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Monday, December 12, 2011

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 12, 2011

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Langley has four minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour to speak to this bill from the member for Kildonan—St. Paul. I describe her as “Canada's Wilberforce”. Bill C-310 is an important private member's bill that would impact modern-day slavery, or human trafficking. The bill would push it back into its dirty corner and hopefully kill it for all time, in Canada and in the world. The member for Kildonan—St. Paul has been on this journey for years. Her whole family has been very involved, through the police, in trying to stop this horrific crime.

I am amazed that Canada is blessed to have Miss Canada come from my riding of beautiful Langley, British Columbia. Tara Teng is that person this year. We will be passing the torch on to young, new leaders such as Tara Teng in years to come. We wonder what these leaders are working on. She is working with this member of Parliament to stop human trafficking, a noble cause. It is understandable that we want to end this horrific evil. We have some of Canada's brightest lights taking on this problem. I want to thank both the member for Kildonan—St. Paul and Tara Teng. We encourage them to never give up. As individuals, as the Government of Canada and as parliamentarians, we do not give up until the job is done.

I recently received 245 letters from students at Walnut Grove Secondary School. They were horrified to find out that slavery actually exists today. They found out about this private member's bill, Bill C-310. I would like to read a letter for the record so members can understand what our young adults think about the problem of human trafficking. This is a letter from Emma. She is a grade 9 student who says:

This problem about human trafficking is horrible and something should be done about it. Young innocent girls and boys being taken into the sex trade is a major problem. The presentation I heard today made me feel like this should not be left aside. Everyone should help to make human trafficking be put to a stop. I know that if anyone I know, or in my family, got taken away to be human trafficked... It would kill me! I would be devastated. No family should have to go through this; losing a child and not knowing where they are. I strongly hope that something will be done to stop this!

Well, something is being done. I encourage every member to support this very important bill.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-310, which would amend the Criminal Code to address the cruel and serious problem of human trafficking in Canada.

I congratulate the member who sponsored this bill for introducing a bill that will have the support of all parties in this House. This is the first time I have supported a government initiative and I congratulate her on it. I hope that in the future the opposition parties and the Conservative government will have many opportunities to work together.

This bill proposes two very important amendments to the Criminal Code that will make it easier to prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking. This heinous crime has destructive effects on the victims, which reminds us that in a not-too-distant past, slaves were treated similarly by Canadians and by our neighbours to the south. Unfortunately, at a time when human rights and individual freedoms should prevail and at a time when we would have thought our attitudes had evolved enough to eliminate this abominable crime, there are still people in this country who can deny their own humanity and sell people who are just as deserving of freedom as any other person.

Therefore, I believe that the House has the duty and the power to hold these individuals accountable by proposing and adopting a legal framework to eliminate this form of slavery and severely punish the perpetrators, so that we can set an example for the rest of the world.

This bill targets the real criminals—the traffickers. This bill would extend Canada's jurisdiction beyond our borders, which means we could go after traffickers with Canadian citizenship or residency regardless of where they are in the world. I would once again like to congratulate my colleague opposite for developing a bill that targets the real criminals and not the victims.

Private Members' Business

However, since there is a distinction made between human trafficking and human smuggling, I have to wonder about Bill C-4, which targets the migrants instead of the smugglers in cases of human smuggling in Canada. Migrants are the victims in this fraudulent scheme, and the real criminals are those who deceive these people by promising them a better future. I would have liked to see the government use Bill C-310 as an inspiration and to withdraw Bill C-4 from the Order Paper.

The first section of the bill amends the Criminal Code in order to apply Canadian extraterritorial jurisdiction to the offence of human trafficking. This will give the Canadian government the legal means to prosecute a Canadian or a permanent resident of Canada involved in human trafficking, regardless of where he or she works, lives or operates. Introducing extraterritorial jurisdiction using the nationality principle in international law is compatible with our international obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, the Palermo convention. Given the international nature of human trafficking, extraterritorial jurisdiction is crucial. We simply cannot allow Canadian traffickers to live a comfortable life without any fear of being held responsible for their crimes just because they can hide behind international borders.

Thus, I am convinced that our government has a responsibility to ensure that our legal system can prosecute those responsible for such crimes to the full extent of the law through this extraterritorial jurisdiction. We have the right to hold our citizens to a certain standard of behaviour, even those who are outside our borders.

In her introductory speech, the sponsor of the bill said that it would ensure justice in cases where the offence was committed in a country without strong anti-human trafficking laws. I agree with her completely, but I find it unfortunate that this government did not live up to this standard during the previous Parliament with regard to Bill C-300, An Act respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas in Developing Countries. Once again, I hope the government will learn something from this private member's bill.

Coming back to Bill C-310, before 2005 the only legal action that could be taken against human traffickers was based on charges of kidnapping, threats or extortion. Section 118 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act prohibits anyone from bringing someone into Canada by means of abduction or fraud. In other words, human trafficking was not considered a criminal offence per se until 2005. Since then, only five people have been prosecuted on the basis of this new offence.

• (1110)

Crown prosecutors and experts blame the lack of prosecutions on the current definition of exploitation, which requires proof of a threat to safety. This proof is difficult to obtain, which results in traffickers being found not guilty.

This leads me to the second amendment to the Criminal Code proposed in this bill. The member sponsoring this bill has every reason to propose expanding the current legal definition of the word "exploitation", which defines the conditions for a person to be considered a victim of human trafficking. The current legal definition of this word in the Criminal Code does not contain any precise examples of exploitation. Therefore, this second amendment

would add evidentiary foundations to enable courts to give clear examples of exploitation, such as threats or use of violence, coercion and fraudulent manipulation. This would update the legal terminology and would give courts the legal tools they need to successfully prosecute these criminals.

Once again, I congratulate the member on her wise and well thought out bill.

I will conclude by talking about human trafficking in Canada. In Canada it is tragic to see that aboriginal women and girls are disproportionately more likely to be victims of human trafficking. This tragedy is the result of a number of factors, and to address this, our government will have to combat it from all sides. We absolutely must recognize that poverty, lack of housing and very difficult living conditions for aboriginal women and girls are factors that explain why they are disproportionately more likely to be victims of human trafficking.

I would like to point out a coincidence. Today, the Standing Committee on Status of Women will present its report on violence against aboriginal women. This report is the product of two years of study on a very serious issue and an unfortunate tragedy in our country. Over the course of this study, the committee heard from about a hundred aboriginal women and people working with victims and their families. I had the opportunity to listen to some of this testimony when I sat on this committee. It is clear that to fight violence against aboriginal women and girls, including human trafficking, we must acknowledge the poverty and economic marginalization they experience.

I truly hope that this report will lead to concrete recommendations for improving the economic conditions of these women and decreasing their vulnerability to violence and human trafficking. I strongly encourage all of my colleagues in the House and the general public to listen to the presentation of this report today. Once again, I thank my colleague for this wise and necessary bill.

[English]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Bill C-310, a bill which the Liberal Party also supports.

The sad and tragic reality is that human trafficking is not going away anytime soon. Indeed, news broke just this past week that a human trafficking police action in China resulted in 700 arrests and secured the rescue of 178 children.

Human trafficking is a particularly serious problem in China, and as CNN reports:

Since the government launched a national campaign against human trafficking in April 2009, police have arrested almost 50,000 suspects, rescuing more than 18,000 children as well as some 35,000 women, the ministry said.

Those are horrific numbers, although even one is horrific.

Private Members' Business

We cannot look at just one country, of course, and human trafficking in isolation. As OSCE special representative and coordinator for combatting trafficking in human beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro noted in an address to global parliamentarians last month that human trafficking is:

—not a marginal phenomenon, but a new form of slavery on a massive scale in which people lose their freedom of choice, and are reduced to commodities for the benefit of their exploiters.

The statistics are shocking and saddening in their own right. We have heard many figures in House debates on human trafficking, such as the UN estimate that nearly 2.5 million people from 127 countries are being trafficked into 137 countries around the world, that trafficking has an annual revenue of more than \$5 billion, that profit from human trafficking may be in excess of \$31 billion annually, that 1.2 million children are trafficked globally each year, and that more than a million children are in situations of forced labour as a result of being trafficked.

With all these numbers, it is easy to forget that behind every number is a name, a face, a real person, a life, a world shattered by the evil that is human trafficking. Lest it be thought that Canada does not have any role to play in this global phenomenon, the U.S. state department, earlier this year, released a chilling report on human trafficking which found that:

Canada is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Canadian women and girls, particularly from aboriginal communities, are found in conditions of commercial sexual exploitation across the country. Foreign women and children, primarily from Asia and Eastern Europe, are subjected to sex trafficking;—

That is talking about Canada.

Indeed, some Canadians have a hand in human trafficking, and we must send a strong signal that complicity in the trafficking of persons is not acceptable in any way. This includes extending the reach of our laws to actions that happen beyond our borders.

Canada, last year, prosecuted a child sex tourist, a Canadian who abused girls in Cambodia and Colombia for violating subsection 7 (4.1) of the Criminal Code. Bill C-310 expands this provision to apply not only to sexual offences against children, as it does now, but to offences related to trafficking in persons. Indeed, with specific regard to Bill C-310, World Vision Canada has said:

This bill is a significant and necessary step in responding to human trafficking, and a vital part of a broader strategy to tackle trafficking at home and overseas from the key internationally recognized intervention angles: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships.

I think I may speak for all members of this House when I say that these are goals we wholeheartedly support.

While the bill we are debating today is a step in the right direction, there is much more that needs to be done to address all aspects of the trafficking process. In that regard I would like to note two other items the U.S. report of this year found with respect to Canada. First:

Canada's law enforcement efforts reportedly suffer from a lack of coordination between the national government and provincial and local authorities, which prosecute most human trafficking cases.

Simply put, changing the law is not enough without adopting a national approach to its enforcement that includes and co-operates with provincial and local authorities.

● (1115)

Second:

—there were no nationwide protocols for other government officials to proactively identify trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, such as women in prostitution or migrant workers. Victim support services in Canada are generally administered at the provincial level. There were no dedicated facilities or specialized programs for trafficking victims.

That is very saddening and disappointing.

We must ensure that we are not only looking at human trafficking with a view toward punishing and prosecuting those involved but also with a view to helping those who have been victimized in the process.

Addressing and redressing this most profound of human rights assaults, an assault on human dignity, requires a comprehensive approach, an approach that will allow us to prevent problems to begin with and to protect the victims of trafficking, while also pursuing the traffickers themselves, and subsequently prosecuting and punishing them.

To make human trafficking offences abroad subject to prosecution in Canada is, as such, a step in the right direction and something all Canadians can support.

● (1120)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul for her dedication to this important issue. I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak in support of legislation that would strengthen Canada's ability to prosecute human traffickers.

Bill C-310 is an important piece of legislation that proposes an amendment to section 7 of the Criminal Code which would add the current trafficking in persons offences to the list of offences which, if committed outside Canada by a Canadian or permanent resident, could be prosecuted in Canada.

I proposed a similar type of legislation, Bill C-212, which would empower the courts to prosecute the offence of luring a child when the offence is committed by a Canadian or permanent resident outside Canada's borders. Giving our courts the ability to prosecute offenders regardless of what jurisdiction the crime was committed in is an important tool in combatting crime like human trafficking or child exploitation in the 21st century.

Bill C-310 also proposes an amendment that would provide evidentiary definitions for exploitation by providing specific examples of exploitative conducts, such as use of threats, violence, coercion, and fraudulent means. The courts would be able to provide clear examples of exploitation.

Private Members' Business

Human trafficking, also referred to as the modern day slave trade, is a despicable crime against humanity that I know all members of this House would agree requires our utmost efforts to eliminate.

The international trafficking of people is a problem larger than average Canadians would assume. We often hear stories of the sex trade of women and girls, and men and boys occurring in faraway countries. However, when it comes to human trafficking, Canada is a destination country, a transit country, and a source country. Up to 16,000 people are trafficked to or through Canada every year.

The U.S. state department estimates there are between 600,000 and 800,000 global victims of human trafficking each and every year. While the majority of victims are women and girls, men and boys are also victimized. Regardless of gender, victims are knowingly lured into a criminal world that views them as objects, to be bought and traded, used for a certain amount of time and, in many cases, discarded when they no longer serve the criminals' purposes.

As a source country, many of our young vulnerable Canadians have been lured away from communities by the prospect or the promise of economic opportunity, and then sold into a dark underworld that steals from young people their freedom, their hope and, in some cases, their lives.

In Canada, we know young aboriginal women are particularly vulnerable to being victimized by traffickers and other parasitic criminals. We know about the Stolen Sisters, some 500 missing or murdered aboriginal women from across Canada. In northern British Columbia, Highway 16 has earned the unfortunate moniker "Highway of Tears". There are a series of unresolved disappearances and murders of aboriginal women in the region and of course, we know of the dozens of prostituted women who have fallen victim to unspeakable crimes in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

In Canada, and around the world, victims of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation often come from the impoverished and marginalized conditions that make them vulnerable to violence and abuse. What cannot be ignored when discussing human trafficking is its root cause, which is poverty.

Growing economic inequality across the globe is a major cause for concern. In fact, this is the foundation of the occupy Wall Street protests and the similar protests it has sparked in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and, indeed, across the globe. Economic inequality creates conditions where people are desperate to provide a more secure future for themselves and for their families.

As labour markets increasingly see no borders, people are easily preyed upon by those offering the promise of a new job in a prosperous country. Once they fall into the trap, they are often manipulated into believing they themselves are criminals and oftentimes, the safety of their families are threatened should they ever try to escape.

• (1125)

Predators of human trafficking are often highly sophisticated, multinational criminal organizations that are experts at trading humans, just as they would weapons, drugs or firearms. The existence of modern-day criminal organizations like this requires our governments to enact clear, legal frameworks to protect victims and

prosecute offenders. Experts argue that to effectively combat human trafficking we must adopt a three-pronged approach: prevention, prosecution and protection.

Bill C-310 would strengthen our ability to prosecute human traffickers. I believe Canada must also take steps to strengthen the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of its victims. In so many complex issues our community faces today, the key to achieving success is prevention, but often politicians have a difficult time justifying investing taxpayer dollars in preventive measures, which, despite a policy's proven effectiveness, may not have the same immediate gains like a new ice rink or a ribbon-cutting ceremony would.

In terms of prevention, we know that education is the key. A lack of awareness about the issue of human trafficking persists in our society. We need a national strategy to combat human trafficking that emphasizes coordination and partnership with various levels of departments of government, the RCMP, other countries, non-profit organizations and others. This level of coordination is key to ensuring protection is adequately provided to the victims of human trafficking.

There are many obstacles to identifying the victims of human trafficking. Oftentimes the first and only opportunity to identify them is at the border when many of them may still falsely believe that they are entering the country for legitimate purposes.

When we come across a potential victim of human trafficking, there are many challenges to providing the necessary elements of protection. We must protect them against unjust detention and deportation. There is a need for support services, such as shelter, health care and counselling. As I mentioned earlier, the lives of these victims and their families are often threatened, which makes it imperative that we offer witness protection services.

Members of the House have spoken about the police resources required to combat human trafficking. Our communities have been asking the federal government to provide adequate levels of resources so police can do their jobs. Canada's New Democrats have been calling for an increase of 2,500 police officers and resources to combat gangs and gang violence and to prevent our youth from being lured into criminal organizations.

In 2006, the government issued new guidelines for the issuance of temporary resident permits to victims of human trafficking, a step forward in combatting this serious crime. However, these permits have had their shortfalls. According to the Canada Council for Refugees:

—the temporary residence permits have proven inadequate: they are discretionary and are not always offered to trafficked persons; they impose an unreasonable burden of proof on the trafficked person; and the mandatory involvement of law enforcement agencies has deterred some trafficked persons from applying.

Private Members' Business

Canada's official opposition is calling on the government to provide victims of human trafficking a permanent option to stay in Canada. We call for this in part due to the shortcomings of the temporary resident permit, but also because of the very nature of this heinous crime. Victims must be given the choice to remain in Canada as permanent residents. They must be protected from prosecution themselves. There must be mechanisms in place to ensure victims are offered a full range of support services rather than treated as criminals.

I am hopeful that all members rise to speak in support of this bill. They will recognize that the fight against human trafficking is not over. Much work remains to be done to ensure that our country is doing all it can to combat the widespread scourge of human trafficking.

I would again like to recognize the efforts of my hon. colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul and would call on all members of the House to support Bill C-310.

• (1130)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to again speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons).

I will begin by thanking all hon. members who spoke today, as well as those who spoke during the first hour of debate on October 25. The careful attention paid to this legislation, and even more so to the issue of modern-day slavery during the speeches, is quite encouraging. There are few matters of justice that require our constant attention as much as slavery.

Bill C-310 would amend the Criminal Code to add the current trafficking in persons offences, sections 279.01 and 279.011, to the list of offences, which, if committed outside Canada by a Canadian or permanent resident, can be prosecuted in Canada.

Extending extraterritorial jurisdiction to Criminal Code offences is, indeed, a rare step. This was noted by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, as well as the NDP justice critic, during the first hour of debate. In particular, the parliamentary secretary stated that, in the limited number of cases in which Canada has extended prosecutorial discretion, it was because there was an international consensus to do so.

However, I want to refer to an extensive report on the practice of extraterritorial jurisdiction released by the Law Commission of Canada entitled, "Global Reach, Local Grasp: Constructing Extraterritorial Jurisdiction in the Age of Globalization". This report states that, while most exercises of extraterritoriality are deliberately multilateral, it is open to Canada to act extraterritorially in advance of consensus having been formed; in effect, to attempt to lead international opinion by example.

What is most notable is that the report provides Canada's child sex tourism laws as an example of this and states that the child sex tourism provisions, though now perfectly in line with international treaties, actually preceded the signing of these treaties. Bill C-310 is an opportunity for Canada to again take international leadership in combatting this heinous crime.

I want to note that, during the first hour of debate, I mentioned that I would be seeking a friendly amendment to add sections 279.02 and 279.03 to this clause. These are offences of receipt of material or financial benefit from human trafficking and withholding or destroying travel documents in the process of human trafficking. This would ensure that all of the acts around human trafficking are covered by extraterritorial offences and there is no chance of a Canadian human trafficker falling through the cracks. I am pleased that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice was supportive of this amendment and I look forward to the discussion at committee.

The second clause of Bill C-310 amends the definition of exploitation and the trafficking in persons offence to add an interpretive aid for courts to consider when they are determining whether a person is exploited. The heart of this amendment is to provide an aid to the courts that clearly demonstrates the factors that constitute exploitive methods. In my amendment, I have proposed including use of threats of violence, force or other forms of coercion and fraudulent means.

I will also be seeking a friendly amendment at committee to include the terms "use deception" and "abused a position of trust, power or authority". These minor changes would ensure that the bill is sound and accomplishes what we all want it to do.

Trafficking in persons is a fast growing crime in terms of profit, and it is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to confront slavery in all its forms, both within our nation and abroad. That is why I am so pleased to see the unity of members on all sides of the House taking such a strong position on this matter before us today. By supporting Bill C-310, each member of the House plays an important role in strengthening the tools used by police officers and prosecutors and to secure justice for victims of trafficking, both here in Canada and abroad.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time provided for debate has expired.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask that you see the clock at 12 o'clock.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Government Orders

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House stands suspended until 12 p.m.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:36 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

[English]

CANADA-PANAMA ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT

Hon. Bev Oda (for the Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway) moved that Bill C-24, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Panama, the Agreement on the Environment between Canada and the Republic of Panama and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Panama, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act. I was worried that I would not get here on time; my plane was delayed.

This is an important piece of legislation, as we can tell from the opposition benches. There is a lot of interest in it and we certainly encourage and look forward to the support of the opposition on this important bill.

Our government is committed to protecting and strengthening the financial security of hard-working Canadians. Our focus continues to be the economy, creating jobs and economic growth to benefit Canadian workers and their families. That is why we are continuing to deliver our job-creating pro-trade plan. The Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act is a key part of this plan.

We Conservatives understand, as do hard-working Canadians, that trade is a kitchen table issue. By that I mean that Canadians intuitively understand that trade is the key to their financial success. One in five Canadian jobs and over 60% of our annual GDP is generated by trade. Trade is a matter of fundamental importance to workers, as it helps put food on the table and helps families make ends meet.

In the past few months we have seen a vivid reminder to all of us that the world economy remains in the grip of a global economic crisis. The fragility of global markets has emphasized the importance and urgency of continuing to diversify our trade relationships and expanding our exports with emerging market economies like Panama.

These are challenging economic times. Problems in the global economic situation continue to persist. That is why our government

is taking action today to create jobs and help our businesses and their workers succeed in the years ahead. That includes our ambitious pro-trade plan to help businesses expand their presence around the world.

In these tough economic times, Canadians expect their government to do everything it can to enhance the ability of Canadian firms to participate in global markets and to create an advantage for Canadian businesses. That is why our government took action on our budget 2010 commitment to make Canada a tariff-free zone for industrial manufacturers.

Eliminating tariffs on goods used in manufacturing helps Canadian companies lower their production costs and increase their competitiveness. This contributes to a stronger economy, creates jobs and growth here at home, and reinforces our G20 leadership in the fight against protectionism.

It is actions such as this that demonstrate our government's clear understanding that there is a link between open markets and free trade and jobs and the quality of life here in Canada. We know that when Canadian companies succeed, Canadian workers succeed.

Free trade agreements help small and large businesses. In fact, small businesses in particular are responsible for 43% of all Canadian exports. This free trade agreement would help small business exporters do what they do best: create jobs and wealth for this country.

With this legislation we are one step closer to giving Canadian businesses the access they need in Panama. By improving access to foreign markets for Canadian businesses, we are supporting the Canadian recovery and creating new jobs for Canadian workers.

In the midst of the global downturn, this government has demonstrated its commitment to seek out more trade and investment opportunity for our businesses.

Through the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act, Canada is also sending a strong message to the world. Canada will not resort to protectionist measures and will continue to fight for an open rules-based system.

As a trading nation, Canadian workers, companies, producers and investors need access to the international marketplace to stay competitive. Canada is an export-driven economy, and pursuing bilateral and regional trade agreements is essential to bringing continued job prosperity and economic growth to Canadians. That is why our government has established an ambitious pro-trade plan.

A free trade agreement with Panama is also a part of our government's efforts to strengthen Canada's engagement in the Americas. Panama occupies a unique and influential position in the global trading system, thanks to the Panama Canal. This vital gateway is currently being twinned. Our government recognizes that Canadian firms are well placed to help. It should be noted that when the twinning of the Panama Canal is finished, it will carry approximately 5% of the entire trade on the planet. That is an opportunity Canada cannot turn its back on.

●(1205)

The Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act would generate increased export and investment opportunities for Canadians by creating a preferential and more predictable trade and investment environment.

For example, for exporters of Canadian goods, Panamanian tariffs on over 90% of Canadian goods exported to that country would be eliminated upon entry into force of the free trade agreement. Most remaining tariffs would be eliminated over a period of between five to fifteen years.

For Canadian service providers, the free trade agreement would help expand market access opportunities in areas such as information and communications technology, energy and financial services.

This agreement would benefit workers in every region of this country.

For example, Quebec would benefit from the elimination of Panamanian tariffs on key exports, such as machinery, vehicles, pork products, pharmaceuticals and aerospace products.

Investment and services provisions would benefit the engineering, construction and transportation sectors.

Ontario would benefit from the elimination of Panamanian tariffs on key exports, such as pharmaceuticals, machinery, information and communications technology products, and electrical and electronic equipment.

Financial services provisions would benefit Canadian banks and financial service providers operating in Panama.

Western provinces would benefit from the elimination of Panamanian tariffs on key export interests, such as fats and oils, processed food, pork, information and communications technology products, pulses and cereals.

The Atlantic provinces would benefit from the elimination of Panamanian tariffs on key export interests such as frozen potato products, trees and plants, fish and seafood, and forestry products.

For Canadians looking to invest in Panama, the free trade agreement includes a chapter of comprehensive rules governing investment. The rules provide greater protections and predictability for Canadian investors and their investments in Panama.

The free trade agreement also provides Canadian exporters of goods and services greater market access to Panama's government procurement opportunities, including those related to the Panama Canal expansion and other infrastructure projects. It is clear that this agreement would benefit Canadian workers and their families.

I am also pleased to report that in July 2011 the OECD formally placed Panama on its list of jurisdictions that have substantially implemented the international standard for exchange of tax information, commonly known as the white list. This is an extremely important achievement. It demonstrates Panama's commitment to combat international tax evasion. I trust it will appease concerns regarding taxation.

Government Orders

Panama is committed to the implementation of this free trade agreement and has already completed its domestic ratification process.

Canada is not the only country with whom Panama has negotiated a free trade agreement. Panama is deepening its regional economic partnerships and is expanding its global reach through the negotiation of trade agreements with countries such as the United States and the European Union.

As members of Parliament may be aware, the United States Congress approved the United States-Panama trade promotion agreement on October 12, 2011. This agreement, which could enter into force as early as 2012, would provide American firms with preferential access to the Panamanian market. Many Canadian goods and services compete directly with those of the United States in Panama. Canadian products would be at a significant competitive disadvantage if they continued to face duties while products from the United States enjoyed duty free access.

We cannot stand by and let Canadian companies compete on an uneven playing field. We must act quickly to ensure our businesses and workers can compete and remain competitive in the Panamanian market and reap the substantial benefits of this trade agreement.

●(1210)

I think all Canadians should be proud of this agreement. This treaty is a high-quality comprehensive agreement that would be beneficial for Canadian workers and their families. As I mentioned before, a free trade agreement with Panama would give Canadian exporters, investors and service providers preferential access to a dynamic up and coming economy. Two-way merchandise trade between Canada and Panama reached \$213.7 million in 2010. As these figures demonstrate, Canadian exporters have been very active in the Panamanian market but there remains significant untapped potential.

Once the new agreement is in place, Canadian businesses will benefit from lower tariffs. This agreement would eliminate tariffs on 99.9% of recent non-agricultural imports from Canada with the remaining tariffs to be phased out over five to fifteen years. Tariffs would also be lifted immediately on 94% of Canada's agricultural exports to Panama. Panama currently maintains tariffs averaging 13.4% on agricultural products, with tariffs reaching peaks as high as 260%. This significant reduction in trade barriers would directly benefit a number of sectors that already have established business ties in Panama, including agriculture and agrifood products, pharmaceuticals, pulp and paper, vehicles, machinery and information and communications technology products among others. By eliminating tariffs on these goods and many others, Canadian exporters and producers would become more competitive against competitors from other countries such as the United States, the European Union, Chile and Singapore which already have or are seeking preferential access to the Panamanian market.

Government Orders

This agreement would also help Canadian businesses take advantage of the new investment opportunities in the Panamanian market. Panama is an established and growing destination for Canadian direct investment abroad, particularly in areas such as construction, mining, and banking and financial services. The stock of Canadian investment in Panama is expected to grow in the years ahead. It reached \$121 million in 2010, in part due to the many infrastructure projects planned by the Panamanian government and the private sector. Once this agreement is implemented, Canadian investors will enjoy greater stability, transparency and protection for their investments.

The agreement would also ensure the free transfer of capital related to investment protection against expropriation without adequate and prompt compensation and non-discriminatory treatment of Canadian investments. Under this free trade agreement, all forms of investment would be protected, including enterprises, debt, concessions and similar contracts. These reciprocal commitments would serve to promote bilateral investment flow which is crucial to linking Canada to global value chains.

Among the most important benefits of this agreement would be the increased ability of Canadian companies to participate in large-scale infrastructure projects funded by the Panamanian government. Indeed, with the Panamanian government investing heavily in its country's growth and strategic importance, government procurement opportunities were a key driver for the negotiation of a free trade agreement with Panama.

As a case in point, Panama is currently undergoing a \$5.3 billion expansion of the Panama Canal. This expansion, which began in 2007, is scheduled to be completed by 2014 which will mark the 100th anniversary of the canal. It should be obvious that activities related to the ongoing expansion of the Panama Canal provide many opportunities for Canadian companies. Canadian companies in the areas of environmental technology, capital projects, human capital development, construction materials and marine technology stand to benefit greatly from this ambitious project.

However, this is not the only opportunity for Canadian businesses. Just last year, the Government of Panama laid out a five-year strategic plan in which it plans to spend \$13.6 billion on the country's infrastructure. Under this plan, \$9.6 billion would be allocated to infrastructure investments and other economic programs designed to stimulate further growth.

Some examples of projects the government is looking to undertake include airport construction, expansions and upgrades, a new convention centre, a new water treatment plant, power generation projects, agriculture irrigation systems, and a \$1.5 billion metro system. These are areas where Canadian businesses possess the necessary experience and expertise to successfully bid on these projects. With the passage of this agreement, Canadian workers and businesses will be able to capitalize on these opportunities.

● (1215)

I am pleased to say that the Canada-Panama free trade agreement includes strong government procurement provisions that guarantee Canadian suppliers will have non-discriminatory access to a broad range of procurement opportunities, including those under the Panama Canal authority. This means that Canadian workers and

companies, wanting to bid on a government procurement contract for goods and or services, will receive the same treatment as Panamanian firms. It is thus important that Parliament acts fast and enables Canadians to take advantage of these opportunities right away.

Canadian services providers and their workers also stand to benefit considerably from the Canada-Panama free trade agreement. On services, this agreement will provide a transparent, predictable and rules-based trading system to Canadian services providers, while ensuring they are treated equitably with Panamanian companies.

Canada negotiated enhanced market access opportunities that would go well beyond Panama's World Trade Organization General Agreement on Trade and Services commitments in services sectors of key interest to Canada. This means that Canadian providers in such areas as professional services, engineering, mining, construction and environmental services will have preferential access to Panama's market.

This agreement would provide a great opportunity to take our current bilateral trade and services to a new level in the years ahead. As we can see, the Canada-Panama free trade agreement is a comprehensive agreement covering everything from market access for goods to cross-border trade and services to investment and government procurement. It would provide rules to assist Canadian businesses doing business in Panama and would deepen our commercial engagement with a strategic partner.

Canadians understand that international trade is the lifeblood of our economy. Canadians value the real and tangible benefits that trade brings to our country. That is why they have entrusted this government with a mandate to focus on economic growth by forging new trade opportunities around the world.

It should not come as a surprise therefore that Canadian businesses have been strongly advocating in favour of this agreement. Let us listen to what Jason Myers, from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, said about this agreement's potential to improve market access. He said it:

—will improve access to two growth markets for Canadian goods, services and investment at a time when Canadian manufacturers and exporters are focusing on finding new customers and business opportunities around the world.

Closer economic integration with Panama promises to deliver further gains for Canadian exporters, investors, consumers and the economy as a whole.

At a time when Canadian businesses are faced with the challenges of the global economic slow down, the quick implementation of the Canada-Panama free trade agreement is of tremendous importance to our economy.

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I reach out to opposition colleagues in the House and I would ask them to support this agreement. This is an important agreement, not just for the Government of Canada, but for the country as a whole. Certainly, our government is focused on broadening and deepening our trading relationship, as it protects and creates jobs and economic growth for Canadian workers and their families.

I have some advice for my opposition colleagues. There are a number of special interest groups that continue to push their job-killing anti-trade agenda and they will continually invent any reason to oppose trade. I ask the NDP members, in particular, to stand strong against those groups, to be reasonable in their position on this important agreement for Canadian workers and to help us support the quick implementation and passage of the bill through the House.

This is important legislation. It means jobs in every part of the country from coast to coast and where there are jobs, there are opportunities.

It has been pleasure to speak to the bill. As members know, this is the same bill we introduced in the last Parliament. During the 40th Parliament, the legislation was debated for 15 days and almost 30 hours. I think the debate is over. It is time to get this through the House.

● (1220)

Mr. Mathieu Ravnignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member finished his comments on the supposed position of the opposition.

We have to be careful with the speed at which these trade deals go forward and also the blind faith that the Conservative government has that any trade deal has to be a good trade deal. With Panama, there are some significant issues.

My hon. colleague mentioned how investment would be protected in this trade deal, but that may be a problem. We know that Panama has various tax havens, particularly for drug money. One of the most important parts of its investment economy is laundering drug money.

What does my hon. colleague have to say about protecting Canadians from drug cartels?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, earlier I asked the NDP members to support the quick implementation of the bill. I will ask them again and stress the importance of it.

We have to look at Panama's record. Panama was on the grey list for many years for money laundering, but it is no longer on it. It is now on the white list. The OECD group decides that, not an individual country. Panama has come light years from where it was only a very short time ago.

As for the NDP position on supporting free trade agreements, I would ask those members to look at their own record. It is a dismal zero. NDP members have never supported a free trade agreement.

I will quote the member for Hamilton Mountain, who, at second reading of the Panama free trade agreement, stated the NDP's position quite clearly. She said, "this is not a trade agreement that I can support". However, she should have added that there was no trade agreement she could support. That is the NDP position.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is correct. The bill was debated for a considerable length of time during the last session and there were quite a number of questions raised. My NDP colleague, who just spoke, raised a couple of those serious concerns that were raised in the last Parliament and I would hope the parliamentary secretary could give us some answers in that area.

There is no question that we will be supporting the bill going to committee, but there is a serious issue around tax havens and money laundering, especially of drug money. The U.S. Congress has spelled out some serious concerns about the money laundering and on Panama not being committed to the kind of commitments that should be made in terms of ridding the country of the money laundering possibility.

Does the parliamentary secretary have any answers on those two critical areas before this goes to committee?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, first, I welcome the comments from the hon. member for Malpeque that the Liberals will support the bill going to committee. It is beneficial to the Canadian economy that we get this agreement through the House and to committee as quickly as possible.

To answer his second point, as I answered the hon. member from the NDP, the OECD has taken Panama off the grey list and put it on the white list. This signifies that Panama's money laundering difficulty, one it had for many years, is being worked on. There are terrific improvements being made by the Panamanian government when it comes to money laundering.

The other thing that should be noted from the hon. member's statement is that the U.S. has signed a free trade agreement with Panama. The European Union is in the process of doing so. Obviously they have satisfied any concerns they had as to money laundering. I see no reason why we should not be satisfied with the advancement that Panama has made in that area.

● (1225)

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been privileged to be part of the international trade committee since being elected by the great constituents of London West. In that time we have had an aggressive approach toward free trade agreements throughout the world. Panama is particularly important in a lot of ways.

The issue that comes up in every free trade deal is agriculture. Colleagues from all sides of the House have just come back from Europe where we talked to the Europeans with respect to that.

Knowing the importance of agriculture as it relates to this free trade deal and what it would mean from a tariff standpoint, could the parliamentary secretary please explain to the House why the issue of tariff-free products, particularly as it relates to agriculture, means so much to Canada and to the agricultural community in our country?

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Mr. Gerald Keddy: I can break it down quite simply, Mr. Speaker. There would be an immediate gain. There are average tariffs on agricultural products of 13.5%, which goes much higher on certain individual items. A number of agricultural products will now come in tariff free, or basically tariff free, including everything from oilseeds and pulses to frozen potato products, which come from the riding of the hon. member for Malpeque, to fish, beef and pork. All of these products will have improved access to the Panamanian market.

The other thing that should not be missed is the fact that the Americans have signed a free trade agreement. They are our competition in North America and throughout much of the world when it comes to agriculture. For us to have an opportunity to have preferential access to agricultural products is an opportunity that our country cannot afford to miss.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to seek some further clarification on the issue of Panama being a tax haven.

The parliamentary secretary indicated that Panama had been taken off the grey list, but as recently as November 5, French President Sarkozy added Panama to a list of countries that he said remained tax havens and would be shunned by the international community.

Would the parliamentary secretary not agree that this casts some doubt on the government's contention that Panama has come a long way and that everything substantial has been done to deal with the issue of Panama being a serious tax haven and a problem in relation to trade?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour only has to go back and check the records. It was in July 2011 that the OECD formally placed Panama on its list of jurisdictions that had substantially implemented the international standards for exchange of tax information, commonly known as the white list. This important achievement demonstrates Panama's commitment to combatting international tax evasion and I trust it should appease most of the concerns of the opposition.

The question is not whether Panama is on the grey list or on the white list. Panama has moved forward. We can either accommodate that and congratulate and reward Panama on that, or we can punish Panama and put it back on the grey list.

With the twinning of the Panama Canal, in 2014 Panama will be about to carry 5% of the entire trade on the planet earth. Canada is in a terrific position and an advantageous position to participate in that. We would be foolhardy not to congratulate Panama on the steps forward it has made and not continue to broaden our trade with it and bring it further into the community of nations in the OECD.

• (1230)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to debate Bill C-24. I will build off of the last question to start with and then return to some comments later.

It is important to note that New Democrats are in favour of trade. There is no doubt about it. None of us are against the movement of goods and services, but what we prefer is some balance in our trade agreements. The constant theme of trade is that when we give something, we get something back. Under this administration and

previous ones, Canada has slipped significantly. It has signed a series of bilateral agreements since NAFTA that have actually put us into a significant trade deficit, even with the United States. My community lost the Auto Pact in NAFTA, and subsequently and eventually our auto manufacturing has gone from number two in the world to number eight.

When we look at Bill C-24 and the repercussions it could create, there are significant aspects with the loss of trade. It does not automatically guarantee that we are going to be the winner in a trade deal. Often Canada's bilateral agreements have been with smaller nation states that have advantages through lax environmental, labour and regulatory systems that allow their products to come into our markets while it is difficult for our products to subsequently get into theirs.

There are also issues related to non-tariff barriers, which I will touch on briefly. One country that has not come forward is Korea. There are tariff barriers there, but there are also non-tariff barriers in the auto manufacturing sector. As a result, hundreds of thousands of vehicles flood into Canada every year, but we sell virtually no vehicles in Korea. That also happens even when we do not have trade agreements or there is no balance.

Another good example is Japan. I was told recently that the only Canadian vehicles sold in Japan were the ones sold to the Canadian embassy. It is a problem when hundreds of thousands of vehicles are pushed into our market and we do not have any reciprocity whatsoever.

The issue of Panama is interesting. It has been put on the white list. There is a blacklist, a grey list and a white list, and I will get into that a little later if I have time. The OECD categorized these lists, but there still is not an automatic assumption of all the characteristics of what a tax haven is. Second to that, there is still a process in place.

The NDP's former international trade critic, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, was very serious in trying to create an agreement that could be worked out with the government to deal with serious tax haven issues with Panama, as well as labour issues and a number of different things. Unfortunately, the government has not agreed to include that as part of its process. It has not been willing to compromise to a certain degree to ensure that tax havens are going to be taken care of.

It is interesting because Panama has quite a significant history of money laundering and tax havens. It also has a history of flagging ships of convenience and basically throwing the seafarers out the window, so to speak, making them vulnerable for treatment that is not part of the conduct of an international agreement. Panama has used that as a way to supplement income and attract corporations for its net benefit at the expense of others.

Although Panama has been moved to this list, it does not mean that all the measures are being taken into account. It does not account for some of the internal taxation issues, or even the current issues that are taking place. Just because it is moved off a list does not necessarily merit having no checks and balances. New Democrats were proposing some checks and balances to the system. There is a big difference between that and just having a blind faith bilateral agreement and seeing what happens later. It just has not been working for Canada in this case, and has not been working in general.

New Democrats want more specifics built into the agreement with Panama, and we are willing to do that. This bill will go to committee, which needs to hear from some witnesses. I have some testimony that I will table here today, but there needs to be testimony from individuals to look at whether there is actual movement.

● (1235)

I know that the parliamentary secretary made a very important point about the Panama Canal opening up in 2014. It is very important. The Panama Canal is historic. My former legislative assistant, Mohammed Peer, actually did a documentary through PBS on the original Panama Canal. It is quite a significant achievement and a marvel in many respects.

The new Panama Canal will actually have 5% of the world trade going through it. I think that is part of the reason that there is a lot of pressure to move Panama onto the white list. I think that is one of the reasons there has been a lot of effort to move it along that way.

However, that does not mean that it has actually moved that way. We need to have some testimony or some checks and balances to ensure that it does.

The government claims it is tough on crime, but often it has been very lax when it comes to organized crime or tackling some of the difficult challenges with our trade partners that relate to crime and also relate to how things are affected on our streets. I would look at my riding of Windsor West, for example, where 40% of Canada's daily trade goes to the United States, basically, along two miles of the Detroit River. It crosses on four crossings: the hazardous materials truck ferry, the Ambassador Bridge, the CP Rail tunnel, and the Windsor-Detroit tunnel. We have two kilometres there.

Despite having 40% of that trade, recently the government has cut back on the customs facilities and branch there. Now decisions about stopping trucks and smugglers dealing in guns, drugs, and human trafficking are now made 400 kilometres away, in Niagara Falls. Despite having reports saying that there should have been a consolidation in Windsor, the government decided to move the headquarters and so forth to Niagara Falls. My point is that cuts have been made, ideological cuts, and that has actually opened up our exposure to these elements.

With regard to Bill C-24, my worry is that we do not have any of the important backstops that are necessary to look at the tax havens. I want to touch on the issue of the OECD here, because it is important that people understand that there is a blacklist that includes countries that do not live up to any expectations or standards. There are really no countries left on the blacklist that I am aware of. The grey list includes a number of countries that do not follow some tax

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standards. Then there is the white list, to which Panama has been added. It has been moved to it recently, so that is a benefit.

However, at the same time, we still do not have the necessary backstops that the member for Burnaby—New Westminster proposed. One of his amendments, which was defeated by both the Liberals and the Conservatives, was a taxation agreement that would track legal income while the tax information exchange agreement would track all income, including that made through illegal means. Considering Panama's history and reputation on such matters, it would be clear that such an agreement is necessary before signing a trade deal.

The member for Burnaby—New Westminster was attempting to ensure that there would be more information and a deeper tax scrutiny on Panama. That would be important because of the hundreds of thousands of corporations that are actually in Panama.

Some testimony from Todd Tucker of the Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch was very important at committee. I want to read a little of what he had to say. He said:

I have two central points. First, Panama is one of the world's worst tax havens. It is home to an estimated 400,000 corporations, including offshore corporations and multinational subsidiaries. This is almost four times the number of corporations registered in Canada. So Panama is not just any developing country.

Later he said:

Let me elaborate on the first point. What makes Panama a particularly attractive location for tax dodgers and offshore corporations? Well, for decades, the Panamanian government has pursued an international tax haven strategy. It offers foreign banks and firms a special offshore licence to conduct business there. Not only are these businesses not taxed, but they're subject to little to no reporting requirements or regulations.

That is important, because when we want to get into a fair trade deal, we need to have access to the types of conditions and strategies that we are going to compete against. These tax havens give advantages on the trade arrangement that do not favour Canadian exporters, and that is why we have seen the trade surplus diminish under the current government and a trade deficit emerge on a continual basis. Our manufacturers, our labourers, abide by international and Canadian standards that make it uncompetitive for them when corporations are able to use those subsidies, being tax havens, to basically lower their costs in the way that they are able to compete, so the relationship becomes naturally unfair and unfitting.

● (1240)

I understand the pressure on the government with regard to increasing its access to markets. We have seen a couple of other interesting issues emerge recently that are motivating the government, not only with Panama but also Jordan, to move toward some type of bilateral agreement. We recently saw our international trade committee go to Europe for the European trade agreement, CETA. That agreement is very important in many respects. It has a lot of conditions that are going to be very critical for our supply management and a series of different things.

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The interesting thing that took place while our trade group was in Europe was that the Conservatives signed a perimeter agreement with the United States for more harmonization on regulations and on different services and products, including food and automotive products, which might actually limit our exporting capability into Europe, because the content requirements are going to further rise between Canada and U.S. regulations and they will then also be negated for Europe.

I can understand the overall strategy of the government in trying to find alternatives out there, but again, it cannot be done in the absence of labour laws and other types of laws that are important.

On Panama, we will offer some recommendations and amendments to try to move forward. However, we are disappointed with the government's lack of ability to compromise and add those elements.

I want to touch a bit on labour rights. Panama has a history of issues with labour rights, and we do not have the type of scrutiny necessary to evaluate this. The member for Burnaby—New Westminster was asking for a commission to be set up to look at labour rights and provide some type of mentorship, in a sense, so that there would be oversight of this trade agreement and labour rights.

In some of the countries we are trading with, labour rights are lower. These issues emerge even in the context of larger trading partners. For example, there are child labour issues with India. These can present serious problems for us to compete against.

Panama, as we know, has ships under flags of convenience. That is important because it allows Panama to lower its labour standards, putting a whole bunch of people at risk, while limiting our capability to compete.

We saw the very high-profile case of Paul Martin's Canada Steamship Lines using flags of convenience. There was quite a controversy in this country. It was really shocking that a prime minister's company would take advantage of this loophole for labour rights to be able to advance his own pocketbook from Canada Steamship Lines. Flags of convenience are another situation that is not addressed in this agreement.

Therefore, we are going to oppose the bill at this particular time. We feel that there should have been some greater compromise with this.

Also, the member for Burnaby—Westminster proposed a yearly review of this deal to examine whether or not Panama has actually advanced on some of the tax haven issues. We would be open to those things as long as there was going to be some greater scrutiny and follow-up. That is the problem with just accepting the bill the way it is right now.

As I conclude, I want to say for the record that New Democrats are supportive of a trade agreement. There is no doubt about that. However, we want to see progressive trade as the difference, and there has to be some balance with regard to our operations and our trade agreements. Right now we are continuing to gut the Canadian economy with some of our trade agreements. How they are working out has led to Canada having the lowest number of manufacturing

jobs since we have been tracking them in the 1970s. This is a real problem, because we are losing the value-added work that is necessary for this country to compete in the global economy. What we are witnessing is that when we open up trade, sectors of the economy have actually lost some of their strength.

We can look at the tool and die and mould-making industry, for example. There has always been the argument that we have to go to high-end, value-added manufacturing to be okay, and that will be a way that we can actually evolve our economy. However, tool and die and mould-making in Canada are the best in the world, but we are struggling to maintain it because of tariff and non-tariff barriers and some of the things brought down in trade agreements that have opened us up to competition against lower standards for labour, lower environment rights and less scrutiny. These are real problems.

We have not addressed some of the serious issues. When we actually have some power and some capability, as in the case of Panama, we should have some conditions built into the agreement that would require analyzing and reviewing it to ensure that those things are measured and taken seriously. We would then be able to put pressure on Panama to comply.

● (1245)

The hon. parliamentary secretary said that if we did not do this, we would be punishing Panama and it would go back to being a greater tax haven. First of all, we still do not know the evidence. President Sarkozy was very clear in his remarks. In fact, he was asked to apologize for his remarks and refused. He is very serious about the effects of the tax haven situation in Panama. I do not know why we would not measure and analyze this. Why would we not build into our base model for trade with Panama the ability to influence, in order to end that type of practice? If we did that, we would have a greater effect on the drug trade, organized crime and corporate responsibility. A series of measures would allow Canadians to compete, while also helping to deal with these issues around the globe. We have an opportunity to do this.

We should not just let the OECD determine our relationship with another country. That is not right. We should be putting our own standards of greater scrutiny in place, because we know there are a lot of politics relating to the OECD. However, if we are serious, we have an opportunity for Canada to have a stronger relationship with Panama. We can actually then have some scrutiny over the conduct in Panama. Leaving it to the OECD is not enough. Its members have disagreements on what a tax haven is. At the same time, OECD members like President Sarkozy note that the tax haven situation has not gone away. I think the evidence is strong enough that it merits our making some amendments. We will look at that in committee.

We are disappointed that the government came back with the same bill. It has been around a number of times, the first being August 11, 2009. The bill has been punted back and forth and subjected to electoral changes, yet has not changed at all. That is a real problem for us. We would have thought that at some point the government would introduce some of the measures it heard concerns about, so that it could move the bill through the House more quickly. There is no doubt that if there was that intent, we could move this legislation through the system a lot more quickly.

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The member for Burnaby—New Westminster was very clear about our concerns with respect to the bill. We would take this approach: we would go back to committee and examine it and hopefully have an opportunity to convince the government to make these changes. If the government were willing to make these changes, then we would work with it to move the legislation through as long as it would ensure that the tax haven, human rights and labour issues would be addressed and that there would be an ability for us to follow through. If we just act in blind faith, we know the results. We know the government's record.

Canada has diminished its capability to trade, especially from the value-added aspect. We are about more than just oil, gas and natural resources in this country. This country was built on value-added work, especially after the Second World War, when there was a real intent to make sure there would be opportunities. Just opening up a market and reducing tariffs and trade does not guarantee that we actually improve our quality of life.

There is no doubt that we want greater access to these markets in Panama, Jordan and the EU. Some policies will be changed; people who have already invested in businesses and parts of the economy will be affected. We need to identify those areas and ensure that Canadians can compete in a fair way. There may be damage to certain sectors of the economy. I know that the government is looking at putting supply management on the chopping block in a number of different agreements. If we implement those types of measures, there has to be a business case and a plan. Therefore, we should be proposing a series of amendments at committee to ensure that these issues can be taken care of.

I appreciate the opportunity to debate this bill. I think it is important for Canadians to understand where our economy is going. Our trade deficit has gone so dramatically high that it is a serious threat to our national economy and to our quality of life. It really shows the mismanagement of the government by just blindly thinking it can sign small bilateral agreements to solve the Canadian economy. We have to have a value-added economy. This agreement is a small part, but it actually has a big part to play in the tax haven issues.

The reality that we all understand is that Panama, as the canal opens up, will have a lot of power. The question is, what will we do right now to ensure there is some fairness and reciprocity regarding the abuse of tax havens?

• (1250)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those were interesting closing comments on reciprocity from the member opposite. Trade agreements truly are about reciprocity. They are about rules-based trading between equal partners. If I can summarize, the hon. member does not support free trade agreements with Panama, Colombia, Peru, Honduras or Jordan, because we should not be trading with those countries. However, if we look at more developed nations, the members opposite do not support free trade agreements with Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein or the 28 members of the European Union. I do not know who they support as free trade partners.

I have a problem with what the hon. member said about companies trading with the European Union. Although he got off topic about Canadian content, it is very clear. I spoke to manufacturers, agricultural producers and people in the fishery about the EU agreement; not one of them was worried about Canadian content. It is good enough for the OECD countries, but it is not good enough for the NDP—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the reason I delved into the European trade agreement is that, at the time, our committee in Brussels and Paris was actively pursuing policies here in Canada and North America that would erode our capability to take advantage of that agreement if it went ahead. That is the reality. Some of the standards that we would adopt under the Canada-U.S. perimeter security agreement would eliminate products and services that we can now bring into Europe because of content provisions and laws in that agreement. This is the challenge we are faced with, as these two things are happening at once.

I want to return to the OECD question from the parliamentary secretary. I do not think it is right for us, when we know the significant tax haven, drug running and money laundering situation in the history of Panama, to turn a blind eye and say that the OECD has let us out of this one. We know the political pressure, because the OECD countries want to ship through Panama. Panama has a big stick, as the canal is opening up. At the same time, the OECD standards should not be a whitewash for us. We should use this as an opportunity to at least do some follow-up on the money laundering situation, the crime and organized efforts that have been identified in Panama.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, countries like India are quickly becoming strong world economic powerhouses. There are other countries where we have adopted aggressive immigration policies, where we have seen growth of countries and communities, like the Filipino community. Could the member indicate what the NDP's policy is on developing freer trade with countries like India and the Philippines?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, when we look at some of these bilateral agreements, we should be taking into account environmental, labour and health issues. I will use India as an example. We do want to trade more with an emerging economy like India, but we have to watch out, because we ship asbestos to India. We have pictures, documents and other information showing children working with Canadian asbestos with no protection. We know India has child labour issues. We believe that some of these considerations should be written into the agreements, to advance and benchmark them, so there is actually progress.

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We are never going to compete if child labour is going to be used in manufacturing, assembling and exporting of the same product. That is just never going to happen. First, it is not ethical. Second, the conditions, wages and treatment of the workers give them such a competitive advantage. This is why they do it. They treat people inhumanely in order to lower the cost of the product. That is just wrong. We believe those things should be addressed, benchmarked and worked on.

• (1255)

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to my colleague, the critic for international trade.

The parliamentary secretary went to some length talking about all of the trade deals that the NDP does not support. Of course, the issue here is that these are trade deals that are developed by the government. That is the concern. Not all trade deals are of concern, and the critic has been clear on that.

One of the problems, and I would ask him to comment on this, is the fact that the government never does an adequate assessment of what the wins and losses are going to be, and the expected impact in terms of the jobs in Canada as a result of a particular deal. Would the member comment on that aspect?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour most ably handled this file prior to his leadership campaign, which required him to take another route. He took a very balanced approach to the trade file.

I think it is important to recognize that we want to see some balance with regard to these trade agreements. He is rightly talking about the examination of the winners and losers in trade agreements. When businesses emerge out of our Canadian economy, and then all of a sudden the government changes where they can operate, how they can operate, who is going to be the competition and how, then there needs to be an examination of these changes. This will help improve the environment, or at least provide an opportunity to adjust to the new environment.

The government is changing the whole field for these companies, whether it be the auto sector or the supply management for dairy and agricultural sectors. A range of problems can emerge.

We are asking for the examination and identification of vulnerabilities. We are also asking for a business plan so that those organizations know what they are getting into, know what the new world environment is going to be so that they can succeed or at least have some time to adjust.

A good example was our chance to buttress the time for trade on textiles with China. I think it bypassed us, while even our own North American competitors took it up and protected their industries. The United States took advantage of it. We did not. As a result, it killed our textile industry, quite significantly and a lot more quickly than necessary.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, a particular concern of the Green Party in relation to the proposed trade agreement with Panama is the investor-state provisions, which essentially parallel the investor-state provisions for NAFTA. I would have hoped that, as we go forward with trade agreements, we would

learn from our mistakes. Chapter 11 was clearly a mistake and it disadvantaged Canadian democratic institutions. It caused us to repeal legislation that protected us from toxic gasoline additives, and put us in jeopardy in such matters as the Abitibi-Bowater contract with Newfoundland and Labrador.

Does the member have any comments on the mistakes made under chapter 11 of NAFTA and why we might want to fix them before going into this agreement with Panama?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, this is an important question because chapter 11 has made corporate power over public policy power a very significant issue.

It can involve everything: milk, chemicals on property, water quality and a whole series of issues that we should not have to give up.

One of the interesting things about NAFTA is that Canada is the only country in the world that gave up its natural resources control. We gave that up with NAFTA. It is incredible. Not even Mexico gave that up. Mexico kept that protection element on public policy.

We are the only country in the world that has given up that crucial element. That is why we have to go on bended knee to the United States all the time. We have given up our number one tactical advantage to be able to trade with the rest of the world.

• (1300)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-24, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Panama, the Agreement on the Environment between Canada and the Republic of Panama and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Panama.

I mentioned the full title because I do believe that very important parts of this agreement, and ones we have been pushing for a long time, are the side agreements on labour co-operation and the environment. Whether they are strong enough at the end of the day, that is certainly something at which the committee will have to have a more in-depth look.

For years, various trade agreements have left out the important points of labour and the environment. It is unconscionable that in a trade agreement we would ask our businesses to compete on so-called fair free trade with other countries, where there are abuses of labour, low paid labour, and regulations on the environment, others do not. It is important to use these trade agreements to bring up labour and environmental standards around the world.

The trade agreement with Panama, though, is yet another example of the government pursuing new arrangements at the expense of established agreements. The most recent indication that the government is better at talking about the significance of trade while ignoring the practical matter of securing our trade with countries we have been trading with for a long time is demonstrated by the most recent trade statistics.

This past Friday, Stats Canada indicated that our merchandise exports declined by 3% and imports increased by 1.9%. Our trade balance, again, slipped into deficit.

Government Orders

While we are getting all kinds of talk from the government and the member for London West earlier in his remarks when asking a question of the parliamentary secretary talked about how aggressive the government is in securing trade agreements. Yes, it is aggressive. There is no question about that. However, it is aggressive in flitting all around the world trying to establish agreements with any number of countries, not big players in terms of actual trade, but while it is doing that, it is ignoring the countries with which we already have established trading relationships, especially the United States.

The government's mismanagement of Canada's trading relationships has resulted in trade deficits for the first time in 30 years, and that is worrisome.

Yes, while we support this particular trade agreement, we believe the government is failing over all in terms of a trade agenda around the world, basically by ignoring the key market that we trade with, which is the United States. In that market, in terms of the value of trade on a daily basis, more than \$1.4 billion is traded between Canada and the United States. According to the international trade publication of Canada's State of Trade 2011, in 2010 the United States market accounted for 74.9% of our merchandise exports, and by 2040, according to the trade department itself, the U.S. share of Canada's exports will be 75.5%.

That regardless of the diversification of trade, even this government acknowledges, in its own documentation, that the United States is and will remain the dominant trading party of this country.

I express that because of all the propaganda and rhetoric we are getting from the government. It talks about a new trade deal here a new trade deal there. It is negotiating Panama today, but it is ignoring our established markets, and that point has to be made.

• (1305)

So yes, while the Conservatives sign the agreements, and they can add up the numbers, the fact of the matter is that they are failing Canadians on the trade agenda, especially with the United States of America.

In terms of merchandise trade, in 2010 Canada exported \$339.4 billion internationally. The vast majority of our merchandise trade was with 10 countries, which, in descending order, were: the United States, accounting for 74.9%; the United Kingdom, 4.1%; China, 3.3%; and then Japan, Mexico, Germany, Korea, Netherlands and Brazil.

It is sad to say that we are now starting to lose ground in the Korean market, which is one of those top 10. The United States has just signed a free trade agreement with Korea and the tariffs to the United States will come down.

Korea is a huge market for Canadian pork and beef. However, the discussions between Canada and South Korea just seemed to have dried up. I do not know whether it is a dispute or whether the Minister of International Trade is trading off Canadian pork producers because the Minister of Finance is so concerned about the auto industry that is in his backyard.

The government has to come together and balance, in an auto-pact kind of way, in order to protect the Canadian car industry, which the

Minister of Finance clearly wants to do as it is in his own backyard. However, the Minister of International Trade has to stand up to the Minister of Finance and say that Canadian pork and beef exports to Korea, where we trade over \$1 billion in that market now, are important too.

Every day from here on, with the United States tariffs coming down, we are going to start to lose our Korean market share. It will go up for the United States and down for Canada. It is time that the Minister of International Trade stood up for Canadian pork producers in that particular market.

This is not Panama, but is an important market and we have to pull the whole trade agenda into context. Panama is important, but it is extremely important that we not lose markets wherein we have already established a market share.

Canada is a trade dependent nation with 80% of our economy depending on access to foreign markets for Canadian exports. The Liberal Party supports the principle of free trade. We support initiatives that improve market access for Canadian business.

To look back at how we got into some of these established markets, we see a failing with the current government. Prime Minister Chrétien led trade missions, sometimes with premiers and businesses, to China and other countries around the world to establish and expand the trading relationship. That is not happening with the present Prime Minister. The trade minister seems to be flying around the world, but as I said, we are losing established markets. We cannot continue to allow that to happen.

The international trade committee studied Bill C-46 in the previous Parliament and consulted with stakeholders to ensure that the agreement was generally good for Canada. The committee travelled to Panama and I believe to Jordan as well. I congratulate the committee on its work.

However, I agree with the parliamentary secretary that we do not need to go through that broad hearing process again. It is on the record and we can look at it. I think there are other issues that we need to look at as a committee in order to do our work, but we do not need to repeat what was already done. I would hope that we can give this piece of legislation relatively quick passage in the House.

• (1310)

Panama has a relatively small economy. In 2009 we exported \$90 million in goods to the country. It is, however, a stable country which has made significant progress in recent years in terms of development and democracy, which Canada is well placed to encourage.

Some of the exports that have great potential in Panama, such as fish, shellfish, french fry potatoes and agriculture products, do come from my region of the country, so the agreement should be good for some businesses and farmers in my own particular region.

Government Orders

I would like to put this into perspective. While this is a very worthwhile venture, the Conservative government has been lagging behind our competitors in important emerging markets like China and India, and this has been mentioned by previous speakers, and has only recently attempted to engage in those markets. Canada should be focusing its trade agenda on larger growing markets where there are more opportunities for Canadian businesses and Canadian employers.

The Conservative government has been failing, and I underline that, to protect Canadian interests vis-à-vis our largest trading partner, the United States. The United States is engaging in increasing protectionism, which has already hurt Canadian businesses, yet the Conservative government seems to be doing virtually nothing.

Time and again we have asked the Minister of International Trade about the buy American issue, and he has surprised and disappointed us. We asked him about the additional fees on products going by sea and air into the United States, and he surprised and disappointed us.

Against the rule of law and undermining democracy, the Canadian government is trying to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board, and the bill may pass through the Senate tonight against the ruling of the Federal Court and against the rule of law.

To the disadvantage of producers in this country, the government is giving to the Americans, undermining democracy in the process. The Americans have challenged Canada 14 times with respect to that particular agency. Canada won every time and now the government is going to give it away. One has to wonder who the minister is really working for. Is he working for American or Canadian producers?

It is one thing to kill the Canadian Wheat Board, but are the Americans going to reduce their subsidies? No, they will not. They never negotiated anything like that. It is a win for the Americans, and that is the problem that we are seeing with the Conservative government.

At the WTO we won the issue with respect to COOL, country of origin labelling. Is the government demanding that the Americans pay compensation to our producers? No. Our industry lost over \$5 billion as a result of that illegal, improper action by the United States, and the minister just sits on his hands. It just gives them something else in return. That is the key point in terms of the trade perspective.

Panama is important. Bill C-24 is a reasonably decent bill, but the government has been avoiding the bigger and broader trade issue. At the end of the day, even with a new trade agreement, Canadian exporters and Canadian businesses seem to be consistently losing ground, and they are feeling it in their pocketbooks.

We support Bill C-24, but our focus in terms of trade is on the larger issues and larger trading partners, both existing and potential, that the government is neglecting to the detriment of the Canadian economy and Canadian jobs.

The agreement with Panama is helpful and in the opinion of the Liberal Party the legislation should move to committee for further examination. As I said a moment ago, we do not need to take months

to examine it. We should be able to give the bill reasonably quick passage if we examine it critically.

● (1315)

I have a couple of points on Panama. In spite of the global economic downturn, Panama's GDP grew at 10.7% in 2008, one of the highest in the Americas. In 2010, Panama's GDP growth stood at 7.5%. Panama is Canada's largest export market in Central America. The bilateral trading relationship has grown 61% since 2009, reaching \$213 million in bilateral trade in 2010.

Primary Canadian merchandise exports to Panama include machinery, vehicles, electronic equipment, pharmaceutical equipment, pulses and frozen potato products. Canadian service exports include financial services, engineering, information and communication technology services. Merchandise imports from Panama include precious stones and metals, mainly gold; fruits; nuts; fish; and seafood products.

The existing Panama Canal, vital, as we know, for the international trading system, is being expanded, with completion slated for 2014. The \$5.3 billion expansion is expected to generate opportunities for Canadian companies in construction, environmental engineering and consulting services, capital projects and more. That is an opportunity for Canadian companies to work on the ground and to gain economy back home in terms of increasing the size of Panama Canal so it can handle super Panamax vessels.

Elements covered by the FTA include market access for goods, cross-border trade and services, telecommunications, investment, financial services and government procurement. Panama maintains an average most-favoured nation, applied tariffs on agriculture products of 13.4%, reaching as high as 260% on some products. The FTA would eliminate these immediately, and that is a good thing, in the case of 90% of the products and gradually on the rest over the next 5 to 15 years. This would likely enhance the competitive position of Canadian agriculture products, such as frozen potato products; pulses; beans and lentils; pork, which was previously taxed at 47%; malt; processed foods; and beef. As I said earlier, several of those products are important to the Atlantic region.

On non-agriculture goods, Panama maintains an average MFN applied tariff of 6.2%, reaching as high as 81% on certain key Canadian exports. The FTA would completely eliminate these tariffs, which could help Canadian exporters of fish and seafood, construction materials and equipment, industrial and electronic machinery, paper products, vehicles and parts. Canada would immediately eliminate over 99% of our tariffs on current imports from Panama.

Government Orders

The free trade agreement also addresses non-tariff barriers by adopting measures to ensure non-discriminatory treatment of imported goods, promoting good regulatory practices, transparency and use of international standards. Ratifying this free trade agreement appears to have little economic risk for Canadian industries. The concerns that have yet to be resolved and relate to the issue of Panama is Panama as a tax haven and the issue of money laundering. I do not want to get into the technicalities in those particular areas. That is an issue that we need to talk about at committee. I asked the parliamentary secretary a question earlier. We see that as an important issue that really does need to be addressed.

The bottom line is that we are supportive of this particular trade agreement but we are critical of the government in terms of its overall trade agenda where it continues to lose out on already established markets as it vies to find new ones.

• (1320)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated listening to the member for Malpeque talk today. I can remember being down in Washington with him a couple of years ago when we were fighting together for our farmers, fighting against the country of origin labelling on which the WTO backed us. I know the member has great passion and great understanding for the agriculture industry.

I have a question for the member for Malpeque. It seems like the Liberal Party will stand behind this bill, and I commend them for that, but could he explain to the government why the NDP is opposed?

If we listen to the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, he said, “The problem with this bill is it is about the Conservative Party”. There is no issue with who develops the bill. If the bill is good for Canada, it is good for Canada and it should not matter who develops it.

Could the member explain to us and maybe give us some insight on why the NDP is so against any type of trade deal?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, it would not be up to me to speak for members of the NDP. They are quite capable of speaking for themselves.

I did listen to the trade critic's remarks earlier when he talked about some of the concerns with this bill. I do recognize and agree with him on some of those concerns.

However, from the Liberal Party's point of view, the overall initiative here is a good one. I outlined in my remarks that we think it is very important that the FTA does have the side agreements on labour and on the environment. It is a good enough bill that we believe it should be given relatively quick passage at committee, move ahead and get on with some of the other trade issues that are irritants to Canadians.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, although we might have some differences with the bill, the one thing we seem to have in common is with regard to the tax haven, even though Panama has been moved on the list to the white list.

Would the member be open to an amendment to this bill that would analyze the changes in Panama and then one year later having some consequences if it has not abided by those changes or it

continues to be a tax haven and continues to be an area for money laundering, drug laundering and where corporations can use tax haven loopholes to their benefit against Canadian corporations and others?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is open to any kind of discussions. We would look at those amendments very seriously.

The member is correct to mention that Panama is moving on the list through a grey area to a white area, and that is a good step forward. However, I do think it is our responsibility as members at committee to not just take the OECD or somebody else's word for it, but to look seriously at a couple of concerns. One of them is certainly money laundering of mainly drug money and two is the tax haven issue.

We will be aggressively pursuing witnesses who can talk about that issue and outline what is really happening within Panama on those two points. We are well open to looking at amendments that could clarify the matter and put the pressure on to see that some of these issues are indeed resolved.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member is surprised and disappointed by the number and frequency of occasions on which the Minister of International Trade has been surprised and disappointed?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, one of the historical statements by the Minister of International Trade will be “surprised and disappointed”. I mentioned it in my remarks. He was surprised and disappointed when the Americans came in with buy American even though President Obama was telescoping that they were going that way, that they were looking at implementing some policy of buy American, which would be against everything, our protectionist stance since June 28. Come October sometime and the minister was surprised and disappointed that it happened. Where was the proactive activity on the part of the government?

The second area where he was surprised and disappointed was on the \$5.50 fee from sea and air going into the United States. That was in legislation in the House for four weeks and yet the minister was surprised and disappointed.

The point being is that the minister needs to be proactive in relations with the United States, our most important trading partner. It does no good to flit and fly all around the world when we are losing ground in our most important economic trading relationship. The minister, instead of being surprised and disappointed, needs to finally stand up for Canadians in this trade arena.

Government Orders

• (1325)

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to travel with the member for Malpeque this past week, as we travelled to Europe on some issues relating to international trade. The reason I mention this is that in his earlier statement the member said that this government was ignoring major countries around the world. I cannot think of a larger trading block, frankly, than the EU. The member would also know that we are on the verge of doing some great work with India as well. Those are two major markets around the world.

The member expresses surprise and disappointment. I think if he were to sincerely express surprise and disappointment it would be over the lack of free trade deals that in the 13 years he was part of the Liberal government the Liberals, frankly, did not put together. What he should be pleased about is the fact that we have had so many free trade deals established around the world. Frankly, that is a harbinger of great things to come.

I wonder if he would comment on those great opportunities.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member for London West missed it during my remarks but the reason we are doing so well in the export arena to this day, including in China, is because of some of the trade trips Prime Minister Chrétien took premiers and business folks on with him. That is where we started expanding trade. Maybe he missed it.

As I also said in my remarks, this is the first time in 30 years that we have had a deficit in merchandise trade and the current government is there. Just talking about trade is not enough. We have trade agreements in place with the United States, being one. We have a good export market in South Korea, being another. However, because we are not in the South Korean market, because I think the Minister of International Trade has caved in to the Minister of Finance, we are now seeing ourselves in the position of losing a billion dollars worth of pork and beef exports to Korea. As the member for London West and I found out when we were in Europe, and good work by the committee there I will admit, we probably will not regain the pork market, which we have lost in Korea, in Europe.

My point is that, while it is important to establish new agreements, it is even more important to not lose ground in the agreements that we have already established with the United States, Korea and elsewhere. That is where the government is going wrong. That is why we have a merchandise trade deficit for the first time in 30 years.

I would ask the member for London West and certainly the Minister of International Trade to wake up and smell the roses. They must start standing up for Canadians in the trade agreements we already have. Yes, do the expansion, but hold our ground on the trade agreements that we already have and see that we are not taken of advantage of by protectionism in the United States south of the border.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my friend, the member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about the issue of labour in the context of the Canada free trade agreement.

[*Translation*]

It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about the issue of labour, in the context of the Canada-Panama free trade agreement.

• (1330)

[*English*]

We live in an increasingly global community and it is integral that we work to broaden and deepen our trading relationships with countries around the world. Canada's pro-trade plan is creating economic opportunities and jobs for Canadians. As our focus remains on the economic recovery, trade agreements are opening up new markets and helping Canadian workers and businesses compete internationally. While improving trade opportunities for Canadian workers and businesses, we also recognize that ensuring strong labour principles, practices and standards is important. That is why Canada has negotiated a strong labour provision in parallel with this free trade agreement.

This labour agreement would ensure a level playing field for Canadian workers and businesses while creating good well-paying jobs for Canadian workers by making it clear that as we grow our economies, we will create jobs and economic growth in both our countries.

We know that the NDP does not want to support freer trade and we have a fundamentally different approach to engaging internationally than the NDP has. It prefers isolation, but we know that through engagement we can promote economic growth that would benefit workers in both countries. The NDP's record speaks for itself. It has opposed every single free trade agreement Canada has ever signed, including the North American free trade agreement and agreements with Chile, Costa Rica, Israel, Peru, Colombia, Panama, the European free trade association, Jordan and Honduras.

Through trade we are creating jobs and prosperity here in Canada. One in five Canadian jobs is generated by trade. We understand that through trade agreements such as this one, we create jobs and prosperity right here in our country. However, as part of the Canada-Panama agreement on labour co-operation, Canada and Panama have committed to ensuring that their labour laws as well respect and embody the International Labour Organization's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. It is through this declaration that we demonstrate our shared commitment to improving labour standards and protecting workers' rights. It also demonstrates this government's firm belief that through trade we create economic growth and prosperity for workers in both countries.

Government Orders

I can confidently say that despite the NDP's protestations, the provisions found in the Canada–Panama labour co-operation agreement are thorough, comprehensive and robust. Both countries have committed to provide protections for occupational health and safety, including compensation in cases of injury or illness. Both countries have committed to establishing and maintaining minimum employment standards, including with respect to wages and hours of work. The parties have also agreed to provide migrant workers the same legal protections as those afforded to nationals. This prevents discriminatory working conditions and protects some of the most vulnerable workers. Overall, this agreement would help create and maintain productive and healthy labour environments that would benefit both countries.

As members can appreciate, these commitments are only as strong as the dispute resolution mechanisms and penalties that back them up. That is why this agreement also includes a strong dispute resolution mechanism that is transparent and easy to use. Both countries would be obligated to respect the agreements and could face financial penalties should they fail to respect internationally recognized labour rights or fail to enforce domestic labour laws. The Canada–Panama free trade agreement also includes a non-binding chapter on labour that reaffirms both countries' obligations and objectives as found in the parallel agreement on labour co-operation. As part of the Canada–Panama agreement on labour co-operation, the Canadian government has agreed to work with Panama to actually improve labour standards and help protect workers.

Through the international program for professional labour administration, Canada is currently funding projects in Panama to build institutional capacity, to foster social dialogue and to promote rights-based labour migration administration strategies. The Government of Canada also recently provided funding for a project to promote occupational safety and health.

• (1335)

By voting in support of Bill C-24, the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act, our government will further strengthen the relationship that we are building with Panama. The bill seeks to implement the free trade agreement and the parallel labour co-operation and environment agreements with Panama.

This Conservative government will be voting to pass this legislation in order to support strong labour practices, strengthen Canada's economic position and build on our previous successes with our global partners.

I move:

That this question be now put.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as it seems that the debate has just begun at second reading, I ask the hon. minister, what is the reason for any haste at this point to invoke closure on debate yet again? Frankly, I am quite shocked by this and I would like to hear some attempt at an explanation for why the House of Commons cannot continue to debate this important legislation.

Are the House of Commons and parliamentary practice now merely nuisances for the government of the day?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, it has been very clear that we view trade as important to this country. In fact, we are the most trade-dependent nation in the G8. We have seen great results from trade. Time is of the essence. It is very important that we move on with the economic recovery and with our trade agenda.

I am very pleased to outline all of the benefits for Panama with respect to labour agreements, funding and helping capacity. Quite frankly, the sooner we get on with this, the better.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am again disappointed at the way the government is so quick to move closure on any debate that comes up in this Parliament. It is not happy enough to have a majority, it wants to bring the hammer down on any debate and make sure that nobody has the opportunity to raise important issues.

The Minister of Labour has a mandate to be responsible for labour and for rules and regulations that affect working people in the country. I would think that she too would be concerned and vigilant about similar regulations and laws as they relate to working people in other countries. If we are to be respectful and treat workers properly in this country, why would we not want to do the same in other countries?

I would like the minister to give me some assurance that she has been vigilant. I would ask her to tell us that in fact labour rights would be protected under the terms of the Panama agreement.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that we do take it very seriously.

The other free trade agreements that have labour co-operation agreements attached I think would be the best examples. For example, I was able to travel down to Colombia last year to speak not only with the government but with the United Nations representatives, who were doing incredible work there on social dialogue. I also spoke with members of the union to ascertain their point of view as to what help the Canadian government could give to improve capacity and occupational health and safety. I have done the same in terms of travelling to Brazil and speaking to counterparts there. There is always that tripartite relationship of speaking with the government, the workers and business to ascertain what Canada can do to bring a stellar labour law legislation system to other countries. They can learn from us and we can learn from them too.

• (1340)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a point of information for myself, regarding Panama, where is it right now with this deal? Does Panama feel as compelled as we do to pass this agreement very quickly?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I can only speak for the current Government of Canada and that we do feel an urgency for it to pass.

Mr. Scott Simms: Well, what if they don't?

Government Orders

Hon. Lisa Raitt: We have worked long on it. There have been several rounds of negotiations. My officials in labour have been talking to officials in Panama. As I mentioned in my remarks, we have had the ability to do some co-operative and funding programs with Panama. I look forward to having a bilateral discussion with my counterpart in Panama in order to ratify this.

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing her time with me.

It is a pleasure and honour to rise in the House to talk about the benefits of the Canada-Panama free trade agreement and what it would bring to Canadian workers and their families from coast to coast to coast.

With one in five Canadian jobs generated by trade, we recognize how important our success depends on our ability to access foreign markets and global value chains. Our government received a strong mandate on May 2 to implement an ambitious job-creating free trade plan that will benefit Canadian workers and their families. Our plan is creating jobs and economic growth for Canadian workers and their families. For example, on August 15 of this year, the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement came into force. Through that agreement, Canada's producers and exporters will benefit from reduced or eliminated tariffs on nearly all of Canada's current exports to Colombia. This agreement demonstrates our government's commitment to creating good new jobs and economic growth for Canadian families, workers and businesses.

We continue to work to provide Canadian workers and companies with opportunities for growth in key economies. The access to foreign markets and the rules for secure and stable trade and investment across our borders is of key importance. Passing the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act is an important part of this plan. This agreement represents an opportunity for Canadian workers and businesses to expand their operations in the growing and dynamic Panamanian economy.

Although small in size, Panama is a significant player in the region. It is a platform for commercial activity through Latin America and is a nexus for world trade. Canadian workers and businesses want to deepen their ties with Panama, access new commercial opportunities, and further develop their operations in this exciting market. Passing the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act would help our export-oriented industries, investors and service providers do just that.

Many Canadian sectors have already demonstrated their interest in Panama. These include the machinery, motor vehicles and parts, pharmaceutical equipment, pulse crops, and other sectors. Our agreement with Panama would give these and other exporters enhanced access to the Panamanian market, addressing both tariff and non-tariff barriers. The agreement would offer tangible benefits to Canadians and companies across all regions of this country.

We should consider the prospective benefits to Western Canadian families. This agreement would specifically help my home province of British Columbia, as wood exporters would no longer have to pay Panamanian tariffs of up to 15% on their wood products. It would remove a significant barrier. It would be a great opportunity for British Columbia and the western forestry industry. Exporters of fats

and oils would see tariffs as high as 30% eliminated from their products.

Alberta's power generating machinery sector and information and communications technology sector would no longer have to contend with tariffs of up to 15% on their exports to Panama. Agriculture producers in Saskatchewan would see the elimination of tariffs on pulses and cereals, which currently amount to 15% and 40% respectively. In Manitoba, producers of precious stones and metals, as well as iron and steel, would benefit from the elimination of Panamanian tariffs of up to 15% on their exports. In addition, Western Canada's investors that are active in the mining sector in Panama would benefit from this agreement's investor protection and legal framework.

Shifting to the other side of the country, the Atlantic region would also stand to significantly benefit from the Canada-Panama free trade agreement. My hon. colleague, the member for Malpeque, will be especially interested to know that Prince Edward Island potato producers would see the elimination of Panamanian tariffs as high as 81% on their exports. I think that would make our folk legend, Stompin' Tom Connors, sing about Bud the Spud from the bright red mud rolling down the highway smiling, because the spuds are big in the back of Bud's rig and they are from Prince Edward Island. There would be more spuds rolling down to Panama if we get this agreement through the House.

In New Brunswick, producers of frozen french fries would no longer face Panamanian tariffs of up to 20%. Paperboard producers would see the elimination of tariffs reaching up to 15%.

● (1345)

Nova Scotian exporters of trees and plants will see the elimination of tariffs of up to 15% and tariffs of up to 20% will be eliminated for vehicles and parts exporters.

In Newfoundland, the information and communications technology sector will see the elimination of Panamanian tariffs of up to 15% on Canadian products.

That is not all. The benefits of this free trade agreement will also be felt in Ontario, where key exports to Panama include pharmaceuticals, industrial and electrical machinery, vehicles and scientific and precision instruments. For pharmaceutical products, tariffs as high as 11% will be eliminated. Exporters of industrial and construction machinery, information and communications technology, electronic equipment and precision instruments will see the elimination of tariffs as high as 15% for their respective sectors.

Government Orders

In addition, Ontario service providers active in this market, including those providing mining, banking and engineering services, will benefit from a secure, predictable, transparent and rules-based trading environment, something we have heard about over and over from Canadian businesses. They want secure, predictable, transparent and rules-based trading. They will have the advantage of being able to plan for the future.

For Quebec exporters, investors and service providers interested in expanding into the Panamanian market will receive real, tangible benefits from the implementation of the free trade agreement. With \$25.7 million in merchandise exports to Panama last year, Quebec accounts for the largest share of Canada's two-way trade with Panama. These exports are primarily in the areas of meat, mainly pork, paper and paperboard, pharmaceuticals, fish and seafood and electrical machinery and equipment.

Quebec's automotive sector will enjoy improved access for vehicles and auto parts, with tariffs of up to 20% eliminated. Quebec's pork producers will see the elimination of tariffs as high as 70%.

For Quebec's highly competitive aerospace sector, current Panamanian tariffs of up to 15% will be eliminated. Tariffs as high as 15% on pulp and paperboard will be eliminated.

As the Forest Products Association of Canada has testified in the Standing Committee on International Trade, the Panamanian market for forestry products such as pulp and paperboard is currently worth \$120 million, but this figure grows by 10% a year, a great opportunity for the forest products industry.

Canada currently only exports \$6.5 million in these goods, so there is significant room for growth and this tariff elimination will help considerably. In particular, it will help Quebec plants that supply a large quantity of the Canadian paper to Panama.

Quebec's service providers will benefit as well. For instance, SNC Lavalin, a company with substantial interests in Panama, has indicated that the Canada-Panama free trade agreement will "provide a good framework for further business".

In 2010, Panama announced a \$13.6 billion strategic investment plan that would focus on economically sustainable infrastructure projects, including a \$1.5 billion metro system and an airport project that will triple its current capacity.

As we can see, the passage of the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act will provide economic benefits to Canadian workers across the country from coast to coast to coast and across a wide number of industries and sector. It will provide new business opportunities for exporters countrywide, from forestry workers in British Columbia to farmers in Ontario, from information and communications technology providers in Newfoundland to manufacturers in Quebec.

We live in an era of global competition. Succeeding in the global economy means keeping pace with competitors and securing new access to foreign markets. There is no question that Canadian companies are world competitors, but the government has a role to play as well.

We need to strengthen Canada's trading relationships abroad, eliminate barriers to trade and provide opportunities for Canada's businesses to expand and grow in key markets. Our government is doing just that. We are fighting for Canadian workers and businesses to connect them with new opportunities in growing markets like Panama and to ensure they are not at a competitive disadvantage, vis-a-vis competitors benefiting from preferential market access.

With one in five jobs and over 60% of Canada's economy generated by trade, deepening Canada's trading relationships will create prosperity and opportunity for Canadian businesses, workers and their families.

While we are focused on protecting and growing Canada's economy with our job-creating, pro-trade plan, the anti-trade NDP wants to slap job-killing tax hikes on families and employers, which would kill jobs, hurt our economy and set families back. We cannot allow that to happen.

For this reason, this Conservative government and this party will be supporting the Canada-Panama economic growth and prosperity act.

● (1350)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Panama's labour record is not very good and it is only getting worse. Our Conservative colleagues often wonder why the NDP has problems with free trade agreements. It is simply because the emphasis is placed on the economic aspect and very rarely on the human or environmental aspects.

My question is simple: why does the Conservative government insist on trying to conclude free trade agreements that focus almost solely on economics and very little on human and environmental rights?

[*English*]

Mr. Ron Cannan: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is new to the House. I had the opportunity to serve for five and a half years on the international trade committee and to travel to Panama with it in May of 2008.

I share her concerns that we all need to be responsible globally to look after the human, social and environmental components of any sustainable community. Within the trade agreement with Panama, we have what is called the labour co-operation agreement. Canada and Panama are committed to ensuring that their laws reflect internationally-recognized labour standards, including the right to freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to organize in collective bargaining.

As far as the environment, both countries will pursue high levels of environmental protection to improve and enforce the environment laws effectively. They will maintain appropriate environmental assessment procedures and ensure that they do not relax the environmental laws to encourage trader investment.

Government Orders

The fact is we are not silent on either one of those issues. We are working hand in glove. It is a balanced approach between the economy, the environment and the social aspects of the community to have a sustainable future for all.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of clarification. He mentioned something in Newfoundland and Labrador that would be of benefit by quite a bit in telecommunications. I think there was a percentage on it. Precisely of which company was he speaking? My colleague from St. John's South—Mount Pearl and I would like to know.

Mr. Ron Cannan: Mr. Speaker, I do not have the exact name, but I would be happy to find out the specific company.

The industry overall is looking at the information and communications technology sector. There are opportunities for growth by removing barrier tariffs for industries across the country. Representatives of many businesses from the Atlantic provinces have come to the committee. This issue has been debated for over 30 hours. Between the House and committee meetings, there have been many discussions. As I said, committee members went to Panama and met with the former Panamanian ambassador. There is a new Panamanian ambassador now who will come before the committee and we will be able to provide the specific information. This agreement is a great opportunity for Canadians from coast to coast to move forward.

• (1355)

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting House in which we all work. As part of this whole debate, the member for Malpeque had the floor at one point and we went back and forth on some questions. Then he suggested that the member for London West, who happens to be me, stop and smell the roses, while in the same breath saying that he, along with his party, would be supporting this trade agreement. I find it a very curious thing that on the one hand we can work together on something, but Liberals can still find a way to say things that, frankly, demean this process.

However, I would like to ask my hon. colleague, who I have the privilege to sit with in the committee, this question. We know that 73% of tariffs with Panama would be eliminated immediately and that this is intended to be a good deal for all of Canada. Coming from Ontario and knowing that he comes from British Columbia, what are the major benefits for British Columbia as he promotes this free trade deal with Panama?

Mr. Ron Cannan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from the city of London, the 10th largest city in Canada, as I have been reminded of at a few meetings along the way, for his great work on the trade committee.

As I mentioned, for the forest industry specifically, this agreement would be a significant investment potential for forest product associations across Canada. I do not believe my hon. colleague across the way would insinuate that he does not stop and smell the flowers. He is one of the most sensitive members in the committee and I appreciate his hard work.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

I have a copy of sections of the proposed Canada-Panama agreement, including article 9.11 regarding expropriation, which describes it as being, in effect, equivalent to nationalization or expropriation except for public purposes. The language would not worry people if we did not have the experience of similar language used in chapter 11 of NAFTA to undermine decisions taken by the democratically-elected House in relation to bills that protect human health and the environment. I specifically recall the issue of the Ethyl Corporation challenging the Government of Canada.

Will the hon. member commit that we will have adequate time in the House at second reading to look through the implications of this kind of legislation, or are we to have debate closure once again?

Mr. Ron Cannan: Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to be in the riding of the hon. member on Friday to open up Canada's largest indoor climbing wall. It is an incredible facility. Gary Lunn, who was the minister of the day, partnered with the province in this significant asset for Canada.

One of the specific questions that the member asked was on rules-based trading. It is significant and something that has been called for by businesses coast to coast to coast. They have come to our committee asking for some certainty and predictability.

We also have the side agreements on labour and the environment, which will be debated at committee. We will then come back at report stage when we will have an opportunity to debate those issues as well.

I want to reiterate for all sides of the House the significance of moving this project forward. The Minister of International Trade was in Europe last night and will be working for the next 10 days or so with the World Trade Organization.

There is an excellent article in *The Canadian Press* that came out last night. It talked about how Canada was working with Brazil, China, India, as well as Panama and Jordan. We are diversifying markets, as was committed to in the throne speech by the Prime Minister, so we can create jobs, hope and opportunity for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for his intervention. However, I wish he had not blown what was a pretty good speech by including some rhetoric in it about the anti-free trade NDP.

I know the member is a very conscientious member of the international trade committee. Does he agree, and maybe he could speak to this, that it is extremely important when doing a trade deal, or any deal for that matter, to understand what the impact of the deal will be before one signs on the dotted line? People should take the time to consider all the items on the table and the different clauses that have been signed off in order to understand what the impact is so they could say with some confidence what would good and what would not.

Mr. Ron Cannan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague served a short term on the committee with us. I wish him all the best in his leadership race for his party.

We have had significant debate. We will have additional debate at the committee and it will come back to report stage.

Statements by Members

I refer back to the article in The Canadian Press with my hon. colleague, the Minister of International Trade. He said:

I realize how critical it is to actually engage at a much higher level and much more often with our key trading partners to develop trust...Sometimes you are so close and so far away from a solution because you haven't developed that bridge.

The hon. Minister of International Trade has worked closely with the Panamanian ambassador. I have had a chance to meet with him. I know he has met with several ministers and trade officials around the world, as I mentioned, with Brazil, China and India.

This is all about relationships as we continue to work forward to build new markets for Canada. I am thankful for this opportunity and I look forward to moving this agreement through the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

THE BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no matter what the federalist parties say or think, the Bloc Québécois is still very much alive, and I have the great pleasure of announcing that Daniel Paillé has been chosen as leader of the Bloc Québécois. My colleagues and I would like to congratulate him on the campaign that he conducted with conviction and determination.

Starting today, the Bloc Québécois will tackle a big job—showing Quebecers that they do not belong in this Canada, which does not reflect who they are, and that an independent Quebec would have everything it needs to make its own laws, collect its own taxes and sign treaties, while respecting its own values.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of Bloc Québécois supporters who participated in this important democratic exercise. Their participation and support are proof of the Bloc Québécois's relevance.

Finally, I take my hat off to the member for Ahuntsic and the member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for their important contribution to this leadership race.

Together, with conviction and determination, we will succeed in accomplishing this task. As Daniel Paillé, our new leader, said yesterday, “Let us get to work”.

* * *

[*English*]

BULLYING

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to put a question asked by students of the Pickering family of schools. The question is this: how do we use our collective voices to uphold everyone's right to live in a safe, caring and inclusive community?

The “i Am Who i Am” campaign was developed at Pine Ridge Secondary School after the devastating suicide of grade six student Mitchell Wilson, a victim of years of bullying by his peers.

At a time when adolescents are navigating new waves of social norms, online media, endless fads and personal insecurities, the “i Am Who i Am” campaign challenges students to stand up for each other. It seeks to promote integrity, honesty and non-violence.

To spread the message, schools in the Durham region will be selling T-shirts and wristbands, using the proceeds to purchase a wheelchair for a Pickering family in need.

In the first week of this campaign, over \$5,000 has been raised, with monthly events now planned to raise even more.

In the wake of this year's Human Rights Day, all of us have a role to play in breaking this cycle of intimidation and violence by taking a stand against bullying.

[*Translation*]

Let us speak out against bullying among teenagers.

[*English*]

Let us speak up and speak out on behalf of victims. Let us celebrate the unique individuality of every Canadian.

I applaud the collaborative efforts of the 19 participating Pickering family of schools for saying “i Am Who i Am”.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOLIDAY SEASON VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to pay tribute to the fantastic work done by thousands of volunteers every year when they collect tens of thousands of dollars, food and toys for people in need across the country. I greatly admire the community organization needed to achieve this and to run successful food drives every year.

I would particularly like to highlight the work of volunteers in my riding of Terrebonne—Blainville. I had the opportunity to participate in this year's food drive four times, and the good humour of these volunteers and their gift of self was heartwarming. I thank the volunteers of the food drive at the Sainte-Famille parish in Blainville, the Knights of Columbus in Terrebonne and Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, and the Blainville firefighters, with whom I volunteered for the Moisson Laurentides food drive.

I would like to thank the public for giving so generously. These contributions help families in need to feel supported by their communities and to have a better holiday season.

To all the families who depend on these donations, I would like to say that you are not forgotten, you play an important role in our communities, and I hope to have the opportunity to work with you.

*Statements by Members**[English]***HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament I often hear the concerns of Canadians for their loved ones overseas who are subject to difficulty. A good MP cannot help but extend heartfelt compassion and ensure that these concerns are heard by government and Parliament.

Tamils, for example, have experienced great difficulty in Sri Lanka. Accountability and real reconciliation need to occur there.

Iran continues to violate the rights of individuals, including academics, journalists and Baha'is.

Reports that Falun Gong practitioners are arbitrarily detained in China are disconcerting.

People in Sudan and the Ogaden region, among others, still face violence.

There are many, many examples. My constituents told me of these situations and I have relayed them to our government.

Canada promotes human rights around the world. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to make it our first priority to raise our voice in support of every person's fundamental human rights.

* * *

● (1405)

*[Translation]***SAINT-LÉONARD**

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parish of Saint-Léonard-de-Port-Maurice was founded in April 1886 and, at the time, it was primarily made up of French Canadian Catholic farmers. A single, main road—Jarry Street—cut through the farmland and there was one church. Saint-Léonard grew from a parish into a town, and is now one of Montreal's largest boroughs.

The changes in its name and status reflect the evolution of the land. After a housing boom, many newcomers—including old stock Quebecers, Italians and others—came to settle in Saint-Léonard and contributed to its economic growth. The population quickly grew from 925 in 1956 to over 70,000 today. Saint-Léonard is known for its ethnic diversity and its determination, thanks to the many key figures who have contributed to sports, politics, science, arts and culture.

At 125 years old, it remains as young as ever. I am very proud to wish the residents of Saint-Léonard all the best on this special anniversary.

* * *

*[English]***LONDON, ONTARIO**

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the opposition has painted a dark, dreary picture of the beautiful city of London, Ontario. Allow me to shed some light.

It was this government that in 2009 established the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southwestern Ontario to help strengthen our local economy. In fact, the first major funding project undertaken was the greater London international airport. Guess whose riding the airport is located in? The NDP member for London—Fanshawe.

Since 2009 many London organizations have benefited from FedDev funding, including the City of London, the Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA, UWO Research Park, and Southwestern Ontario Angels Group, just to name a few. This is on top of the millions of dollars of investments in my riding and city from various other federal departments.

I encourage the member for London—Fanshawe to exit the darkness of higher taxes and see the light of strong, stable investments in our city.

I, for one, am proud to live in London.

* * *

*[Translation]***SAINT-BASILE-LE-GRAND**

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was extremely proud to attend the Governor General's History Awards ceremony today, where the Saint-Basile-le-Grand historical society won the Award for Excellence in Community Programming for its "La Mémoire des Grandbasilois" project.

On behalf of the historical society, its president, Richard Pelletier, accepted a prestigious award created by Canada's History and presented by the Governor General to acknowledge excellence in history and heritage.

Mr. Pelletier and countless volunteers amassed a collection of 50 or so interviews with seniors from our region and thousands of old photographs, which were then filed, digitized and shared with the people of my riding in order to promote the wonderful history of Saint-Basile-le-Grand.

The Saint-Basile-le-Grand historical society has mounted a number of photo exhibits and first person accounts by seniors to help the people of Grand Basile discover their rich history. Every participant in the historical society's project can be proud of their tremendous work. I am proud of it as well.

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*[English]***ELMWOOD CURLING CLUB**

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Elmwood—Transcona, there are many celebrations of anniversaries happening this year for museums, organizations and community clubs.

Today I want to bring to the attention of the House the Elmwood Curling Club, which recently celebrated 100 years as part of the community of Elmwood.

Community centres and facilities are the backbone to a healthy community, so today I want to acknowledge how proud I am that there are facilities like the Elmwood Curling Club celebrating a long and healthy relationship with the community.

To all those who took part in the celebration, congratulations. It really is a service that is greatly appreciated by all of Elmwood.

I also want to quickly pass on a warm Christmas wish to all the constituents of Elmwood—Transcona. I hope they enjoy this season with family and friends, and have a blessed new year.

* * *

• (1410)

SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a year it has been for Saskatchewan.

In May we witnessed the election of a strong, stable Conservative majority government, ready and willing to implement promises it made in the election.

This was followed by the Saskatchewan Party's landslide election win, in which the socialists were reduced to nine seats.

Saskatchewanians are very high on the future. They see marketing freedom for their wheat and barley producers as just around the corner; freedom which would give them access to world grain prices, if they so choose.

The view of our free trade deals in Latin America are models with which trade deals in Europe and Asia can be structured, access to markets which would fuel Saskatchewan's economic boom well into the future.

The new Saskatchewan has changed dramatically for the better. No longer does it demand increases in federal handouts, as in the case of the previous NDP government. We now promote our natural wealth and our entrepreneurial spirit as a means of increasing our prosperity.

This is the new Saskatchewan, proud of its place in Canada, and proud of its growing economic and political power.

The year 2012 will be full of challenges. However, in Saskatchewan, it will be full of opportunities.

On behalf of my constituents, merry Christmas and happy Hanukkah to all.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMUNITY OF HONORÉ-MERCIER

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the community of Honoré-Mercier for its spirit of giving.

I am referring to all the organizations that are mobilized to ensure that the holidays are enjoyable and inspiring for everyone. I would like to thank and congratulate all those people who made the food drive a great success, helped hundreds of children to meet Santa

Statements by Members

Claus this weekend, and gave of their time to provide Christmas hampers to families in need.

I would also like to mention all the seniors who work hard to prevent their peers from being lonely by organizing many activities allowing them to join in the celebrations. It is great to see the energy of our seniors as they dance, sing and bring happiness to others.

Thank you and happy holidays to everyone.

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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is old news now. The Bloc Québécois is outdated and Quebecers have realized how ineffective the party is in Ottawa. To prove it: Daniel Paillé's first public statement is misleading. The newly elected leader of the Bloc Québécois compares getting a long gun to opening an account on Facebook.

The Bloc Québécois leader's comparison is ridiculous. Our government believes that it is very important to maintain the requirement of obtaining a permit in order to own a long gun. We will not allow the Bloc Québécois leader to mislead the people of Quebec. We on this side of the House believe that the firearms registry is expensive, ineffective, and unfair to honest farmers and hunters.

* * *

DANIELLE LEMIEUX-LESSARD

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Danielle Lemieux-Lessard.

Danielle has worked in the House of Commons for 31 years, including 15 years as an administrative assistant in the Private Members' Business Office, where she played a key role with regard to petitions and adjournment proceedings.

There are people who contribute significantly to the workings of the House who are always behind the scenes. Danielle is one of those people.

[English]

Danielle was always ready to help new members and show them how to get around the Hill. She was always reliable, and her never-failing dedication was appreciated and will never be forgotten.

[Translation]

Her name might be “Lemieux-Lessard”, but to us she is “la meilleure”, or “the best”. We will always remember Danielle for her great personality and her sense of humour.

Danielle, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, thank you and farewell. Best wishes in your future endeavours, happy retirement and bon voyage.

*Statements by Members**[English]***CHILD ABDUCTIONS**

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I bring awareness to an issue that hits close to home.

For the past two and a half years, my constituent, Stephen Watkins, has courageously been working to locate and bring back his two children who were abducted to Poland.

I want this House to know that Mr. Watkins is not alone in this fight. Since learning of the situation, Canadian consular officials have been actively engaging with local authorities in Poland, the provincial authorities, and the York Regional Police on this case.

Today, the minister of state announced the launch of an interactive consent letter for parents with children travelling abroad. This valuable resource is intended to make it easier for children to travel while preventing their abduction to foreign countries. The minister of state has noted:

Child abductions are among the most distressing circumstances for Canadian parents and are among the most difficult and complex cases faced by consular officials.

Our government stands with Canadian families at home and abroad. We take cases involving children extremely seriously. We will continue to work with our partners toward a positive resolution in the case of my constituent, Mr. Watkins.

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●(1415)

*[Translation]***ROGER CRÊTE**

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Vanier lost one of its own on December 7 when Roger Crête, the former mayor of Vanier, passed away.

In addition to serving as mayor, Roger also worked with distinction as a municipal councillor and was a very active volunteer in his community. Roger was an engaged businessman and his long-standing contribution earned him the respect and esteem of his fellow citizens, both anglophone and francophone.

Roger Crête leaves behind his spouse Gisèle, their children—Pierre, Pauline and Robert—his grandsons and three great-grandchildren. I extend my sincerest condolences to his family. We have lost a friend and an exemplary servant whose contribution will remain etched in our collective memory. I would also like to thank the Crête family—Gisèle, the children and their spouses—for their dedication and immense contribution to our community. They were proud of their father, and he was and will remain equally proud of them.

On behalf of the residents of Ottawa—Vanier, farewell, Roger, and above all, thank you.

* * *

*[English]***NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP oppose creating jobs. They travel abroad to

attack Canada and they oppose all free trade agreements. Even the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley would, as he says, “violently agree”.

The NDP's leadership candidates attack our energy sector and many across the aisle naively cry for a halt to the development of the oil sands. They have tried to kill billions of dollars in investment and are happy to sacrifice 622,000 jobs across Canada. They have no policies that will secure Canada's economic future.

Instead of supporting private sector union jobs, the NDP chooses to side with a small group of foreign-financed special interest activists who protest against our energy resources.

The oil sands are a proven strategic resource for Canada that create jobs and economic opportunity for Canadians in all provinces and all regions of the country. Abandoning Canada's economic interests is yet another clear indication that the ineffective, disunited NDP is unfit to govern.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, convicted fraudster Bruce Carson was a key adviser to the Prime Minister until 2008, and he did not leave because he was fired. He left with \$40 million to perpetrate an even greater fraud, starting two phony think tanks to take the stink off the oil sands.

However, his greatest scam was yet to come: using his Conservative connections to exploit the appalling living conditions on a first nations reserve. What kind of a man sees human tragedy as an opportunity to cheat people, and what kind of a government would give such power to such a horror of a human being?

Mulroney used to say that the boys have to make a living, but we thought we had closed the door on that sordid chapter of Canadian politics. It seems that history is repeating itself.

Contempt for Parliament, ignoring the rule of law and letting loathsome parasites try to fatten themselves on the third world conditions of first nations reserves are all things that lead us to the conclusion that the Conservatives are not fit to govern.

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STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the 80th anniversary of the Statute of Westminster, one of the most important documents in our country's history. On that day, Canada achieved equality with the United Kingdom and our sister dominions.

As the Prime Minister said:

This important milestone reminds us foremost of how Canadians who came before us earned our country's independence through bravery and merit, particularly in World War I.

The statute removed London's ability to make laws for Canada enshrining our equal status as a nation. Our system can be traced back to the common ties of the Magna Carta and the Westminster system of responsible government to the statute in 1931. These noble principles have universal application yet, sadly, have not been universally accepted throughout the world.

We continue to build upon our proud foundations and work closely with the Commonwealth nations. The Commonwealth shares a common history and values that the world needs: freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after creating the biggest deficit in the history of Canada, the Conservative government will be in a structural deficit until at least 2017. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer said.

With their reckless corporate tax cuts, the Conservatives are gutting the fiscal capacity of the government to provide people the services they need. Why do they continue to harm Canada's finances by digging the structural deficit even further with even more corporate tax giveaways?

• (1420)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, can quote the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I can see that bet and raise it by quoting the Minister of Finance who, I might add for her and this House, this past year, was voted as the best finance minister in the world.

Our low tax plan is helping create jobs. That is why the provincial NDP Government of Manitoba is working with us and why Ontario's Liberal government is working with us.

We have a plan and that plan is working. That low tax plan has led to the creation of almost 600,000 net new jobs since the bottom of the recession. That is a good start. We remain committed to doing even more.

[Translation]

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if only the Conservatives would at least be transparent.

The report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer shows that the government's estimates concerning the deficit are once again too optimistic. That is their rose-coloured glasses policy. The Conservatives are not being straight with Canadians. The report explains that the numbers concerning trade, the GDP and tax revenues are incomplete or unavailable.

Why is the government hiding this information? Why such a lack of transparency? Is it to hide the fact that their economic inaction plan is a complete failure?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the economic action plan has been a great success but the reality is that far too many Canadians are looking for work, which is why we remain focused on job creation and economic growth.

One of the things we see causing problems for the world economy, whether it is in the United States or in the eurozone, is governments that do not live within their fiscal means. Reckless spending and out of control debt are key problems.

This government is taking some reasonable measures to ensure that we return to a balanced budget, that we focus on job creation and that we focus on economic growth. That is the plan on which we will continue to work diligently.

[Translation]

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we need a job creation strategy now.

The Conservative tax strategy is undermining the Canadian economy. Fiscal restraint will only make matters worse. Even the OECD has recognized this. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's report shows that the government's estimates are too optimistic, that the economy is performing below its potential.

Instead of increasing the structural deficit by giving billions of dollars in gifts to large corporations, the government needs to change course immediately, help small and medium-sized businesses and get Canadians back to work.

When will you think about changing course?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only plans and proposals the NDP puts forward to help create jobs are to simply raise taxes and spend more. Those have been devastating policies in the United States and they have caused major problems in parts of Europe. That is why this government is focused on our economic action plan.

The next phase of that plan is focused on low taxes, on a competent regulatory environment and making strategic investments in the economy. Canada is doing so much better than the other G7 countries because we have had strong economic leadership from the Prime Minister and especially from the Minister of Finance.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Attawapiskat symbolizes the fact that this government does not understand the reality of aboriginal people in the north.

The government ignored the problem in Attawapiskat and then blamed the community for its poverty. Yesterday, the minister deceived Canadians about the manager's role and made up answers about the negotiations under way. It is strange. He cannot talk honestly about this crisis.

Does he have any credibility left?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a load of nonsense.

Our priority is the health and safety of the people of Attawapiskat. The third party manager is already getting results for the community. He purchased 22 modular homes using federal funds. He is ensuring that programs and social services are being delivered.

We act in good faith and full transparency. We urge the chief and council to join us.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect the minister to bring the tragedy of Attawapiskat to a just conclusion but how can they trust a minister who not only goes on national television but comes into the House of Commons and makes things up?

The third party manager is not coordinating relief. That is fiction. It was the community that ordered the trailers. It was the community that worked with emergency measures. The community will not pay for the gold-plated emissary who is twisting his thumbs over in Winnipeg.

When will the minister stop playing Pinocchio and bring this tragedy to a just conclusion?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1425)

The Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure that kind of reference is helpful.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was no factual basis to any part of that question, so there is no need for a response.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in three separate reports, the former auditor general, Sheila Fraser, made it very clear that in her view the third party management system was dysfunctional, it did not work, it did not produce additional capacity, it did not help solve long-term problems and it did not deal with the underlying conditions with respect to housing and water supply.

Why did the government ignore every single finding of the Auditor General of Canada with respect to the management of these questions when it came to dealing with the crisis in Attawapiskat?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, anyone seeing the situation at Attawapiskat would know that the status quo was not an option. That is why the minister and this government took decisive action.

Our government has acted to ensure that the residents of Attawapiskat have access to safe and warm shelter for the coming months. We have already delivered urgent funding to support housing and shelter to ensure that the people of Attawapiskat can deal with the harsh winter. That is why the minister is taking such decisive action to ensure that help is on the way.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question remains unanswered because the minister did not answer my question and everyone knows it.

The Auditor General published three reports—one in 2003, one in 2006 and one in 2008—as well as a final report when she left office. In all these reports, she clearly states that everyone agrees that the current system, the status quo, does not work and that the third party management system is dysfunctional because it does not enhance people's capacity.

Why are the reports not being acted upon?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite honestly, the status quo was not an option.

Since the third party was appointed by the minister and by the government, we have seen \$500,000 in emergency funding. It will help renovate five homes for families in urgent need of shelter. We are working quickly to provide temporary and long-term housing for more than 20 families. Our government, working with our partners, has already sent 10 composting toilets, 20 high-efficiency wood stoves and other basic necessities. In the coming days, more supplies will be flown in.

That has happened since the minister appointed the third party manager.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, because the Federal Court has ruled with respect to the Wheat Board question that the minister acted outside the framework of the law, I wonder if the government could tell us why it is proceeding with the legislation in the Senate when the matter is now back before the courts. Why not wait for the matter to be disposed of by the courts before pursuing this law any further?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will quote Justice Campbell, who said:

The Applicants confirm that the validity of Bill C-18, and the validity and effects of any legislation which might become law as a result of Bill C-18 are not in issue in the present Applications.

What we are doing is something remarkable. We are telling western Canadian farmers that they have the same rights as farmers in every other part of the country to sell their wheat and their barley. The Liberal Party wants to make it legal to sell marijuana and illegal to sell wheat.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirms that this government is increasingly having problems making budgetary estimates. The difference between the government's numbers and the real numbers is roughly \$10 billion a year. The government is overly optimistic and it is hiding the numbers from the public. We need transparency in order to create a jobs plan. The economy needs jobs and so do Canadian families.

When will this government show fiscal transparency and effectiveness?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has made it clear that he thinks it is necessary to continue to reduce deficits in Canada, and we entirely agree. Indeed, in the economic action plan, the emergency plan that we brought forward in January 2009, every year we had deficit reductions leading up to balanced budgets in the medium term. The Parliamentary Budget Officer supports that track, Canadians support that track, and we are not going to make the mistakes the European countries did with big deficits and big public debt.

Surely that lesson has been learned, except by the NDP opposition.

• (1430)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we take no lessons from the government, because we know the job numbers that it throws out are—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster has the floor.

Mr. Peter Julian: They do not like to hear the truth, Mr. Speaker.

Canadians are also starting to see very clearly that the government has problems managing money. The PBO report is clear. The Minister of Finance is refusing to publish important information on trade, taxation and GDP. The PBO says that its fiscal projections are \$10 billion off.

We need real numbers to make a jobs plan work. Why are the Conservatives hiding the numbers, when will they commit to fiscal transparency and when will they provide an effective jobs plan in this country?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a low-tax plan for jobs and growth. Here it is. We like this budget so much that we introduced it twice this year. The Liberals opposed it the first time, and look where they are now: down in the corner.

For members who have not had a chance to read it yet, I have good news for Christmas giving. There are still a few copies left. The demand has not absorbed all the copies. Chapter 5, in particular, has the statistics on reducing the deficit. It makes warm, comfortable fireside reading. I urge the member—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Durban, the Minister of the Environment refused to say whether or not the government was pulling out of the Kyoto protocol. India's environment minister criticized the fact that Canada, which signed and ratified the Kyoto protocol, was considering withdrawing from it without so much as a good-bye. The government is breaking its promises to the international community and to Canadians who want leadership on climate change.

When will the government pull its own weight in the fight against climate change?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to bring my colleague opposite up to speed on what has happened while she was gone, she has had colleagues ask the international community to ignore Canada. Just as a refresher, her party has voted against budgetary measures to support climate change adaptation and regulation. Our country, as we have said over and over again, supports an agreement that has all international emitters around the table to see real action in the reduction of GHG emissions.

[Translation]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the agreement concluded in Durban yesterday lacks ambition. Nothing will be done before 2015 and no one will have to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions before 2020. These deadlines are far too long to stop global warming from becoming disastrous. Nevertheless, the Conservatives say they are satisfied with the results of the negotiations. It is that attitude that won us the fossil of the year award.

When will the government put the interests of Canadians before the interests of major polluters?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is ambitious is seeing the outcome of the Durban conference, which is an international will to have a binding agreement with all major emitters sitting around the table. This is how we are going to see real reductions in GHG emissions.

The key award that my colleague opposite should take note of is the fact that our country sits atop the G7 with regard to economic growth.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of sabotaging climate change talks and barrelling ahead with job-killing inaction, the government should start working with the international community, because yesterday world leaders moved ahead with a climate change agreement, but our environment minister was nothing but an anchor dragging Canada behind.

Oral Questions

Those nations are going to play a leadership role in future climate change negotiations, and the government will be left out until 2015. Why is the government killing Canadian jobs by letting Canada fall behind on climate change?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about sabotaging and killing jobs, I am not sure if my colleagues' opposite trip to Washington to lobby against our energy sector was productive in that regard.

What is productive is the result that came out of Durban from our talks, which is an international will and an international agreement to put forward an agreement whereby all major emitters sit around the table to ensure that we have real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. This is progress.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are not the only ones talking about how the Conservatives are killing Canadian jobs, because notes from the Minister of the Environment's own staff show that Canada does not have enough credible scientific information to call its oil sands project environmentally responsible. The notes also say that the minister's actions threaten Canadian jobs.

Other markets are moving ahead, moving forward with climate change policies that are leaving Canadian energy behind. The government can either start playing by the rules or gamble with Canadian jobs. Which is it?

• (1435)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague opposite brought up the point about our oil sands monitoring framework, which does provide credible science.

When we were in committee earlier this year and she asked the Environment Commissioner about this plan, the Environment Commissioner said:

What I would say is there is now an ambitious plan, a significantly important plan for the federal government to put in place a monitoring system.

Instead of this empty rhetoric, I ask my colleague to get on board with real science and a real plan.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has given Atlantic Canada the hook yet again.

This time it is 200 jobs at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans gone. Instead of investing in science, marine safety and fisheries management, the government is callously handing out pink slips. Add this to the 100 ACOA jobs slashed in October, and it is pretty clear the government has it in for the good people of Atlantic Canada.

Why is the government carelessly and irresponsibly slashing good-paying jobs that support Atlantic Canada? Why the grudge?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly there is nothing new in this question.

As indicated under the strategic review earlier this year, we said fewer than 1% of DFO employees would be affected by the changes. The other point is that we have an annual attrition rate of over 6%, so we are very confident that most people will be placed in positions.

The letters are simply part of the process of informing employees who may or may not be affected by the changes. Those questions came from employees. They asked us to advise before Christmas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that answer is not going to help the hundreds of employees and their families have a relaxing Christmas.

This government plans to cut at least 200 jobs in the department, in essential services such as the coast guard and scientific research. The inability of this government and its predecessors to manage our aquatic resources has already deprived countless fishing families of their jobs.

Is that the Conservatives' economic action plan? Dismiss hundreds of employees at Christmas?

[*English*]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier in my response, DFO employees asked us to proceed with this and to advise them before the Christmas season so that they could make plans.

The fact is that the actual transition process for employees will take several months. We are listening to employees about their needs as the process takes its course.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even though the unemployment rate has risen in the past few months and families are struggling to make ends meet, this government continues to cut public services rather than supporting families.

This indifference is not really in keeping with the holiday spirit.

Reducing services, as is already the case with employment insurance, will not stimulate the economy. End of story.

Will the government finally help families and maintain the services they so desperately need, especially in these difficult economic times?

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything possible to help people who have lost their jobs, especially in December. Unfortunately, there is a large increase in the number of unemployed workers every year at this time, but we are trying to help them by providing them with benefits as quickly as possible. That is why we have added additional resources to process benefit claims as soon as possible.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, DFO jobs have been slashed once again. At a time when Canada has one of the worst rescue response times in the world, there is a skills shortage among DFO scientists, their reports are dropping in number, and employees are overwhelmed from the lack of resources. This is an absolute slap in the face.

How does the government justify cutting hundreds of crucial employees when senior officials rake in huge bonuses? Is this what the minister calls realignment?

● (1440)

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this is not new news. This goes back to much earlier this year as a result of our strategic review operation.

If the member opposite wants to talk about science, his party was an authority on that, gutting \$50 million in 2005 alone from science.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Canadians know very well what the Conservatives are doing to them. Let me inform the House of the total number they are firing: Veterans Affairs, 500 jobs cut; Service Canada, 200 jobs cut; ACOA, 80 jobs cut; DFO, 275 jobs cut; search and rescue, 30 jobs cut. Over 1,000 families are going to be thrown out on the street, and when a veteran or fisherman or farmer, or anyone, goes to the line, no one will be at the other end.

When are the Atlantic ministers going to stand up for the people of Atlantic Canada?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under our government Canada has created over 600,000 net new jobs. Canadians gave us a strong mandate to protect and complete Canada's economic recovery. This review is focusing on responsible government spending to ensure ongoing value for Canadian taxpayers. While the opposition is calling for higher taxes that will kill jobs and hurt the economy, our government has a plan to keep taxes low, focus on jobs for Canadians and grow the economy.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the beginning the government told us that it would only cost \$75 million per F-35. When the experts told us that this was absolutely unrealistic, it changed its story and said we will get the 65 planes for \$9 billion. Now we find out that the associate minister of defence is telling us that the number 65 is really not a hard number; the government is looking at it, evaluating it.

Is the minister telling us that the government is now going to buy fewer than 65 airplanes?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all reasonable people agree that we need aircraft to defend Canada and Canadian sovereignty. As we have said many times before, our plans are on track. We are providing our brave men and women the best equipment at the best price to do their jobs safely and effectively while supporting—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member asked the question. The associate minister is entitled to a response.

Hon. Julian Fantino: Mr. Speaker, we are providing our men and women the best equipment at the best price to do their jobs safely and effectively, while supporting an industry that employs 80,000 Canadians.

Unlike the opposition's job-killing agenda, our government will continue to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to renewing—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

[Translation]

Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, we learned that we will have to wait another six years before the first military truck is delivered. The trucks that our soldiers are currently using are a safety hazard, and this government is blaming suppliers. How many more botched military procurement contracts will taxpayers have to pay for? We do not know.

Can the Minister of National Defence explain the mismanagement that is delaying the replacement of the rusty trucks used every day by Canadian soldiers?

[English]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians elected our government to equip our Canadian Forces with the best aircraft and the best equipment for our men and women to benefit their work and enable them to carry out their missions in a safe environment, and to do so at the best price for taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here we have a twist on the usual accountability issue. Usually we do not get an answer to our questions. This time, the minister has decided to blame industry for the six-year delay.

Oral Questions

Will the associate minister elaborate for us on his claim that industry is to blame, or will he take responsibility for the six-year delay, all of which has taken place under the Conservative watch? Will he tell us when our forces can expect to receive the equipment they need to do their job?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite continues to criticize our decision to purchase the best equipment for our men and women in the services, we intend to continue with the program. The program is on track creating jobs right across the country, in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Why does the member opposite want to kill Canadian jobs?

• (1445)

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question about the F-35s. I will give the associate minister a few seconds to find his speaking notes to that question. I think they are the ones that begin with, “We are on the right track”.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We only have one week left. I would ask all hon. members for their co-operation to have a little bit of order.

The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I presume that the associate minister has found his notes. “We are on the right track”, they say.

The associate minister keeps saying that he is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I think I can count on the associate minister having found his speaking notes now.

The associate minister keeps saying that he is on the right track and yet he now says that we may not buy 65 planes. Does this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am giving the hon. member some extra time because he has been interrupted so many times. The hon. member for Beaches—East York is entitled to put his question.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left? I have about 10 seconds. We were with the speaking notes that everything is on the right track, and yet the associate minister now says that we may not buy 65 planes. Is this plan B, i.e., fewer planes than the minister talked about—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am afraid we are off to a rough start this week. I will give the floor to the hon. associate minister.

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even my grandchildren would not stoop to answer that silly question.

[Translation]

Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question was definitely not concise, but at least it was simple. On November 16, here in this House, the minister presented

his famous plan B. The real problem with the purchase of the F-35s is not that Lockheed Martin has production problems, but rather that this minister proves, day after day, that he is incapable of managing the F-35 file.

What is the famous plan B that my colleague wanted to hear about?

[English]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our plan is on track. We are intending to buy the best aircraft for our men and women in the services. That aircraft is the F-35, which Canada, along with eight other partners, feels is the best aircraft for our men and women. Our plan is on track.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government welcomes foreign investment that benefits Canada. It helps the Canadian economy grow and it creates jobs. At the same time, when undertakings are secured as part of a foreign investment, we expect compliance.

In 2009, our government went to court to ensure U.S. Steel would meet commitments it made under the Investment Canada Act when it purchased Stelco. In the time since, the government has worked hard to maintain jobs in a vibrant steel industry in Hamilton and Ontario.

Could the Minister of Industry give the House an update on this important issue?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our top priorities are jobs and the economy. Today I am announcing that the government and U.S. Steel have come to an agreement that ends the court proceedings.

Under this enhanced agreement, U.S. Steel has committed to continue operations in Canada until 2015, with \$50 million in capital investments above its original undertaking of \$200 million and a contribution of \$3 million toward community programs in Hamilton and Nanticoke.

When it comes to foreign investment and a company makes an undertaking, we will ensure it is respected.

* * *

• (1450)

AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Hélène Lavergnière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, late on Friday the secretive Conservative government suddenly announced a new Afghan detainee transfer agreement with the United States.

Oral Questions

Canadians expect a lot more transparency on these issues, and they want a few simple questions answered. Could the minister confirm that no Canadian-captured detainees remain in the custody of the Afghan national directorate of security, and if so, when did the transfer occur?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was a big secret. I announced it right here in the House of Commons. Before I did that, I talked to the hon. member and offered her a full briefing which she, to her credit, took on Friday afternoon.

With the Canadian Forces combat mandate ending in Afghanistan, we have moved to a new system that builds on the two previous agreements. We are working with the Obama administration to ensure that we meet all of our international obligations.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): First, Mr. Speaker, I would repeat, could the minister confirm that no Canadian-captured detainees remain in the custody of the Afghan national directorate of security?

[Translation]

Second, why was this agreement reached now, when we have known for seven years that abuse is common in Afghan prisons?

A report published in October by the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan documents the torture and abuse suffered by detainees in Afghan prisons. What—

The Speaker: The hon. member is out of time.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a robust monitoring system. A Canadian official will be on the ground in Afghanistan to ensure that all of our international obligations are met.

I am pleased to report to the member opposite that there has not been a single corroborated allegation against any detainee transferred by the Canadian Forces. We will continue to do our very best to ensure that both outside of Kandahar and at Parwan.

* * *

[Translation]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government is completely out of touch with the reality facing Canadians. At a time when taxpayers are tightening their belts, certain Conservative ministers are using jets and rescue helicopters as their own personal taxi. It is completely irresponsible. As we know, this is not the first time that the Minister of National Defence has used search and rescue aircraft for personal reasons.

Will the minister finally shed some light on what really happened and tell us how much it cost taxpayers for him to be picked up from his fishing trip on July 9, 2010? How much did it cost?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in this House many times, I left time off to go back to work. Before leaving Gander, I took part in a search and

rescue demonstration that has been confirmed by retired Cormorant squadron leader and pilot, Major Stephen Reid, who stated that the participation in this training exercise was viewed as a win-win situation.

As I said, I took part in this demonstration, and then as requested, I went on to complete further government business.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 150 workers from my riding were told this morning that they are losing their jobs. The shutting down of paper machine number six at Resolute Forest Products in Kénogami was supposed to be temporary, but as of this morning, it is now permanent. We are still waiting to hear what the government plans to do to retrain these workers. With the current wait times for EI claims, there is no way they will receive their benefits in time for the holidays.

Can the government finally tell us how it plans to help the workers of Kénogami?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to help the people who lost their jobs because of this shut down, especially at this time of year, with Christmas just around the corner. That is why Service Canada is working with the provinces and territories to provide unemployed workers with information on the various benefits they have access to in order to help them and their families, especially at this time of year. We also want to help them get back to work. That is why we are providing training programs, in partnership with the provinces and territories.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has said no to sponsoring parents and grandparents. It has put on a two-year freeze, something which we oppose.

The expectation of the super visa, on the other hand, was high, and it is turning into a super disappointment. Individuals are finding it too difficult to get the health care coverage necessary to get the super visa.

Will the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism make the necessary modifications to enable the hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals to get their parents and grandparents to—

• (1455)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member is out of time. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Oral Questions

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and the exuberance with which it has been placed.

The super visa program for parents and grandparents from around the world who want to visit their children and grandchildren here in Canada was just undertaken on December 1. We have just begun the program. This is going to allow parents and grandparents to come to this country, visit their children and grandchildren, and enjoy quality time here with them.

* * *

[Translation]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this, the last week, I would like to point out that we have never seen so many ministers refuse to answer questions, read notes robotically, and slip out the back door after every question period.

I want the Minister of National Defence to go through the front door and explain himself to the media, to the press, instead of hiding the way he does when it comes to the F-35s or his use of rescue helicopters.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in almost 15 years in this place, I have never walked out the back door of this chamber.

I want to repeat what retired Cormorant squadron leader and pilot Major Steven Reid said in response to questions about the flight:

The flight would have flown regardless of whether or not the minister was included because the squadron conducts two training events per day as part of a regular routine.

I took part in one of those routines, and I can tell members that our SAR pilots, our participants in those missions, are doing spectacular work on behalf of our country.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is an elderly couple in Toronto. She has asthma and bronchitis. He has Parkinson's. They can barely make ends meet. In fact, they just won a contest because of the depth of their needs. However, there are no winners here. Three hundred thousand seniors live in poverty. The government offers no help. Seniors should not have to turn to a contest just to keep their heads above water.

When will the government stop ignoring seniors and start actually helping them?

Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for bringing up this very important issue.

Seniors' poverty is something all Canadians should be concerned about. That is why our government has been taking action. We have worked hard to put more money into the pockets of seniors by cutting taxes and investing billions in affordable housing, but it does

not stop there. We have also introduced pension income splitting and have provided the largest GIS increase in a quarter century.

Canadians know that they can count on this government to deliver for our seniors.

[Translation]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the minister realizes how critical the situation is for seniors because she refuses to admit that more needs to be done. Some 300,000 seniors are living in poverty. It is not just a statistic; it is a hidden crisis, and the government is doing nothing about it. This winter, seniors will have to choose between paying their electricity bills or buying groceries. It is not an easy choice. In order for our seniors to be able to live in dignity, it would take only \$700 million, which is half of what this government has given in gifts to the banks this year alone.

Why does this government help CEOs instead of seniors?

[English]

Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting seniors. The largest GIS increase in a quarter century has put more money into the pockets of 1.6 million more seniors. Our low-tax plan has removed 380,000 seniors from the tax rolls completely. Our investment to combat financial elder abuse is raising awareness so that the money seniors have worked so hard to save is not lost.

I have also consulted with stakeholders around the country and have seen first-hand the positive impacts made, thanks to our government.

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CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the NDP's perfect world, the Canada-U.S. border would be laden with trade deterrents.

Unfortunately for the NDP, under this Conservative government we have achieved an agreement to improve the flow of goods and services between Canada and our friends and neighbours to the south.

Would the hard-working Minister of Foreign Affairs take this opportunity to tell the House about the remarkable economic benefits the beyond the border agreement would provide for all Canadians?

● (1500)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the relationship between Canada and the United States is very important to our government. It is one of the most successful relationships in the world.

Last week the Prime Minister and President Obama announced an ambitious, yet achievable, road map to help trade and to help people travel back and forth between our two countries. This would lead to better security and more jobs.

*Oral Questions***LABOUR**

Improving the flow of people, goods and services over our shared border is a central part of our economic action plan. Let us not mince words. This agreement is the most significant step forward in Canada-U.S. co-operation since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It will help create a lot of jobs.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United States has ratified its free trade agreement with South Korea. However, Canada is missing in action again. While the minister flits around all over the world talking trade, Canada continues to lose markets in established countries.

South Korea, until now, imported over \$1 billion of pork and beef. Now, as tariffs go down for the United States, we can expect our product to be displaced. Why has the minister sold out the Canadian pork industry? Is it really because the government has failed to negotiate a secure auto pact for both sides?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is the Minister of International Trade has been working tirelessly on behalf of Canadian farmers, Canadian consumers and Canadian manufacturers and will continue to work with our friends in South Korea toward firming up our trade agreement with South Korea.

In the meantime, the hon. member has an opportunity to support a trade agreement, the one with Panama, which is before the House, and I encourage him to do it.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government continues to ignore hard-working families in the GTA. We have predatory temp agencies that can have half a worker's salary. We have car insurance rates in places like Brampton that are some of the highest in the country. To make matters worse, the Conservatives make huge cuts to services that help settle new Canadians in our region. It is a pile-on. The Toronto area is one of the most expensive places in the country to live.

Therefore, here is a low-tax plan for the Minister of Finance. Why does he not make life more affordable for Canadians and cut the federal tax on home heating?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member was not here at the time, but some of the members of the NDP were here when we promised Canadians back in 2006 that we would reduce the GST by two points. Then we came to this place and in our first budgets we proposed reducing the GST by two points for the entire country. Who voted against it? All the members of the NDP.

Those members have a lot of nerve coming here talking about tax reductions. They do not believe in them. They just talk about it. However, when the times comes to vote, they are not there.

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the collective agreement between Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, representing locomotive engineers, and CN Railway will expire on December 31 of this year. A work stoppage at a national railway would have a significant impact on the economy and on local communities.

Could the Minister of Labour please give the House an update on the status of the labour negotiations at CN?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to inform the House that indeed a tentative agreement was reached by both parties on Saturday before the expiration of their old contract. The best solution in any dispute is the one that the parties reach themselves.

A reliable transportation system is crucial to Canada's economic growth. Our transportation network accounts for 4.1% of our GDP, employing over 900,000 Canadians moving \$1 trillion worth of goods to markets. We are the most trade dependent nation in the G8, so we require a system that is modern, efficient and reliable. I thank CN and its users.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, security forces have attacked demonstrators and fired on those who are challenging last week's election results. Canadians are concerned about the escalating violence in that country.

The international community has to act swiftly to prevent there being more victims.

What is Canada doing to defend human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

● (1505)

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I share the concern with the member opposite. I also shared the concern with the member for Ottawa—Vanier who raised this issue last week.

Canada spoke out very loudly and clearly on this issue this past Friday. We are tremendously concerned about the transparency of the election results and the potential for violence. We are calling on all parties to reject violence. We would like an examination to ensure that all results are posted in a transparent way so we can ensure the vote was truly democratic and fair.

*Routine Proceedings***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, in the wake of the important negotiations in Durban last week, my question is about Canada's ongoing commitment to remain within the Kyoto protocol. On December 17, 2002, the House voted to ratify it. The House also voted on February 14, 2007, on the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act. Will the government either commit to not legally withdrawing, to staying in the process, or allowing the House the opportunity to debate the issue?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have said already today, we are very encouraged by the talks that happened in Durban over the weekend. We have seen an international will to move forward and put together an agreement that sees all major emitters around the table. The Kyoto protocol does not cover this. We are very excited about this positive development.

Instead of raising these points, I would ask my colleague opposite to work with the government in its sector-by-sector regulatory approach and not vote against our important budgetary measures to address climate change adaptation and regulation.

* * *

[*Translation*]**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in our gallery of Jacques Chagnon, the Speaker of the Quebec National Assembly.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

The Speaker: I would also like to mention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Glen Abernethy, Minister of Justice, Minister of Human Resources and Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board for the Northwest Territories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I would also like to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the 2011 Governor General's Canadian History Awards recipients: Chad Howie, Sarah Beech, Sylvia Smith, Shantelle Browning-Morgan, Andrew Stickings, Flora Fung, Raymond Bédard, Eric Ruel, Guilaine Maroist, Michel Ducharme, Carol Pauzé, Cybèle Robichaud, Pat Rowe, Joan Karstens and Richard Pelletier.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS[*English*]**COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYING**

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 10.5 of the Lobbying Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report on investigation from the Commissioner of Lobbying.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in relation to commemorative celebrations in the 21st century.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee advises that pursuant to Standing Order 91.1 (2) the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the items on the order of precedence between November 17 and December 6 and recommended the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2) the report is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

● (1510)

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Status of Women in the 41st Parliament. The work on this report began in the early spring of 2010 and was initiated by the committee of the 40th Parliament because of its profound concern related to the tragedy of nearly 600 missing and murdered aboriginal women. The loss and abuse of our sisters compelled us to look at the root causes, depth and possible solutions for the violence experienced by aboriginal women.

While the committee was unable to complete its work before the May 2011 election, the committee submitted a draft report with the promise that the committee of the 41st Parliament would complete the work and make recommendations to the government in regard to the solutions brought forward by aboriginal women themselves to the great harm that such violence perpetrates.

I would like to thank the clerk, Michelle Tittley, and the analysts, Havi Echenberg and Laura Munn-Rivard, for their commitment to helping the committee complete this challenging report.

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the original purpose of the study of violence against Aboriginal women was to gain a better understanding of the extent and nature of violence, examine the root causes and recommend solutions in consultation with Aboriginal women.

This report does not do that. Over 150 witnesses spoke to the committee and offered sound recommendations to the government.

[*Translation*]

I am very sad to announce that the report tabled in the House today has virtually nothing in common with the testimony. The report omits huge portions of the content heard during testimony, offers no recommendations whatsoever that would commit the government to act, and does not acknowledge the humanitarian crisis facing aboriginal women.

This report does not really broach the subject of violence. It is nothing but a list of government programs. And yet, the committee did not hear most of the contents of this report. The programs described as solutions in this report were never mentioned. The final report silences aboriginal women in an attempt to clear the government of all responsibility.

[*English*]

New Democrats have written a dissenting opinion to make recommendations based on the witness testimony. New Democrats will honour the testimony aboriginal women offered us. We will work on collaborative, consultative solutions to end the systemic violence. We will never be complacent to this crisis.

The Speaker: I see other members rising to make comments, but I should read Standing Order 35(2). It states:

Upon presentation of a report accompanied by supplementary or dissenting opinions or recommendations pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), a committee member of the Official Opposition representing those who supported the opinion or opinions expressed in the appended material may also rise to give a succinct explanation thereof.

Therefore, I am afraid the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel is the only one who can speak to this report at this time.

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions this afternoon. The first one is on ozone monitoring.

The petitioners say that the following are examples of questions the government has failed to answer on ozone. Why have both the minister and the parliamentary secretary repeatedly said that there will be no cuts to ozone monitoring despite their own briefing document titled, “Ozone monitoring cuts”? Will monitoring be maintained in the lower atmosphere? By what percentage, in terms of money and positions, was the experimental studies division to be cut? What percentage has been cut? Do Brewers and ozonesondes perform the sound task?

The petitioners therefore call upon the Minister of the Environment to develop a plan to ensure the integrity of the ozone monitoring program and commission a report to assess the adequacy of Canadian contributions to the global observing system for climate in support of the United Nations framework convention on climate change.

Routine Proceedings

●(1515)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is regarding CCSVI.

The government claims most of what I am asking for in Bill C-280 is already under way. This is absolutely not the case.

First, follow-up care remains a problem today and has not been adequately addressed.

Second, phase I/II trials will not put Canada at the forefront of international research.

Third, funding for trials has still not been provided.

Fourth, there is no advisory panel composed of CCSVI experts.

Fifth, I am suggesting that clinical trials begin in Canada by March 1, 2012. The government is suggesting that CIHR announce the successful research team by then.

Therefore, the petitioners call for the Minister of Health to consult experts—

The Speaker: I am just going to stop the member there. She has had the floor for about two minutes and the Standing Orders do call for a brief or succinct summary of the petitions. I just want to ensure she does not have any other petitions to present.

SENIORS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition, signed by a significant number of people across the country, in response to a motion that I brought to the House in June of this year, calling on the government to take action against the rising levels of poverty among Canadian seniors.

As members will recall, that motion passed the House, but unfortunately we have seen no real action. The government talks a good game and provided less than half of what is needed to raise seniors in Canada out of poverty. In a country this rich, 300,000 seniors living in poverty is not acceptable.

Therefore, I submit this petition.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition against the Conservative government's reckless, irresponsible decision to close the maritime rescue subcentre in St. John's, Newfoundland. This petition is signed by over 100 workers on the *Terra Nova* oil rig.

This oil rig is located in the middle of the north Atlantic Ocean. The workers know only too well how important it is to be able to access safety when they need to do so. They lost colleagues on the Cougar helicopter that went down with the loss of 17 lives. They know how important it is that every second counts when we are talking about safety.

Routine Proceedings

However, the government is going ahead and closing the maritime rescue sub-centre in St. John's, where there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise about the local environment. When we are talking about the ocean and about safety, we need local knowledge, we need the expertise that is there in order to ensure that safety is paramount.

On behalf of the more than 100 employees on the *Terra Nova* oil rig, I call upon the government to please change its mind.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I bring forward a petition on behalf of many citizens from the great city of Calgary, Alberta. There are also a few signatures from people in Bragg Creek, Alberta.

The petitioners point out to the government, quite succinctly, that in our current media environment public broadcasting is an essential promoter and defender of Canadian culture in both French and English. They also note that Canada requires a broadcaster that reflects the different needs and circumstances of each official language, and that Canadians should continue to have access to Canadian stories and Canadian content, which is something we believe in here.

The petitioners implore the government to fulfill its commitment to the CBC, so that Canada can tell its stories to all of us from coast to coast to coast by way of our great public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today. I will try to brief and succinct as I report them to you.

The first petition I would like to table with the House of Commons deals with concerns of electors from across Canada, and particularly in my own riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands, about the fate of Canada's plans relating to climate change.

The petitioners point out that the national round table has estimated that we could be facing annual costs as high as \$43 billion a year by 2020 and that we must reduce our emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.

This is an excellent and timely petition, given the recent events in Durban.

• (1520)

BOTTLED WATER

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by people primarily in my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands who are concerned with what the federal government could do in relation to the issue of bottled water. Many jurisdictions are taking the decision to not have bottled water in their municipal offices and even in provincial offices.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to stop the provision of bottled water in places where water is potable. Bottled water represents a huge solid waste issue. It is not any safer than our tap water, thank goodness, in most Canadian homes, but this does not apply to first nations communities. Our potable water from the tap is just as good and just as healthy, or healthier, than bottled water.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 193 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 193—**Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to the F-35s: what information was provided to the government about the aircraft's capabilities indicating that they have the capacity to meet the Canadian Armed Force's mandatory requirements?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the joint strike fighter, JSF, partnership, together with eight other nations, and as a signatory to the JSF memorandum of understanding, MOU, Canada was provided unparalleled access to classified aircraft capability information by the U.S.-led Joint Strike Fighter Program Office. Applying the principles of the Access to Information Act, specific information concerning aircraft capability has been withheld in accordance with subsection 13(1), as it is considered information obtained from other governments. In addition, access to aircraft capability and systems integration demonstrations was available through participation in joint strike fighter program simulator events.

The capability options for the joint strike fighter, i.e., the aircraft and its associated sustainment and training systems, were measured against the Royal Canadian Air Force-approved high-level mandatory capabilities and their associated mandatory requirements. If an option was unable to meet one or more of the mandatory requirements, the option would be deemed unable to perform the missions that Canada needed from its next generation fighter capability. The F-35 joint strike fighter was the only option for the Royal Canadian Air Force that met all of the mandatory requirements. In particular, mandatory requirements associated with survivability, interoperability, and sensors and data fusion were met only by the F-35 joint strike fighter.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question Nos. 192 and 194 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 192—**Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to the capability of the next generation of fighter jets: (a) what are the mandatory requirements that must be met; (b) how and why (the step by step process) were these requirements deemed to be mandatory; (c) on what basis was the determination made that the F-35A was the only aircraft that could meet all of the mandatory requirements; and (d) were there other aircraft considered and, if yes, on what dates and to which Department of National Defense's divisions were provided the specifications concerning these other aircraft considered?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*Question No. 194—**Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to the National Immunization Strategy (NIS): (a) what was the total amount of funds allocated to the NIS since fiscal year 2003-2004, broken down by year; (b) were all allocated funds spent each year; (c) when did the most recent funding expire; (d) when was funding last renewed; (e) were each of the nine goals of the NIS achieved, if not, which goals were not achieved and why; (f) since 2006, have staff of either the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and/or Health Canada (HC) met with any professional groups and members of the private sector on the NIS and, if so, which professional groups and members of the private sector, and which staff, broken down by year; (g) were any recommendations made by staff within either the PHAC or HC to the Minister of Health that the NIS be renewed; (h) how many lives have been estimated to have been saved by the NIS; (i) how many illnesses have been estimated to have been prevented; and (j) has the NIS reduced hospitalizations of preventable diseases for which Canada has vaccines?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed from November 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to our copyright reform legislation. This is our third attempt at bringing this very important legislation forward and get it passed through this place. In those attempts, we had spoken with hundreds of thousands of Canadians. We have heard from people from across the country. The House has heard hundreds of hours of debate. At committee, we have spent an equally long time speaking about the issues with respect to Canada's copyright reform.

We know that the legislation is extraordinarily important to the Canadian economy. It is very important that we bring forward legislation that brings us in line with international standards. We have heard from people and creators in my riding, particularly in the video game industry, who have been calling on us to ensure that we can actually get this copyright legislation passed through the House, so that they can compete on a fair and level playing field with everybody else.

The legislation is important to hundreds of thousands of Canadians. It helps protect Canadian jobs. It balances the rights of consumers with our creators. This is the type of legislation that we need to ensure that Canada's economic recovery continues and that Canada continues to lead the G7 in terms of economic productivity.

I hope that now that we have had a significant amount of debate, not only on the actual bill but also with respect to an amendment that had been moved earlier by the Liberal Party, we can now move

forward and bring send legislation to committee as expeditiously as possible.

We know that creators and consumers across the country are looking to the House to show some leadership. They know that on this side of the House we are prepared to bring this forward to save and protect Canadian jobs.

I move:

That this question be now put.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the minister would be somewhat sympathetic in terms of the whole principle of having the opportunity as members of Parliament to be able to discuss and debate bills. There is this responsibility of accountability. We have now seen the government, in many different forms, bring in legislation and then assign time allocation. Now we are starting to see the movement and adjournment of debate. All of these actions take the ability away from us as legislators to give due diligence and scrutinize what these important issues are for all Canadians.

For the people who are witnessing this debate, it is important that we recognize the difference in the style of government that we have seen since the Prime Minister has achieved his majority. We have seen a majority come down with a very heavy hand. It is critically important that each minister be accountable for the types of actions that they are taking, which take away from what this institution is all about.

We now have yet another minister who has made the decision to limit debate—

• (1525)

The Speaker: Order. I will stop the hon. member there. He has had a minute and a half to put his question. I am sure other people would like to ask questions, so I will stop him there and allow the parliamentary secretary to answer.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, he is correct on one thing. There is definitely a big difference in styles between the government and that side of the House. On this side of the House we are actually focusing on jobs and the economy, keeping our economy moving and keeping Canadians working. That is what we are doing.

This copyright bill has been debated for many years. It was debated in the last Parliament. It has been debated extensively in this Parliament. We have met with hundreds of people. It has had many hours of debate in this House. It has had many hours of debate in committee in the last Parliament. It is the same bill that we brought forward. We want to get it to committee, so that we can continue to hear more of the voices from Canadians who want to talk about this bill.

Ultimately, he is quite right. We will be different than the opposition. We will continue to focus on jobs. We will continue to focus on the economy. We will continue to do everything that we can on this side of the House to ensure that Canadians have a government that they can rely on to create and protect jobs.

Government Orders

This particular legislation is required to bring us in line with international standards. We need the opposition to get on board with us.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary was talking about wanting to move this to committee and that is why the government brought in the motion to limit debate. He said he wanted to move this to committee to hear from Canadians and people who had any issues, or concerns, or whatever. What does he think this process is? We were elected by Canadians to stand up and examine each and every piece of legislation.

There are rules set out in the books to give us time to do that, yet for every single piece of legislation that this majority government brings forward to the House, it has to bring in a motion to limit debate. Who in their right mind could ever suggest that that is any indication that this government has any respect for democracy?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, we have spent hundreds of hours debating this bill. In fact, we debated a Liberal opposition amendment to the bill in the House for many weeks. In the last Parliament we had this very same bill before the House. We spent many hours debating that bill. I know many of the members on this side of the House have been speaking with constituents. They have been speaking with stakeholders with respect to the bill.

We also know that we need to move forward on copyright legislation and bring this in line with international standards so we can protect Canadian jobs. That is what is important. The members opposite and Canadians will have a greater opportunity again, at committee, to put forward their feelings with respect to this legislation. It will then come back to this place again and we will have some more opportunity to debate it further.

We just need to get this to committee, so we can do the work that Canadians have sent us here to do and to stop filibustering, stop killing jobs, and focus on creating jobs and Canadian industry that is so reliant on—

The Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Random—Burin—St. George's.

• (1530)

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-11.

As I listened to my hon. colleague across the way, I could not help but notice the irony in his remarks. Clearly we are dealing here with a piece of legislation that the government is not the least bit interested in hearing submissions on, or if it is hearing submissions, it is not hearing what is being said.

We are hearing from stakeholders who have made presentations that when they bring forward solid recommendations, changes they think need to be made and would like the government to consider, the government does not consider them. The government still says that it wants to invite more submissions. What is the point in inviting more input and more debate if the government will not take it seriously?

The government often and deliberately points out, in an effort to justify limiting debate, that this exact copyright legislation has been debated before at length, as the member just said, and was even at

committee, and it was. In fact, 167 stakeholder organizations made submissions and recommendations.

The government looks back at this lengthy discussion with Canadians on copyright legislation and concludes that the necessary discussion has been had, with unmatched arrogance. Discussion has been had, but it has not been listened to.

The Conservative government declares that there will be no more debate, no more discussion and no more constructive criticism. In fact, it does not even see the input as constructive criticism; the government just sees it as criticism. Instead of accepting it for what it is intended to do, which is to perfect an imperfection in this particular legislation, government members want instead to just go full steam ahead with their way or no way. In contrast, I look at past discussion and debate with Canadians as a missed opportunity to tailor this legislation to serve Canadians best.

The government is right on one account: Canadians have voiced their opinions on copyright by making 167 separate submissions to committee, which is no small feat. Unfortunately for Canadians from coast to coast to coast, whether artists or creators, they have not been heard by the government, and that is how they feel. They sincerely believe that even though they have made submissions and presentations, and the government members have appeared to listen, they really have not been heard.

Last year Canadians appeared in droves to offer expert recommendations at committee. Clearly, during this important consultation the government just checked out. After hundreds of hours of debate and discussion in the last Parliament on Canadian copyright, the Conservative government proved that artists' and creators' legitimate concerns and recommendations fell on deaf ears by reintroducing this unchanged and unsatisfactory legislation.

The Conservatives constantly say that they have a majority mandate, when in reality only 39% of Canadians who voted actually voted Conservative. There were many Canadians who did not vote, and they were eligible to vote. In fact, only 59% of eligible voters actually voted in the last federal election, with 39% of that total voting Conservative. If we take into account all eligible voters, including those who did not vote, only 24% of possible voters voted Conservative. This is hardly a majority mandate.

It is about time that the government started to listen to Canadians when it is making legislation. It is about time it realized that while it may have gotten the majority number of votes, in fact only 39% of the Canadian population that voted cast their votes for Conservatives.

Let us be understanding and be receptive to hearing from Canadians, and from Canadians who did not vote Conservative, who, by the way, have something to offer as well. Just because there is no impending election does not mean that the Conservative Party has a mandate to stop listening to Canadians and blindly implement its rigid copyright legislation without meaningfully considering Canadians' advice.

To be clear, a meaningful consideration of the consultation process requires balanced, effective implementation of Canadians' recommendations, not just half-hearted listening and empty consultation.

While we are dealing with the Conservatives' procedural attempts to ignore the will of Canadians and skirt an open and transparent democratic process, I must also address a serious flaw in this legislation.

• (1535)

The Conservatives' inclusion in its current form of the digital lock provisions undermines any attempt at fairness and equality between the users and creators of copyrighted works. Canadians who legally purchase CDs, DVDs or other forms of digital content should be entitled to transfer their legally bought content from one format to the other, provided they do so for personal use and not for profit or transfer to others. They have paid for this content, and it is theirs. The right and proper thing to do is to allow them to transfer it for their own personal use, clearly not for others and clearly not for profit. Bill C-11 would allow corporations to apply digital locks that would prohibit any type of format shifting. Under Bill C-11, the Conservatives seek to criminalize a Canadian consumer who legally purchases a CD and then transfers it to his or her iPod. Shockingly, the Conservatives' attempt to modernize copyright law criminalizes the modern mainstream application of legally purchased content.

Recently I received an email expressing concerns around Bill C-11 from a passionate and informed constituent of mine from Burin, in the riding of Random—Burin—St. George's. Shawn Rose hit the nail on the head when he wrote:

As a Canadian, I am both concerned and disheartened by how easily my rights are trumped by the overriding and all encompassing protection for digital locks contained in the legislation.

While the legislation provides many legitimate and justifiable rights for users, with one swipe the digital lock provision strips them all away.

Bill C-11 would enable Canadians to make copies of copyright works for personal use such as format shifting, in which consumers shift their legally bought CD on their iPod, or time shifting, in which content is recorded or backed up for later use—unless a corporation puts a digital lock on the content. Then the consumer is out of luck. If there is a digital lock on legally purchased content, consumers have no rights whatsoever. In a bizarre contradiction, the government gives rights to consumers while providing corporations with the tools to cancel all consumer rights.

Another constituent of mine from Kippens, Russell Porter, accurately describes the contradiction in this bill by writing:

The anti-circumvention provisions included in Bill C-11, unduly equip corporate copyright owners and distributors in the music, movie and video game industries with a powerful set of tools that can be utilized to exercise absolute control over Canadians' interaction with media and technology...

I continue to get mail from many of my constituents. Another consumer and constituent writing from Random—Burin—St. George's, Ross Conrad from Stephenville, writes with regard to his legitimate concerns over the digital lock provisions' banning of tools to transfer formats:

I strongly believe that in addition to linking the prohibition of circumvention to the act of infringement, it is also paramount for consumers to have commercial access

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to the tools required to facilitate such lawful acts. It is imperative that the ban on the distribution and marketing of devices or tools that can be used to lawfully circumvent be eliminated by removing paragraph 41.1(c) and any associated references to it or any paragraphs in the Bill that would be rendered irrelevant by this change.

This goes to show that Canadian consumers are watching. They know exactly what this piece of legislation contains, they know exactly what is wrong with it, and they are calling on the government to acknowledge that there are flaws with this piece of legislation. There is nothing wrong with listening to what Canadians have to say. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have refused to listen to thousands of Canadians like Shawn, Russell and Ross, who have eloquently explained their issues with respect to the imbalance between corporations and consumers in Bill C-11.

After all, it is clear that this bill was not written to protect the creator but the corporations.

• (1540)

Instead of Bill C-11, the Liberal Party supports true copyright modernization to protect the works and intellectual property of Canadians while achieving a delicate balance between consumers and creators.

While we will again be bringing forward a number of amendments at committee, this bill, unchanged after 167 submissions to committee and an outpouring of important and informed opinions from Canadians from coast to coast, is an insult.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her very interesting remarks.

Unfortunately, in our House the time set aside for debate is extremely limited. Limits are constantly being imposed on us—and that is truly very disappointing—especially when it comes to the bill before us today, which may very well affect many artists in Quebec and across Canada. She mentioned that the bill seemed to favour big business and not creators. I would like her to talk a little more about how a bill like the one we have before us could help creators. How could this bill be improved?

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, clearly we always have to take into account the creations of our artists. It is really important that we do whatever we can to ensure that their creativity is protected.

There are ways of doing this. We need to modernize this legislation so that it takes into account the hard work of our artists, the hard work of our writers and the hard work of our musicians, while at the same time bearing the mind that consumers have rights as well.

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What we are saying is that consumers should never be allowed to abuse the works of our artists by only buying one of anything and then making multiple copies to distribute elsewhere. What we are saying, and what we think the government should agree to, is that consumers should be allowed to make one copy for their own personal use, not for distribution elsewhere. We really do need to protect our artists and at the same time be fair to our consumers.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the thing that concerns me about Bill C-11 is exactly the thing the member put her finger on in her statement.

Why are we still talking about digital locks when every single witness, every single expert and every single sector of the creative community that works in the field has said that this provision must be removed, that it works against the goals of modernization with respect to consumer and creator rights?

I am wondering if the member would want to expand on this concern. Why are we not seeing a willingness to amend Bill C-11 and get rid of the digital locks provision?

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is an excellent example of what is wrong with this legislation.

As I said in my earlier remarks, the government just will not listen, even though it has had so much in the way of representation about the problem with digital locks. It is not listening.

There were 167 submissions at committee. Clearly, while the government may have heard, it did not listen and it did not act. Other people have credible input. Other people can make good recommendations. The government does not have all the answers.

The only reason I can think of as to why it is not taking what it is hearing into account is that it does not want to have input from anyone else. It thinks it has all the answers, and that is the problem with the government.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know we have had hundreds of hours of debate in this place. We know we have had it in the previous Parliament. We know we have had it at committee. The member cited in her remarks how much input we have had on this bill.

I wonder if the member might cite for me a jurisdiction, any jurisdiction, where digital locks have been used and the actual availability of content has been reduced.

The member mentioned purchasing a CD with a digital lock; I am not aware of any that have been created with digital locks for many years. I wonder if the member could tell me what CD that was, and when she purchased it.

What would the member say to the over 14,000 people in the video gaming industry who depend on digital locks to be successful in the industry? This is about jobs and the economy. What would the member say to the thousands of people whose jobs are at risk if we do not pass updated legislation?

• (1545)

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent example of the government fear-mongering, where it is coming out with straw

horses and trying to put out ideas that will not float. People know that what they are suggesting is not right.

We know that creators have a right and that consumers have a right. However, the Conservatives are failing to acknowledge that there needs to be equality between the two. Consumers need access. If they buy it, it belongs to them but it is not for anything other than personal use.

Digital locks actually give preference to the large corporations. The history of the current government is that it is always coming down on the side of large corporations versus the independent consumer and small business.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also rise in the House today to oppose Bill C-11, a bill the Conservatives decided to call the Copyright Modernization Act. My colleague from the Liberal Party pointed out that the bill will benefit big business at the expense of authors. Today, we are trying to get some balance into this bill. Unfortunately, once again, debate has been limited and the Conservatives do not want any amendments, so the debate in the House today will most likely be of no benefit to the bill. It is truly undemocratic to try and ram this through faster than our constituents want.

Canadians want this bill gone over with a fine-tooth comb and properly debated so that it can be amended and its major shortcomings addressed. For example, Bill C-11 creates rights for big business, for the content owners. Creators will not benefit from the bill. The big winners will certainly be the content owners, in other words, big business. This bill compensates those who already make a decent living and are well off. And yet, it is the artists that are having trouble getting by and who need our support. They are the ones in our regions and in our big cities who make Canada culturally rich. They are the ones that need the government's support. Things are going very well for big business.

Frankly, the revenue that the government derives from big business is entirely adequate. The proof is in the pudding: the government is trying to cut back on the revenue it gets from big business. That would suggest that the revenue is too high. Small businesses, creators and artists are the ones that need the help. This bill also greatly affects young people and students who would only have about 30 days to erase any copyrighted products in their possession.

There are some pretty tough clauses in this bill. For example, the fines in this bill include penalties of up to \$1 million and 5 years behind bars. That is really over the top. These penalties are in keeping with the Conservatives' priority: to have a law and order society. They are bent on building prisons and sending good, upstanding Canadians there. The Conservatives think that we all want these people behind bars. Frankly, the Conservatives' position is quite over the top. Five years in prison to protect big business' copyright is over the top, just like most of the crime bills that have been introduced

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It is clear that the Copyright Act should be amended and should better reflect the transformation of technology and of our methods of communication in Canada. While the title of the bill is the Copyright Modernization Act, the story we are being told is an old one. The act is not being modernized; what we are seeing is how things were done in the 1900s or even the 1800s, when big corporations made money at the expense of the workers, the creators and small businesses. They want to reward big corporations. Honestly, this is an old story. There is nothing modern about it. It is quite antiquated. The government should perhaps think about it a little more and help all our constituents and all Canadians, not just those who are well off, like big corporations.

What is being proposed today is a transformation of the print media into digital media. This has brought about profound changes in the way Canadians discuss politics, society and culture. In Canada, creativity, innovation and vision are emerging from the places where people live and identify themselves as Canadians. All works of art, whether in music, literature or the visual arts, are based on the experiences of people who live in their native regions.

• (1550)

They are not based on the bottom line of a big corporation making big profits; they are based on everyday life. People's everyday lives are where we should be lending a hand. We should create tax credits for artists. We should go looking for them and lend them the hand they need. Instead of that, they are being told that we will favour big corporations and maybe, eventually, if artists are lucky, they will be able to sell their products and make some money. As well, we are told that once that is done, they will have to forget about their rights to their creations, because they will belong to the big corporations, who will get 100% of the profits from them.

In my riding, Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, there are large numbers of artists. Most of them are not particularly wealthy. There are a few exceptions. Kevin Parent, for example, has benefited from the cultural life in our region and relatively strong support for his work. People love his work. As a result, he has been able to move onto the international stage—not because some big corporation gave him its support, but because ordinary people gave him their support. Sylvain Rivière, a writer, also benefits from the support of the people in our region.

We want the artists in our region to be well equipped and well positioned to move onto the national and international scene. We want the festivals in our region to benefit from a rich cultural life and from our artists. To achieve that, we have to lend them a hand.

Again, this bill does not do that. It will do nothing but increase the profits of the big corporations. Frankly, I do not see why big corporations would need anyone to lend them a hand. The fact is that it is small artists and small businesses that all members of the House claim to support. Frankly, I think that it is only the people on this side of the House who support them.

Festivals and artists are essential to the cultural life of our regions, but unfortunately, Bill C-11 will take millions of dollars in revenue away from artists, and away from the people who make the festivals in my region possible. It is going to erode the market.

This bill includes a long list of exceptions that do not adequately recognize the rights of creators. That is what we should be debating today. Once again, the Conservatives do not want their bill to be amended. They want to limit debate. They do not want the House to improve the bill. Honestly, we must take the time needed to end up with a good bill.

We must try to respond to our constituents' requests. We have been asked by many people to amend this bill. Unfortunately, to date, the Conservatives have not been willing to amend the bill we are considering.

I would like to quote a well-known technology commentator, Mr. Geist from the University of Ottawa, who succinctly summarized the issue, "The foundational principle of the new bill remains that anytime a digital lock is used—whether on books, movies, music, or electronic devices—the lock trumps virtually all other rights." This means that fair dealing and the new rights in the bill cannot be supported.

It is very unfortunate that our Conservative government really does not want to listen. We all know that the vast majority of businesses in Canada are small, local, family businesses. The vast majority of artists are independent. They are local people. The artists transform the culture and society and sow the seeds, but it is the multinational entertainment industry that will reap the rewards.

Canadian copyright legislation can strike a balance between copyright and providing fair compensation to artists for their work, while ensuring consumers have the right to reasonable access to content. We want to find the right balance. This bill provides a number of new privileges with regard to access to content, but it does not provide any alternative means of compensating our artists.

This will seriously impact our artists' ability to survive. The Copyright Modernization Act gives with one hand and takes with the other. I hope that this bill will not pass.

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House will remember Bill C-10, the bigger and more jails bill that the government brought in. When it did that, a number of amendments were moved that even the government members themselves wished they had recognized a bit earlier, so that they could have possibly passed them at committee stage. That was because they were in such a rush to get that bill through.

Now we have Bill C-11, and we are talking a lot about that big rush once again. The government appears, as it did with Bill C-10, to be completely close-minded to any sort of changes. The Conservatives talk about hundreds of hours of debate, which is not true, inside the chamber since the last election.

I know that within the New Democratic caucus, a number of people were just elected in May. Therefore, I ask the member to what degree he feels they have been afforded the opportunity to contribute any time at all to debate on this important piece of legislation for Canadians?

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Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I was recently elected, as was my colleague, the member for Winnipeg North. A great number of MPs on both sides of the House in fact were recently elected. I would challenge a great number of them to say how much time they have actually had to speak to just about any bill that has been presented in the House since we started sitting in June.

Frankly, the government seems to be in a huge hurry to pass bills without the due reflection that is required. We need to seek the comments of our electors, the people who live in our ridings, to ensure that the bills before us are properly conceived and will be properly delivered. I do not think that we are given nearly enough time to do so.

Again, we have a situation where the government is trying to steamroll legislation through the House. I am frankly quite appalled that the lack of democracy in the House is tolerated by members on the opposite side.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the member's speech. He talked about the well-heeled people who will benefit from this.

When he is talking about the well-heeled people, is he talking about the 500,000 people in the television and film industry across the country who need updated copyright legislation, the people who actually work behind the scenes, the hairdressers, the seamstresses, the electricians and the people who create the sets for these productions? I am wondering if they are the well-heeled people he is talking about. Perhaps it is the 14,000 people in the video game industry. Is that who he is talking about, the people who work hard every single day, and after having done something very special in their offices, go home at night to feed their families and pay their taxes? All they want is a little protection for the work that they have done. I am wondering if they are the well-heeled people that he is talking about.

As nobody yet has been able to do this on that side, can the member point out a jurisdiction which has used technical protection measures to protect creators' works, where those measures have resulted in less content for consumers?

Why does he not believe that creators have the right to protect the works they have created?

• (1600)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is referring in his first question to what is called the trickle-down theory, where people who are super rich will eventually perhaps spend money and allow the less privileged, the workers who work in those institutions, to benefit from the wealth that has been created.

I think it is about time that the people who actually create the wealth in this country actually benefit directly from that wealth. I do not think the Viacom's of the world should be the biggest beneficiaries of bills like the ones before us today. We need to ensure that everybody has a shake of the stick. Frankly, I think that this bill is entirely biased toward those who do not need our help.

I will remind the members opposite that, yet again, they are talking about tax cuts for the wealthiest corporations. If that is the

case, then clearly they do not need the money. It is the people at the bottom of the heap who probably need it a lot more.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the bill, although I am not so pleased to rise to speak to the motion for time allocation. I find it hard to believe that this is what we are doing here today. We are actually shutting down debate on copyright legislation.

As far as the bill goes, I want to communicate some things to the House while I have the floor. Copyright legislation and copyright reform is really important to people in the riding of Halifax. This is because it is home to many creators and many consumers.

In the three short years since I was elected, I have attended several different workshops and panel discussions in my community on copyright. I attended a discussion held by Dalhousie Law School, a round table to talk about the key issues that we need to look at here. There were law professors, law students and lawyers who deal with copyright.

I also attended a panel discussion put on by students at NSCAD, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. They are creators who want to understand the key issues and how copyright legislation should be reformed when it comes to our rights as creators.

I was delighted to moderate a panel discussion during the Halifax Pop Explosion. During this great music festival, there were opportunities to learn about different issues facing artists. Copyright was the big panel discussion that folks wanted to have and it was very well attended. I actually learned quite a bit during that panel discussion.

As I said, it is important to the folks in my riding. I look at the number of people who have contacted my office about copyright via email, Facebook and Twitter. Lots of people have contacted me, the majority of whom are creators and, of course, consumers. In this day and age, almost all of us are consumers. They are trying to present to me the perspective of a consumer, the perspective of a creator.

I have heard the Conservatives in this House stand up and talk about why we need copyright reform, and they are right, we absolutely do. This is a very much out-of-date piece of legislation. Yet, in changing it, when I listen to the arguments that have been brought forward, I see arguments that will really stand up for the owners of copyright, which is different from the creators and consumers of copyright. Being owners of copyright is not the same as being consumers or creators.

I am sad because we did see a version of the bill in the last Parliament. That bill was brought forward. It went to committee. We heard from people in the community. We heard from experts and academics. We heard from owners, creators and consumers, and it did not change.

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The bill is being brought forward now and there is nothing different about it. That is really disappointing. If we are to be good legislators, if we are to bring forward sound public policy, which I hope is the point, we should be relying on the people with the expertise, people who are actually working day to day with these issues. Not all of us have that expertise.

We are members of the House of Commons. We represent the common people and we are here as their representatives. It does not mean we are experts on copyright.

I have colleagues in the House who handwrite their emails and give them to their staff to then type up and send. Obviously there are folks in this House who have no expertise when it comes to what should happen when we download a video, if they are handwriting their emails.

We need to rely on the people we have at committee, rely on their expertise and heed their advice. We also need to rely on our constituents. I am relying on Carrie Forbes, Jessica McCarvell and Mike Wade, George Edwards and Ricky Tang, and Ryan Clancey. These are folks who have written my office as consumers or creators to say, "Wait a minute, here is my stake in this. As someone in your community, here is what I want you to know". Sarah Wilkin, Jake Parker, Will Hopkins are all people who have contacted my office. We should be taking their advice and hearing what they have to say.

● (1605)

One of those folks, Evan Walsh, a member of the Halifax community with Stitch Media, wrote to my office. I want to read his letter into the record because I think there is some good advice in it. He wrote:

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my concerns and suggestions for points of revision and amendment in regards to Bill C-11, The Copyright Modernization Act. Although Bill C-11 appears to be more flexible than the previous attempts at copyright reform, this Bill is flawed to its core by the inclusion of strict, anti-circumvention provisions. As a Canadian, I am both concerned and disheartened by how easily my rights are trumped by the overriding and all encompassing protection for digital locks contained in the legislation.

The anti-circumvention provisions included in Bill C-11, unduly equip corporate copyright owners and distributors in the music, movie and video game industries with a powerful set of tools that can be utilized to exercise absolute control over Canadians' interaction with media and technology, and may even undermine Canadians' constitutional rights.

A solution to Bill C-11's contentious core problem and the means to avoid the unintended consequences generated by the broad protection for digital locks is to amend the Bill to permit circumvention for lawful purposes. Not only is this approach compliant with the WIPO Internet Treaties, but it also provides legal protection for digital locks while maintaining the crucial copyright balance. I urge this Government to either add an infringing purpose requirement to the prohibition of circumvention or add an exception to the legislation to address circumvention for lawful purposes.

I strongly believe that in addition to linking the prohibition of circumvention to the act of infringement, it is also paramount for consumers to have commercial access to the tools required to facilitate such lawful acts. It is imperative that the ban on the distribution and marketing of devices or tools that can be used to lawfully circumvent be eliminated by removing—

—and here is a very good suggestion:

—paragraph 41.1(c) and any associated references to it or any paragraphs in the Bill that would be rendered irrelevant by this change.

Some have suggested that market forces will decide the fate of digital locks in Canada and that codifying strong protection for such measures in Canadian law is simply good interim policy. I disagree. Rather than handing control of Canadians' digital rights over to corporations, the Government must consider regulating how

digital locks are implemented to ensure they are not simply used to deny user rights. I put forward to this Government that adding a labelling requirement to disclose the use of digital locks on consumer goods be considered. A requirement as such, would permit Canadian consumers to make informed decisions about the products they purchase and the access and usage rights, or lack thereof, they can expect with the ownership of a given product.

In review, I believe it is in the best interest of Canadian consumers and creators alike to amend Bill C-11 to clearly link the act of circumvention to infringement, removing the all-encompassing ban on circumvention tools, and to establish a new TPM labelling provision.

I think that is fairly reasonable.

As I said, we rely on experts. We rely on academics and folks who actually work on these issues day to day. We rely on our communities to give us good advice. Many of those people are experts.

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Girl Guides in Halifax. I asked them how many did classes online at school. They all put up their hands. I said "What if I told you that, after a certain number of days, you would not be able to access that information you were given by your teacher anymore?"

These girls, who were 12 to 18 years of age, said that that was not right, as it was class information that their teacher gave them. They accessed it and used it to keep learning. Maybe they would want to use it a year later, in their next class.

We have the experts, and we have out of the mouths of babes. It is clear that there is a lot of concern about this bill and we need to listen to the concerns and make amendments at committee. I am hopeful that will happen this time around.

● (1610)

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, a Conservative MP said the concerns about digital locks and jail time were theoretical and exaggerated. He asked for examples. There are many, but one off the top of my head is Norah Jones, the talented Canadian jazz singer, who has a CD called *Come Away With Me*. Under this proposed legislation, it sure looks like if we were to copy that onto our iPad, we could be risking five years in jail or a \$1 million fine. Is the member aware of draconian possibilities on real CD digital locks that are already happening?

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Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right to point that out. We have seen cases in the U.S. where this has happened. Music companies have cracked down on people, who unsuspectingly break the law by transferring from one format to another. When we see those kinds of examples, one would think that we would turn the other way, that we would try to avoid that happening. His example was Norah Jones. She may not even own that song. It may not even be the artist who is upset about this. Maybe the artist thinks someone is doing something really interesting with a work or the artist wants people to be able to listen to it, whether it is on an iPod or CD, and it is fine with the artist, but it is not the artists who are cracking down.

My colleague across the way talked about the well-healed folks who are the beneficiaries of this and that is who we are talking about. It is the music companies, not the artists, that are necessarily pursuing this kind of litigation.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Norah Jones, of course, sings like a Canadian, but we know that she is not a Canadian, as a matter of fact. I wanted to correct the hon. gentleman.

In the member's speech, she referenced an email she received, that talked about modifying the TPM measures and specifically mentioned the video gaming industry. As I have said over and over in the House, there are some 14,000 jobs in that industry alone that rely on strong, effective copyright legislation to continue the great work in that industry. Is the member suggesting that these jobs be put at risk with insufficient TPMs?

When she talks about the rich who are part of these industries, is she talking about the people who work throughout the industry? As I said in my previous question, she talked about hairdressers, seamstresses, set designers, electricians, all of the people who support the film, video and TV industries. Are those the well-healed people she is talking about hurting Canadians?

On this side of the House, those are the people we want to protect with updated copyright legislation, as well as the industry and thousands of jobs. I wonder if the member and her party opposite are talking about putting an end to the video gaming industry in this country with weak TPM measures.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest it is the hairdressers and set designers, et cetera, that my colleague is talking about who are the ones to end up with charges. Of course, we need to modernize copyright legislation for various industries, like the film and television industries that he talked about. Of course we do, but the way to do it is not at the expense of heavy fines and possible jail time for ordinary Canadians.

I know the author of the letter that I read and that he is part of a working group in Nova Scotia, where there is a very strong video gaming industry, which may be surprising. He is a member of a working group in the community that includes video gamers, who I know, as members of my community, want fair and balanced copyright legislation.

I would invite the parliamentary secretary to come to Halifax any time and I would be pleased to introduce him to these people, who are actually part of the backbone of the Nova Scotian economy. Maybe he could listen first-hand to their advice on how to make this bill better.

• (1615)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we want to take a look at the copyright modernization act in many respects.

I think there is some confusion over time allotment. I think that this question being put being means we cannot put any amendments in at this point. That is unfortunate. It is the last opportunity we get to put up amendments without running the risk of fundamentally changing the bill, its scope, and its principles because now when we vote on it, and I assume if every Conservative votes for this, then it would pass and go to committee. We are somewhat constrained as to where it can go.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage has already said that he will accept some technical amendments and some other amendments in general. However, the problem with amendments in general is that they will not be accepted at that level because we cannot fundamentally change that bill before saying yes to it in scope and principle.

So, I think that the door has been closed on that last opportunity for amendment. That is unfortunate. One of the issues that I want to talk about, and I did not have the chance to during the last part of the debate on Bill C-11 pertaining to copyright modernization, is an issue that could have been dealt with here but was not; that is, artist's resale right.

I had representation from several groups that talked about artist resale rights. The Conservatives have said time and again that they want to get on board with the times, as it were, change the Copyright Act so that it reflects the modern times. That this is what other countries are doing, which is always the refrain.

However, this is something that other nations are doing, as well: artist resale. I hope that the Conservatives will give it some consideration in the future, maybe as something stand-alone.

I will give an example just to illustrate my point.

Acclaimed Canadian artist Tony Urquhart sold a painting called *The Earth Returns To Life* in 1958 for \$250. That may have been a fair chunk of change back then, but it certainly is not today if we are selling art. It was later resold by Heffel Fine Art auction house, in 2009, for approximately \$10,000. Similarly, his mixed media piece *Instrument of Torture* originally sold, in 1959, for \$150 and ended up receiving \$4,500 in the same auction. Without an artist's right for resale, the artist would not benefit from the increased value of his work whatsoever.

So other nations have gotten on board with this, allowing the artist to receive a percentage of those sales as long as the painting exists. Of course, that is something we need to be talking about here, as well.

Nonetheless, back to the copyright here at hand. Bill C-11 mirrors what was Bill C-32 in that we expressed some great reservations and the debate has gone around TPMs, or digital locks. I will get to that in just a moment.

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The reason I brought up artist resale rights, by the way, is because I received some input from people who say we are not talking about artists enough in this particular debate and a lot of it has to do with digital locks; albeit, important, but let us keep in mind here the impact on the artist.

My hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, talked about people involved in the movie industry, the seamstresses and the other occupations. However, my fundamental question to that would be, if these people wanted to make a better living, I do not know how digital locks are supposed to be the be all and end all for them to continue doing their trades for the rest of their lives.

Aline Côté is the chair of Association nationale des éditeurs de livres. She represents Quebec and French Canadian publishers. This is how she describes copyright, which I think is a very apt description:

In fact, nothing is simpler than copyright law: if you create something original outside an employment framework, it is yours exclusively; you can give it away, sell it, authorize a third party to sell it for you, etc. Copyright law simply acknowledges a creator's exclusive intellectual property on his work upon its creation. Since the initial work exists as a single entity (a manuscript or print-ready for books, a master copy in the case of movies or music, etc.), this exclusive ownership right gives the creator the right to authorize the reproduction of copies (copyright).

That being said, I want to return to the debate regarding TPMs.

• (1620)

We are talking about a bill that the government says is fair and balanced, but unfortunately some of it just does not add up or make sense. In some cases it is black or white, but there is no grey matter to deal with these situations, and the digital locks regarding the education exemption is a fine example. Here is what I mean by that.

An education exemption is in place for people who want to use materials mostly in a structured classroom, but even that now has had quite a bit of debate. How do we know what a structured education forum is? Does the bill go far enough to explain that? Is it a technical amendment that we have to look at? I believe that it is. If a corporation provides some training material internally, does that corporation have to be part of a collective? Can it get away from that now because it receives that exemption? That is not a proper educational structure within a corporation. It is certainly nothing akin to a post-secondary institution like a college or a university. That needs clarification.

Let us say one is within a legitimate education area, a school, a university or a college, and providing material free of charge under that exemption. What if that material is digitally locked? A right to fair dealing, a right that one would acquire under this legislation, is there but also in this legislation there is a digital lock. The two conflict.

Many countries have gone through this already, including New Zealand, Australia and now the United States of America, which also has exemptions for education but is also very strict on the idea of digital locks.

The government, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage in particular, have talked about having to live up to their obligations under the World Intellectual Properties Organization, or WIPO. Living up to those regulations may be excessive. New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America worked on ways to

provide certain exceptions to circumvent these locks for the sake of the education exemption. In other words, they found there was a problem and they fixed it by doing that.

In the copyright legislation there is also a provision that would allow someone to purchase music and share it among his or her devices, unless it is TPMed, or digitally locked. The individual has the right to use that music on personal devices, but if it is digitally locked, which would be allowed under this legislation and is being promoted, then the two conflict. Under fair dealings the individual would not have the right to that song.

My colleagues across the way look at the video gaming industry as a good example. A good example is the fact that I can understand completely, wholeheartedly, why digital locks work in that particular circumstance if they protect the business model they are in and they are correct. These digital locks will do that. The use of digital locks cannot be expanded from this one sector to all of the others.

This legislation has been done in haste. We have to look at it. I do not know that by accepting this in principle at second reading would give us the freedom to look at it even further.

Here is what we suggested in our amendment, which I think is right. It is a direct test to an exemption. There are two ways of looking at this. We could study exceptions to the rule that we have been talking about extensively. One is Canadian made from 2004, that is the CCH ruling as we normally call it. There are six steps involved there. The other step is more of an international standard which is the Berne Convention from TRIPS. That is called a three step test measure, and I will read it out, "The courts shall interpret any exceptions to copyright infringement or limitations on copyright in this act so as to restrict them to (1) certain special cases that do not conflict with the normal exploitation of the work, and (2) do not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the author number three". It is pretty profound when we think about it. If this material is provided to a school or a particular individual a three step test like this must be applied so that fair and equal balance is created.

• (1625)

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think members on both sides of the House would agree that copyright modernization is long overdue but this bill has some glaring problems. The most controversial and worrisome of all is the issue of digital locks. I have received hundreds of emails from across Canada, as well as hundreds of signatures on my online petition. If people google "digital lock freedom", they will find it.

Does the hon. member agree that the biggest problem of all in this legislation is digital locks, which will lead to huge abuses and possible jail time and huge fines?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I think he is right. I hope some of this is illustrated within the context of committee. Unfortunately, from what I understand, and I may be mistaken or at least I hope I am mistaken, the committee does not want to bring back anybody who was a witness during the last round when it was examining Bill C-32, which is a shame because all the new members in the House could have a good conversation about this.

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As to the TPM measures, we must keep in mind that, as we say in legislation in many cases, there is nothing new under the sun here. Many countries have dealt with this and by way of example we should look at them, like what the U.S., New Zealand and Australia did. My hon. colleague makes a valid point.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when *The West Wing*, which was a popular TV show, was filming its last episode, it came to my home town of Stouffville. A number of local businesses were able to participate in the show; from the baker who provided the food and snacks for the actors and crew to the people at the local hardware store who supplied generators to the production. All these people benefited from having a production like this in my home town of Stouffville.

I would suggest to members opposite that when this industry decides where it is going to make such important investments that create hundreds of thousands of jobs, it will look to jurisdictions that, along with their international partners, will actually protect the work it is creating. When I talk about people, like hairdressers, seamstresses and set designers, those are the people I am talking about.

Could the member confirm for me if he was on the select committee that studied Bill C-32? I think I am correct in suggesting that there were some 7 hours of debate in committee, 32 hours of witness testimony from 76 individuals and 153 individuals and organizations who submitted written submissions. This is actually the second time the member has spoken on this bill.

I am wondering how much debate is required before we send this bill to committee and continue to hear from some of the people who have not had the opportunity to speak. I also wonder if he could explain to the NDP the concept of *Hansard* whereby people can go back and review some of the testimony and comments made in previous discussions on both Bill C-32 and Bill C-11.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, once again, at the risk of infringing my own copyright, I would like to answer his question with the illustration of a point or perhaps revert back to a popular ad that was played. The number of submissions on Bill C-32, hundreds; the number of changes, zero; political lip service, priceless. Absolutely nothing was done to change it. What is the point of having all of this input, all with great amendments, I might add, when none of it was even looked at?

The member can sit there and pretend that he is listening all day. Some people build relationships on it. Nonetheless, I digress. Unfortunately, in this particular case I would suggest that he follow his own advice. He talked about *The West Wing* going to his town. As far as I am concerned, if he thinks that the production value is created by smaller communities such as mine or his and, if he is so concerned, he should worry about the artists who get the money directly to help ply their trade, not digital locks.

• (1630)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, Service Canada;

the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, Poverty; the hon. member for Etobicoke North, The Environment.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin speaking on the substance of Bill C-11, I would like to denounce the methods being systematically used by this government to limit debate. Once again, we are up against a motion that limits the time for debate on this bill. There have been too many to count. I do not know how many the government has moved, but it is becoming a habit. It has become a habit; this government's *modus operandi* is always to try to limit debate, as though there were some emergency, as though there were a fire, any time a bill is introduced on any subject.

In response to this, the government always says that it has a majority. To my knowledge, 40% of voters does not a majority make.

[English]

The government says that it has been given a strong mandate but this is not a strong mandate at all.

[Translation]

The government is using this strong-arm method, but it does not have a strong mandate. Since less than 40% of voters placed their trust in the Conservatives, they cannot use the argument that they have a strong mandate.

Once again, I am disappointed because we are again being forced to cut debate short and we will not be able to explore this properly. As many of my colleagues have pointed out, many of us are new here and would really like the opportunity to express our thoughts on these important issues. Indeed, the bills we are voting on today will have consequences. Many of my colleagues would like to have the opportunity to express their thoughts, without being systematically bullied by this government.

A number of things in Bill C-11 can be criticized. I would first like to talk about the thing that is probably most shocking to Canadians: making it an offence to remove a digital lock. The impression we get is that this government wants to put the entire population in prison; I do not know where we are going to put all the people being locked up. In the NDP, we say this government is disconnected from reality, disconnected from what Canadians see and what Canadians think in everyday life. Canadians do not understand why they want to put someone in prison for five years, when other crimes are much worse but are punished much less harshly. Putting sentences for digital manipulation on the same footing as assaults and crimes against the person makes no sense to the Canadians who watch us do our work as legislators every day.

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I am going to offer a more personal anecdote. Before I became a member of Parliament, I worked for Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada's legislation on the subject of the census said that a person could go to prison for not answering the census. This was quite an old provision. Canadians did not understand why failing to fill out a form could mean someone would go to prison just like a person who committed a crime against a person, who committed an assault on someone, or who caused damage to property. People could not understand it.

The fact that we are told someone can be imprisoned for a term of up to five years shows that the government is completely disconnected from reality. No one in Canada would understand how someone could be put in prison for five years for digital manipulation, when other people do not go to prison for crimes against a person. For myself, this is what I find most shocking when I read this bill. It tells me there is a complete failure to understand, a complete disconnect between the government, on its pedestal, which is all powerful and demonstrates every day that it uses and abuses those powers, and the people who are trying to live their lives, and sometimes just trying to survive, and cannot understand this double standard.

Another aspect is also a cause for concern, in my opinion. We have the impression that this government is targeting students. There is a provision in this bill that would require them to destroy course notes they have used after 30 days, when those notes should be part of the knowledge they have acquired. They should be able to retain them for later use in their profession or in higher education. This makes no sense.

•(1635)

We want a country that develops and flourishes due to the quality of its teaching—providing better education for its children—and yet, paradoxically, a clause has been included in this bill that will force students to destroy their class notes. As a result, they will not be able to take advantage of everything they have learned, which is valuable to them, and to all of us here. Indeed, we need the next generations to be better educated and more comfortable, in a professional sense, with new technologies. This is yet another example of the government not sharing the same approach. It is as if they were living in another world.

Something else shocked me. I have listened to a number of debates and discussions on this issue and get the sense that the government is being deliberately ambiguous, and engaging in verbal games with words like “creator” and “copyright owner”. Some of my colleagues made a very relevant observation earlier, and that is that creators are not necessarily—and not at all in many cases—the rights holders. In the debate on this bill, every member across aisle constantly talks about standing up for the rights of authors, but copyright is not always the property of the authors, rather it belongs to big companies or publishing houses which, in practice, are not the authors.

So there is this constant, insidious ambiguity, deliberate in my opinion, regarding creators—whom we wish to encourage, of course—and copyright owners. The latter are often, too often, big companies with sometimes outrageous profit margins, whose situation does not resemble that of a creator, that is, the person

who had the brainpower to generate the cultural product in the first place.

The NDP has consistently favoured a balanced approach to find the right balance between, on one hand, the rights of creators—not the copyright owners—to receive fair compensation for their work and their contribution to society in general, and, on the other hand, the right of the consumer to have access to culture at a reasonable price.

When considering the flaws in certain provisions in this bill, what automatically springs to mind is the issue of digital locks, which has in no way been resolved. In fact, as things currently stand in the bill, there could be situations where legal and legitimate copies are banned, despite the fact that it is perfectly legitimate to make the transfer from one format to another once the rights to a product have been purchased. Clearly the bill has not resolved this problem.

I will stop there and answer my colleagues' questions.

•(1640)

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech got me thinking.

If we are prohibiting copying and forcing people to destroy data, would it not make sense to think about destroying old bills that have already been introduced? This would mean less paper hanging around and would save power.

Mr. Tarik Brahma: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. He is funny, as usual. We always appreciate his sense of humour.

This seems to be something that we are seeing from this government: the willingness to destroy course notes that have been collected, created and used in a completely legal way. He was perhaps also referring to the fact that the government wants to destroy the data from the long gun registry, but I am not sure if that was the case. I imagine that it was. However, in the case of Bill C-11, we do not want to force students to destroy their course notes.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of members of the NDP started their speeches on a motion to limit debate as did he. That is one of the problems we have with this debate and so many debates in the House. There is no motion to limit debate on the floor right now. We are continuing debate. There will be an opportunity to bring motions forward at committee should we get this bill to committee.

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In the hon. member's home province I know the video gaming industry has actually taken off in the hon. member's home province. It is doing quite well and is very important to thousands of jobs in his province. Could he explain to the House how, in the absence of effective technical protection measures, that industry could continue to flourish in the province of Quebec? What suggestions might he have for continuing the investments in the film, TV and music industry in Quebec? He seems to be suggesting that we do not protect our creators or our artists and that those people who have worked so hard in so many industries in our country should not have their investments protected by a law that is in line with our international partners. How does he suggest we make those protections? If he can table for me the motion of closure, I would appreciate that as well.

• (1645)

[Translation]

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his comments.

Obviously we are not against the idea of protecting people, but we are against the adverse and unintended effects of digital locks. When a digital tool has more adverse and unintended effects than the original purpose for which it was created, we could end up preventing someone who legally acquired music rights from changing the platform or format. What we are against are the adverse effects of certain tools, which are not controlled and are not seen today.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member can help me. According to the Conference Board of Canada, there is an estimated 1.1 million jobs, 6% of the Canadian labour force, in Canada's arts and culture industry, generating some \$25 billion in taxes. It seems to me that people who have testified before, including the artists themselves, the creators, SOCAN, for example, representing artists and music publishers, et cetera, are all calling for some kind of a balance. Would the member not think that a government that believed in Canadian heritage and industries would actually try to achieve that in a bill, rather than going this other way?

[Translation]

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

It is indeed a Conference Board of Canada report from 2008 that supports these numbers in terms of how much money this brings in for Canada and in terms of culture. In this bill, we do not see any clear willingness by the government to recognize our creators. That is what we are denouncing today.

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, as far as democracy is concerned, things were certainly better in previous Parliaments. During the 41st Parliament, or at least until the holidays, there has been nothing but closure after closure and no debate. I do not know whether the cameras are rolling and whether people can watch us from home, but if they can, what they are seeing day after day is the Conservatives refusing to talk about legislation that is important for the public, people and small businesses. The Conservatives think that is just fine.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is now the fourth or fifth member of the NDP who has talked about closure on the bill. I wonder if you might clarify for the members of the NDP whether closure has been invoked on this bill?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, to provide some clarity, one could look at the definition of closure. Quite frankly, if the member is referring to the fact that the motion that has been moved prevents a person from being able to bring in another amendment, that is, in one sense, a form of closure. It is the way in which one might want to define closure.

The Conservatives might not be comfortable with it, but that is the reality of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): While I appreciate the intervention and the assistance from the hon. member for Winnipeg North, what has happened is the previous question has been moved. The meaning of that is there are no further amendments allowed to the bill before the House.

Time allocation or closure in the usual sense has not been moved. We are not debating time allocation or closure.

However, the member for Winnipeg North is correct in a broader definition. Limiting debate may be a better phrase to use rather than closure. We are debating the previous question, which means there will be no further amendments.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but if 61% of the population is not allowed to speak and propose amendments, and if the government refuses to debate, I have to wonder where democracy is in this 41st Parliament. We are supposed to have the right to propose amendments. This means debating and sharing ideas with the governing party—the Government of Canada, I should point out.

We have heard that the Copyright Act is very important for the market and that it is indispensable to cultural policy. Through clear, predictable and fair rules, it can promote creativity and innovation. There will be no innovation here if we are not able to propose any amendments, that is for sure.

Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, introduced by the Minister of Industry and member for Mégantic—L'Érable, will create years of confusion in the court system and in appeals courts, and will also delay the existing processes for recognizing certain contested copyrights.

It seems that, in this era of new technologies, creators' and inventors' copyrights are being violated more and more every day. These people, who often spend their entire lives creating, developing, composing and fine-tuning their work, will end up seeing their vital right violated. It is often vital for them, since this is sometimes referred to as giving birth. This is a lifelong process. All of this will simply be ignored because the government refuses to listen to 61% of the population when it comes to this bill.

The question here is: what is copyright? Copyright ensures that creators have the right to receive royalties, but fundamentally, it recognizes the property of the tangible or intangible heritage of a country or region, or even of the entire planet.

Since section 6 of Bill C-42 passed in 1985, copyright continues to apply for up to 50 years after the death of the creator. Many sovereign states have since decided to extend that time limit in order to better reflect reality and to recognize the contribution that these creators made to the heritage of their country. Copyright extends as long as 70 years in some countries, when the work is not declared part of the national heritage, in which case, the copyright is simply eternal. When we think of Beethoven or Mozart, clearly, some creations are eternal.

I would like to talk more about music. I have been working in the industry for 30 years. I have known some creators. I have known many young people, and many not so young, who have spent their lives practically starving because they never got the recognition and the royalties they really should have received.

These days, new communication and technical support technologies allow pirating to happen in many ways. This is especially true of music, but also of books and photographs. I do not think that the bill address this issue well enough. If the Conservatives would listen to these artists and creators a little more, they would understand what is at stake for these Canadians, the people of my country, Canada.

The penalties for copyright infringement are so inappropriate and so ridiculously biased that they completely miss the mark in terms of this legislation's objective, which is to protect real people who spend their entire lives creating, entrepreneurs who create jobs and generate revenue.

The copyright bill also does not define what is meant by "fair". This is a question of fact that must be decided based on the circumstances of the case. Lord Denning explained this in *Hubbard v. Vosper* in 1972 in an appeal court decision:

It is impossible to define what is 'fair dealing'. It must be a question of degree. You must consider first the number and extent of the quotations and extracts [whether they are music or print]. Are they altogether too many and too long to be fair? Then you must consider the use made of them. If they are used as a basis for comment, criticism or review, that may be a fair dealing. If they are used to convey the same information as the author, for a rival purpose, that may be unfair. Next, you must consider the proportions. To take long extracts and attach short comments may be unfair. But, short extracts and long comments may be fair. [It is always subjective]. Other considerations may come to mind also. But, after all is said and done, it must be a matter of impression. As with fair comment in the law of libel, so with fair dealing in the law of copyright. The tribunal of fact must decide.

● (1655)

Justice Linden of the Supreme Court of Canada, in *CCH Canadian Ltd. v. Law Society of Upper Canada*, set out factors to assess fair dealing as follows:

(i) The Purpose of the Dealing

In Canada, the purpose of the dealing will be fair if it is for one of the allowable purposes under the *Copyright Act*, namely research, private study, criticism, review or news reporting: see ss. 29, 29.1 and 29.2 of the *Copyright Act* [which will be affected by the reform]. As discussed, these allowable purposes should not be given a restrictive interpretation or this could result in the undue restriction of users' rights. This said, courts should attempt to make an objective assessment of the user/defendant's real purpose or motive in using the copyrighted work...Moreover, as the Court of Appeal explained, some dealings, even if for an allowable purpose, may be

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more or less fair than others; research done for commercial purposes may not be as fair as research done for charitable purposes.

We all agree on that. Let us continue with the ruling.

(ii) The Character of the Dealing

In assessing the character of a dealing, courts must examine how the works were dealt with...

(iii) The Amount of the Dealing

Both the amount of the dealing and importance of the work allegedly infringed should be considered...

(iv) Alternatives to the Dealing

...

(v) The Nature of the Work...

And I will finish with the following:

(vi) Effect of the Dealing on the Work

Finally, the effect of the dealing on the work is another factor [one of the most important and vital] warranting consideration when courts are determining whether a dealing is fair. If the reproduced work is likely to compete with the market of the original work, this may suggest that the dealing is not fair.

In this regard, I would like to point out that different types of "marketplaces" have been established in our society where counterfeit goods are commonplace and difficult to control. Even if the effect of the dealing on the market is an important factor, it is not the only nor the most important consideration when the time comes to complete the analysis of fair dealing.

The amendment proposed in clause 29 would extend copyright to education, parody and satyr. I hope that we will not bear witness to parody or satyr here today.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I go to questions and comments, I understand there are some difficulties with the lights that go along with the microphones. I have been told that the microphones are functioning, even though the lights may not be on. I can tell you that the light on my microphone is not on right now either.

If you are recognized by the chair, proceed as though your microphone is on and we will stop you if it is not.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague, and I was very interested that he laid out the six steps that were identified in the Supreme Court decision in the Upper Canada College court case that defined the principle of fair dealing.

One of the most contentious issues we have seen on the copyright bill involves, on the one hand, the desire of students and educators to be able to access works and, on the other, the concerns from the artistic community that fair dealing could open up a Pandora's box that would undermine the rights of artists.

The Supreme Court decision set out the six steps that clearly identified how fair dealing would be utilized so that it would not be open season. The decision made it clear that we could not just take a textbook and photocopy it as much as we wanted and that there had to be criteria to ensure that the rights of the students were balanced off against the legitimate rights of creators.

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I am concerned that the necessary level of balance is not seen in the bill. The bill does not go anywhere in defining fair dealing in terms of the rights under education that were defined by the Supreme Court.

It has been the position of the New Democratic Party that if we are to continue to maintain the sense of fair dealing and are going to put it in legislation, then we have to have it within the context defined by the Supreme Court so that people know the rules.

Would my hon. colleague tell us why he thinks the Conservative Party has failed to have this fundamental basic test of fairness put into this legislation?

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for that question.

I think it is a question of values. The Conservatives' values are not the same as the public's values. Creators have concerns that are different from the concerns of the big corporations, the concerns of all the people who control the publishing and reproduction industry.

I think creators' essential rights must be protected. They can make a real contribution to education and to sharing their works, because, to my mind, that is part of their property rights that must be recognized. It is all a question of values and judgment.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that artists find it difficult to survive. It may surprise the members of the House to hear, but the average income of an artist in Canada is \$12,900 per year. Obviously, it is difficult to survive on that. The bill wants to take millions of dollars in revenue away from artists.

I think we risk losing a lot of artists because they will be unable to survive. I would like to ask my colleague how he thinks this may affect Canadian content in the arts.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Mr. Speaker, we will see in the free trade talks whether that is part of a secret deal or agenda with the Pacific or Europe.

Canadian content is already not given enough protection in all our institutions, in radio and television broadcasting, and in the publishing and marketing of our products. If there is one right that is essential to Canadian artists and creators, it is that their products must be marketed properly so that they can be shared by as many people as possible, and so that creators can receive the royalties they are due. Perhaps then their average income would not be below the poverty line in Canada. I was in the music industry for 30 years and I have seen creators. There are hundreds of thousands of creators who deserve to be in the spotlight and to express themselves in front of an audience.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, clearly the laws governing intellectual property and copyright in Canada need to be modernized. Technology has changed over the past 50 years. Change is necessary, but the question is what kind of change. Change is all the more important in a world where trade is becoming increasingly globalized. Change is also important if Canada wants to protect itself and its creators from unfair competition with countries that have already modernized their laws. The reason why the

government is so motivated and eager to pass this bill is that it is currently in negotiations with Europe for a free trade agreement, and Europe has tougher laws that better protect its creators.

The principle of having a bill on intellectual property and copyright is, therefore, good. The NDP believes it is high time that copyright rules were modernized. The way this government is going about it, however, causes too many major problems. In some cases, the government is even creating problems where none existed before. We are attempting to amend the bill so that it is more in line with the best interests of Canadians, however the government does not even wish to consider any amendments.

What is important is protecting the creators and not the distributors of the works. That is what counts.

Let us spend a little time considering the principle of copyright. Copyright is a set of exclusive prerogatives that an author has over his or her original works. It is a legal, historical and social construct that has greatly changed since the invention of the printing press, and it is periodically called into question. It can basically be divided into two branches: moral rights, which recognize the author's authorship of the work and which also aim to ensure that the integrity of the work is respected, and proprietary rights, which confer a monopoly on economic use of the work for a specified period after which the work enters the public domain. As a branch of the law, copyright is one of the key elements of intellectual property and literary and artistic property.

Coming back to my point: the purpose of this right is to protect the creators and not the distributors of works. That is the mistake this government is making, and that is the problem with this bill.

Who is the creator of the work of art? Whether we are talking about a new computer game or a new novel, that is the question we need to be asking when we draft a bill like this one. We have to protect the production and the creation of the creators, the artists, the musicians and others. If we take the time to ask an artist—I wonder if the government did that—what one of their greatest challenges is, it is often having to deal with the major corporations to which they are obliged to sell their creations.

I oppose this bill because it protects the large corporations and does not set out to protect the authors or creators themselves. The vast majority of artists are local. They are poor and need help getting better compensation. The reality is that, once a work is created, sometimes the contract that is signed with the distributors does not allow the artists to earn a living.

• (1705)

[*English*]

A good example of this is the music of Bob Marley. Bob Marley had a terrible struggle with music companies, even to get enough food to feed his family. He had to invent writers for his songs to avoid his songs being published by companies which exploited his name and reputation for their own gain. Even today these companies continue to publish his catalogue without any recognition or compensation to the rightful owners of the corpus of his work, his very own family.

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[Translation]

We also need time to consider all the amendments that might be made to the bill in order to create a system of fair royalties for artists. As it stands at present, the bill eliminates several million dollars worth of income for artists. What is more, this bill grants a number of new privileges in terms of access to content, but does not provide any alternative method of remuneration for the artists. That will have a significant impact on our artists' ability to survive.

[English]

However, the government pretends that it is protecting creators, but it has yet to show how artists and other workers in creative industries would have a better living because of this bill. Bragging about the strong measures, including digital locks, does not miraculously make this a good piece of legislation.

Artists know that this is a bad bill. That is why over 80 arts and culture organizations across Quebec and nationwide argue that the bill would be toxic to Canada's digital economy. They warn that failure to amend the copyright modernization act to ensure fair compensation for Canadian content owners, not distributors, could only lead to a decline in the production of Canadian content and its dissemination domestically and abroad.

If that is not enough, let us consider the opinion of the Writers Guild of Canada on digital locks. According to the guild, the only option the bill offers to creators when it comes to digital locks is the freezing of current revenue streams for creators. It creates an illogical loophole in the copyright bill by taking away the very rights the bill grants to consumers in its other sections.

If that is not enough, let us consider the opinion of the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, SOCAN. SOCAN believes that copyright law amendments should facilitate access to creative content on new media and ensure that creators are fairly compensated for the use of their creative content on new media.

Access must go hand in hand with compensation. Without this balance, the creation of creative content would eventually decrease as Canadian creators would be unable to make a living and compete with other countries worldwide.

The government has said it is giving rights holders the tools they need in order to develop products, market them and get paid for them, that this bill is about protecting creators from piracy, but artists themselves disagree. The government's sloppy legislation forgets that copyright covers a very wide range of artistic media using cutting-edge technology to create art.

Digital locks may work for software, but they are a restrictive and unpopular option when it comes to entertainment and artistic content, and are likely to be selected against in the open market as they were with music. Digital locks are neither forward looking nor in consumers' or creators' best interests.

I would also note that this is the first time I have spoken to this piece of legislation. There are artists in my riding. If I had not had a chance to speak to this bill, it would have been very unfortunate for them, for my chair is not my chair, but the chair of the people who elected me.

● (1710)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how lucky we are that this gentleman had an opportunity to talk about this bill in the House. A number of members of the NDP and the Liberal Party have also had an opportunity to speak to it. It has been before the House for many years. There have been hundreds of hours of debate on it. We have heard from a lot of witnesses. I was very pleased to hear in the member's speech that the NDP is starting to come on side, because earlier they were saying that there would be no more amendments, that the debate was finished. The hon. member has clearly stated that, in his words, they will attempt to amend the bill, so they will be bringing amendments forward. We anxiously anticipate that.

In 2009 in Quebec, I think there were some 107 films worth hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity. He referenced the video gaming industry as well. I keep asking every single member of the NDP the same question without getting an answer. How would the members of the NDP protect the hundreds of thousands of jobs in the Quebec video gaming industry and in the movie and television industries in that province if they refuse to absolutely protect the creators of these works? This represents hundreds of thousands of jobs. That is what this bill would do. That is what the creators are asking us to do. If we want to continue investments in these valuable industries, we need to protect them.

I am wondering if the member will work with us to get this bill to committee and let us see the amendments that the hon. gentleman has talked about.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, there were a number of points in that question and I will try to address them separately.

First, it does not matter to me how many members spoke to this bill before. What matters to me is whether I was able to speak to this bill for the people of my riding. That is what is essential.

With respect to the second point, I was speaking in the past. We would have liked to amend this bill.

Third, it is hard to follow the member's rambling question, but I think he talked about protecting workers. It is an ironic question because on this side of the House we have no problems speaking up for workers, as opposed to members on that side of the House who spend their time trying to destroy collective bargaining rights.

● (1715)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question for my colleague, which follows from what we heard about protecting jobs.

Government Orders

If I am following the debate, it seems to me that Bill C-11 is kind of like an inverted pyramid, in which the rights of everyone would be recognized, but everyone else's rights are placed above creators' rights, which are at the bottom of the inverted pyramid. If we want to maintain and even emancipate all the jobs in the industry, the bill must primarily protect creators' rights. Without creation, there is nothing.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my hon. colleague and I thank him for his question. First, creators in Canada are saying that they are against this bill. There are measures in this bill that supposedly and ideologically target creators and artists, but all they do is strengthen rights for big corporations in this country.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member have any specific recommendations as to how we would protect the over 107 films that were created in Quebec in 2009 at close to \$200 million of economic activity? Does he have any specific suggestions how we would protect the 14,000 jobs in the video gaming industry as a result of the NDP's position to absolutely forget about protection for creators? How would the NDP actually do that? We have not heard that yet.

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat: Mr. Speaker, asking a question that has nothing to do with what I spoke about is not a question. I will ask the member again what the government is doing here to protect the large majority of artists in our country who are not earning a living.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the parliamentary secretary constantly asks questions in regard to the amount of debate time this issue has had before the chamber. Therefore, I want to start off by making a statement that the bill before us has been introduced on two separate occasions. Most recent, there has been some limited debate, but not as many hours as the parliamentary secretary tries to give the impression of.

The parliamentary secretary needs to understand why the opposition is somewhat skeptical. The government tries to give the impression that it is open to listening to what the public and members of the opposition have to say.

Bill C-10 was the bill that would increase the number of jails, build bigger jails and so forth. The member for Mount Royal had very good amendments that he brought forward in committee on behalf of the Liberal Party and the government voted all of them down. However, after doing that, when we came back to report stage, the government recognized that there were some serious flaws with its legislation.

The government attempted to bring in those amendments, but found it could not because the opportunity was lost. All the government had to do was just listen to the member for Mount Royal and we would not have had the issue that evolved. However, the government was determined to push through its legislation completely unamended.

I will fast forward to what we have today. We have yet another piece of legislation in which a great deal of concern has been

expressed. The government's only response is that the opposition has had so much time to debate this issue, that the public has already made presentations in the last session and expressed concerns.

However, the government turned a deaf ear to everything that was being said. It is not as if the government listened and took action on those issues that were brought forward. Now the government says that it is in a bit of a hurry to pass the bill.

The minister is not as powerful as other ministers who have been able to get time allocation on their bills. This minister had to settle for moving a motion that would prevent any other amendment being brought forward. This is the time to bring amendments to make this a better bill. Imagine if that would have been allowed on Bill C-10, the government could have averted that mess.

The point is we have a bill that we are trying to debate. The minister was not able to get time allocation argued with his House leader, but he settled for a motion to have no more amendments brought forward on the bill. However, there is one outstanding issue that has been raised by a number of different speakers. One would think the government would have come up with some sort of creative way to try to appease or deal with the concerns that members of this chamber have, and it is not just members of the chamber who are concerned. I would suggest the viewing audience and other Canadians should be concerned about the bill and the digital locks.

We can all relate to going to a store to buy either an eight track, cassette or even a record in our younger years. I will reflect a little on my past. I would buy a couple of records, take the songs that I liked and put them onto a blank cassette. I believed that since I had purchased the records, I had the right to copy the song onto a cassette for my personal use.

• (1720)

I do not believe I was alone. I believe there were hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Canadians who recognized that they should be able to do that since they legitimately purchased a record. They may not enjoy every song on a record, maybe two or three, and they would copy those songs onto a blank cassette so they could pop it into their CD players in their vehicles or whatever else to listen to the music. There was absolutely nothing wrong with that. I think most people would see that as the thing to do and there should be no consequence for doing it.

Let us look at today when we have CDs. CDs are not cheap, per se. I will provide some comment on artists, but we value their contributions in making those masterpieces, in this case music. Consumers should be able to copy songs from a CD onto a shuffle or some other form of MP3 player. If I go to the store later today and buy a CD for my daughter for Christmas, she should be able to copy her favourite songs onto the numerous gadgets she has so she can listen to them.

I do not believe there is anything within Bill C-11 that would ensure she could do that because of the way in which the government seems to be locked in on the need for digital locks and the impact they will have on the average consumer. The example I gave is a very real, tangible example that Canadians will do every day. I am not talking a few people; I am talking thousands. That is one of the issues that has been talked about a lot, yet we do not see it.

Government Orders

We recognize local artists. The Liberal Party of Canada has recognized the contributions that local artists make. They create jobs, generate economic activity, build on our heritage and culture and identify who we are in good part. I participate, as I am sure others do, in all sorts of local festivities, things like Folklorama in Winnipeg. If members have never been, I would encourage them to participate in it.

There are many different cultures that local artists and they will often have their own CDs. Artists attend fundraising events to promote themselves and encourage others. After giving concerts of sorts, they will sign their CDs because they are trying to promote themselves. The average artist does not make that much money. We recognize how important it is to support artists and we will continue to advocate for them. We would look to the government to recognize that.

The government would do well if it was not in such a hurry. I know the parliamentary secretary takes exception when I say it is in a hurry because he feels there has been plenty of time on the issue. I beg to differ. If the government is not prepared to listen and start understanding why we are appealing to the government to do the right thing, it is doing a disservice. I understand there is no time allocation motion on this, but I recognize it as a form of closure because we can no longer move amendments.

• (1725)

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's comments and to all the comments today with great interest because this is an important issue for me personally as well as for many artists in our country.

With respect to the bill, it strikes me that the government has listened to many people from large multinational media corporations and perhaps has not listened enough to the voices of artists. The government consistently likes to talk, for example, to those in the tar sands without talking to environmentalists, or talk to big media conglomerates without talking to artists. I see a trend emerging and I wonder if my colleague sees the same trend.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of concern on the part of the people who view the proceedings here and witness first-hand what is going on, not only on this bill but with other pieces of legislation that comes before us.

The government does seem to have a big company mentality where it forgets about the little guy. In this case, I am not convinced that the government is protecting the best interests of the consumer, the average person, who purchases a CD and wants to store it on a shuffle or some other mechanism. I am not convinced it is listening to what the local artists have to say. Smaller, local artists, the ones who perform at many different festivals and so forth throughout the country, are the ones we should be most concerned about. I am afraid they are not a concern of the government.

• (1730)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like our friends in the NDP, that member is also starting to change his position a bit. Now he is talking about continuing debate and hearing from people.

The member spoke about who we actually talked to and from whom we received information. My office received hundreds of

emails. We have met with a lot of people. The largest entertainment labour union in the world, representing 110,000 in the stage, motion picture and television production industry, supports the bill. Over 14,000 people in the video gaming industry support the bill. Across Canada, 25 university student associations support the bill. Approximately 300 of Canada's business associations and boards of trade support the bill.

The movie industry is important to Manitoba's economy. It did suffer a dip, but it is starting to recover.

What solutions does the hon. member have for that? Could he identify one music CD that has a lock on it that he is unable to transfer to his iPod?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the support he had received for the legislation. In part, the legislation does have some merits, but a vast majority of Canadians have shared some overriding concerns with me and other members of the opposition and these need to be addressed.

I made reference to the digital locks, and the member challenged me to list a CD. I suspect that if I contacted my daughter, she might be able to help me out on that issue.

The point is it would have taken a little more courage by the minister to have stood in his place and provided assurances that the legislation would not impact consumers. That is the problem with the legislation. The minister cannot stand in this place and tell 30 million plus consumers that they have nothing to fear in terms of digital locks. The parliamentary secretary is not confident enough in the government's position to provide that guarantee to the Canadian consumer.

I will jump up and defend the Canadian consumer over the selected few individuals or groups that the parliamentary secretary has referenced. I wait for the parliamentary secretary to provide that assurance.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-11. In many ways, this bill and its predecessors are part of the reason I am here today. In 2006, I came to Ottawa as an artist to discuss copyright with the then heritage minister and the then industry minister. I came with a couple of other artists, Brendan Canning from the Broken Social Scene and Steven Page from the Barenaked Ladies. We came to talk to the government about what it was like to be a working musician and why we did not think suing fans was such a good idea.

One of the interesting things that came out of those meetings was that people were surprised that we did not want to sue everybody. That was the kind of thing the government had been hearing time and time again from those who had its ear, and those who had its ear were then, in 2006, and today, in 2011, the multinational media companies.

Government Orders

It is important to underline the fact that those companies, which employ many people and many of the people they employ are friends of mine and I, therefore, want to see a healthy and vibrant music business, but those companies do not speak for artists. They speak for the shareholders of multinational corporations. Their sole interest is in their bottom line, which is not necessarily the same as the bottom line of artists. It is also not necessarily the same bottom line that consumers have.

For example, we have many people in the arts and culture sector who look at the multinational corporations that, let us be honest, own most of the content that we are talking about here, and they have had historical struggles with these large entities.

One of the things about Bill C-11 and copyright generally is that there is an opportunity here to right some of the historical imbalances that we all know only too well. The musicians who barely eke by while the owners of their content makes millions upon millions. We hear those stories all the time. It has been noted that the music industry, like many of the creative fields, is a great place to get rich if one is lucky but a lousy place to make a living.

The copyright reform that we are talking about today is an opportunity to right some of that but this bill misses that opportunity by a mile. In fact, like the government on so many other occasions in this House, it likes to play politics. It likes to divide, rule, separate, hive off different groups and try to get them to bicker with other groups in its own effort to ram through legislation.

It is heartening to hear that the government is changing its tune about listening to the opposition around amendments. As we know, over the last several months in this House the government has not been interested in hearing anything from the opposition. In fact, when we have good ideas, it just rejects them. Occasionally, at the 11th hour it realizes there are some good ideas and that it had better rush them into bills only to discover that it cannot because it is too late. It is nice to hear that around Bill C-11 there is a willingness to listen.

One of the big issues for us on this side of the House is that artists get paid. I think Canadian society would agree that it is in our interest as a society to see a healthy, vibrant arts and culture sector.

● (1735)

However, when we have artists making below poverty wages to create the content that makes this country the rich and joyous place that it can sometimes be, it is incumbent on us in this place to look at ways in which we can foster a vibrant arts and culture sector so that more of the wealth that is created in this sector ends up trickling into the pockets of artists.

Forty-six billion dollars of Canada's GDP were created in the arts and culture sector in 2007. Twenty-five billion dollars in taxes for all levels of government in 2007 on an investment of \$7.9 billion is pretty good. There are 600,000 workers in the sector, 4% of the Canadian workforce. This is perhaps my most favourite stat of all: Canadians spent twice as much on live performing arts in 2008 than they did on sports events. That is one stat that I particularly enjoy saying as often as possible.

The reason I am mentioning these statistics is that the arts and culture sector is a major driver of the Canadian economy, which is

partially why this bill is so important and also why we need to take a serious look at the bill because for artists this bill falls short. It falls short for consumers on a number of levels, too, and for businesses as well. There are many ways in which the bill needs to be looked at.

However, I will just step back for a second. When I first came to Ottawa in 2006 as an artist to talk about this bill, I was shocked by what I heard. I heard that the government had no ideas, other than to lock down content and sue consumers. The government asked if we had any better ideas. Since 2006, I think there have been a lot of good ideas but very few of them are reflected in the bill that we see before us.

I come from the music sector. I am a songwriter, composer and producer. Copyright is something that I rely on. It is something that has helped me make a living in this country as an artist, which is something I am very proud of.

We have an opportunity to make this bill a fairer, more balanced playing field for artists. One of the particular pieces of the bill that makes absolutely no sense to us is the broadcast mechanical. Why would the government take \$20 million from broadcasters who are making a \$2.5 billion a year business here in Canada? Why would it just pluck that out and let it go?

We in our party are against that and we will be tabling amendments at committee that will seek to change that part of the bill because we do not want to see artists not get paid. In fact, the bill takes us a step backward in terms of compensation for artists, instead of looking at the myriad of possibilities that the digital era presents for us in the arts and culture sector.

● (1740)

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. member on our side, who is a talented musician and an eloquent member of Parliament, is specific and broad at the same time. It is about digital locks.

It seems to me, from listening to him and others, that digital locks are bad for consumers because they prevent Canadians from having full access to digital content that they purchased. It seems that they are bad for artistic creativity and bad for innovation. It seems that they are bad for education because they may make criminals out of instructors who access content for educational purposes. Do I have it about right and, if I am wrong, could he correct me?

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that the bill does not really address and one of the opportunities it misses is the idea of blanket licences. I come from a sector where we licence songs through a collective and those songs, whenever and wherever they are played, a portion of a revenue stream comes back to the creators of that content. The problem with digital locks is that they lock up the potential for further revenue streams for artists. Digital locks also do not provide the protection for content creators and owners because, as we have seen happen in the music industry, those locks can be circumvented. This is why the digital lock provision is troubling for us in our party.

Government Orders

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that this is the second time the member has had the opportunity to speak to the bill. Far from limiting debate, this is offering more opportunity for him to do that. He has also mentioned that he is prepared to bring forward some amendments.

We also heard the member from Thunder Bay talk about criminalizing Canadians. I wonder if the hon. member might point out the section of the bill that would actually criminalize Canadians.

He also talked about the minister not having the opportunity to speak to artists. I was in the parliamentary dining room today when the hon. member came by my table where I was with the minister and Jim Cuddy who is doing a great concert for us tonight. The minister was there. I am not sure if Mr. Cuddy merits being a Canadian artist.

The member also talked about having had the opportunity to be here before he was elected to this place to talk about copyright. We have been at this a long time. As a member from Toronto, how could he possibly promote anything that would kill hundreds of thousands of jobs in the movie sector in that great city?

• (1745)

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, once again we have the laundry list of questions from the parliamentary secretary. Absolutely, Jim Cuddy is one of our great Canadian artists.

The problem we have here is that the balance with the government is never right. We have a parade of the captains of global industry who do not even need to knock on the door of the government. They get the red carpet every time they drive up to Ottawa.

The problem is that we do not hear enough voices from those who actually make their living on the ground in the arts and culture sector being able to speak to the government. Our job on this side of the House is to ensure we have an engaged debate on Bill C-11. It is also important that we bring some new ideas into this bill and, hopefully, the government will listen.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talked about bringing forward amendments. The Conservatives' record on supporting amendments is about the same as the Indianapolis Colts' record this year in the NFL, which is zero.

The opposition parties understand that there needs to be a change in the legislation, that there needs to be a change in the rules and that we need to adapt to the technology. The rules have not kept up with the technology.

What we and my NDP colleague are trying to say is that this restricts the creative community. It restricts those who make the product, the Shania Twains, the Bryan Adams, the Tragically Hips, or pick a Canadian artist. It is those people who create the product who will be handcuffed by this particular legislation.

I would like the hon. member's comments on that.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, the issue here is that if digital locks worked and if the downloading of music were the sole issue that was troubling the music industry, then maybe we would have a

conversation here. However, they do not work and there are many issues troubling the industry.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in this great House once again to represent the people of Timmins—James Bay. It is a great privilege to come on stage right after the hon. member for Davenport. It seems I have been doing that ever since we were 16, having to go on stage with him at Larry's Hideaway and The Edge and all the other places that we played across Canada, and learning very early on that the money artists rely on, the money that comes back in payment, is so little.

Artists live on pennies. It is the accumulation of pennies. That is the fundamental principle of copyright. If we take those pennies away, the ability of artists to maintain careers evaporates.

When the government strikes \$20 million that goes directly to artists out of the bill and thinks it is no big deal because the Conservatives' buddies in the big broadcast centres want a better break, the government is not providing any industrial advantage, but it is making it impossible for some artists to continue. Year after year, many artists have to sit down. My colleague and I worked with many great Canadian artists who, after a while, simply could not make it. They count on those pennies coming in to offset the incredible investment they must make as artists; when those revenue streams are not there in sufficient number, or if they are ripped off and are unable to see a balance, then Canadian content is affected.

The debate on copyright has been excellent for Canada and for Parliament. I was here in 2004, when the understanding of copyright was to pass the bill really fast and get it done. There have probably been some advantages, because we now have a House where we can discuss the implications of technological protection measures, and it is important to discuss these kinds of things.

When we pass elements in this House, for example, on technological protection measures, they will have implications. In some areas those implications will be positive. In other areas there will be implications that will be extremely negative. That is the fundamental balance of copyright. To simply say it is one or the other, that it is a black or white world, does not work in the realm of copyright. It never has.

If we go back to the copyright debates that happened in France, England, the United States in the 1700s and the 1800s, the issue was that necessity to find balance between the public good and the private right.

The private right is defined by two basic players. One is the author and the other is the publisher. They are not necessarily the same creator. Who has the right to make a copy? That is the fundamental principle of copyright. Who has the ability to access that artistic work, and how long should the control over it last in order to maintain a public good?

The work is not a piece of property. This fact has been defined in Parliament and has been defined in law. An artistic work is an idea that is put into the public realm. It exists for a period of time during which someone is able to receive exclusive compensation for that work and has that exclusive right, but after a certain time that idea belongs to the larger community, which will base future artistic works on it. That is the balancing act.

Government Orders

In reforming copyright, it is essential for Canada to upgrade its copyright regimentation in 2011. We have a national obligation, because one of our greatest exports—maybe our greatest export, above our oil, gas and gold—is our international artistic reputation. We have produced great artists internationally, so we have a national priority in maintaining that reputation.

There is an industrial component, of course, because we do not simply want to see goods being knocked off, ripped off and traded off. If we put an intellectual investment into a product, we have a right to a response.

There is also the creative community. We have been speaking about it a great deal in the New Democratic caucus, because we believe the fundamental principle of copyright is that our artists should get paid. When we look at artistic copyright legislation that takes away rights that previously existed, we have a problem with it.

It does not mean that the New Democratic Party will say it is against copyright. No. New Democrats support copyright, and we want to make sure that the artist has a right to get paid. However, the other essential element of copyright is the public good, and this is where we will sometimes butt heads with the industrial component.

We have created an incredible digital commons. In terms of the ability of people around the world to communicate and exchange ideas and create on a base of older works, there has been nothing like it in the history of civilization. It has certainly created havoc with older business models.

● (1750)

The other day I was in a record store. I was talking to the owner of the record store about all these young kids who are coming in and asking about Sun Ra and Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Gene Vincent, artists we would never have heard of when we were younger. We did not know these artists even existed, but because of YouTube and the Internet, there is so much more potential. That digital commons must be protected.

Within that digital commons there are obviously some major issues in terms of people trading off works. We have Pirate Bays, where entire works are available and people are not paid for them, but the issue is to not simply lock down content overall. We do not simply let industry decide what rights artists have; we bring it to Parliament. Within Parliament, we decide what rights a citizen should be able to have.

For example, a citizen should be able to have the right to extract, under a digital lock, work for study or for commentary. Anybody in the documentary film industry will tell us they need to be able to extract excerpts from films because they are making commentary on it. That right is defined by Parliament. We have all agreed to that right.

However, a digital lock would simply override that right. The right given in Parliament might not be the right given by the industry. That is not insurmountable, but it is certainly problematic.

We need to define, as most of our European counterparts have done on the digital lock provisions, that it is the right of an industrial organization to put a digital lock in place to protect their product from being ripped off.

This is what we would say. The gaming industry has made enormous investments, and digital locks are essential for that business model. However, if a student breaks a digital lock because he or she cannot see or is partly blind and has to break the digital lock to access the work on a Kindle, that student is not the same as someone who breaks a digital lock to rip off video games.

That was defined in the WIPO convention. It was very clearly articulated that in our international obligations we have to protect the intellectual property but that we can also define legal exemptions within Parliament or within a federal government.

That is the issue on the digital locks; the issue is not to say that digital locks are good or digital locks are bad, but that we need to define the exemptions, just as we have to find out why certain areas of important revenue streams that artists have relied on are being erased. We do not support erasing artists' rights that they have exerted.

In terms of education, there is so much potential in the digital realm. We have an ability to transform a nation as spread out as ours in doing education or library loans. We had never even been able to contemplate these capabilities before.

The problem is that within this bill there are provisions that have to be fixed. Again, it is not that this bill is going to be black or white, but things have to be fixed. For example, a student in Fort Albany who is taking long distance courses and getting course notes over the Internet would be told that after 30 days, that piece of paper would have to be burned up or disappear. However, a student going to Collège Boréal or Northern College in Timmins would be given the paper notes and would get to keep those notes. There cannot be two sets of rights, one in the analog paper world and a lesser set in the digital realm.

We need to clarify that. We have asked many times whether the government would work with us to amend the act, because we are committed to reforming Canada's copyright legislation. At least since I have been here, the position of the New Democratic Party has been that we want copyright to move forward; however, we must amend this bill, because if we do not amend it, there will be many perhaps unintended consequences, and we have seen where those consequences will be.

We are telling the government that if it expects support to get this legislation through, it should show willingness to sit down and go through the problems. There are problems with this bill. There will be problems with any copyright bill.

It is about restoring that sense of balance. We have not seen that yet. That is the fundamental principle of copyright. We will remain committed to the principle of a balanced legislative framework.

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, different groups of artists have different needs. The needs of consumers and creators are also different, and heaven knows that this bill is far from perfect. I would like my colleague to speak a bit more about the amendments that are required and that should be made to this bill, even though we know that they will probably be rejected.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, wherever the bill has erased the rights of artists to be paid, we want those artists' rights to be restored. That is fundamental. We want clarification on the digital locks language. The issue of distance learning has to be amended so it is reasonable.

As we spoke about earlier, the other element is the issue of the fair dealing provisions, particularly in relation to education. The Supreme Court has given a very clear six-step test to clarify what fair dealing is and what it is not. Anybody who has ever dealt with education will know that the fair dealing provisions are perhaps the most explosive. We would like to clarify fair dealing in education and how it conforms, under this legislation, to the Supreme Court test. Many of the artists' groups and many of the education groups may feel a little better, but unless the government is willing to make some of those changes in language, there are going to be problems.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. gentleman because this is, I believe, the third time he has had the opportunity to speak to this bill. That is over an hour of time in this House for him alone on this bill, and I am still waiting for some suggestions with respect to how he and the NDP members opposite would help to preserve and protect the thousands of jobs in the video gaming, movie, TV and video industries, not only in Toronto but across this country. We know it is worth billions of dollars in economic activity. We know we have to protect those jobs. If we expect people to continue to invest in this country, we know we have to update our laws so that they reflect the same laws as our international partners.

Because I have not heard it in the over 60 minutes of discussion we have had so far, I wonder if the member could outline some of the changes that he anticipates would help preserve and protect the hundreds of thousands of jobs and the billions of dollars of investment that are relying on an update to our copyright legislation.

• (1800)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I will send the hon. member the *Hansard*, because I think I just spoke to that point. However, if he wants to know what the changes would be, what we would do is bring ourselves in line with our WIPO-compliant partners in terms of article 10 of the WIPO treaty. That is where the New Democratic Party stands on the issue of digital locks.

Earlier the member said he had never heard of an example of a musical CD that had a digital lock. Maybe he is not aware of it, but he could look up the Sony rootkit. Sony put out CDs that had spyware in them so that it could spy on consumers to find out what they were doing with the music. That spyware actually destroyed entire computer systems. Kids bought a CD to listen to some music, and the corporate digital lock destroyed their computer systems. Sony later said, "Sorry; we didn't mean it", but that is not good enough. We think that when consumers buy a product, they should be able to play the music and back it up without having to worry that the computer is going to be destroyed because of a digital lock that was placed on their musical device.

[Translation]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the head of the Union des écrivaines et des écrivains québécois, Francis Farley-Chevrier, believes that the new bill socially devalues the work of authors. He said the following:

The Copyright Act encourages those who have chosen this profession by providing them with an income. If we discard this system, we take away recognition. It is not just a question of money. It is a question of placing a value on the work we do.

What does my colleague think of that?

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, as an example, back in the music days of my colleague from Davenport, cable television never paid royalties to musicians because they said that if musicians had a video on cable TV, it was promoting them and they should have their video on there for free. Musicians were expected to pay \$30,000, \$40,000 or \$50,000 for a video, and they never received payment for it. It was not just that they were being ripped off for the money; when they turned on the television and saw their video, they realized they were making money for somebody else and not seeing a dime for it. That was not right, so at that time SOCAN, the artists' rights organization, fought the broadcast industry for years to get a settlement.

It is a fundamental principle that if people create a work and that work is exploited, they should be paid. That is a fundamental principle. If they create a work and nobody buys it, then they can sing it to their family and the family might like the song; however, if it has a commercial value, the creator has a right to be compensated. That is the principle of justice to the creative community.

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the bill once more because there are some very important points that we must discuss. I am very pleased that we have more time for this discussion. It is very difficult to follow a colleague such as the member for Timmins—James Bay, who is so well versed in this matter. He spoke eloquently about a number of points, but I will nevertheless continue to talk about education.

Before saying anything about all this, I want to repeat what has been said many times by my colleagues. It is extremely important to remember that, contrary to what some members opposite have said, this bill is not necessarily black and white. What we are saying is simple but copyright, especially in the digital age and with all the technological changes that have taken place in recent years, is a complex issue.

Government Orders

It is understandable that some questions are more difficult to address, particularly if, like the NDP, you advocate a fair balance between protection of users and the rights of creators. This is the first very important point to stress, and it has been stressed many times already, but it merits repetition. As my colleague said so well, when we talk about the products we export, in Canada and Quebec, culture is a very significant product. It is one of our resources, one of our assets. According to Statistics Canada, in a research report from Laval University, in Quebec alone, cultural production amounted to \$9.8 billion, an enormous figure. It is 4.1% of Quebec's GDP. That was in April 2010, and the figures may have changed a little, but clearly this is a very important resource. We strongly agree that it is a resource that must be protected and developed in a way that is fair to everyone, and creators must be remunerated.

On the question of fairness, I want to address the education issue. The last time I had an opportunity to speak to this bill, the hon. parliamentary secretary told me we were scaring students by telling them they were going to have to burn their notes. And yet the first time I heard the words "book burning policy" they did not come from an NDP member or someone trying to scare anyone. They actually came from members of the Fédération québécoise des professeurs et professeuses d'université. Those people who work in education came to see myself and other colleagues of mine to convey their concerns to us and tell us that this aspect of the bill was problematic. It is very important to point this out. We are not trying to create a false context around the bill; rather, we are trying to convey the concerns expressed by people in the field. I think it is very important to point that out.

The other aspect I would like to address is the famous term "fair dealing", which is called "fair use" in the United States. This is a point well worth raising, because the members opposite often say that we want to treat ordinary people like criminals, and so on. And yet that is exactly what they seem to be advocating here. This aspect is missing from Bill C-11, but it exists in the example of our neighbours to the south, in the United States Copyright Act.

•(1805)

There really are specific provisions that limit, for instance, the legal recourse that can be taken against people in certain situations. I am referring to librarians or people who use library services, which are offered to the public, services that, ideally, are funded either partially or fully by governments. Libraries enrich our society considerably. I am convinced that no creator would oppose that and, to my knowledge, none has ever opposed it. This also refers to students and educational uses, to teachers, instructors and so on.

I think those kinds of provisions need to be examined. We heard earlier about the kinds of concrete measures we would be willing to propose. This is just such a measure. We have talked about clauses that would allow for compromise. Once again, without rambling on too much and repeating the excellent points my colleague made, if we compare this to video games, which are at the very heart of this technological revolution in terms of creation in the 21st century, such measures already exist in that field. Some computer games already have provisions in place to prevent pirating: they have digital locks. What is different here is that we fully support these measures—except that what we propose is that the bill provide some degree of protection to someone who is going to use the creation honestly for

educational purposes and not punish an honest citizen who uses these creations. This use is not only honest, but it enriches everyone. This use contributes, quite often, to our society and our culture. I think that is exactly the same principle as the American legislation. We are proposing a very practical measure.

I would also like to come back to the issue of fair dealing. It is easy to say that there is a fair dealing clause on education in the bill, but the problem is that there are other clauses and other aspects of the bill that cancel out the fair dealing. Think of the course notes that have to be destroyed, the documents from libraries and inter-library loan materials that have to be destroyed. This is extremely problematic. I mentioned this earlier. I studied in Montreal where there are several universities. There is a great wealth of material in the community. There are anglophone universities and francophone universities. Often, a great way of creating ties between the universities and between the students who attend the different universities is the ability, as a student enrolled in one university, to take advantage of loans from the other universities, digital loans or physical loans. I think that is the type of right that should be protected. It is such a great tool and it is extremely useful. We know very well that not every university has the same specialties and the same expertise. I think it is extremely important to benefit from that.

I will close simply by saying, once again, that we are proposing very concrete measures. We want measures in place to protect honest users, but at the same time, we absolutely are in favour of protecting the creators. We simply want to find a fair balance. It is not black and white. It is truly a very complex issue. We are aware of that. That is why we are calling on the government members to work with us on finding a fair solution that will satisfy everyone and contribute to the wealth of our society.

•(1810)

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the excellent dissertation my colleague gave because of his expertise in knowing what it is like at the university level in a digital realm.

The questions about the digital lock provisions for university interlibrary loans are essential. As the member said, various places across the country have various expertise in learning. Some are very large institutions, but some are very small. However, the bill would oblige these institutions to have digital locks in place.

Government Orders

Does my hon. colleague think that the bill would impede learning and put unnecessary restrictions on the ability of an education institution to maintain that? Also, with the digital lock provisions, would universities and education institutions that are very risk adverse back off on a number of areas of development altogether?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, this bill would certainly impede learning. I can even give a concrete example in support of what my colleague and I mentioned earlier. I studied at McGill University, which has students from outside Quebec and even outside Canada in some cases. These students often take a Quebec politics course. Some excellent work has been done at francophone universities like Université de Montréal or Université du Québec à Montréal. Preventing these students from participating not only impedes their education, but it also prevents them from participating in the culture and society that they came to immerse themselves in as students at these universities. So that is a huge problem.

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on his second speech on the copyright legislation. He is, of course, availing himself of the extraordinary opportunities we have in the House to debate in the spirit of openness that this government has brought not only to this bill but various pieces of legislation in the House.

I have a quick question. I know we are unlikely to get an answer on anything to do with jobs and the economy, but I wonder if he has contemplated what impact this will have on jobs and the economy in his province if we do not update our copyright legislation. Does he join with me in being frightened that we might lose hundreds of thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in investments if we follow the approach of the opposition; that is, delay and frustrate this legislation and not do anything to protect the creators of digital content?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I think it is the complete opposite. We are very aware that there are a lot of jobs in this industry. Most artists are not rolling in cash. There are also the people who support them, such as producers, camera operators or other industry workers. That is exactly what we are saying. We want to protect these jobs, but we also want to protect the economy when we are talking about education. We are asking for a compromise to protect compensation for artists and others working in the industry, but we also want to protect people who want to study and take full advantage of their education to contribute to the economy and find jobs. I completely agree, and that is why we are looking for a better compromise than what is being offered right now.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay asked the same question that I wanted to ask, but I would nevertheless like to ask my hon. colleague from Chambly—Borduas if he kept his course notes. He was a student until very recently and he is very familiar with the university environment. How would he have been personally affected by this bill as it currently stands?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question. What is ironic is that I studied political science and I was often told that people study in that field in order to become a politician. In fact, that is not at all the case. I have never met more cynical people than the professors I had. I did keep my course notes. When it comes time to think about a bill, to make comments or to know how I plan to address an issue, my course notes help me a great deal. Since the bill has not yet passed, I can say that without any risk.

Such notes are a very useful tool for our own growth. Furthermore, we can share them with others. I often had friends who were taking political science courses, although that was not their main area of study. I loaned them my course notes to give them a better understanding of the subject. The notes they received in an introductory course, for instance, might be different than those given to a political science student at the university level. It would in fact be a big loss.

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the second opportunity I have had to rise in this House and speak about Bill C-11. The Minister of Industry has reintroduced former Bill C-32 on copyright modernization, the purpose of which is to make long overdue changes. These changes will adapt the Canadian rules to technological advances, and harmonize them with the current standards.

I have noticed since the start of the session that it is often the ministers and parliamentary secretaries who answer questions. We will not stop reiterating the need to amend this legislation before seeing it pass.

This bill creates new and very powerful anti-circumvention rights for owners of content. These new provisions are backed by fines of over \$1 million and sentences of up to 5 years behind bars. They would also create a situation where digital locks would practically trump all other rights. The exceptions do not adequately recognize the rights of creators.

The political issue is actually more of a trend towards meeting the demands of the big owners of foreign content, particularly American content. When will Canadians finally have legislation that meets their needs?

Our party believes that Canadian copyright laws can strike a balance between the right of creators to receive fair compensation for their work and the right of consumers to have reasonable access to content. We are going to review all potential amendments to the bill in order to create a fair royalty system for artists.

This bill grants several new privileges regarding access to content but provides no alternative method of compensation for artists. This will greatly affect artists' ability to make ends meet.

The copyright modernization act contains a number of concessions for consumers. These are undermined by the government's refusal to adopt a position of compromise regarding the most controversial issue at stake in the area of copyright in Canada.

Government Orders

We propose that the clauses that criminalize the removal of digital locks for personal non-commercial reasons be removed from the copyright modernization bill. We support reducing penalties for those found guilty of having breached the Copyright Act.

Our party, the NDP, believes it is high time that the Copyright Act is modernized; however, this bill contains too many blatant problems.

Over 80 organizations from the artistic and cultural sectors in Quebec and the rest of the country maintain that the bill will be toxic to Canada's digital economy.

● (1820)

These organizations caution that, if the government does not amend the copyright modernization act to provide for adequate compensation for the owners of Canadian content, it will lead to a decline in the production of Canadian content and the distribution of that content in Canada and abroad.

The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, SOCAN, thinks that the bill should be amended to facilitate access to creative content using new media, and that a fair balance should be struck. Without that balance, creation of creative content will eventually decline because Canadian creators will no longer be able to make a living from their creations.

A law professor at the University of Ottawa said that the provisions relating to digital locks in Bill C-11 and in its predecessors, Bills C-32 and C-60, might be unconstitutional. He believes there are doubts as to whether Parliament has the necessary authority to legislate in relation to digital locks. That is an issue.

Similarly, even if there is an economic issue, it does not seem to fall under federal jurisdiction on trade and commerce, and consequently it falls under provincial jurisdiction. It is also by no means clear whether the federal government has the power to implement international treaties that would justify enacting the bill as it is proposed.

In general, the broader the proposed provisions, the more remote they are from federal jurisdiction and the more they encroach on provincial powers. At minimum, certain aspects of this issue affect the sphere of provincial powers. All of this suggests that the attorneys general and other provincial decision-makers should be actively involved in the discussion.

As for consumers, the "no compromise" provisions grant unprecedented powers to rights owners, which supersede all other rights. If Bill C-11 is enacted, it could mean that we will no longer have access to content for which we have already paid, and we will have no right or recourse. It is draconian and unacceptable to ask students to destroy course notes within 30 days of when the courses end, as this bill proposes.

● (1825)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to join me in appealing to the parliamentary secretary responsible for the bill to get a very simple statement. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary would be prepared to guarantee on behalf of the government that individuals who wanted

to purchase copies of music would not have to worry about the lock situation. I wonder if he would be prepared to give that guarantee today.

Does the member agree that this would be a wonderful question on which to get a yes or no answer from the parliamentary secretary?

[Translation]

Mr. José Nunez-Melo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Winnipeg North.

I would ask the minister and the parliamentary secretary the same question. Will he answer the question?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member for Winnipeg North is trying to ask me questions through other members.

I note that this is the second time the member for Laval has spoken to the bill. I want to congratulate him for taking advantage of the extraordinary opportunity we are providing by allowing debate on this topic.

An hon. member: What a joke.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, of course the member for Malpeque could care less about artists and individual creators.

Does the member for Laval have any ideas on how we could protect the hundreds of thousands of jobs and creators in this economy? He is the last speaker today of over 50 NDP members who have spoken to this bill, and we still have not received that answer. I wonder if he might avail us with an answer to the question as to how we could protect and preserve jobs and investment in this country if we do not update the act.

● (1830)

[Translation]

Mr. José Nunez-Melo: Mr. Speaker, one way to protect current jobs is to refrain from putting restrictions in legislation. Bill C-11 in particular is very restrictive. If we want to maintain employment, and not just consider what affects the income of artists and all those who work in the media and elsewhere, the bill should be amended.

* * *

FAIR REPRESENTATION ACT

The House resumed from December 9 consideration of Bill C-20, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867, the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act and the Canada Elections Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motions at report stage of Bill C-20.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

● (1845)

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1.

● (1855)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 100)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseauult	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Sandhu
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel — 95	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bélangier
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael

Government Orders

Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coderre
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dion	Dresshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Foote
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Hsu
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lamoureux
Lauzon	Lebel
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Obhrai	Oda
Oliver	Opitz
Pacetti	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poillievre	Preston
Rae	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Smith	
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 186

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 lost.

Government Orders

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 8.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the result from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting no.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, NDP members will be voting yes.

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, Liberals will be voting no.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois will be voting yes.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party votes yes.

[Translation]

(The House divided on Motion No. 8, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 101)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brousseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Grogulé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Sandhu
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)

St-Denis
Sullivan
Toone
Turmel — 95

Stewart
Thibeault
Tremblay

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bélanger
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coderre
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dion	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Foote
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Gameau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Hsu
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenny (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lamoureux
Lauzon	Lebel
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Obhrai	Oda
Oliver	Opitz
Pacetti	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poillievre	Preston
Rae	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Sgro

Government Orders

Shea
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Smith
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trottier
 Truppe
 Uppal
 Valeriotte
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)

Shiple
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Trost
 Trudeau
 Tweed
 Valcourt
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 186

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 8 lost.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

● (1905)

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

(Division No. 102)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson

Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Obhrai	Oda
Oliver	Opitz
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poilievre
Preston	Raiit
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 154

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Boivin	Borg
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Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1910)

[*English*]

SERVICE CANADA

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are many problems with how Service Canada is operating. People are not receiving the services that they need. I have heard from the London location of Service Canada that the front end staff have been reduced and it is causing a considerable backlog.

While the minister argued that additional staff were hired to deal with the influx of cases during the economic downturn, it is clear that additional staff are still needed and demand has not declined. In fact, there has been a 6.6% increase in the number of people receiving EI.

Access to help from Service Canada is vital. In documents obtained by the NDP, the government's own numbers show that in the last week of September, 50% of Canadians who tried to call for assistance with their CPP or OAS could not even speak to a machine, let alone a person. The facts are clear: Conservative cuts are hurting families that rely on Canadian services.

I would like to remind the House that these are some of our most vulnerable Canadians. They are asking for help. In too many cases, Service Canada cannot even give them an automated message.

This out of touch Conservative government is already failing Canadians in need and its cuts to Service Canada will just make things worse. Hang up rates in some regions, like Winnipeg and Vancouver, can be as much as a third of all calls. In Nova Scotia, the Glace Bay call centre is going to be closed, even though 25% of maritime callers hang up before they can actually talk to someone.

Stats show that other programs have also been affected, like the Canada pension plan and old age security. Half the calls made to these services between September 26 and October 2 did not even get an automated message. A constituent of mine, Joseph, sadly lost his wife in June of this year. After the funeral, the family said their good-byes, and Joseph began the process of applying for death and survivor benefits.

On July 18 he was able to confirm that Service Canada had received the necessary documents. He tried to call back to get an update on his status, but was never able to get a live human being on the telephone.

Finally on September 27, more than three months after Service Canada confirmed receipt of the application and supporting documents, Joseph received a letter informing him that he had not supplied sufficient documentation. Frustrated, he finally came to visit my office for help. Four months after the application was received, Joseph's benefits were finally approved.

For seniors on fixed incomes with all the expenses that come along with the loss of a spouse, this is absolutely unacceptable, particularly during a time of emotional and financial difficulty.

There are many issues. While modernizing the old paper system is needed, and I would say important, I am very concerned that people are going to be faced with complicated forms requiring access and an understanding of computers. Many of those accessing Service Canada struggle financially and they struggle with disabilities. These new computer models and these complicated access points are not going to help them.

My point is that Service Canada should be there to help the people in our constituencies and this minister is responsible to make sure that that happens.

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the member for London—Fanshawe today on CPP-related calls to Service Canada.

First, let me assure the member opposite that Service Canada is not only meeting but is exceeding its service standards related to the Canada pension plan applications and payments. Over 95% of benefits are paid within the first month of entitlement.

Last week 9 out of 10 Canadians resolved their calls through the automated voice response system or talked to an agent at at least 1 of our 14 CPP call centres.

I find it unfortunate that the member opposite would attempt to mislead or misinform our seniors about the level of service they can expect from Service Canada. Our government's support for seniors is a matter of record.

In budget 2011 we increased the guaranteed income supplement to help seniors in poverty. This was the largest increase in 25 years and the money is already flowing to those in need. We provided income tax relief through pension income splitting and enhanced the pension income credit.

We are educating Canadians about elder abuse and increasing seniors involvement in their communities through a number of initiatives, including the new horizons program. Our government wants to ensure that Canadian seniors receive timely services and accurate information, no matter where they live.

At the present time, Canadians have access to more than 600 points of service across Canada, including Service Canada centres, outreach offices and community offices. In addition, there is a Service Canada call centre network that consists of 14 call centres primarily assigned to provide services for unemployment insurance, old age security and Canada pension plan benefits.

Between April 1 and October 1, 2011 our call centre agents answered 1.7 million calls and our automated telephone services received over 3.2 million calls.

•(1915)

[Translation]

Our goal is to provide all Canadians, including seniors, with one-stop accessible service, whether they deal with us by telephone, by Internet or in person.

[English]

We also have other ways to reach out to seniors directly. For example, we can identify Canadians who are approaching the age of 65 based on information related to their CPP contributions. Using this update, we mail CPP and OAS applications to Canadians who may be eligible for these benefits.

Through the tax system, we can identify those low-income seniors who are not receiving the guaranteed income supplement, so we can send them a GIS application form.

The government is committed to delivering programs and services that are efficient and effective, aligned with the priorities of Canadians and financially sustainable over the long term for Canadian seniors.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, when I come into the House and talk about people like Joseph or people trying to struggle with disabilities who cannot get through to Service Canada, it is my obligation. It is not misleading. It is not misrepresenting. It is telling

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the government that people need services and it is not providing them. There is less and less every day.

The government's plan makes no sense. Between the middle and the end of September, there were over 100,000 fewer calls per week because people had abandoned those calls; they could not get through.

Seniors are struggling to make ends meet. People need a government that cares. They do not have one.

Ms. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, we are consolidating and improving the way employment insurance benefits are delivered to Canadians.

The way in which claims are currently processed is outdated. That is why we are increasing automation to make the service fast, more effective and more efficient.

As the minister has said several times in the House, there is a long-standing tradition of providing extra resources this time of year to deal with a seasonal increase in claims. We will continue to do that this year, as we have in the past.

As I mentioned earlier, our government is committed to delivering programs and services that are efficient as well as effective.

The member opposite should stop relying on inaccurate and misleading information from union agitators whose only interest is protecting the old and inefficient way of doing things.

We are standing up for hard-working taxpayers who demand that we find more efficient ways to spend their tax dollars.

POVERTY

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question to do with the increasing use of food banks in this country. I want to remind listeners why we were raising this point.

A news release on the HungerCount 2011 stated that food bank use has skyrocketed by 26% since 2008. The report highlights that in a typical month, food banks across this country provide food to more than three-quarters of a million separate individuals and that more than 322,000, about 38% of the total, are children.

The minister has been heard to say in the House that people should just get a job. HungerCount points out that 20% of individuals and families assisted by food banks have income from current or recent employment. Clearly, the income from the jobs that people are getting simply does not allow them to meet their expenses.

The use of food banks is in the context of a number of reports that have come out recently which talk about the rising inequality in income in this country which drives people to use food banks. Many of these people have substandard housing, cannot afford to pay for their children to get a college or university education, and the list goes on.

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In the article, “Rising Inequality, Declining Democracy”, put out by Bruce Campbell on December 12, 2011, he states that the income gap in Canada has:

—risen to levels not seen since the 1920s, and by some measures it is the worst it's ever been. The Conference Board notes that since the mid-1990s, income inequality in Canada grew at one of the fastest rates in the industrial world; faster than in the US.

He further states:

The average top 100 CEOs' compensation was \$6.6 million in 2009, 155 times the average worker's wage.

Further on in the article, he quotes Canadian John Humphrey, a co-author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He wrote in his memoirs, “Human rights without economic and social rights have little meaning for most people”.

Of course, many people would argue that in this current economic climate what we have is a violation of human rights when people cannot afford the most basic of things, such as good nutritious food for their families.

Later on in the article, he indicates:

Whereas the Keynesian era was marked by rapid growth, low unemployment, widely shared prosperity, and economic and financial stability, the neoliberal era has been marked by three severe recessions, dozens of financial crises, slower economic growth, higher unemployment, ballooning inequality, and wealth concentration. Social spending in Canada and other Anglo-American countries...declined as a share of the economy.

He talks about the assault on democracy. In this country, we have seen that poor people have taken a disproportionate hit as a result of some of the policies that we have seen over the last five years. He talks about the fact that more than half of the unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance and that we are seeing the erosion of pensions.

It is clear that what we need from the government is a response around eliminating poverty. Will the government support Bill C-233, An Act to eliminate poverty in Canada, and put forward a national action plan on the elimination of poverty in this country?

● (1920)

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for her concern about the level of poverty in this country and in particular, the rise in food bank usage. I, too, share this concern. In fact, our government has studied Food Banks Canada's annual HungerCount report and we are encouraged to see a decrease in food bank usage compared with last year.

Our government has been taking action to reduce poverty and to address the conditions that lead to food bank use. We are working on two main fronts. We are equipping Canadians with the skills and opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency. We have targeted supports for those who face particular barriers to that self-sufficiency.

One of the best ways to reduce poverty is to get more Canadians working. I would like to point out that almost 600,000 more Canadians are working today than there were at the end of the recession. This is something I have commented on in this House before. The unemployment rate has declined to 7.4%, significantly down from its peak at 8.7% during the recession.

[*Translation*]

To get more people into the workforce, the Government of Canada is working closely with the provinces and territories.

[*English*]

For example, each year we provide almost \$2.5 billion to the provinces and territories to deliver critical services and supports to Canadian workers who need help finding new jobs.

I would also like to comment on our targeted supports.

To help seniors who are economically vulnerable, budget 2011 enhanced the guaranteed income supplement. This additional support is for those seniors who rely almost exclusively on old age security and the GIS. Effective July 1, 2011, these seniors will receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for a single person and \$840 for couples. This represents an investment of more than \$300 million per year, which will improve the financial security of over 680,000 seniors. This is the biggest single top-up of the GIS in 25 years.

To help low income families with young children, we have implemented the universal child care benefit. This program helps provide over \$2.6 billion each year to 1.5 million families. The child care benefit has lifted an estimated 55,000 children living in 24,000 families out of poverty.

To help people with disabilities, we introduced the registered disability savings plan. This is a program to help Canadians with disabilities and their families save for the future.

The Government of Canada has provided Canada disability savings grants and Canada disability savings bonds to low and modest income Canadian families.

We recognize that families who have children with a disability may not be able to contribute regularly to these plans and that it may take time to set up these plans. Therefore, in budget 2010 we implemented a 10-year carry forward program for both of these entitlements.

Our government is working to reduce poverty in many ways and our efforts are paying off.

● (1925)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, it becomes a war of statistics.

The parliamentary secretary talked about a marginal decrease in the number of food bank users. The fact is that nearly 40% of food bank users are children, 20% have a job, 20% of households live on old age security or disability benefits.

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With respect to the jobs that the parliamentary secretary referred to, the government simply does not want to talk about the percentage of those jobs that are low wage, seasonal, contract, part-time employment and simply do not produce a living wage.

One of the recommendations that came out of the HungerCount 2000 called on the government to jump-start innovative partnerships in government-led programs that help ensure Canadian jobs are well paying jobs.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary if the government is prepared to undertake a review of the kinds of jobs that have been created. Would it undertake a review and make some recommendations with respect to creating good paying jobs? People simply cannot live on the kinds of jobs that have been created.

Ms. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. Let us look at the numbers.

The low income rate for children has declined significantly from a peak of 18.4% under the Liberals in 1996 to 9.5% in 2009 under our Conservative government.

We have doubled our investment in the working income tax benefit to \$1.1 billion per year. This encourages more low income Canadians to find and retain a job.

We have raised the level at which the Canada child tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement for low income families are phased out. This allows families to earn additional income and still qualify for full or partial benefits. By raising the ceiling for eligibility, we have provided an additional annual benefit of up to \$436 for a family with two children in 2010-11. The child tax benefit assists 3.3 million families. The national child benefit supplement assists 1.5 million families with 2.7 million children.

As the member can hear, we are supporting Canadian families while reducing the conditions for food bank usage.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ozone is critical to life on earth and protects us from harmful ultraviolet or UV radiation from the sun. This radiation causes skin cancer, cataracts, sunburns and local and whole-body immunosuppression. Without the ozone layer, life as we know it would not exist on earth.

Canada has a critical role in monitoring ozone as part of the global observing system for climate in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Assistant Deputy Minister Karen Dodds has said that he department has two separate technologies that measure ozone, but that budget cuts will mean that the two separate networks won't be maintained.

Why, then, have both the minister and the parliamentary secretary repeatedly stonewalled and said that there will be no cuts to ozone monitoring, especially when their own briefing document is entitled "Ozone monitoring cuts"?

We have also repeatedly heard that ozone monitoring will be maintained in the upper atmosphere. I will now ask the parliamentary secretary, yet again, whether monitoring will be maintained in the lower atmosphere.

The ozonesonde manager has received a workforce adjustment letter. A simple yes or no is all that is required. Sadly, I have absolutely no doubt that the parliamentary secretary will once again fail to answer my question.

Perhaps the parliamentary secretary will answer my third question.

Before a decision was taken to cut the ozone monitoring program, was any research undertaken to assess the adequacy of Canadian contributions to the global observing system for climate in support of the UNFCCC, yes or no? If the answer is yes, I would ask that the parliamentary secretary table the relevant documents in the House.

I have a fourth question for the parliamentary secretary.

Was Environment Canada aware of the 2,000,000 square kilometre ozone hole over the Arctic when decisions were made to cut ozone monitoring, yes or no?

I would argue that it was known, as the *Nature* research paper describing the ozone hole was accepted for publication in May and the cuts were not announced until August.

Moreover, Environment Canada's presentation to the Eighth Meeting of the Ozone Research Managers of the Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer in May 2011 had a slide titled "An Arctic Ozone 'Hole' ", meaning that Environment Canada was aware of severe ozone depletion in the Arctic well before the government began to announce its cuts to ozone monitoring and science in June.

That is deplorable. Is the government trying to eliminate science that it finds inconvenient?

The government's cuts to ozone science are absolutely negligent and shocking. They reduce Canada's ability to monitor the environment and respond to problems, reduce our country's ability to explore the links between ozone and climate change and threaten international science and Canada's reputation.

My fifth question is this: how many people work in the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre?

My sixth question is this: does the parliamentary secretary understand that if the person who runs the data centre is let go, the data centre will close?

By what percentage in terms of money and positions was the experimental studies division to be cut? What percentage has been cut? Can the parliamentary secretary table in the House a spreadsheet showing how many people work in the department, how many people received letters and who, if any, had their letters rescinded?

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She has told us repeatedly what is not being cut. What I am asking specifically is this: what is being cut?

• (1930)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for her question, because it once again gives me the opportunity to talk about Canada's record in monitoring ozone.

We certainly have a very strong record in this country of participating in world monitoring activities. We understand that this work is very important, and this is why, as I have said several times before in response to my colleague's questions, we will continue to monitor the ozone. It is as simple as that.

We also understand that as a government, we have a responsibility to manage and be wise stewards of taxpayers' dollars, so we look at ways to do that, but also to continue to deliver services that are important. That is what we are doing with the ozone.

As I have said before, we will continue to monitor it.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, most of the ozone scientists have received workforce adjustment letters, and these letters have not been rescinded. If the parliamentary secretary is as committed to monitoring ozone as she says, then why has nothing been done about this deplorable situation?

My 10th question is this: do Brewers and ozonesondes perform the same task—that is, is there duplication in the system, yes or no?

I remind the parliamentary secretary of the briefing note approved by the assistant deputy minister, which stated:

These methods measure different characteristics of the atmosphere and thus complement, but do not duplicate each other.

I also remind her of Environment Canada's presentation in May 2011, which stated:

Balloonsonde networks provide critical high-resolution vertical profiles of ozone...and need to be maintained and expanded.

Therefore, my 11th and last question is this: why in May were ozonesondes critical and in fact believed to be in need of being expanded, and not so in August? What changed?

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I assure my colleague opposite that, as I have said before, we are proud of our record of monitoring ozone here in Canada and our government intends to continue to monitor the ozone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:34 p.m.)

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