008.

• (1630)

Hon. Maria Minna: When will it be sent to committee? When will it be referred to committee?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Can you say that again?

Hon. Maria Minna: When will it be referred to committee for parliamentary review?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: A new referral motion will be required, as I indicated.

Hon. Maria Minna: When will that happen?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: I'll defer to the official on this.

Mrs. Hélène Gosselin (Deputy Minister of Labour, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development): I think the government is considering the timing at this point, along with the other priorities.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we will go to Mr. Vellacott, please.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

First, right off the top, I want to ask Minister Raitt about something. We saw in the budget that the wage earner protection program has been expanded. I think that's a good thing. Can you share with us the importance of that, particularly as it is part of the economic action plan?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Thank you very much.

When I first took over the portfolio in January, one of the opportunities I had was to talk to people associated both with the labour side and with the employment side. There was one thing that everybody had in common. From the CAW, from the Canadian Labour Congress, everybody agreed that the program itself was a huge help to workers and that it came at a very timely point in Canada's economy.

In essence, as I indicated, this program is designed to compensate Canadian workers for wages that are owing to them when their employer unfortunately goes bankrupt or goes into receivership. Just to give you some statistics about it—because I think it helps to give some context around it—since 2008 when it was created, almost 20,000 Canadian workers have received about \$40 million in payments for wages owing in the six-month period up to the bankruptcy or receivership.

Prior to this program being put in place, interestingly, workers were rarely reimbursed for wages that were owed to them by bankrupt employers. In fact, studies have shown that payment was received in fewer than 25% of the case. The statistics demonstrate that the average worker received only 13¢ on the dollar, and often these moneys were received after several years of fighting with the employer for compensation. So the program itself has been put in place in a very timely way and has been very beneficial.

We also expanded the program to allow workers to claim both severance and termination pay, in addition to the wages and the vacation pay, up to the equivalency of four weeks for unemployment insurance. The economic action plan invested another \$25 million in the program for this fiscal year and that's in addition to the \$31 million set aside annually for WEPP payments to support the enhanced program.

It's increased the applicability of the program, obviously, to a larger number of claimants and the average payments increased as workers became eligible for the program. The average WEPP payment in 2009-10 was \$2,210, compared to \$1,300 in the previous year, but that remains below the current cap of \$3,323.

In the end, it's a great example of the good work we're doing to help workers through the economic period we've just endured. Quite frankly, nobody wants to think about their company going bankrupt and workers being left on the street, and we filled the gap that was created. We've helped an awful lot of people. It's been a great program in that sense.

• (1635)

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Thank you.

How much time do I have? Two more minutes?

I'll shift the focus to Minister Finley for the moment. I think it's pretty much agreed...or at least most people will make the statement that children are our most important resource as we look to the future. How we develop them, how we work with them, and how we take care of our children are pretty important.

You've already made some comments with respect to that, but our government doesn't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach to the diversity of Canadian families. That's why there's choice in child care in the manner in which we do it.

I certainly fully support putting money in the pockets of parents who make their own choices with respect to child care. My understanding is that, due to our actions, the typical Canadian family has about \$3,000 more in their pockets than they did under the Liberals, and that's a very good thing.

This is the largest investment by the federal government in Canadian history. At least, that's my understanding. Is it correct that this would be the largest kind of investment of that nature?

Hon. Diane Finley: Absolutely. Right now, each year we're investing approximately \$13 billion in children: child care, early learning, and child benefits. That would include the tax credit, the child benefit, the universal child care benefit, and early learning investments. There's a wide range of programs—even in helping the provinces fund the child care, the day care centres, for which they have responsibility. This is an unprecedented investment in our young people.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Monsieur Desnoyers, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My questions are for Ms. Raitt. Somewhat like my colleague, I will read them to you all at once. In five minutes, you may not have time to answer all the questions and I would like to have your answers in writing.

First, we're talking about the Wage Earner Protection Program and about \$40 million that were given to workers. As you know, this crisis was dramatic for most workers, but also for tens of thousands of retirees. I could name businesses and prepare list after list. A number of them are claiming additional protection under this act. They have made requests to the government to amend the act and to ensure that pension plans are protected in one form or another.

Does the minister intend to introduce amendments to the act to protect pensioners? Currently we're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars that are lost in the Canadian economy, whereas you say it gave active workers only \$36 million.

With regard to the act, you talked about modernizing federal standards concerning which consultations were held.

First of all, I would like to know how much time those consultations took. How much did those consultations cost? Who was consulted? I checked with a number of bodies and several told me they had not been consulted. That's why I wonder who was consulted. Lastly, was a consultation document used by your group when you conducted those consultations?

In addition, would the Minister of Labour be in favour of a precautionary cessation of work program, particularly for pregnant women with high-risk pregnancies?

For more than 25 years, Canada Post workers have been asking that an error be corrected under the former Pay Equity Act. Does the minister intend to solve this problem and how?

Lastly, I'll read you my final question. It's the last but not the least. In your strategic review of the Labour Program, you mentioned that decisions would be implemented this year, in 2010-2011. I would like to know which decisions you are going to make and what kind of additional spending will result from the implementation of those decisions.

I don't know how much time you have left to answer. However, as I mentioned, I would like to have answers in writing. I think that's important.

• (1640)

[English]

The Chair: The ministers have just over one minute.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Thank you very much.

I'll see what I can do, sir.

In terms of pension protection, as you know, the government understands the value of secure and sustainable pensions. The pension reform issue itself, though, falls under the mandate of my colleague, the Minister of Industry, so it's not appropriate for me to talk about what packages are being considered. The package that Minister Flaherty is—

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Madam Minister, I don't agree with you that this is not under your responsibility.

The Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act is your responsibility, and we know that it is in situations of bankruptcy that these workers lost their pension plans. We're talking about as much as 85% of their value.

I think this act might be subject to improvement.

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt: My constituents also have concerns about pensions, and I understand the issue. The Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act does not come under my portfolio or my purview. That is under the Minister of Industry and that's why he and Minister Flaherty are charged with the mandate of looking at it. I will be happy to answer your specific questions about the WEPP in writing.

But it does not come under my mandate; it goes to Industry. Of course, we'll pass along the comments from today.

On your second question about the federal—

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: If that isn't part of your mandate, why do you talk about it in your report?

I understand that you gave \$36 million and that we lost hundreds of millions of dollars with pensioners. There's a close connection in terms of work when you talk about workers.

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt: On the way the program was defined, it was defined to include workers who were employed by companies that went bankrupt. It was not defined to capture people who had been pensioned by these companies. You're asking me whether or not WEPP should include those as well. It doesn't currently. It is not part of the status of WEPP.

I understand that you'd like it to be so and my response is that both Minister Flaherty and Minister Clement are looking at the pension issues within their mandates and within the tools they have. I appreciate your feedback that you think WEPP should be utilized; however, the whole issue of pensions is being dealt with by another minister. But thank you for your interest.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We'll go to Mr. Cannan, please.

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mesdames Ministers and officials, for being here today. In the spirit of national pink shirt day and our anti-bullying campaign, I'm glad that the spirit and intent of our colleagues here are respectful of that. We do have a responsibility to lead by example.

One of the ways we have been... I appreciate the comments from my colleagues. One comment was about housing and provincial jurisdiction. Coming from British Columbia, I'd like to thank our CMHC representatives for working closely with BC Housing. We have an excellent program. The province sets the priorities. They've been focusing on seniors and persons with disabilities and we've really had good success to date.

I'd like to focus on something. It was a break week last week. Wherever I went, I heard that there was an issue with regard to something that's been in the headlines. It had to deal with Canada's most notorious serial killer, Mr. Olson, and the fact that he is getting old age security and a pension while he's incarcerated. I don't know about you, but I just think it's preposterous. My constituents can't believe that somebody is entitled to these benefits, getting a cost of living allowance, and getting everything paid for. It's a joke and it's frustrating for all of us.

Our government has always put victims first, Madam Chair, and all of us around this table realize that it's important to respect the victims instead of the criminals. In 2006 we implemented one of the first offices for victims of crime, the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Also, in this last budget, we're helping to support victims of crime and their families. So I know it's very important.

Maybe you could elaborate, Madam Minister. What are you hearing from Canadians and your constituents as far as our government's effective action on criminal justice matters is concerned? What are you hearing on the general issue of Mr. Olson?

Hon. Diane Finley: First of all, let me say that when I was first made aware of this situation, I was very angry, to put it mildly. I was very, very angry. This situation is totally unacceptable.

Like you, I was hearing from constituents and from Canadians right across the country during constituency week. Not one of them supported people like Clifford Olson continuing to receive taxpayer-funded benefits like old age security.

As soon as I heard about this, we took action. We are now reviewing all of the options available to us so that we can put a stop to this current situation as quickly as possible and prevent it from happening again, because it is just totally unacceptable. In fact, it's offensive to Canadians.

• (1645)

Mr. Ron Cannan: That's great news. The sooner the better, I think. I'd be surprised if anybody in this room would disagree with that, so I thank you for your quick action—the sooner the better.

Minister Raitt, on an aspect of coming into this new portfolio as the Minister of Labour, I think you've jumped in 100%, full bore, and full steam ahead.

I'm a father of three adult daughters and they remind me of the aspect of equality, especially employment equity. What's our government doing to respect and enforce government equality with federal contractors?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: I appreciate the question, and actually, it's one of the aspects of the portfolio that I wasn't really clear on, but I'm really happy that it's something that we actually have in the government.

I do want to note that I like your pink shirt on stopping bullying, which is very dear to my heart as well in terms of making sure... In fact, we should all wear that in the House of Commons sometimes, so that we don't bully each other too—

Mr. Ron Cannan: Maybe we could try that between 2:15 and 3, right?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: In terms of the federal contractors, as I said before, I was really pleased to see the recent report on employment equity with federal employers, because there has been some great progress.

We are committed to employment equity, but we're committed beyond... It's not just those employed by the federal government. The program you mentioned and that I'm talking about actually requires that all contractors with 100 or more employees sign a certificate of commitment to implement employment equity if they

want to bid on a contract of \$200,000 or more from the federal government.

If the contractor is successful in their bid, the contractor must implement employment equity obligations that are equivalent to that which we see under the Employment Equity Act. So it's the federal government reaching out, not just from our own employee base, but into the private sector as well, for anybody who wants to do business with us.

The department conducts a rolling review of federal contractors. As part of the review, actually, 148 of 446 contractors were disbarred from the federal procurement process for failing to complete or fulfill their employment equity obligations. So it's not just saying that we're going to do this; it's following up and it's reviewing. Then, when they don't adhere, we actually have them disbarred from the process. It's a very tangible way that our government has used the power in our procurement process to positively affect employment equity in Canadian businesses.

Thank you for the question.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Ms. Dhalla, please.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.): Thank you very much. I had a chance to sit on this committee for a number of years and it's a pleasure to be back, to be helping out one of my colleagues, and to have the pleasure of having both of the ministers here today.

I actually wanted to ask Minister Finley a few questions, but before I begin, however, I want to mention to Minister Raitt an issue that one of my colleagues from the Bloc brought up in regard to the pensioners.

I know that it's not part of your mandate, but I can tell you that throughout my almost six years since being elected, I've had a number of town halls in my constituency, and I have never ever seen the turnout that I did when I had a town hall for Nortel pensioners and seniors concerned about the issue of pensions.

Even though it may not be a part of your mandate, I would really urge and request you to take the message back to both of the ministers responsible that we do need to have an amendment made in the bankruptcy protection act to really ensure that these workers and people who are pensioners are protected in the future. The global recession has known no boundaries and no barriers, and I think Canadians across the country have been affected. As Minister of Labour, hopefully you can take that message back to them.

Now I'll go to my questions for Minister Finley. We had an interesting moment in my office a few months back when an older woman came in who had called for an appointment. We had never seen her before. She came in with a walker. As she struggled to get into the office, she had all of these plastic bags, and you could tell that she had not showered probably for days on end. It was really unfortunate to see.

She came to see me just to talk about politics. While talking to her, I was asking her how she got to my office. She mentioned that she had taken two buses. It was towards the end of the day. I asked her how she was planning to get back home, and she said she was going to be taking the bus. I asked where she lived, and she was very hesitant to answer. One of my staff members.... We were all in the room and we said that the staff members were also leaving and maybe they could drive her. My staff member decided to drive her. My staffer asked her where she would like to go. This woman would not say; she just wanted to be dropped off at an intersection. It was at that point that we discovered she didn't have a home, that she was homeless.

I bring up this issue because when people think about communities like Brampton, they take a look at the median income, which is almost \$80,000, and think that it's a very prosperous city and community. However, the state of affordable housing in the community is an absolute disaster. People are waiting 21 years to get into a home. There are almost 13,000 families, or 30,000 people, on wait lists to get into affordable housing. I want to know what initiatives you are taking within your government to help these individuals, who are real stories. We read about the facts on paper.

More importantly, we are one of those industrialized countries in the world that do not have a national housing strategy. Do you foresee, with your vision, that your government will put in the time, effort, and energy to ensure that we as a country do have a national housing strategy so that we can help people like that woman who came into my constituency office?

• (1650)

Hon. Diane Finley: Let's focus on the important thing here, and that is the people like the woman who came into your office. It is unfortunate that in a country as wealthy as ours and in an area as wealthy as Brampton there are still people who, for a wide number of reasons, find themselves homeless. It's not limited to the big cities and the wealthy areas. Unfortunately, we have them in my towns as well.

But what Canada does have—and where we are fortunate—is a wide spectrum of housing solutions that we do provide, with everything from emergency shelters to transition housing, supportive housing, subsidized housing, and affordable housing, and even incentives or discounts to help people buy their first home.

In the province of Ontario, where you and I both live, the province has assumed responsibility for these programs. We do provide funding, and we try to work with them to make sure they deliver what's required. One of the reasons we're doing this is that they said they know their local needs the best.

Let's face it. Right now, we are spending unprecedented amounts on housing and homelessness—\$3 billion per year—and right now we have some 3,500 new projects under way right across the country to help ease the very situation about which you're speaking.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla: What do you think is stopping the creation of a national housing strategy? I mean, when you talk to other stakeholders, organizations, and advocates... I think you said that in a country as prosperous as Canada, it's an absolute embarrassment, both nationally and I think internationally, for us as a country

not to have a national housing strategy. Are you making efforts to try to ensure that this goal actually becomes a reality?

Hon. Diane Finley: I think we have to look at the reality. Places like the United States and New Zealand take the same kind of approach that we do, and that is to have a whole suite, a continuum of services and programs, that actually functions the way a “national strategy” would. But they're actually in practice as opposed to something we talk about. There is something we've been doing for quite some time. We do it in cooperation and conjunction with the provinces and territories, some of which have assumed responsibility for it.

Places like Australia don't have that second tier to deal with, nor does the U.K. We have shared jurisdiction in this country, and it's something that our government has committed to respect while we try to address the really fundamental challenges of those who are very unfortunate.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla: I know it's—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Dhalla—

Ms. Ruby Dhalla: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...the reality is that the strategy is obviously not working. When you have a 21-year wait list and 30,000 people waiting, we need to ensure that we do better and that there are programs to help many of these individuals.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dhalla.

We'll go to Mr. Casson, please.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank Minister Raitt and Minister Finley for being here today.

I just want to take you out west for a little trip to Alberta. With our resource-based economy, we've been hit pretty hard with this downturn in the economy. Our unemployment rates are some of the highest in the country. Even last month, when some of the rest of the country was coming around, there were more people looking for work in Alberta.

One of the estimates I've heard in the last month or so is that as we move forward and this turns around we're going to need 80,000 skilled workers in Alberta alone. In order for Alberta to return to the economic engine that it was and to be a net contributor to the equalization payments in this country, which I'm sure many of the provinces around this table enjoy, we are going to need that.

Minister Finley, one of the programs you have is this apprenticeship incentive grant. You indicated that 143,000 Canadians have received help to get into the program, plus a completion grant. Is this something that's sustainable, that we're going to be looking at over the next number of years to get these trained people we're going to need as this economy starts to chug—as it has already—out of this recession? Will it help us get back to the spot where we were at one time?

• (1655)

Hon. Diane Finley: There's no question that Alberta has been very hard hit by the global recession. I know that southern Alberta, where you are, was facing real challenges five years ago with the BSE situation. Now it's the north that's been hit by the resources. We know that right across this country there are skill shortages in many professions, even during this recession. That's why we brought in the apprenticeship incentive grant.

We also brought in tax relief for employers who hire apprentices under this program. We want to encourage them to help young people get the skills they need. The completion grant and the incentive grant are both ongoing. These are a permanent part of the fiscal framework. Those are not temporary programs.

The other thing we're doing is helping with the tool tax credit. These people need to get their tools and they get a break on that. It's the same for textbooks.

If anyone is doing part of their apprenticeship through a college and they get a scholarship or bursary, we've made it easier for them. We've made sure, as a government, that these people aren't taxed on their scholarship and bursary income.

We want to encourage people to get the skills, and we're doing everything we can to help them get there. In fact we've launched a new program of student grants, as I mentioned earlier. It is helping 120,000 more students than were benefiting from previous programs. That's a lot. That's money they don't have to repay. That's reducing their debt burden when they graduate.

Again, we're hoping this will motivate people to get into these programs and get the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

Mr. Rick Casson: Is that 120,000 an annual number?

Hon. Diane Finley: Yes, it is. That's 120,000 more per year. In fact, the grants program has now helped 265,000 students in the last year. That's free money. They don't have to repay it.

Mr. Rick Casson: Thank you.

Minister Raitt, in your comments on employment equity, you said that the government's employment equity programs "encourage the establishment", and you go on. How does that actually work? How do you encourage these private sector firms to do what they're doing? Is it training? Is it money? How does that work out?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Since the act came into place in 1987, there has been a combination of everything. First of all, if you put the legislation in place, you want to help employers to understand what their obligations are, as well as helping them with the tools to enable them to carry out what is intended within the Employment Equity Act.

There are guides to help employers understand what they should be doing under the act. There are people within the labour ministry who can come in and help them understand what has to happen. That's really on the contractor side, but it's been embedded for such a long time within the system that we're actually seeing the benefits associated with putting this act into place.

As I indicated before, what is key, which we have seen in the newspapers today, is that before the creation of this act, women

accounted for only 5% of the executive jobs in the public service and now they account for 43%. Today, if you take a look at this table alone, you can see your employment equity action at work—except for Mike.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Lisa Raitt: I don't want to seem facetious about it, but it's very true. If you make it an obligation for an employer and if you make it an incentive for an employer in that they are able to have a part of the procurement process within the federal government, it's enough to have them want to follow the rules. We're there to help them do so, and when it's not done, we're also there to tell them that it has to be done.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We do have bells at 5:15, but if the ministers are all right with this, I'd like to allow Mr. Martin to finish off this round with his question. I think then we'll have completed the questions. Unfortunately, after that point we won't have time for another full round.

Is it all right with the ministers if Mr. Martin asks a question?

Hon. Diane Finley: Sure.

Mr. Tony Martin: I have a couple of questions, hopefully one for each of you.

One is on the self-employed EI program. We had a forum in the Soo last week. Your Service Canada employees were excellent. They came in and were very gracious. A number of self-employed people came, because they were very interested.

They were, first of all, a bit frustrated that they hadn't heard enough about it up until then. None of them were able to take advantage of that early sign-on date; I think it was April 1 to qualify by June 1. They weren't able to get in because they hadn't heard about it, so when we set up the forum, they came. They raised a couple of issues. I'm just wondering how it's rolling out and how many people have actually signed on.

The folks who were there that evening were very concerned. Many of them own their own businesses and are self-employed. It seemed that the program was sort of income-based and that a lot of things were triggered by their income tax. If they went off on benefit, perhaps had a child, had somebody come in to replace them and keep the business going, and then that business actually continued to generate income, would that income then act as a clawback...? Would the benefit be clawed back once they filed their income taxes? That was one of the questions. They were a bit concerned about that.

So, how many have signed on, and is this issue a problem?

Hon. Diane Finley: This is a new program. We wanted to make sure people knew about it. We had a very short window in which to do this, but we did do an advertising campaign.

We worked very closely with the chambers of commerce—the national and the local chambers. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business was putting stuff on their website, as was the Direct Sellers Association.

We have a number of groups that can reach a broad range of self-employed, because they vary from people who do part-time work as an Avon lady to lawyers who are earning hundreds of thousands of dollars a year on a self-employed basis. There's a broad audience here, of some 2.6 million Canadians, and we made a lot of efforts, including on our own website, with a feature right on the front page, to try to attract attention to this to get people to sign up. That information is still there.

In terms of the tax situation you've described, it would vary from person to person depending on their corporate structure and their financial structure. If they took that money as personal income, there could be an issue there. If the money was paid to the replacement employee, that's a whole separate issue. It's going to vary for individual cases, but I'm pleased to say that over 3,000 people have signed up so far.

Mr. Tony Martin: The message I'm bringing to you from them is that it's not clear. They're very concerned. They're not buying in because they're afraid. They pay, and they want the coverage, but they're concerned that once they actually go on leave and the business continues to generate income, they'll in fact lose, and there will be no benefit for them there. I'll just leave it at that.

Hon. Diane Finley: I'm glad you mentioned that, Mr. Martin. We'll try to clarify that for them.

Mr. Tony Martin: Okay, because there's some confusion about that.

Hon. Diane Finley: Sure, and I enlist the support of all the members in letting self-employed Canadians know about this terrific option for them, so that they don't have to choose between their work responsibilities and their families.

Mr. Tony Martin: The other question I have is with regard to Habitat for Humanity, which is, as you know, another wonderful vehicle out there that is building homes for people. They brought a really interesting scenario to my attention in regard to trying to find families.

On one end, if you don't make enough, you don't qualify. You have a number of families that are just below the threshold, so they don't get in, and they'd really benefit if they could. Sweat equity doesn't work as well as some of us think it should in terms of that. On the top end, for people who should qualify and are now getting the child tax benefit, the child care benefit, and their GST rebate, those things are putting them over the threshold.

So in my area, with a population of 75,000 to 85,000, they're finding it hard to find the family that actually fits because of those two thresholds. Why is that? Who makes those decisions? Who puts in place those criteria? How can we be more flexible here so that we can get some families into homes?

• (1705)

Hon. Diane Finley: Habitat for Humanity is a great program, no question about it. It is an international program and is totally independent of the federal government. They do make their own decisions. We work with them in different situations, but they are an independent operation making their own decisions.

Mr. Tony Martin: So those criteria, top and bottom, are not driven by Canada Mortgage and Housing in terms of the mortgage and that kind of thing...?

Hon. Diane Finley: Not at all.

Mr. Tony Martin: Because the person I was talking to didn't seem to know either where that actually came from. So you're saying to go back to Habitat for Humanity, that it's there.

Hon. Diane Finley: Yes.

Mr. Tony Martin: Those are my questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would like to thank the ministers for being here. We've appreciated the time that you spent—

Mr. Savage.

Mr. Michael Savage: On a point of order, Madam Chair, I appreciate the ministers being here as well, but we did pass a motion at this committee, unanimously, that the ministers would stay for 90 minutes. There's no need to leave. The votes are about 11 seconds that way; I know we have bells coming up. I wonder if we could do another round.

The Chair: Well, we would need unanimous consent, because as soon as the bells ring, I do need to adjourn the meeting. We don't have time right now for a full second round, so we definitely would have to stay past 5:15. I'm not sure if the ministers are able to stay that long.

Mr. Lessard.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: If we start right away and we have three minutes each, we'll have just enough time.

[English]

The Chair: To be fair, actually, to finish this round we do have one more question that would be allowed from the government side. That would be a five-minute question; I was actually hoping that the government wouldn't mind if we didn't proceed with that. But if we want to finish the round, then right now we would go to Mr. Lobb for five minutes.

Mr. Michael Savage: Pardon me. I defer to your judgment and wisdom. You've been a scrupulous chair—no problem. I wonder if we could then proceed on the basis that the Conservatives could have their five-minute round, and then we could begin the next round and get as far as we can before we have to adjourn.

The Chair: Let's make that decision now. First of all, I need to ask the ministers if they would be able to stay past 5:15.

Hon. Diane Finley: I'm afraid not. I'm sorry—

The Chair: You're not able to? All right. Okay. Thank you.

Minister Raitt, would you be able to stay?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Michael Savage: Let's go until 5:15.

The Chair: All right. We'll go to Mr. Lobb, for five minutes, please.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Seeing that it's 5:08, I figured maybe you'd give me seven minutes, Madam Chair, just in the spirit of generosity.

Anyhow, thanks again, Ministers, for appearing today and for your forthright answers. I'm always amazed at the seven- and five-minute questions that come from our committee. It has been quite a learning experience.

Minister Finley, your riding is very similar to mine, both in the size and in the “ruralness”, if you will, of the riding. The demographics are very similar in that we have retirement communities with an abundance of seniors. Since 2006 the government has undertaken a tremendous number of initiatives that have definitely helped our seniors have more prosperous retirement years and a better standard of living, no doubt about it.

Before I go into my question, though, I would like to also take an opportunity to thank you for coming to the riding of Huron—Bruce in the pre-budget consultation period and hearing what the people of a rural riding have to say. I think they certainly appreciated that opportunity. As well, I'd like to thank you for the hard work from your offices; my staff deals with them in Kitchener, London, and Goderich, and they are just tremendously helpful. I know that the people who come into my office appreciate the ability to have that medium to deal with.

There is a great number of examples of where the opposition parties have voted against our government time and time again, whether it's on pension splitting, guaranteed income supplements, or New Horizons dollars. It's really quite staggering, to be honest with you.

One very successful program, though, that I've seen in my short time in office, is the New Horizons program. Again, the opposition parties voted against it, but I just wondered if you could put it in your terms. You've travelled from coast to coast to coast. Tell this committee how that helps seniors.

• (1710)

Hon. Diane Finley: Thank you for the praise. I really do appreciate that. I will pass that on to my staff.

We are very sensitive to the needs of seniors. These are the people who built our country, for heaven's sake; they are your parents and

your grandparents, and mine. That's why we want to help them. We want to help them stay active within their communities. We recognize that they have a wealth of experience and knowledge, and we're trying to tap into that.

Let's face it. They say that 70 is the new 40 because 70-year-olds have so much energy compared to, say, the 70-year-olds of 40 years ago. We want to tap into that energy. The New Horizons for Seniors program does that. It gives seniors a chance to organize projects that get them involved in helping other seniors and helping young people learn from their wisdom. It gets them volunteering and keeps them active.

It has a number of aspects. One is that project component, which is really good. There is another—the capital assistance part of it. I know that in my own riding the local seniors' home set up a satellite library. Because they're outside of town, people can't get downtown to the library easily, so this is a satellite library with large-print books and audiobooks. It really serves the local needs. These things don't cost a lot of money, but they have a huge benefit for our seniors.

The third component is the program that we're really pushing this year. We started last year with a series of ads about elder abuse, which had tremendous success in raising awareness of the issue. We're going to push it further. This year, my Minister of State for Seniors and her National Seniors Council are going to be focusing on raising awareness of and combatting financial abuse of elders, because too often that either goes ignored or is dismissed as not being abuse. But I really believe that crippling somebody financially is just as serious an issue as crippling them physically. The scars may not be physically visible, but they are very real and they can last a lifetime.

This is all being done through the New Horizons for Seniors program. I was very pleased when the Minister of Finance included an additional \$10 million this year on top of the \$26 million that was already in the budget, to which the Bloc member referred.

It's really a fabulous program. I'm hoping that we'll be able to protect even more seniors from financial abuse, whether it's by scam artists or, unfortunately, even members of their own families or their friends. This is not acceptable. We want to stop it and I'm looking forward to working with the Minister of State to do just that.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have two minutes until the bells go.

Mr. Savage, I will give you two minutes.

Mr. Michael Savage: Thank you very much.

I want to go back to the Canadian Council on Learning because I have a bit of a theory. I don't have time to ask a lot of questions, but I want to test this theory on you, Minister.

Don Drummond said it's a "valuable service". An official at the University of Alberta said that it's a "terrible, short-sighted action" to kill CCL. The secretary-general of the OECD pledged his personal support for CCL. The president of CASA, CAUT professors, the provinces, university presidents, community college presidents, many people in industry, and a lot of people in labour all looked to CCL, and they've said that it's exactly what Canada needs; we need some surveillance on what we're doing.

We spend all kinds of money on post-secondary education and other forms of education, and CCL is a pittance to organize; this is one of the most cost-effective programs that the Government of Canada has come forward with. It's unbelievable that this government would refuse to go forward with it. It is one of the most economical investments the government could possibly make, and seemingly agreed to unanimously.

So I have this theory. I think many of the officials in this room... I know that when you come here you travel with a large party. I think a lot of the people in this room have probably told you that we should keep CCL. I think a lot of them know that CCL does good work. I think it was purely a political decision that was made by you, and perhaps your colleagues, to cancel CCL because it committed two sins: it was a Liberal program and it worked. What do you think of that?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Diane Finley: Well, I would wholeheartedly disagree with your theory. That was not the case at all, as I explained earlier. Labour market information is fundamental to Canada. Good labour market information, relevant labour market information, is fundamental to our capacity to go forward as an economy, to identify the skills we're going to need, and to make sure we have programs at our post-secondary institutions and even at the secondary school level to develop those skills. Employers are looking at where they can get students and what programs exist. What we're trying to do—

• (1715)

Mr. Michael Savage: I'm in agreement with that, but let me give you a different theory, Minister—

Hon. Diane Finley: I'm sorry. I thought you wanted me to answer a question.

Mr. Michael Savage: I just want to get your opinion on this. One of my favourite movies is *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. At the beginning of that movie, Harrison Ford goes into the cave, and there's the golden idol. He wants it so much, but he has to find something that weighs the same before he can take it away, because otherwise all the traps will be set off.

Why would you not keep CCL at least until you have something to take its place?

Hon. Diane Finley: Well, as you rightly pointed out, there was a program and it was limited to funding for five years. That's the way the Liberals set it up.

I would also point out that this was obviously not because it was a program brought in by the Liberals. We've protected many programs that the Liberals brought in and that, since then, the Liberals have actually argued with us, you included, to change. We go on the value and merit of the program, and not on who brought it in, but how well it's serving its purpose.

You and I spent last summer arguing. I was trying to protect the program that the Liberals brought in because I found that it functioned well. You were the one who was trying to eliminate it. Fortunately for Canadians, our perspective prevailed.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much to both ministers—

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: Madam Chair—

[English]

The Chair: The bells are ringing, Monsieur Lessard—

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: Madam Chair, I have a comment to make.

[English]

The Chair: I know, I'm sorry, Monsieur Lessard, but the bells are ringing. The meeting is adjourned.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: That's how you operate, Madam Chair. I am very sorry that you operate in that manner. That has just broken a way—

[English]

The Chair: Did you say "point of order"? I heard "point of observation".

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Lessard: This is a point of order, Madam Chair. I'm sorry you operate that way. I'm going to let you get settled.

Oh, that's how it is!

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry. We're adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>