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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

● (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of our national anthem, today led by the pages.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the community training and development centre, in conjunction with the Community Employment Resource Partnership Northumberland and the Status of Women Canada, have designed an initiative for the women of Northumberland County. The WISE By Plan initiative allows rural women to enhance their economic security.

Approximately 200 women provided their feedback requesting local, accessible and easily understood training in job search strategies and in financial literacy. The response includes a series of videos featuring local job search stories. Within each video experts will provide leadership and guidance to job seekers. In addition, an online virtual coaching tool will be implemented to assist job seekers in developing personal career action plans.

This \$296,000 project is just one more example of how our Conservative government is improving the lives of rural women in Northumberland—Quinte West and in Canada.

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[*Translation*]

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks World Environment Day. This year's theme is "Think. Eat. Save". World Environment Day asks us to reflect on the environmental impact of our food choices. It encourages us to avoid waste and buy locally.

For example, in Drummond people can buy local food at the farmer's market and at the Écomarché de l'Avenir. In Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, there is the ÉcoMarché de solidarité régionale and the farmer's market, the oldest public market in Quebec.

Although this is a day for positive action, today's events are taking place in the shadow of Conservative attacks on the environment and science.

The greatest legacy we can leave to future generations is a clean and healthy planet. Conservative policies threaten the environment, health and economic prosperity of Canadians. The NDP will replace the Conservatives in 2015, to offer future generations a healthy environment and a prosperous economy for all.

* * *

● (1405)

[*English*]

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, prostate cancer is a serious health concern for all Canadians. In fact, it is the most common cancer diagnosed in Canadian men. Prostate cancer accounts for over a quarter of all new cancer cases in men. As we in this chamber know all too well, it can have fatal consequences.

In my riding of South Shore—St. Margaret's, Dan Hennessey of Bridgewater, who was diagnosed with prostate cancer over six years ago, has dedicated himself to making a difference in the lives of those going through this disease, in addition to doing his part to raise awareness. To this end, he authored a book entitled *With the Snap of a Glove* and most recently launched the Blue Glove Men's Health Fund, a not-for-profit that raises funds dedicated to men's health. The Blue Glove fund is committed to improving the health and wellness of men and boys and their families, through mobile men's health clinics and an education campaign.

I would like to thank Dan and recognize him for his dedication and hard work.

*Statements by Members***GRANDMOTHERS ADVOCACY NETWORK**

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across a continent ravaged by HIV/AIDS, grandmothers have once again become primary caregivers for millions of children left orphaned by the terrible scourge and a lack of access to life-saving medicines and treatment. Unable to abide with the knowledge that so many sub-Saharan grandmothers are left labouring through what should be more peaceful years, a group of selfless and dedicated women, and some men, came together and vowed they would not rest until their African counterparts can.

These women, now known as the Grandmothers Advocacy Network, are tireless in their efforts to not only bring awareness to the plight of parents, grandparents and children in sub-Saharan Africa, but they are also determined campaigners for reform of our access to medicines regime.

When considering my role here in Parliament, I often look to the example provided by these spectacular women. I hope to embody a sliver of their dedication to service.

I rise on behalf of all members here to congratulate them on their hard work and to stand with them as they stand with the grandmothers of Africa.

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69TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I attended the 69th anniversary of D-Day in my riding of Etobicoke Centre last Sunday, organized by the Royal Canadian Legion.

D-Day was history's greatest military invasion, and Canadians were integral to victory from the time they came ashore on June 6, 1944 to VE Day. Despite fierce opposition, 14,000 Canadians took Juno Beach. In doing so, Canadians and Allied forces liberated Europe and ended the Nazi regime.

However, such victories come with a cost. There were 340 brave souls who were killed and a further 574 were wounded. We remember their sacrifice made so that future generations of Canadians could live in freedom and never face the appalling horrors that rendered humanity speechless.

I congratulate the Legion's district D for organizing this very moving service. What Canadians accomplished on D-Day will live forever in our memories as one of the greatest moments of one of the greatest generations of Canadians that history will ever have the honour to know.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC'S RURAL COMMUNITIES

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while rural areas continue to deal with a major structural crisis, there is an organization in Quebec whose mission is to promote the revitalization and development of rural areas.

For more than 20 years, Solidarité rurale du Québec has been defending rural communities' right to be different and to use that difference to their advantage. This organization is proposing a

regional development model that focuses on the distinct character of rural areas.

I am extremely privileged to have Claire Bolduc, the president of the organization, living in my riding. She is constantly travelling around Quebec to listen to, inspire and invigorate rural communities.

Tomorrow, Quebec's premier will appoint Claire Bolduc a chevalière de l'Ordre National du Québec, which is the highest distinction the Quebec government can bestow upon an outstanding citizen.

On behalf of all my constituents and the members of the House, I would like to congratulate her on this well-deserved honour. As she so eloquently says, "A country is only as strong as its towns".

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●(1410)

[English]

GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Canadian chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption, I have the distinct pleasure of welcoming a delegation of four MPs from the National Assembly of Guyana who have come to study the estimates process here in Canada.

This event comes on the heels of a visit held by GOPAC Canada to the Parliament of Jamaica, in which GOPAC Canada shared its experience with the public accounts committee of Jamaica and offered its assistance in helping the Jamaican PAC review and expand its mandate.

GOPAC is composed of past and sitting members of Parliament, from all parties, who put their political differences aside to work together constructively to share experiences with other countries that are looking to strengthen accountability through improved scrutiny of the budget estimates.

Today I would like to thank my colleagues from both sides of this House and the members of GOPAC Canada for sharing their experiences this week, and to the Guyanese delegation for their interest in Canada's process. We look forward to continuing to learn from each other and to deepening our co-operation.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the oil sands are the economic engine of this country, providing 334,000 jobs in Canada today and \$2.1 trillion toward our GDP—yes, that is trillion with a *t*—and one million jobs by 2035.

Statements by Members

The approval of the Keystone XL pipeline would not only create economic stability for all of Canada, it would also provide the United States with \$172 billion—that is billion with *b*—toward the U.S. GDP by 2035, with \$99 million in local government revenues, \$486 million in state government revenues, and 1.8 million person-years of employment in the next 22 years. Wow. I am no doctor, but Keystone XL sounds like a perfect prescription to begin to cure an ailing U.S. economy.

As usual, the NDP opposes this Canadian pipeline and all Canadian jobs, but I would argue that a strong Canada-U.S. economic partnership could only mean success for all citizens of our great countries.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 28 we celebrated the International Day of Action for Women's Health. This day provides an opportunity to reflect on the challenges associated with women's health, especially with regard to reproductive rights.

A number of studies prove that access to contraceptives and vital information results in positive outcomes such as better health, reduced poverty and greater gender equality.

The situation of Beatriz in El Salvador is a glaring example of the need to fight for this right. Her life was at risk because of her pregnancy, which she also had no chance of bringing to term.

Women have the right to choose. It is because of people like Beatriz that this day of action is necessary.

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[English]

EGYPT

Mr. Deepak Ohrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern regarding Tuesday's decision by an Egyptian court to convict 43 non-profit workers, including 27 foreign nationals, of illegally using foreign funds to foment unrest in the country and sentencing them up to five years in jail.

Civil society and international NGOs are legitimate actors in any democratic state. These individuals were working to support the transparency of the government that has been closed for too long. They seek to strengthen the dialogue between citizens and the government, supporting the aspirations of Egyptians for a stronger democratic country.

The targeting of civil society actors undermines the legitimacy of the judicial process and is a clear misuse of government power. Without legitimate institutions, a government cannot hope to maintain the confidence of its people.

We continue to call on Egypt to work with their citizens to build a stronger and more democratic Egypt.

[Translation]

GRANDMOTHERS ADVOCACY NETWORK

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me today to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of the Grandmothers Advocacy Network.

[English]

The Grandmothers Advocacy Network, or GRAN, is a pan-Canadian network of volunteer grandmother advocates working with a multi-partisan scope and a humanitarian intent. It acts as a voice for the grandmothers of sub-Saharan Africa who are caring for millions of AIDS-orphaned children.

● (1415)

[Translation]

Today we have 45 grandmothers here from all across Canada.

I would like to invite my colleagues to join us after oral question period to meet the grandmothers and congratulate them on their efforts.

[English]

I congratulate GRAN for working to ensure dignity for the present and hope for the future of grandmothers and vulnerable young people in Africa.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, days, weeks, and even months have passed by since news broke of Liberal Senator Pana Merchant's \$1.7 million offshore account, and the leader of the Liberal Party still has not said a word.

What is worse, the Liberals are blocking the Auditor General from undertaking the audit in the Senate for which our government called. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Liberal leader is more interested in protecting the entitlements of Liberal senators and championing the status quo.

In fact, the Liberal leader recently confessed that he did not think the Senate should change one bit because, "it benefits us". For the Liberal leader, "us", of course, equals just his home province of Quebec.

When it comes to protecting Canada's national interests, the Liberal leader does not seem to grasp that Canada is more than the interest of any single province. When it comes to the Senate and his support for the status quo, the Liberal leader simply is in way over his head.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, World Environment Day aims to be the biggest and most widely celebrated global day for positive environmental action.

Oral Questions

In Canada, during our Environment week, we must push the government to develop a comprehensive climate change plan instead of its delay tactic, its sector-by-sector approach, as climate change is accelerating at a much faster rate than previously thought.

We must also push the government to protect the Arctic, which faces unprecedented challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change, ozone depletion, ensuring responsible and safe shipping and security issues.

We must also push the government to protect our water, keep our water safe for future generations and commit to a national water strategy.

Let us recommit today to protecting our natural environment, particularly for the health and well-being of our children and grandchildren. To ignore Canada's pressing environmental needs would be a gross disservice to future generations.

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[Translation]

THE SENATE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our party and our government demand real accountability of the Senate. That is why the Leader of the Government in the Senate asked the Auditor General to conduct a full audit of Senate expenses.

However, the Liberals in the Senate have prevented the Auditor General from undertaking that audit.

Speaking of the Senate, the Liberal leader is busy defending the status quo and the Liberal senators are busy protecting their rights.

The Liberal leader's poor judgment does not stop there. The Liberal leader has known for weeks that a Liberal senator is hiding \$1.7 million in an offshore account. That senator continues to be part of the Liberal caucus only because the Liberal leader refuses to hold the Senate to account. He is clearly not equipped to deal with this issue.

* * *

THE SENATE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we will let them fight it out. The upper chamber is so high up—uppity, even—that it is completely out of touch with reality. The Senate remains stuck in the 19th century.

The chamber houses unelected party cronies who are not accountable to anyone, other than their buddies who put them there. The very people who are supposed to act as a counterbalance to the executive are themselves appointed by the executive. That is ridiculous.

It gets worse. Senator Dagenais, a walking example of ridiculousness, is ignoring the advice of the Leader of the Government in the Senate and does not want the Auditor General sticking his nose in the senator's business because he follows the rules. The Prime Minister said the same thing about Wallin and Duffy. He said that they followed the residency rules, until we realized that was not true.

The Senate is like that box of junk you drag around move after move without ever opening, yet that box does not cost \$92 million a year and is not mired in scandal year after year.

The Liberals and Conservatives can defend their Senate friends all they want. They can claim to want to reform the Senate or they can propose an improved status quo. The NDP, on the other hand, will take care of things.

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TAXES

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that, to keep taxes low, everyone must do his or her fair share, and they expect MPs in particular to set an example, and with good reason.

Nevertheless, we know that the member for Brossard—La Prairie owes thousands of dollars in unpaid taxes. When he was asked about this yesterday, he told a newspaper that he had never tried to hide the fact, yet in his 2011 declaration to the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, he made no mention of this debt. So much for transparency.

What is even more worrisome is that the Leader of the Opposition ignored the member's history as a deadbeat and appointed him as revenue critic in 2012.

Canadians want an explanation from the Leader of the Opposition, and they want him to give this message to his caucus: pay your taxes.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said, "Mr. Duffy approached me to seek some clarification". What kind of clarification did Mike Duffy seek?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our view from the outset is that all expenses must be appropriate when they are claimed. If they are not appropriate, they should be reimbursed to the taxpayers. I have made this view known to a range of our caucus and also my staff.

Mr. Duffy was seeking clarification on remarks I had made to this effect in caucus and I was adamant that any inappropriate expenses had to be reimbursed by him.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the scandal, the Prime Minister denied giving orders to his staff. Yesterday, he was forced to admit that he did indeed give orders to his caucus.

Was Nigel Wright at that caucus meeting or not?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my view from the outset has been clear. Expenses must be appropriate and if there are inappropriate expenses claimed by a senator or a member, then they must be reimbursed to the taxpayers.

I made this view known to my caucus and obviously to my staff. We have very high expectations of our staff.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, was Nigel Wright present at the meeting between the Prime Minister and Mike Duffy or not?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I already said that I made my view known to the entire caucus and all my employees.

[*English*]

I have been clear about this. I have made it very clear what my views were to all my staff and to our caucus. We expect inappropriate expenses to be reimbursed and I would expect they would be reimbursed by the person who incurred them. I would certainly not expect them to be reimbursed by somebody else.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister stated that Nigel Wright's full severance package, including vacation pay and other benefits, would be less than \$90,000, so he knows the amount. If he can tell us it is less than \$90,000, why can he not tell us the amount?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I have indicated that Mr. Wright will obviously be paid only those amounts required by law. That is our obligation under the law. Any suggestion that he is being compensated for any other reason, anything directly or indirectly, to do with his paying Mr. Duffy's expenses is categorically false.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 17, long after the Prime Minister knew about the cheque, his director of communications said, "The prime minister has full confidence in Mr. Wright and Mr. Wright is staying on". Yes or no, did the Prime Minister authorize that statement by Andrew MacDougall?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, Mr. Wright informed me of his personal cheque on May 15. This was an error in judgment. He indicated he did this because he believed that taxpayers should be reimbursed and he was prepared to ensure that happened, as in fact it did happen. However, obviously this was an error in judgment for many reasons that have already been outlined and for that reason, I accepted his resignation.

This is a couple of days we are talking about. The leader of the NDP withheld information from the public about envelopes from the mayor of Laval for 17 years. He can explain that.

• (1425)

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister's Office wanted to save the taxpayers \$90,000 from Mike Duffy's expenses, it could have docked his Senate pay until it was paid back. The Prime Minister said that his chief of staff thought, ethics rules and criminal law aside, that writing a big cheque was the best plan. I presume the Prime Minister would not buy that flimsy excuse any more than Canadians do.

What real reason did Nigel Wright give for writing that \$90,000 cheque?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, Mr. Wright has been clear about why he did what he did and the effect of what he did. He has also accepted responsibility for that. He has been very clear that he is prepared to be accountable and answer all questions from the Ethics Commissioner and all authorities, and he is doing that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): If the Prime Minister's Office really wanted to reimburse taxpayers for Mike Duffy's \$90,000 in expenses, it could have deducted the money from his pay.

The Prime Minister claims that despite the ethics rules and the Criminal Code, his chief of staff thought that the best solution was to write a big cheque.

If I can be so bold as to assume that the Prime Minister did not buy this excuse any more than Canadians do, what real reasons did Nigel Wright give for writing that \$90,000 cheque?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wright said he wrote cheques to ensure that the taxpayers would be reimbursed, and he actually repaid taxpayers out of his own pocket.

He admitted that this was an error in judgment and he is prepared to be accountable to the authorities, including the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

[*English*]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we still have not heard why. Perhaps the real reason is linked to the fact that Nigel Wright was a director, for seven years, of the Conservative Fund, the fundraising arm of the Conservative Party, including in 2008, when Mike Duffy was appointed to the Senate and became active as an important fundraiser.

I will ask the Prime Minister again: Why did he appoint Mike Duffy to the Senate?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we need to be absolutely clear here. Mr. Wright paid these monies from his own personal funds. That was his decision, for which he takes full responsibility.

We appoint a range of Canadians from different backgrounds to the Senate, and we expect all of these senators to, obviously, uphold higher standards of ethics in the use of taxpayers' money. If they do not, we expect there to be accountability.

On this side of the House, unlike the Liberal Party, we think the Senate needs to be reformed or abolished. We do not defend the status quo.

Oral Questions

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, something does not add up. The Prime Minister just said that Nigel Wright's motive in cutting the \$90,000 cheque was to protect the taxpayers. Mike Duffy is a wealthy man. He owns two houses, and he is earning a six-figure salary. The Senate could have obliged him to reimburse. There is no way the taxpayer could have been on the hook for that money.

How can he believe that that is the motive? It does not even make sense.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this: Mr. Wright spent his own money. He assured that that money went back to the Receiver General of Canada, to the taxpayers of Canada. He wanted the taxpayers reimbursed, and he is prepared to be accountable before the Ethics Commissioner and others for his decision in that matter, which he admits was an error in judgment.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Senate could have forced Mike Duffy to pay. Is it not also clear that Nigel Wright's real motive was to get this problem out of the Prime Minister's Office, as he had ordered during the meeting of his caucus where Nigel Wright was present?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear. I never gave any such order, any suggestion nor had any idea that Mr. Wright was using his personal money to make sure the taxpayers were reimbursed. That is a decision he took on his own that he chose not to inform me about. He admits that was an error in judgment, and he will be accountable to the Ethics Commissioner for that decision.

• (1430)

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since February, how many times has the Prime Minister spoken to Senator Marjory LeBreton about the Senate expense scandal?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, I speak to the senators regularly, and I encourage the Senate to take measures to ensure that senators treat taxpayers' money with respect and uphold the highest standards of behaviour.

That is what we expect from all of the senators.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the results of the Pamela Wallin audit are expected in the coming days. Has the Prime Minister been briefed in any way, shape or form concerning the preliminary results of the audit of Pamela Wallin, Yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the results of the audit. I am aware that the audit has taken considerable time, and considerable issues remain unresolved. Beyond that, I am not aware of any particulars. Obviously, Senator Wallin has stepped outside the Conservative caucus and understands she must resolve these matters.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, was Pamela Wallin offered the same deal by the Prime Minister's chief of staff that was offered to Mike Duffy, Yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wright informed me of his payment to Senator Duffy on May 15. I immediately required that matter to be disclosed, both to the Ethics Commissioner and to the public. At the same time, I did ask Mr. Wright whether he had any similar arrangements or had discussed any similar arrangements or had any similar arrangements with other senators, and he said no.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, see? It is not that hard to answer.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Perrin has said that he was not involved in the "decision" to pay Mike Duffy \$90,000. He has not said if he was involved in the transaction in other ways.

Can the Prime Minister tell us if his lawyer, Ben Perrin, was involved in any way, shape or form in this transaction with Mike Duffy?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Perrin, who is now a private citizen, speaks for himself on these matters. I believe, in fact, he has answered these questions and obviously would be prepared to answer the questions from anybody else, just as I have done here.

While we are answering questions, exactly how many stuffed envelopes over his career in Quebec provincial politics was the leader of the NDP offered?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister refused to say whether Ray Novak was involved in any of these discussions concerning Mike Duffy. I would like to ask the Prime Minister clearly now: Was Ray Novak involved in any way, shape or form in these discussions concerning Mike Duffy, yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the facts here are very clear. Mr. Wright decided to take an action on his own initiative, using his own funds. These actions are his sole responsibility. I have no information before me to suggest they are anyone else's responsibility. Mr. Wright is obviously answering for those actions, which he admits were a mistake, to the appropriate authorities.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, did Andrew MacDougall or Carl Vallée take part in any discussions regarding the situation with Senator Mike Duffy?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is only one person responsible. Mr. Wright admitted what he did and chose to take full responsibility for his actions. He is prepared to answer questions from the authorities about his actions, for which he is responsible.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how, then, was it possible for Andrew MacDougall and Carl Vallée to comment on all of these issues in detail on behalf of the Prime Minister if they had not attended any of those meetings?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, it was Mr. Wright who made the decision to take his personal funds and give those to Mr. Duffy so that Mr. Duffy could reimburse the taxpayers. Those were his decisions. They were not communicated to me or to members of my office. They were Mr. Wright's decisions, but he takes full responsibility for them.

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41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Elections Act is explicit, and I quote: “An elected candidate who fails to provide a document as required by [subsection 463(2)]...shall not continue to sit or vote as a member until they are provided”.

Today, two Conservatives have not provided these documents and are therefore not allowed to sit in the House. Tonight we will be voting on the estimates. Is the Prime Minister seriously going to allow the member for Selkirk—Interlake and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance to vote illegally on over \$65 billion?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Elections Act is clear on a lot of things. First of all, it is clear that these members have the ability to make this intervention at the court level. We also know that they acted in good faith, and there is a difference of interpretation with Elections Canada.

The act is also clear that when a loan is not repaid, it becomes a donation. If that donation is larger than the donation limit, it is a violation of the law. There are \$500,000 in such illegal donations currently held by the former Liberal leadership candidates. What is the Liberal Party doing to hold them to account?

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Peter Penashue resigned for the simple reason that Elections Canada was investigating his election expenses. In the case of the two Conservative members, Elections Canada informed this chamber that they do not have the right to sit in the House. However, there they are in their seats.

When will this Prime Minister order these two Conservatives to leave the House until such time as they obey the law?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these members acted in good faith. They were democratically elected by their constituents. The Elections Act is also very clear that loans to candidates that are not repaid become donations and that donations of more than \$1,000 are illegal. Liberal

leadership candidates also received illegal donations. When will the Liberal Party be accountable for those illegal donations?

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party pleaded guilty in its in-and-out finance scandal. Peter Penashue was forced out by gross campaign irregularities. The Conservative database was used for illegal voter suppression. The PMO and Conservative senators engaged in a cover-up of the Nigel Wright affair, and now we have two more Conservative MPs sitting in this place under a cloud.

Any fisherman in Newfoundland and Labrador would say that fish rots from the head down. When will the Prime Minister take responsibility for the scandals in his caucus and on his watch?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will be happy to compare our record on this side of the House of Commons to the Liberal record any day of the week. This is the party that passed the Federal Accountability Act. This is the party that banned big money and corporate cash from the political system. This is the party whose Prime Minister has appointed every single senator who has been elected in the province of Alberta and who has said to every province that they too can have the opportunity to choose their own senators. On this side of the House, we say, in both official languages, the exact same thing: Our Senate should be elected. Our government should be accountable.

● (1440)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, behold the Conservatives' code of ethics. Bend the rules, we blame the bureaucrats. Break the law, we hide behind party lawyers. Abuse the public trust, we just deny all responsibility.

The Conservative members from Saint Boniface and Selkirk—Interlake contravened the Canada Elections Act, and the Chief Electoral Officer has asked that they be suspended as MPs for these violations, as is mandatory under subsection 463(2). What is the government going to do to hold these Conservative MPs to account for violating elections law?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said already, these members acted in good faith, and they were democratically elected by their constituents. That is why they sit in the House of Commons. They are exercising their right to have this latest interpretation by Elections Canada reviewed by the courts, and we look forward to the outcome of that.

The Leader of the Opposition said it was very easy to answer questions, and then seconds later he refused to answer a very basic factual one: How many envelopes of cash had he been offered when he was in Quebec politics?

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, either the parliamentary secretary does not know the law or he is ignoring it because he believes his party is above the law.

It is extremely important that we report our election campaign expenses in detail. However, the members for Saint Boniface and Selkirk—Interlake are still hiding theirs. They believe that they have found a loophole in the law, as in the case of the in and out scheme, that will allow them to win out. However, there are no shortcuts in a democracy.

When will the Conservatives give Elections Canada the powers needed to prevent other violations of the Canada Elections Act?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these members acted in good faith. They were democratically elected by their constituents. They now have the right to argue their case in court, and we respect that right.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they did not even need to break the law. If they had lost the election, they were guaranteed a job in the Social Security Tribunal.

Take another example. Claude Durand, who ran in 2008, was parachuted into the EI Board of Referees, where she promptly broke the rules by continuing to make donations to the Conservatives. Was she punished? No. She was appointed to the Social Security Tribunal.

Why do they continue their Duplessis-style patronage, even when those who benefit do not follow the rules?

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government makes appointments based on merit. The Social Security Tribunal positions were widely advertised. The members appointed were subject to a rigorous competency-based selection process and had to meet specific criteria relating to the experience and competencies required to perform these duties.

[*English*]

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is pretty simple.

People like Margot Ballagh, Claude Durand and Neil Nawaz broke donation rules by giving money to the Conservative Party after their first patronage appointment. However, instead of being punished, they are being rewarded by the Conservatives with yet another plum patronage appointment.

What is it about these Conservatives that makes them believe that the rules do not apply to them? Is it really possible that they still do not understand that they are not above the law?

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of

Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will say this again in English to be very clear.

Our government makes appointments based on merit. Positions on the Social Security Tribunal were advertised broadly. Members appointed went through a rigorous, competency-based selection process where they had to meet specific experience and competency criteria in order to have the roles.

* * *

● (1445)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the anniversary of D-Day. Canada's armed forces played a critical role in ensuring the liberation of Europe. We fought on the water, we fought in the skies and we fought on the ground against the tyranny of Nazism. We will always remember the sacrifices of our men and women who died fighting in Canada's name for freedom.

Today, the Canadian Forces continue that proud tradition. We know that HMCS *Toronto* is doing incredible work in the international fight against terrorism. Can the Associate Minister of National Defence update this House on the efforts of our brave men and women sailing aboard HMCS *Toronto*?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Durham for his service.

The Royal Canadian Navy has done incredible work in disrupting the illegal drug trade in the Indian Ocean. In the past few weeks, HMCS *Toronto* stopped and boarded ships, and recovered over 1,100 kilograms of heroin. This week, HMCS *Toronto* made an astonishing seizure of over six metric tonnes, or 6,000 kilograms, of hashish, the largest seizure in the history of the Combined Maritime Forces.

The women and men on the HMCS *Toronto* are working to keep shipping sea lanes free of pirates and terrorists, and our streets free of illicit drugs. We are very proud of these sailors.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Public Safety did not speak out against the RCMP commissioner's condescending remarks about sexual harassment.

By calling into question the validity of the complaints, he is encouraging women who work for the RCMP to continue to remain silent for fear of reprisal. The existing system is not working at all.

Can the minister reassure us and confirm that these women did the right thing by coming forward? Can he also tell us where this much-promised change in RCMP culture is?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we take the issue of harassment within the RCMP, and specifically sexual harassment, very seriously. That is why our government introduced Bill C-42, the enhancing Royal Canadian Mounted Police accountability act, to, among other things, modernize and speed up the process whereby complaints like this can be handled.

Sadly, the NDP opposed this important piece of legislation, which was supported by police organizations, by civil liberties within B.C. and by justice ministers across the country. The New Democrats speak about accountability. They speak about stopping sexual harassment, but do nothing.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we heard from witness after witness that Bill C-42 is not enough to put an end to sexual harassment in the RCMP and the government knows that. The RCMP members will not feel comfortable coming forward, especially when other complaints are being questioned publicly and in the media.

Public confidence in the RCMP must be restored, but Canadians need to see change. Will the minister show leadership and establish an out-of-court process to resolve these very serious harassment complaints?

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was at every committee meeting that covered this bill. I do not think that member was. I can say that the witnesses overwhelmingly supported this legislation.

What we have done is put in place not only a process whereby complaints can be handled more quickly, but also a new civilian review commission that can handle complaints from within the RCMP as well as from out of the RCMP.

The opposition members offer no solutions. All they do is oppose good, sound legislation.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only has Public Works been charged, and is soon to be sentenced, in the case of the boiler explosion that killed and injured workers, but it has been revealed that failure to obey health and safety laws is systemic. The truth is out on a pattern of neglect for repeated warnings about unqualified contractors, code violations, and reports by both workers and health and safety officers.

The buck stops with the minister. When can we expect the minister to make compliance with worker safety a priority?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to the family of the deceased from the Cliff plant incident. Since this incident we have made sure that the department has implemented a number of additional health and safety measures, including enhancing training and management oversight, conducting a review of the occupational health and safety training program, and investing in third-party procedural reviews.

I am happy to report that Donna Lackie, who is the National President of the Government Services Union, has said that we are moving in the right direction. She said, “We’re confident the measures they have put in place will ensure the proper training has been done...so employees can do their job safely”

● (1450)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a man is dead because Public Works and Government Services Canada used an unqualified subcontractor. This situation is ultimately the department’s responsibility.

A former Public Works and Government Services Canada employee warned his supervisors about a problem with the subcontractors that had been hired. Safety codes had been violated.

Even though Public Works and Government Services Canada has been charged, the company involved could not be brought to justice simply because the incident occurred on federal property.

It is high time the government stopped stalling and provided better protection for people working on federal property.

When will the government change the law to better protect workers?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the mandate of Public Works and the work that we could do, I instructed my department in every way to work with the union and with the investigation, with our labour department. As I said, we have introduced a number of enhanced measures to make sure that this does not happen again. We have worked closely with the union. The head of the union did say that she feels confident that the measures we have put in place will ensure that the proper training has been done, that the programs and policies are now in place to make sure that employees are working in a safe environment. That is what matters.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have crowd-sourced over 3,000 questions from Canadians across the country for the Prime Minister on economic challenges facing the middle class. I want to ask the Prime Minister a question I received from Dustin in Calgary. His question is specifically about his EI premiums, which are rising by \$50 this year, a direct payroll tax increase.

Dustin would like to know why the Prime Minister chose to raise EI premiums for him and every other working Canadian?

Oral Questions

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, employment insurance premiums are paid by both workers and employers.

Let us be very clear. We are focused on making sure that employment insurance is available for those who need it when they, through no fault of their own, are not able to be employed. More importantly, we are focused on ensuring that Canadians are connected to jobs so that they have the right skills in the right place so that they can provide for their families.

I encourage the member opposite to get on board and support the Canada job grant and our numerous other initiatives in economic action plan 2013.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister another question, this one from Monique in Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix.

Monique would like to know how the government can justify spending Canadians' money on negative partisan advertising. She does not think that is productive for anyone, except the Conservative Party, and she thinks that there are many other causes that would be worthy of her tax money and that would help Canadians.

She wants to know why the Prime Minister is wasting her tax dollars on negative partisan advertising.

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank Monique for her question.

I will say that advertising is an essential means for informing Canadians about important issues, such as temporary stimulus measures, tax credits and public health issues.

[English]

I would say, of course, that our rates of advertising are much lower than those of the previous Liberal government, and we will continue to do so to make sure that the taxpayer is defended.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, the Hupacasath First Nation is in court, challenging the legality of the Canada-China FIPA. Despite a constitutional obligation to consult first nations, the Conservative government rammed through this agreement with no talks whatsoever.

The Prime Minister signed this deal on September 9, 2012. While the Conservatives refuse to acknowledge the serious problems with this agreement nine months later, the government still has not ratified it. Why not?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government

will take no lessons from the NDP on protecting the interests of Canadians. While the NDP supports giving special breaks to Chinese manufacturers, it has no interest in protecting Canadians who are investing in China.

This agreement will give Canadian investors in China the same types of protections that foreign investors have long had in Canada. Just once, the NDP should stand up for the interests of Canadians.

• (1455)

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand whether the minister does not want to answer the question or whether he simply cannot. I will try again.

The Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement has been ready for ratification since November 10, but the Conservatives have not yet ratified it.

If, as the Conservatives claim, there is no problem with the agreement, why have they not yet ratified it?

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat. Canadian investors have applauded this agreement because it protects their interests. It is a fully reciprocal agreement that ensures that Canadians have a level playing field on which to compete, but of course, the NDP supports measures that tilt the balance in favour of Chinese exports.

It is a shame the NDP is more interested in standing up for Chinese manufacturers than for Canadian investors. Shame on them.

* * *

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to providing safe food for Canadians. In fact, since 2006, our government has invested over half a billion new dollars in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and has hired over 750 net new inspectors.

Our government has also passed the Safe Food for Canadians Act and brought in new E. coli controls. We have also put in place an independent expert panel to look into the events of last fall, stemming from the XL beef plant in Brooks, Alberta.

Can the Minister of Agriculture please update the House on that panel and its findings?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Medicine Hat knows that Canadian families must have confidence in our food safety system.

Following the recall of XL Foods last fall, this government initiated an independent review panel. I met with that panel earlier today. I am pleased to say I will be tabling that report in the House this afternoon.

Oral Questions

Let me be clear. Our government accepts the recommendations that the panel has made. We will continue to work on bolstering our food safety system by improving inspections, strengthening food safety rules and recalls and improving communications of Canadian consumers and passing things like Bill S-11.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's own research shows its ads are ineffective, yet tonight, Conservative MPs will approve spending \$24 million more in wasteful and ineffective advertising, including \$140,000 for a single 30-second ad.

One report last year showed that 92% of people who saw the ad did nothing at all in reaction.

How could the government possibly justify spending millions more on advertising that it knows does not provide any useful information to Canadians?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member, as is consistent with the public accounts, that advertising represents 0.3% of government spending, less than that in fact. It is the responsibility of governments to communicate on important programs and services available to Canadians.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, when we allocate money to advertising, it actually goes to advertising.

* * *

PENSIONS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have a short memory when it comes to their promises.

Last December, the Minister of Finance made a clear commitment to meet with his provincial counterparts this month about CPP and QPP. CPP and QPP are the backbone of our pension system. Our communities and all Canadians will benefit from CPP-QPP expansion.

Will the minister tell us when this meeting is happening and will he be keeping his promises to strengthen CPP and QPP?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, I must remind the hon. member that the Canada pension plan has shared jurisdiction between the provinces. We cannot arbitrarily make any changes to the Canada pension plan without consulting with the provinces.

We continue to do that, but not all the provinces are in support now of expanding the Canada pension plan, but they were all in support of putting in place a framework for the pooled registered pension plan.

We think that is a good idea, but apparently the NDP members do not. They do not think we should help people have another option for savings, because they voted against that in the House.

● (1500)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal Party's industry critic criticized our government's decision to promote competition so Canadian consumers could benefit from more choices and lower wireless prices.

Frankly, this is not surprising. After all, the Liberal leader does not have to look far to find inspiration in the 1970s era Liberal monopolies that hurt the economy and Canadians.

By contrast, will the Minister of Industry explain to the House how our government's decision will benefit consumers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mississauga South for her very relevant question.

[*English*]

It was clear yesterday that the Liberal Party was more comfortable with the status quo in the telecom industry than real progress. Liberals have made it clear that they stand against Canadian consumers and for higher prices and less choice.

Meanwhile our government sent a bold, clear message to the industry. In that sense, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre said loud and clear that our government stood up for wireless consumers.

[*Translation*]

The Conservative government will not hesitate to use all of the tools at its disposal to promote healthier competition and to protect Canadian consumers in this industry.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Canadian Transportation Agency concluded that compensation offered to Air Canada customers bumped from overbooked flights is insufficient. That compensation would have been sufficient if the Conservatives had supported Bill C-459.

Why do the Conservatives feel that Canadian passengers do not deserve the same protection as Europeans and Americans?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's airline industry is based on a user-pay principle. Other countries have chosen different options, but here, people who use the air transportation system pay for its services. We have excellent airline service in our country.

We will continue to support airlines across the country by putting in place infrastructure, security measures and regulations that allow them to run a successful business.

Our system operates on a user-pay principle.

*Private Members' Business***THE SENATE**

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the government ran out of ways to cover up the Senate expense scandal, it asked the Auditor General to look into the senators' shady claims.

In 2010, the Bloc Québécois was the only party to immediately agree to the request by former auditor general Sheila Fraser to conduct such an audit for the House of Commons.

Why stop there? Why not ensure that the Auditor General can go over senators' and members' expenses with a fine-toothed comb and make it a regular, statutory review?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as our colleague well knows, last week, we took very responsible measures to protect the taxpayers' interests by adopting 11 tough new rules.

We will continue in that vein by making changes to the Senate. We will also proceed with bigger changes: having senators elected or abolishing the Senate, if necessary, and changing the length of senators' terms.

That is the direction the Conservative government is taking. We will do what is right for the taxpayers.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a parliamentary delegation from the Kingdom of Lesotho, led by the Hon. Sephiri Enoch Motanyane, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to a number of questions that were raised by the leader of the Liberal Party, which were clearly in contravention of the rules of this place.

I know he is somewhat new here and is not entirely familiar yet with the rules, but when we look at the good book, O'Brien and Bosc, we will find at pages 502 and 503 a reference to questions in question period. A question should not be a representation and, furthermore, it should not be a question from a constituent. This has been dealt with on occasion by Speakers of the House. For example, in early 1994, the member for Fraser Valley West asked the finance minister a question on behalf of one of his constituents and Speaker Parent advised that was out of order.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you not permit such questions and that you ask the hon. member to withdraw his inappropriate context or otherwise acknowledge he is just simply in over his head.

● (1505)

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame of mine, but I am not an MP from Calgary. I am the MP for Papineau and neither question was from a constituent. The questions were from Canadians who had questions they wanted the Prime Minister to answer. That is part of our jobs as members of Parliament.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I will not state the obvious, that he does not think he represents Canadians but only one constituency in the city of Montreal. However, I will point out that the reference means a question of any representative type on behalf of a Canadian. We are here in our role, as the Speaker has ruled clearly in the past, to ask questions, not to ask representative questions on behalf of individual Canadians.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, members in the House have asked many times of the Prime Minister why he is choosing to raise payroll taxes and why he is choosing to spend public funds on accounts. These are questions Canadians have.

[Translation]

The Speaker: On another point of order, the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on another point of order.

I would like to give the Minister of Canadian Heritage and his government the chance to make amends since he did not really provide a clear answer as to whether the government has decided to allow the Auditor General to review the management of the Senate as a result of the spending scandal.

For the sake of consistency and transparency, I seek unanimous consent for the following:

That this House allow the Auditor General to conduct regular, statutory audits of the expenditures of senators and MPs.

[English]

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

The House resumed from May 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-419, An Act respecting language skills, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, May 22 the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-419.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

Private Members' Business

● (1515)

[English]

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

(Division No. 727)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Andrews	Angus
Armstrong	Ashfield
Ashton	Aspin
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Baird
Bateman	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Blaney	Block
Borg	Boughen
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brison	Brosseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chisholm
Chisu	Chong
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Clarke
Cleary	Clement
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crockatt
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeschen
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Foote
Freeman	Fry
Galipeau	Gallant
Garneau	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Gill	Glover
Godin	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Gravelle
Grewal	Grogulé
Harper	Harris (St. John's East)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Holder
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Jean	Jones
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kellway	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)

Lake	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Lauzon
Laverdière	Lebel
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Leung
Liu	Lizon
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKenzie
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani	Mulcair
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nicholson
Norlock	Numex-Melo
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Poilievre	Preston
Quach	Rafferty
Raitt	Rajotte
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Seeback
Sellah	Sgro
Shea	Shiplee
Shory sor)	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Smith	Sopuck
Stanton	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Storseth	Strahl
Sullivan	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Toone
Tremblay	Trotter
Trudeau	Truppe
Turmel	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 271	

NAYS

PAIRED

Nil

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (PRIZE FIGHTS)

The House resumed from May 29 consideration of the motion that Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (prize fights), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading of the bill.

● (1525)

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

*(Division No. 728)***YEAS**

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Alexander
Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Andrews	Angus
Armstrong	Ashfield
Ashton	Aspin
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Baird
Bateman	Bélangier
Bellavance	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney
Block	Borg
Boughen	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brosseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chisholm
Chisu	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Clarke	Cleary
Clement	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crockatt	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Daniel	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeschen
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Footé
Fortin	Freeman
Gallant	Garneau
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Gill
Glover	Godin
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Gravelle	Grewal
Groguhé	Harper

Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
James	Jean
Jones	Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kellway
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Lauzon	Laverdière
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leitch
Lemieux	Leslie
Leung	Liu
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKenzie
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McColeman
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Michaud	Miller
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani	Mulcair
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nicholson
Norlock	Nunez-Melo
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Patry
Payne	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Poilievre
Preston	Quach
Rafferty	Raitt
Rajotte	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Seeback	Sellah
Sgro	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	Smith
Sopuck	Stanton
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffler	Storseth
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Toone	Tremblay
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Turmel
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Valerioté
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Yelich	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 267	

NAYS

Members

Albrecht	Ambler
Chong	Galipeau
Holder	Mayes
Watson	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)— 9	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

**RESPECTING FAMILIES OF MURDERED AND
BRUTALIZED PERSONS ACT**

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-478, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (increasing parole ineligibility), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-478 under private members' business.

● (1530)

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

(Division No. 729)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Bellavance	Benoit
Bergen	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
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Fortin	Galipeau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	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

Routine Proceedings

Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Mourani
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Patry
Payne	Plamondon
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Seeback	Shea
Shiplely	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
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— 156

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF CANADA

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada regarding returning officers. This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

* * *

XL FOODS INC. BEEF RECALL 2012

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the independent review of XL Foods Inc. beef recall 2012.

*Routine Proceedings***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 18 petitions.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two reports to present to the House on behalf of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34, the first report I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, is the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in a parliamentary mission to the Republic of Lithuania, the next country to hold the rotating presidency of the Council of Europe, the European Union and the European Parliament, held in Vilnius, Lithuania, and Brussels, Belgium, from April 3 to 9, 2013.

The second report that I wish to present to the House, pursuant to Standing Order 34, in both official languages, is the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Washington, D.C., in the United States of America, from March 12 to 13, 2013.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in relation to its study "Public Accounts of Canada, 2012".

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

* * *

● (1535)

EMPLOYEES' VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-525, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act (certification and revocation — bargaining agent).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce my private member's bill.

Bill C-525 would provide necessary amendments to the certification and decertification of a bargaining agent by way of a mandatory secret ballot vote based on a majority.

For far too long the federal legislation has lagged behind that of our provincial counterparts, and workers deserve the right to have a

secret ballot vote to decide who represents them at the bargaining table.

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

* * *

CRACKING DOWN ON ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORISM ACT

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-526, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code, also entitled the "cracking down on organized crime and terrorism act".

It has been identified by this Parliament, the RCMP and criminal law experts that organized crime is a serious problem in Canada and around the world. Currently, offences connected with organized crime and terrorism are considered aggravating factors during sentencing.

Bill C-526 would protect Canadians further by creating a new subcategory of serious aggravating factors and, secondly, providing greater direction and additional tools to judges to identify and punish gang members, organized criminals and terrorists.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that those committing a criminal offence in collusion with others, and those committing acts of terrorism, are severely punished.

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

* * *

TACKLING CONTRABAND TOBACCO ACT

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-16, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in contraband tobacco).

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**FINANCE**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, in relation to its study on income inequality, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to continue its deliberations beyond Thursday, June 13, 2013, and to present its report no later than Thursday, October 31, 2013.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

IRAN

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among parties, and I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, jointly seconded by the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake and the hon. member for Mount Royal.

Routine Proceedings

I move:

That, this House condemn the mass murder of political prisoners in Iran in the summer of 1988 as a crime against humanity, honours the memory of the victims buried in the mass graves at Khavaran cemetery and other locations in Iran, and establishes September 1 as a day of solidarity with political prisoners in Iran.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS**SEX SELECTION**

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present six sets of petitions today from constituents from the London area, Woodstock, Welland, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Toronto.

All of these petitioners are asking to draw the attention of the House of Commons to the fact that millions of girls have been lost through sex-selective pregnancy termination, which creates a global gender imbalance and causes girls to be trafficked into prostitution.

Therefore, the petitioners are asking Parliament to condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

● (1540)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to present a petition signed by hundreds of residents of New Brunswick and other provinces in Atlantic Canada.

They are objecting to the very wrong-spirited and mean-spirited changes that the government is making to employment insurance, particularly as it impacts seasonal industries and those who work in seasonal industries.

The petitioners are asking this House and the government to change direction and to rescind these changes to employment insurance to ensure that economic progress and fairness can continue in areas dependent on seasonal work.

VENEZUELA

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition on behalf of Venezuelan Canadians residing in Ontario. They are asking to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the civil rights and electoral rights of Venezuelan people have been shamefully violated since the last presidential election. The petitioners are asking our government, the champions of democracy, to take a strong position regarding this matter, and call for a peaceful and democratic resolution to the crisis in Venezuela.

NATIONAL PARKS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition regarding Rouge national park. The petitioners call on the government to protect the 100-square-kilometre public land assembly with a healthy and sustainable Rouge national park; ensure that the Rouge national park implements and strengthens the ecological visions and policies of previously approved Rouge park plans; conduct a rational, scientific and transparent public planning process to create Rouge national

park's boundaries, legislation and strategic plan; and, include first nations and Friends of the Rouge Watershed on an advisory board.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to table from British Columbians throughout metro Vancouver. The petitioners call on Parliament to acknowledge that current impaired driving laws are too lenient and they request tougher laws, including mandatory minimum sentences for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Thunder Bay, northwestern Ontario and across Ontario protesting the closure of the Thunder Bay Marine Communications and Traffic Service centre. This centre is crucial for the safety of boaters and marine traffic on lakes and rivers, all the way from Lake Winnipeg downstream through Lake Superior to Lake Huron.

The petitioners are asking that the House reverse the government's decision to close the centre, which has been a critical institution in the northern marine safety community for the past 104 years.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from a number of constituents from Prince Edward Island. They wish to indicate to the House that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as a national public broadcaster, plays an important role in reflecting Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences while serving the special needs of those regions.

They call upon the Government of Canada to maintain stable, predictable, long-term core funding to the public broadcaster, including CBC Radio and Radio-Canada, in support of their unique and critical role.

PEACE

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians, mostly from western Quebec and eastern Ontario, who are among the more than one million Canadians who actively support the creation of a federal department of peace. They call upon the government to create such a department to provide leadership toward ensuring the government's commitment to the promotion of peace worldwide.

Privilege

NATIONAL PARKS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition from approximately 650 petitioners from the Toronto area, but including from a region extending to Burlington, St. Catharines and Oakville. They are petitioning the House to pay attention to the implementation of the vision of a Rouge Valley national park worthy of the name.

I started working on the Rouge issue back in the 1980s, and I am disheartened to find that the current plans and the May 2012 operating plan and vision for the park might even leave the national park with less protection than it had under provincial control.

The petitioners ask for a full, rational planning process and consultation with first nations and with Friends of the Rouge so that we can respect the ecological integrity and move forward with the government's vision of a national park in the Rouge Valley.

● (1545)

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table today a petition from students from a north end Winnipeg school dealing with the issue of corporate social responsibility and Canadian companies. Petitioners are asking that the House of Commons legislate that the standards for Canadian mining companies operating outside of Canada be the same as the standards they must reach operating inside of Canada.

* * *

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 no. 1317 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1317—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to Bill C-11 from the 1st session of the 38th Parliament, "An Act to establish a procedure for the disclosure of wrongdoings in the public sector, including the protection of persons who disclose the wrongdoings", what are the details of all codes of conduct that have been implemented, considered, modified, or withdrawn by the government under Chapter 46, clauses 5 through 7, of the bill since it received Royal Assent on November 25, 2005, and what is the current status of each code of conduct?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Avalon.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ELECTIONS CANADA

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege to discuss a matter of great importance relating to two Conservative MPs and whether they should currently be sitting in the House of Commons.

We learned recently that the Chief Electoral Officer sent you a notice, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the two Conservative MPs in question, specifically the member for Selkirk—Interlake and the member for Saint Boniface, indicating that he had made requests for corrections to their electoral campaign returns and that the corrections requested had not been made.

Before I start my arguments, I would like to quote the Canada Elections Act, which reads, in subsection 463(2):

An elected candidate who fails to provide a document as required by section 451 or 455 or fails to make a correction as requested under subsection 457(2) or authorized by 458(1) shall not continue to sit or vote as a member until they are provided or made, as the case may be.

It is quite clear that this subsection of the Canada Elections Act would require that these two members be suspended immediately, because the act says that they are to be suspended until the correction requested by the Chief Electoral Officer is made.

I understand that they may disagree with Elections Canada on the substance of their filings and that they have both made applications to the Federal Court on this matter. However, this does not change the fact that they should not sit or vote in the House until the matter is rectified, either by Elections Canada or by the Federal Court.

The precedence on this matter is clear. On March 1, 1966, in dealing with a similar question of privilege, Speaker Lamoureux ruled:

- (a) That, even if there is a penalty provision in section 63 of the Canada Elections Act and whatever may be the terms of the order made by the judge pursuant to the said section in allowing an authorized excuse, the house is still the sole judge of its own proceedings, and for the purposes of determining on a right to be exercised within the house itself which, in this particular case, is the right of one hon. member to sit and to vote, the house alone can interpret the relevant statute.
- (b) That the procedure followed in 1875 with regard to the precedent above referred to, which bears a resemblance to the case before us, seems to me to indicate that the question was dealt with at the time as being of the nature of a prima facie case of a breach of privilege.
- (c) That it is not within the competence of the Speaker to decide as to the question of substance or as to the disallowance of a vote, and that such decisions are to be made by the house itself.

This ruling makes it perfectly clear that the House, not the courts, and with due respect, not the Speaker, determines whether the member for Saint Boniface and the member for Selkirk—Interlake have the right to sit in the House.

As for how this matter should be addressed, we are of the view that the question on this matter should be put to the House. According to Maingot, 2nd edition, on page 188, in reference to and from the same ruling, it says:

Privilege

[T]he Speaker said that the right of the Member for Montmagny—L'Islet to vote subsequent to the date when he should have paid his election expenses was a proper subject of privilege, but that the House must decide that issue, and whether his votes should be disallowed. The Member who raised the matter did not move the usual motion to refer it to the committee and no further proceedings were taken.

Again, on page 247 of Maingot, 2nd edition, it says:

A...procedure akin to "privilege" (because it would be given precedence and discussed without delay) would be the case of whether a Member was disqualified to sit and ineligible to vote. These matters may only be resolved ultimately by the House, and they are "privilege" matters because the House has the power to rule that a Member is ineligible to sit and vote, and to expel the Member.

It goes on to say:

The determination of whether a Member is ineligible to sit and vote is a matter to be initiated without notice and would be given precedence by its very nature.

The facts are clear. The members have not made the proper filings or corrections, as requested by Elections Canada.

• (1550)

The act plainly states:

An elected candidate who fails to provide a document as required by section 451 or 455 or fails to make a correction as requested under subsection 457(2) or authorized by 458(1) shall not continue to sit or vote as a member until they are provided or made...

The review by the Federal Court does not provide relief from this section of the Canada Elections Act. Precedent clearly states that it is for the House to determine the member's eligibility to sit and vote in the House, not the Federal Court and not the Speaker. As such, I would ask that members of the House be provided the letter sent to the Speaker by Elections Canada on this matter.

This goes to the heart of our democracy. The fact that we are all elected to this place on the same footing, by the same rules and on an even playing field for all provides for a fair election to the House of Commons.

If Elections Canada, our independent elections agency, determines that rules have not been followed or have been broken, there are consequences. Those consequences are that those members do not deserve the right to sit or vote in this House as members.

Finally, if you do find that there is a breach of privilege, I will be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that the hon. members from Saint Boniface and Selkirk—Interlake may wish to address this more fully, once they have an opportunity, and the related issue of whether it is their privileges that have been offended by what has unfolded here.

Briefly speaking, my understanding of the issue is that the individuals in question are being asked to account twice for a single campaign expense, that being the billboards that were put up on a permanent basis. The rules in the past have always been that if there is spending that transfers over from an election period to a non-election period, any costs that are fixed are pro-rated.

Apparently, Elections Canada wishes to take a new interpretation of this. The members are disputing this new interpretation, which has not been applied, certainly in my own experience and that of others in the past. As such, the members have availed themselves of the

only avenue that exists, which is to have the issue resolved in the courts.

That is where the matter sits right now. It is a quite simple dispute. It is certainly not the kind of question of accounting interpretation that I think a reasonable person would say would justify a member being suspended from being able to participate in the House, having been duly elected by the voters.

From that perspective, knowing how simple that issue is and also the legal framework in which you are working, the decision you have taken to allow that legal process to unfold to resolve the issue, at which point the question of how it would function under the act might come into play, is an appropriate one. Therefore, I do not see particular merit in the suggestion, in advance of the resolution of the issue and in advance of the court deciding on the interpretation of the fixed costs of billboards, that it has reached a level such that the member is asking you to intervene. I would suggest that it is obviously very premature. Another process is under way, and it would not be your place as Speaker to interpret that process and make a ruling when it is before the courts.

That being said, I think the hon. members may wish to come back here and make further submissions on the points that have been raised and if the fashion in which it has unfolded has offended their own privileges.

You, as the Speaker, I think have conducted yourself in the fashion that the rules of this place suggest, that being as the guardian of the privileges of the members of this place. The way in which you have responded to this issue has been the appropriate response in those circumstances.

As I said, the hon. members will likely return with further submissions.

• (1555)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of the official opposition, we would also like to reserve the right to come back to this as soon as possible and to let you know when that would be.

It is true what the member for Avalon said. The provisions of section 463(2) do not make specific reference to an appeal process or a court process as trumping the section. The section is a mandatory section, but the approach you have taken also obviously has its merit. Therefore, we would much prefer to reserve for the moment and come back to address the matter.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that while the Conservative members may try to argue that they have filed the appropriate documents and it is only the substance of those documents that is in dispute, that point is in fact irrelevant.

Thinking strictly in terms of Elections Canada's legislation, subsection 463(2) uses the word "or", not "and", where it says:

...or fails to make a correction as requested under subsection 457(2) or authorized by 458(1) shall not continue to sit...

The word "or" is disjunctive, not conjunctive.

Business of Supply

Mr. Speaker, this puts you in a position where you are bound to comply with the request of the Chief Electoral Officer. To do anything less will constitute a breach of the privileges of the rest of us in the House and, worse, bring the proper application of the Canada Elections Act and our willingness to abide by it into disrepute.

The Speaker: I look forward to further submissions on this question. We will move on now to orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—THE SENATE

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP) moved:

That all funding should cease to be provided to the Senate beginning on July 1, 2013.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 24 minutes.

Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending June 23, 2013, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

I am pleased to rise in the House to begin debate on my motion regarding funding for the Senate.

As hon. members know, the Senate dates back to the time of Confederation. The Fathers of Confederation gave that chamber the mission of reviewing and improving legislation passed by the House of Commons. The Senate was also designed to ensure that the provinces and regions are represented in the federal legislative process. Thus, the Constitution Act of 1867 divides the country into four regions—Ontario, Quebec, the maritime provinces and the western provinces—and sets out the number of senators that represent each of those regions.

That was the vision, but the problem is that the Fathers of Confederation also decided that the Senate would be made up of unelected, partisan members. That is the problem. Unfortunately, there is a fundamental contradiction between the duties of the Senate and its partisan nature. This contradiction has now become a democratic crisis. We are at a turning point in the history of this institution and the democracy of our country. Today, senators more and more frequently vote along party lines rather than in the interest of the region that they are supposed to be representing. What is more, they refuse to pass bills that were carefully considered by the House and its committees.

Unfortunately, today, many of the senators were appointed to the Senate not on their merit, but as payback for their loyal service to the

party in power. The Liberal Party and the Conservative Party have both appointed defeated candidates, campaign managers, close friends and party donors to the Senate.

We can talk at length about the democratic deficiencies of this outdated institution, but as the Treasury Board critic, I will let my colleagues add their important contribution to the debate and focus instead on the financial side of the issue.

Before moving this motion I asked myself the following questions: is the Senate a good deal? Is the Senate a good investment for Canadian taxpayers? I will show in the rest of my speech that the answer to these questions is a categorical no.

The reality is that the Senate costs Canadians a lot of money, more than \$90 million a year. While the Conservatives have reduced the House of Commons budget, the budget of the duly elected members, they have just increased the Senate budget to a total of \$92.5 million.

We are spending \$92.5 million for an upper chamber when the provincial senates have been abolished since 1968. The provinces are getting along quite well without a senate. No one has convinced me that the difference between federal and provincial governance is enough to justify spending \$92 million for a senate.

I would also remind Canadians that the senators worked only 71 days last year, roughly three months out of 12, and that they earn a salary of more than \$130,000 a year, in addition to all their benefits. What is more, 31 senators were absent for 25% of those 71 working days.

As incredible as it may seem, it takes the annual taxes paid by more than 8,000 families to pay for the Senate. Just by way of example, the total of other shady expenses, in other words, those claimed by Senator Wallin, are equivalent to the federal taxes paid by 28 Canadian families. The senator's \$350,000 in travel expenses would be enough to pay for old age security for 57 seniors for one year.

Between now and the end of his term, Senator Duffy, who is at the centre of a scandal, will pocket a further \$1.3 million in salary. Between now and the end of his term, Mr. Brazeau, who is himself involved in a scandal, will earn \$7 million. The total future payroll for the senators appointed by the Prime Minister is \$116 million.

● (1600)

Senator absenteeism has become a problem. The average number of days worked by a senator in 2011-12 was only 56, which is not even two months of work.

[English]

If that is not convincing enough, several senators are double-dipping by claiming a residence that they do not really use.

According to the Constitution, senators must reside in the province they represent. Under section 31 of the Constitution Act of 1867, a senator's seat shall become vacant if "he ceases to be qualified in respect of property or of residence".

Business of Supply

Senators must also own a minimum of \$4,000 worth of land in their home province, and according to internal regulations at the Senate, senators who live more than 100 kilometres from Ottawa are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses and to a \$21,000 annual housing allowance.

The problem is that several senators have declared second residences in Ottawa when these residences are actually their primary places of residence.

For example, in 2012 Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau declared that his primary residence was in Maniwaki, Quebec, thus enabling him to claim a housing allowance for a secondary residence in the national capital region. Maniwaki is 130 kilometres from Ottawa. Media reports indicate that the residence in question is in fact the home of Patrick Brazeau's father. Brazeau resigned from the Conservative caucus and is now sitting as an independent.

On May 9, the Deloitte audit and the Senate committee on internal economy's report ordered Senator Brazeau to repay \$48,000 in unjustifiable claims.

Another Conservative senator, Pamela Wallin, is supposed to represent Saskatchewan, but her primary residence is in Toronto and she holds an Ontario health insurance card. Since 2010 she has claimed \$300,000 worth of travel expenses not related to travel to her province of origin and has been seen at numerous Conservative fundraising events.

In question period on February 13, 2013, the Prime Minister confirmed that he had seen the senator's travel expenses and that they were normal.

However, Deloitte is still examining the senator's expenses. On May 17, 2013, the senator left the Conservative caucus to sit as an independent.

Mike Duffy is supposed to represent Prince Edward Island, where he owns a cottage, but he does not have a P.E.I. health insurance card. His primary residence is in Ontario. On March 26, Deloitte confirmed they had received a letter from Mike Duffy's lawyer stating that Duffy had repaid \$90,000 and would no longer participate in the audit, and we know how that went.

All of these senators were named by the current Prime Minister, but to show that the problem is not limited to the governing party, Liberal Senator Mac Harb has claimed \$31,237 in living expenses since 2010. Even though he is supposed to represent the riding of Ottawa Centre in the House of Commons, he has not been living in Ottawa for a long time and has now confirmed that he lives in Pembroke, Ontario, a 90-minute drive from Ottawa.

Deloitte's audit and the Senate committee on internal economy's report made public on May 9 ordered Mac Harb to repay \$51,000, after which the senator resigned from the Liberal caucus in shame.

These are only examples that we know of, and the secretive way the Senate functions may very well mean that there are hidden abuses that we do not know about. These cases may just be the tip of the iceberg.

In his 2012 audit of Senate expenses, the Auditor General audited the housing allowance and travel expense claims for a number of senators. The Auditor General recommended as follows:

The Senate Administration should ensure that it has sufficient documentation to clearly demonstrate that expenses are appropriate.

We on this side of the House agree with him, but this is like putting a Band-Aid on an amputation. The problem is that senators are really on a different planet than most Canadians, and we cannot expect them to police themselves.

Here is the proof that the Senate cannot investigate itself. On February 28, 2013, the Senate committee on internal economy determined at the outcome of its investigation that senators' housing allowances, including those of Mike Duffy, were in compliance with the rules.

Well, that is convenient.

● (1605)

Let us not forget that the Senate committee on internal economy removed paragraphs in its report that criticized Mike Duffy because he had supposedly reimbursed the amount that he owed.

No, the institution is outdated and fundamentally anti-democratic and non-elected senators are entrusted with duties similar to those of elected officials. This is the very definition of redundancy. Its continued existence just cannot pass the test of good value for money. It is time to solve the issue once and for all. Let us do Canadians and our democracy a favour and let us shut off the tap and empty the trough.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I talk to my daughter who is five years old. I understand she wants to get something done and yet I have to explain to her that there are rules in place, so if she wants to do something that is not how she can do it. I feel that this is the problem with the NDP right now.

I understand New Democrats want to make some changes to the Senate. We are doing that as well and we have a plan to do that. What they have is a gimmick and they do not understand that there is a proper way to do things.

I would like to ask the hon. member if they are trying to fool Canadians. Or do they just not understand the Constitution? Can he tell us whether their gimmick today, their little plan, is even constitutional?

● (1610)

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell my hon. colleague is that all it has been is inaction for the last two years on behalf of the Conservative government. Conservatives were elected on a promise they would do something about the Senate. What have they done? Nothing.

Business of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party members have demonstrated once again that they just do not understand what is important to Canadians today. It is the issue in regard to the Prime Minister's Office and the \$90,000. We have seen that in question period where it is prioritized, but New Democrats are off on this tangent in regard to the Senate. They are being a little dishonest because they know full well it takes a constitutional amendment to do what they claim they would like to do some day.

Can the member provide a list of the provinces that the New Democratic Party has actually approached? Does he have any idea of how many provinces, according to the Constitution, would be required? How many provinces do they have onside with the resolution proposed today?

Why is the NDP not dealing with the issue that is on the minds of Canadians today, which is the issue related to the Prime Minister's Office and the \$90,000?

Mr. Mathieu Ravnignat: Mr. Speaker, what I do understand is that we can always count on a Liberal to defend entitlements and patronage. That is exactly what the Liberals are doing. That is exactly what their leader did. Canadians deserve better. They deserve that the institution be put to bed.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just heard the Liberal Party tell us that Canadians do not care that the Liberal senators have been ripping off the Canadian taxpayer for the last 106 years, that it is not important to Canadians.

What does my hon. colleague hear? Does he hear from people who think that people like Pamela Wallin, Mike Duffy and Mac Harb are an absolute disgrace and there needs to be accountability? I know the Liberals will defend it to the bitter end, but what is he hearing from his constituents?

Mr. Mathieu Ravnignat: Mr. Speaker, from coast to coast to coast, I have had support for this motion from ordinary Canadians. It is not all that difficult to recognize that spending \$92.5 million on a House in which the majority of people do not do their job is not worth taxpayers' money.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if the NDP is really serious about the motion today, I think it is disrespectful to the Supreme Court because the question is in front of the Supreme Court now, what has to be done if we want to change the Senate in different ways.

I would say the NDP cannot be serious. If that is the case, we should not be debating it in the House today.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnignat: Mr. Speaker, getting rid of its funding is not an issue that is before the Supreme Court.

The motion, and I am sure my hon. colleague has read it, is about cutting the funding to the Senate, and that is completely possible.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to express the frustration of the people of Canada at an institution that has belligerently refused to reform itself over the years and is now at the heart of the worst spending scandal in Canadian history. Still, we see Liberal and Conservative senators, and the Liberal Party working with them, trying to deflect people

from the fact that we have an unelected, unaccountable body with senators who feel that they are entitled to take money when they want it and how they want it. When they are under pressure, they say that maybe they will start providing a few receipts and ask if that would make it go away. That will not make it go away.

This is not an obscure constitutional debating point. We are talking about an institution in 2013 that is unelected and unaccountable to Canadians, that has the power to interfere with the work of the democratically elected House. The House of Commons passed a bill dealing with catastrophic climate change because that is what Canadians want action on. It went to the other chamber, the red chamber. It is not called the red chamber just because of the colour of the carpet. This is the institution of patronage and corruption that was created by the Liberal Party. When that bill went to that place, it was senators who undermined the democratically elected will of Parliament.

One of the key senators who undermined that bill that was passed by the House of Commons to deal with catastrophic climate change was Pamela Wallin. Pamela Wallin is one of the rogues' gallery chosen by the Prime Minister. Pamela Wallin also sits on the board of directors of a major oil sands development company. Is that not a conflict of interest? I ask the people of Canada that. When Pamela Wallin was asked why these unelected and unaccountable senators monkeywrenched legislation that had been passed by a democratically elected House, she said that bill was a nuisance.

I have talked to senators. Some of them are nice people, some of them are smart people, but they see us as a nuisance. They believe that their work in the Senate is somehow more important than our work. There is at least one NDP private member's bill somewhere that they are all hot and bothered about that they have to deal with. Meanwhile, when the Conservative government stripped the Navigable Waters Protection Act and stripped environmental protection for lakes and rivers across this country, we did not hear a peep from senators. They rolled over like a bunch of obedient puppies doing tricks for their political masters.

We are talking about a Senate where the Liberal Party members, though I see now the Conservatives are starting to get in on this, say that House of Commons MPs are just not bright enough and we do not understand that we cannot make changes. I hear that from senators all the time. They are not going to reform themselves because they do not think they can be forced to reform. They say it is a constitutional issue. We will hear that all day from the Liberals. They say it is constitutional and we cannot touch it. It is perfectly constitutional for the House of Commons to decide how much money to appropriate.

Business of Supply

Given the abuse of the taxpayers, given what has happened in the other chamber, I say that it is time to turn off the taps. Is there a precedent for it? Certainly, there is. We come from the Westminster tradition. Did members know that members of the House of Lords do not get salaries? No, peers do not get salaries. What they get is a per diem if they show up. Imagine the situation where hacks and party pals get to sit in the Senate until they are 75 and cannot be fired. They cannot be fired.

Today someone from the media asked me if I was shocked that Mike Duffy missed half the committee meetings. I said heck no, I was shocked that he even showed up. There is no obligation for him to show up. Senators cannot be fired. Conservatives are looking at each other and sort of grinning about Patrick Brazeau, a man who has certainly disgraced a public office. He cannot be fired. He is in there until he is 75. He is a \$7 million man. However, if we turn the taps off, we can tell Mr. Brazeau he can come back any time as a volunteer, just like in the patronage. I hear some squawking from the Liberals asking what the per diem is. Certainly members of the House of Lords get per diems, but if we turn off the taps, it would allow the House of Commons to finally start a discussion with these unelected and unaccountable cronies.

However, that is not what the other two parties want to do right now because they have used the Senate to place their party organizers. The people that the member for Papineau relies on for fundraising sit in the other chamber. They do the party work on the taxpayers' dime. This is the way it has always been and this is still going on. They get to do that regardless of whether Canadians want them to do it or not because they believe Canadians cannot touch them.

•(1615)

We are not talking about constitutional change. We are talking about cutting off the taps. Let us put that to the Canadian people.

The other thing that is really galling, from a democratic point of view, is the belief that in the 21st century Canadians have no ability to decide whether they want an unaccountable body.

Every now and then, we will see the poor young tour guides who go around the House of Commons. They give a spiel about how the senators are there to defend minorities. I was at lunch the other day and I heard a senator go on about how her job was to defend minorities.

When John A. Macdonald set up the Senate in 1867, he was very concerned about minorities, but he was not worried about women, francophones and gay people. What he was concerned about was the rich people. John A. Macdonald said that there would always be more poor people than rich people and that was why the Senate was needed to protect their interests. If the Senate has done one job well over the years, it has certainly looked after the interests of that class of people.

On the housing scandal, the Liberal and Conservative senators came out and asked how we defined a primary residence. What planet do these guys live on? I go home to Cobalt. I could ask people if they know where their primary residences are because there are senators who do not know where their residences are. It is really complicated for them.

This is part of the scam that went on in the Senate and why we have to demand some accountability from it. We were told that poor Mike Duffy just was not all that bright, that he could not fill out a form. That is why he was on the hook for \$90,000.

Certainly, if an average Canadian cannot fill out a form and claims \$90,000, they get charged with fraud. However, we were told, according to internal audit of the Senate by Senator Tkachuk, Senator Olsen and the Liberal senators who were there, that the only problem with Mike Duffy was that he could not figure out where he lived, so they had to cut him some slack.

On May 9, Marjory LeBreton, Conservative leader in the Senate, said that the case was closed, that it was over. It was as if there was nothing to see and they were going home. We did not hear a peep out of the Liberals about that, but they knew what was going on as well.

Then we find out, because of the potentially illegal cheque that was written out of the Prime Minister's Office by Nigel Wright to Mike Duffy, which forced the light back on, that it was not just the fact that he did not know where he lived, but he could not seem to fill out expense forms. He would turn in an expense form and it would be rejected. He would turn in another one and it would be rejected. How many times does someone send in improper forms that even the Senate rejects without someone saying that there is a of abuse of the public trust.

That was going on with Mike Duffy. I would be fascinated to hear what they say about Pamela Wallin, if we ever finally get that. Maybe the Liberal and Conservative senators will gang up and keep that hidden.

There are a number of senators in the penalty box right now and none of them have responded with honour. The fundamental thing is public honour. We are called here to represent something better than ourselves.

The Liberal leader, the member for Papineau, praised Mac Harb the other day. He said that Mac Harb did the right thing. What did Mac Harb do that was so good? The Liberals did not kick him out of the caucus. He quit the caucus so he could go after the Senate, go after his old comrades because he was not going to pay the money.

Patrick Brazeau says that he is not going to pay the money. Mike Duffy did not even have to worry about paying the money, because he just called up Nigel Wright and asked him to give me \$90,000 or he would not pay, so Nigel Wright paid him the \$90,000.

Do members think Pamela Wallin is going to easily fork out that money? That will be an interesting one.

In 2013, when we have a group people that are defiant, people who cannot be fired and who refuse to be accountable to Canadians on the most basic things, we do not have to get into a constitutional debate with them, we simply have to say that enough is enough and we are turning off the taps.

Business of Supply

If they want to come back to us and discuss a role and what would be fair, I am sure we could talk about stuff. We could look at the situation in England where in the House of Lords, the members get a per diem. If they do not show up, they do not get paid. We could discuss that. Then it would restore it to the democratically elected House to decide what to do with that chamber, because it will not reform itself.

• (1620)

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is right about a couple of things.

First, he is right that Canadians are disappointed and angry. I think they feel their trust has been betrayed, certainly by what they have heard in the news. I think that is why the NDP has reacted with this motion today.

However, we have a reference right now to the Supreme Court of Canada. It asks a number of questions. One is about how the government could go about reforming the Senate, which is an important question. It also asks conditions under which we would have to satisfy if we were to look at abolishing the Senate.

We have been consistent on that. Certainly I am never going to defend the status quo in the Senate. I know the Liberal leader has done that a number of times recently. I also know he gave Mac Harb a pat on the shoulder, which I thought was disgraceful.

I understand the motion the NDP brought forward which, by the way, I do not believe, even if the motion were passed, could ever be undertaken. However, would the member support our government's efforts to reform the Senate, if not reform, then abolish it? Will the member support the government in its stated direction?

• (1625)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, what we find frustrating is we remember when the Conservatives came in and they agreed with the New Democrats on many areas. One was our share of frustration with the Senate. We were promised that action would be taken, but really no action has been taken. I do not know if it is whether the Conservatives do not want to do it or they realize the Senate will not do it. Therefore, it is important that the question is put before the Supreme Court.

However, we have to send a message now. We cannot keep waiting. Because the Liberals keep telling us again and again that it cannot be done. Well, we turn off the taps. I certainly would like to hear from the courts on what we need to do.

Also, when the Conservative government came in, it was working with the New Democrats on the accountability act. One of the key elements of the accountability act that we pushed was for a single ethics officer for both Houses and that was turned down by the Liberals in the Senate. Now the Senate officer needs permission from the people she will investigate and if she even gets that permission, she has to bring her recommendation to an in camera hearing and it will decide what to release.

The Senate ethics officer has gone back into hibernation. There is no accountability. There were attempts to bring accountability and senators blocked it. It is time we take action.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is right. It is about accountability. Earlier today, the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada had a proactive approach at disclosing expenses. That would have ensured more accountability for tax dollars, not only for the Senate but also for the House of Commons.

The NDP's official response was that it was too onerous. The NDP wants to tell Canadians that we do not want this type of accountability because it is too onerous.

I wonder if the member might want to reflect, in terms of that spontaneous statement from the New Democratic Party, and recognize that taking a proactive approach for both Houses, the Senate and the House of Commons, is what is in order and that he would in fact support the leader of the Liberal Party's call for more accountability of tax dollars, and that means taking a more proactive —

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay has just a little more than a minute.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Boy, Mr. Speaker, he sounds defensive over there. I think it is cutting close to home.

Let us go back to the Raymond Lavigne fraud case. He is the Liberal senator who was convicted of fraud. I urge people to Google it. They will see that everything was laid out there in the abuse of public trust, and they decided to go back to business as usual.

Now what the Liberal leader is trying to do is what the Liberal senators are trying to do, saying "Don't look at us. Look over at the House of Commons", and then they accuse us of diverting people's attention by throwing any attention elsewhere.

If it had not been for us taking this up issue, the Liberals would be doing the same thing that happened under the Raymond Lavigne fraud case, saying, "You know what? Once people stop looking, we'll just ignore it and we'll be back to business".

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. 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 Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, Employment Insurance; the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, Science and Technology.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me address this NDP gimmick, because that really is what it is. That is most obvious.

Business of Supply

Our party remains the only party with a serious plan to reform the Senate. Our party leader remains the only party leader with a clear plan. The Prime Minister has been clear. The Senate needs to be reformed or it needs to be abolished. While the NDP concocts this last minute motion, with serious constitutional ramifications without even consulting the provinces, our government takes real action such as tough new spending oversight for the Senate. That is not anything like the NDP window dressing. That is action.

In fact, as recently as this week, the leader of the government in the Senate introduced a motion to call in the Auditor General to review Senate expenses. Of course, Liberal senators blocked it, as the Liberal leader continues to justify the status quo in the Senate.

The New Democratic Party wants to call open season on Canada's constitution and the Liberal Party has its horse blinders on saying that the status quo is the way that it will go. Canadians want real action.

Empty rhetoric in the case of the NDP and empty ideas in the case of the Liberals is not action. We believe that the Senate, in its current state, must change or it must go. It needs to reach its full potential as a democratic institution serving Canadians.

To find out what we can change, we have taken several questions and proposals straight to the Supreme Court so it can clarify our mandate. The NDP meanwhile has not even tabled a serious or legitimate bill on abolishing the Senate, not one. They know they cannot get the support of the provinces, yet the New Democrats sit here today discussing this as if it is something more than an empty gimmick. Canadians will not be fooled.

The NDP does not have an interest in actually reforming the Senate. It does not have an interest in talking to the provinces. Instead, it wants to ram through a poorly thought out gimmick that proves that it lacks the basic understanding of how our democracy works.

Let us look at this concoction that the NDP has tabled today. The NDP wants to halt all funding to the Senate by Canada Day. It believes the Senate and the people who work there are rotten to the core. It is a broad brush. Let us pretend we have halted funding. What happens then? Legislation from the House still needs to pass in the other chamber.

I just cannot believe the New Democrats are going to stand over there and pretend that this is an actual plan or anything more than what it actually is, just a gimmick. It shows how little they understand about functioning government. It shows how little they understand about our constitution. It shows how foolish they think Canadians are if they think they will buy this farce. No, Senate abolition is not a real goal for the NDP, a distraction maybe, but certainly not a goal.

Why would a party serious about a constitutional battle with the provinces over Senate abolition make a caveat in the coalition agreement with the Bloc and the Liberals to have the power to appoint its own senators? The answer is that it is just not serious. Why would a party serious about Senate abolition state in its election platform that on top of a carbon tax if it formed government, it would bar party insiders from being appointed to the Senate? The answer again is, the NDP is just not serious.

The NDP has been on every side of the issue. It calls for abolishing the Senate, then says it is open for reasonable reforms. Then it will not say whether it would appoint its own senators or not, when it is well known that it would, given the opportunity.

The Supreme Court will provide a ruling on how to reform or abolish the Senate. However, given the NDP leader's past criticisms of the Supreme Court, I can see why it would rather roll the constitutional dice and hope it has pulled the wool over the eyes of Canadians.

● (1635)

Are the members over there actually intending to go home over the summer and attempt to sell this to their constituents as a real plan? Is this something that they would really try to sell? Surely, there must be a reasonable person on that side who knows full well that this is not action or a plan. It is simply empty rhetoric. Their own leader has said that abolition would require profound constitutional change and that they have other priorities before opening up the constitutional debate, yet here we are debating a motion that has no constitutional merit, one that would crack open the Constitution.

What were the other priorities that the New Democrats had? Was the other priority to cover up their leader's cash-filled envelope offer from the former mayor of Laval, someone who faces numerous charges, including gangsterism and fraud? Why is it just coming to light now when he kept it to himself for 17 years? Is that the priority? They spent this time to discuss a gimmick when they could have used it to talk about the Canadian economy, something important to every Canadian and that affects us all.

I can understand why they would not want to discuss their plans for the economy either. They are much like their proposal today.

A \$21-billion carbon tax. Maybe that is a tougher sell than today's concoction, but Canadians deserve to know what that means for them. It means essentially a tax on everything, on gas, on groceries, a tax on it all. It would kill jobs and hurt our economy. I would not want to spend the summer trying to sell that either.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. We have a minister who, rather than speaking to the motion, is just rambling all over the place. I would like to have you bring him back to order. He is supposed to speak relevantly to the bill at hand. I know he is shy about talking about the Senate given all the embarrassments. Regardless, he has to speak to the issue at hand, which is the Senate and the Conservatives who have been illegally taking money for expense claims that they should not have received. I hope he will address that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I appreciate the intervention on the part of the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster. He will know of course, as will the hon. minister, that certainly relevance is part of the restrictions on debate in the chamber. Members are to address their remarks to the question that is before the House.

Business of Supply

Having said that, members will know that there is a great deal of liberty given to members to present their arguments and comments in a way that comes around to that question, and of course members have the time allowed for their remarks to do just that. I am sure the hon. minister will be making those connections in the course of his remarks in the time provided.

The hon. Minister of State (Democratic Reform).

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, I will continue. I was talking about the NDP's \$21-billion carbon tax as a priority for them.

I would not want to sell that. However, what I would want to sell as a government is the leadership of our Prime Minister. In the first quarter of this year the Canadian economy grew by 2.5%. As a government, our focus is on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. That is a plan that works. This country has added over 900,000 net new jobs. We have had the greatest job growth in the G7. We are saving families over \$3,200 a year in taxes. That is something to be proud of. Under our government, families of four are better off by more than \$3,200 a year.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord wish to raise a point of order?

Mr. Dany Morin: Mr. Speaker, yes, I do.

Could you repeat what you said earlier to my Conservative colleague, namely that he must speak about Senate reform, the issue that concerns us, rather than boasting about the Conservative government's record? If that is what he wants to do, he can clearly use other means of communication, such as his Twitter and Facebook accounts or the national news media. However, we are here to discuss a very important issue, that of cutting funding to the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I would be very grateful if you reminded him of what you said a bit earlier, because he apparently did not understand. You might want to repeat it in the other official language.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for his intervention. It is true that members' comments and speeches must be relevant and pertain to the question that is before the House.

• (1640)

[English]

However, I would go on to say again that members are afforded a great deal of liberty in terms of how they present their arguments. I have been listening to the hon. minister. It is my understanding that he is drawing a contrast in terms of his initial argument in respect to the question that is before the House, and presenting arguments to support that assertion that he made in the initial comments that he offered. The hon. member does have some time to present those arguments. I am sure he is going to bring those ideas around to the question in due course.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, I can understand the New Democrats would not want to discuss the fact that under our government, families of four are better off right now with more than \$3,200 a year. I know that is something I am very proud of.

Therefore, at a time when the economy is a top concern for Canadians, when it is so fragile, this is what the opposition members want to focus on, taking a wrecking ball to the Constitution. Canadians are concerned about the future of their own finances and the finances of this country. However, I just cannot connect the dots here. The New Democrats would rather debate a motion that they know has absolutely zero merit, that has absolutely zero chance of being remotely constitutional; a motion that looks like it has been written in their leader's dream diary. It is mind-boggling. Now we know the NDP plan.

What about the third party's plan? What have the Liberals offered up? Well it is the same as all their policies that we heard during the leadership campaign to be sergeant for the third party: nothing. The Liberals want the status quo. They want to cover their eyes and pretend the Senate does not need reforming, that somehow the magic of their new leader will make the Senate more accountable because he said it should be. Besides, why would the Liberal leader attempt to reform a place that he says is an advantage for Quebec? He wants it to remain unelected and unaccountable for no other reason than to attempt to divide regions of this country. That is not leadership. That is just cheap politics. This not about one region being better than the other, as the member for Papineau suggested. It definitely should not be about defending his Liberal buddies' entitlements, and we cannot allow it to be about the same old, same old.

We have the leader of the NDP proposing a ridiculous motion, and we have the leader of the Liberals sitting tight, careful not to breathe too heavily out of fear that it might come across as something that resembles an actual policy.

We need real proposals. We need a real plan, and clearly ours is the only serious plan.

I am going to circle back here and let the hon. members digest some of what I have just mentioned. It is such a clear difference between where we are and where we all stand. I saw in an article that one of the NDP members was interviewed on this motion and its merits. I was so surprised at how little he understood about the ramifications if this should actually pass. The reporter had him twisted and turned, and it was just obvious that his leader sent him out there to defend what is indefensible.

We know the NDP leader likes to pick fights with the provinces. We have seen it before, and this is just another clear-cut example. If he is not accusing premiers of being de facto spokespeople for the Prime Minister, he is attempting to shut them out of a debate that requires clear provincial co-operation. The Constitution is not a document any government can wilfully ignore at its convenience, and it is not a document one wants to open or edit without a clearly defined plan. This gimmick before us today by the NDP is just not doable. It is as simple as that.

Business of Supply

My critic on the other side, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, is an experienced professor of law. Would he honestly take this to his students and say to them that this is action, that it is legitimate, that it is constitutional and not at all a gimmick? I highly doubt that this is something he would want to put his name to. He must be as frustrated as I am by this empty motion. He has previously said the New Democrats are open to any kind of reasonable reform. I think our plan goes further: it is reasonable and it is needed. We know why this is not possible, and why this is as risky as the NDP's economic plans for taxes and more taxes.

Part of the reasonable approach we know is needed is that the Senate should be elected, be accountable and have term limits. One of several questions we have put to the Supreme Court is, how do we do this? I, like many, am anxious to hear about the ruling.

● (1645)

The Senate reviews laws that affect the day-to-day lives of every Canadian. The Senate makes laws that affect the day-to-day lives of every Canadian. Lastly, it passes these laws. This is why the Senate should have a democratic mandate, a mandate to represent the people at the will of the people. It is a concrete proposal that we have.

Compare that to the proposal in front of us today and it is a case of apples and oranges. I encourage the Liberals to support us in moving forward on reforming the Senate and move away from lobbying for the status quo. I understand that they are still searching for policies, so why not borrow some of the ones that work and have ensured long-term prosperity for our country?

The status quo of the Senate is not good enough. I have long maintained and our government and party have long maintained that it is not transparent enough and it is not accountable enough. This is something that the Auditor General can maybe tend to, thanks to our Leader of the Government in the Senate taking firm and tough action on something that I know Canadians are proud to see happening.

To my third party colleagues in the corner, I say drop the status quo policy. It is not what Canadians want. Maybe some of my colleagues are hoping to make it their retirement plan, which makes this a tougher choice. However, we are elected by Canadians and, unlike the Senate, we have the responsibility to do what is right. That is to reform the Senate or, if that is not possible, to see that it is abolished. This is a policy that we should stand behind.

I can even offer up a policy to the NDP. If kids want to play soccer, support them. This is something that I take very seriously and I wish the NDP did too. If kids want to play sports or to be active, logic says that we want them to be healthy, so let them play. NDP logic, however, is to remain silent and hope that no one noticed, but people have noticed. It is another tick on the NDP's failed policy column.

Yes, if the policy is not being serious about the Senate or calling for the return of a wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry, or if it is not a \$21-billion carbon tax, the NDP members just cannot seem to get it right. They refuse to acknowledge the real and present concerns of Canadians. That is their economic future.

Our government has done very well in keeping the economy on track and, like I said, one of the best job growths in the G7. We will

continue to take action when necessary and hope that, for once, the Liberals and the NDP put the economy first and support our efforts.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to follow the minister's quite meandering and not very relevant speech. It also occurred to me in the midst of his speech just how far the Conservatives have fallen from the commitments they made in the past.

We can recall when a Liberal senator went AWOL in Mexico. The Conservative Party's predecessor was there with a mariachi band, saying how bad it was to have a Senate with no rules and a Senate that would gouge Canadian taxpayers. It said the same thing about Liberal Senator Lavigne. However, it now appears apparent that what it was actually committing to was replacing corrupt Liberal senators with corrupt Conservative senators. We can look at Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin and Patrick Brazeau.

Today, in a debate that actually determines whether or not we are going to allow this Conservative gravy train to continue, we have a Conservative who would not even speak to the issue.

The question is very clear. Given all of the scandals coming out of the Senate and the fact that Canadians, including Canadians who voted Conservative, want to press for abolition, why are Conservatives turning their backs on people who voted for them and have said that it is simply not good enough to have an unelected and unaccountable Senate? People want it abolished. Why do the Conservatives not support that? Why do they not stand with their constituents?

● (1650)

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Prime Minister has been very clear that the Senate must be reformed or it must be abolished. This has been our position for a long time.

What the NDP is proposing today is clearly just a gimmick. It knows that it will not work. The Supreme Court will provide a ruling on how to reform or abolish the Senate in the not too distant future. We look forward to that ruling. However, again, what the New Democrats are proposing today is just a gimmick and it just shows that they either do not understand the Constitution or they just do not care.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague with great interest, but I did not hear anything about the following: one, who appointed the senators; two, how the Prime Minister chose those senators; three, what the Prime Minister's Office knew from beginning to end on this particular deal, with a buyout of \$90,000 and cover-ups and so on.

Business of Supply

It is great to sit there and say the NDP does not know where it is going and to say the Liberals are in cahoots with the NDP, but let me refresh this for the minister: first, when did the Prime Minister find out? Second, we are talking about his chief of staff. There could not be anyone closer to any one of us, besides a wife or husband. I am wondering if the minister is trying to hoodwink the House, or does he really believe what he says?

Does he really stand in front of the mirror and say “mirror, mirror on the wall, I believe what I say”. I would like to know what he can tell us about the \$90,000 that was given to Mr. Duffy.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the hon. member a refresher. It was his party, in many years of being in government—the too many years, in fact—who did nothing at all to reform the Senate, make it more accountable or make it more transparent. They did nothing at all.

We, on the other hand, have an actual plan. We have been clear that the Senate must be reformed, and if it cannot be reformed, it must be abolished. We have a plan to have elections to allow Canadians to have a say in who represents them in the Senate. We have appointed elected senators at every opportunity.

I am very proud of the fact that Alberta has been holding those elections in my home province. We have term limits in our bill. We have brought in tough new spending rules for the Senate. We have a plan. The NDP has no plan and the Liberals do not want to do anything at all.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the Liberals braying across the way about the Senate when we know they do not want to do anything about it. They do not want to change it. They want to leave it the way it is.

Does the minister think the motion from the New Democrats comes out of silliness or from cluelessness? Clearly they have brought forward a mischievous motion that once again demonstrates their complete inability to govern or to actually give us an example of what would happen when they govern. If Canadians look at the motion and realize the consequences of it, I think it reminds them one more time that the New Democrats are not fit to govern in this country.

We have done a number of things toward reforming the Senate, and certainly that includes 11 or 12 different measures to bring accountability and transparency to the Senate. The Senate leadership has called in the Auditor General. We have gone to the Supreme Court with the bill to see what we can do with it.

I am wondering if the member could talk a little about the reforms we have already brought forward and our intentions in making senators transparent and accountable, which we want, as all Canadians do.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague sees very clearly, and Canadians see very clearly, that what the NDP members have proposed is nothing more than a gimmick. It is a political stunt. It is unfortunate that they are using up valuable House time just before we are going back to our constituencies for the summer. There are very few hours left in this place to debate very important issues,

such as the budget or public safety. There are a number of issues we could be debating here. Unfortunately, the NDP brings forward this motion that it knows very well will not work.

I do not mind debating Senate reform issues. If there is a real plan, the plan is worth discussing. Our plan is to have elections, term limits and to put in tougher spending rules. That is the real plan that we have.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éleine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of State for Democratic Reform said is bunch of nonsense. It is unbelievable. He is talking about a gimmick, but the only gimmick here is the Conservatives' Senate reform plan.

The Conservatives are proposing elections and term limits. Senators would be elected one time. They would be able to serve nine years and would not be accountable to the public during their mandate. For nine years, they could do whatever they want without ever being accountable to the public. That is nonsense.

His government is not doing anything about Senate reform. How can he justify keeping an institution that undermines democracy every single day? I am referring to how the Senate has rejected bills that originated in the House, such as the climate change bill the NDP introduced a few years ago. This bill had the support of all opposition parties in the House, but it was defeated in the Senate. I am also referring to the bill from my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst requiring Supreme Court judges to be bilingual. His bill was defeated in the Senate.

How can the government justify keeping an obsolete institution that violates the rights of parliamentarians and prevents them from properly serving the people they represent?

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the fact is, whether she likes it or not, the Senate is there; it is in our Constitution, and any legislation that we pass here must be passed in the other place. This is in the Constitution. I assume the NDP does not know this because the gimmick they have proposed today reflects that they do not understand.

As for our plan, we have a plan for elections, term limits and toughening spending rules. Unfortunately, when we presented legislation in this place, the NDP has stalled it at every opportunity.

Now we have taken a further step and referred a number of questions to the Supreme Court of Canada. We await its ruling on how we can move forward to reform the Senate, and if it cannot be reformed, how we can abolish it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have struggled with my position on the Canadian Senate.

Business of Supply

I can share with hon. members that my party's policy, based on our membership vote, was that we should move toward an elected Senate. However, I have always preferred our current model. I have worried that we would enter into a gridlock if we had an elected Senate that felt entitled to shoot down bills that came from the Commons. Therefore, I voted for the NDP motion that called for the abolition of the Senate.

My views around the Senate have changed, basically because of the quality of the senators and the partisanship in the current administration of the current Prime Minister. That has made me fearful that the Senate would do again what it did on Bill C-311 in the previous Parliament. This was a bill that was passed by the House on climate and was voted down by unelected senators without a single day of hearings in committee.

I have a question for the hon. minister. Is it not about time that we admitted we ought to follow the example of New Zealand, another Westminster parliamentary democracy, in eliminating the Senate, and that we move directly to abolition?

The bill put forward by the government at the moment does nothing but provide the option for the Prime Minister to pick among possible senators who have been chosen through provincial or municipal elections.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been clear that we would prefer to reform the Senate, and if that is not possible to abolish the Senate. That is why we have referred questions to the Supreme Court, to find a pathway and get some clarity on the pathway to either reforming it, or abolishing it, if reform is not possible.

I would refer a question back to the hon. member. Does she really think that the gimmick put forward today by the NDP is actually a real plan?

It obviously is not. In fact, the NDP critic in this area, the member for Toronto—Danforth, said that abolition will be at minimum extraordinarily difficult. It is not going to happen with a little gimmick and a motion like this.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of problems with the NDP motion.

First, it does not respect the Supreme Court. Second, it does not respect the provinces. Third, the NDP is helping the government, which would rather talk about the issue of the Senate than the \$90,000. What is worse, this motion would eliminate the role of the federal government in its entirety. This motion is absolutely ridiculous.

[*English*]

When my Liberal colleagues and I saw today's motion from the NDP, we were taken by surprise. We had assumed that its caucus and, in particular, its Treasury Board critic, would understand the effects that the proposal would have on the government. In short, it would lead to the total shutdown of the Canadian government by the end of this fiscal year. We could not imagine that was the intent of the New Democrats. However, I was reminded that one should never

attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by ignorance. It is our conclusion in this corner of the House that the NDP may very well be completely unaware of how the federal government works.

It is clear what the NDP is trying to do: push forward its agenda for the federal government to unilaterally abolish the Senate. Liberals cannot agree with that short-sighted and, frankly, unconstitutional plan. We are also deeply troubled by the means to which the NDP is willing to go to further this agenda, including shutting down the entire Canadian government, and many provincial governments, too, I might add.

First, let me address the underlying point on Senate reform. Despite what people hear from Conservatives and New Democrats, Liberals are not opposed to Senate reform. We are not pushing for the status quo. What we are opposed to are unconstitutional declarations from high atop the Hill in Ottawa demanding changes to the Senate. Let us be perfectly clear. That is what New Democrats are proposing. For all of their talk about consultations with the provinces, they have decided what the outcome of those discussions will be. That is not consultation. Provinces deserve to have a real voice in this matter.

Before we enter any sort of discussion on Senate reform, Canadians, as well as our provincial and federal governments, need to know the terms under which the discussion will take place. This issue is now before the Supreme Court of Canada. That is the responsible way to handle this matter. In fact, Liberals have been asking the government to do this for years and the government has delayed forever. However, the Conservatives only wanted the appearance of action. Privately they know that changes to the Senate will require complex and messy negotiations with the provinces. The New Democrats are following right behind the Conservatives. They do not care about hearing from the court because they know deep down that their policy is unworkable.

My colleague, the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier and the Liberal democratic reform critic, has done a lot of work on this file, and I have spoken to him a great deal about the matter of Senate reform. Let me quote the member at some length regarding the complexities of Senate reform.

[*Translation*]

Many Canadians would like their Senators elected rather than appointed. That's understandable: it would be more democratic. But what would happen if, as proposed by the [Prime Minister's] government, we changed the way Senate seats are filled without amending our Constitution accordingly? If we went along with the Conservative Senate reform proposal, we would have: no dispute settlement mechanism between the elected Senate and the House; continued underrepresentation of Alberta and British Columbia, with only six Senators each (when New Brunswick holds ten); US-style (and now, Italian-style) gridlock between two elected chambers; and bitter constitutional disputes regarding the number of senatorial seats to which each province is entitled.

So, first thing first: will the provinces be able to reach an agreement on the distribution of Senatorial seats? If they do, we can then figure out which Constitutional powers we should attribute to the Senate in order to create healthy complementarities with the House—rather than paralyzing duplication. After which we can agree on a process to elect Senators and finally, amend the Constitution accordingly.

Business of Supply

Should the provinces fail to agree about the number of Senators to which each one is entitled, we must avoid the kind of constitutional chaos that an elected Senate would cause. Instead [of risking that kind of chaos], let us keep the Prime Minister accountable for the quality of the individuals he appoints to the Upper House. And let the Senate continue playing the role conferred by the Fathers of Confederation: the Chamber of scrutiny, or “sober second thought”.

That was a long quote, but I think it contains a reasonable proposal for Senate reform.

● (1705)

[English]

This motion is certainly not that.

These are not simple questions. The Senate is the body of regional representation for the provinces. Provincial governments would not sit idly by while the New Democratic caucus decides for them what should happen to the Senate, and let us be perfectly honest about this point: consultations on how to abolish the Senate are not consultations on Senate reform.

I now turn my attention to the quite incredible motion now before the House. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I do not attribute any malice to the actions of the NDP; rather, I believe the motion stems from a lack of understanding as to how the Government of Canada spends money.

The motion is poorly constructed. It is simply not clear what the member is calling for. Does he simply want the annual appropriations of the Senate zeroed out, as his colleague from Winnipeg Centre has proposed for tonight's supply votes, or is the NDP also calling for the amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act that are required if we are to remove senators' salaries?

I will give my colleague the benefit of the doubt, as I hope it was not the intent of New Democrats to leave senators with no work, but a full salary.

However, it is clear that their intent is to shut the Senate down without making the necessary amendments to the Canadian Constitution. It is as if they think they have found a way around our founding laws and can perform an end run around the Supreme Court and the provinces.

The motion does not abolish the Senate, it renders it inoperative. It does not matter how much they dislike the Senate; it is a needed part of our government under the Constitution.

We should consider the effects that this proposal would have on our government. The Senate would still exist. In fact, there is a good chance senators would still get paid. However, some changes would be noticed on July 1, the day on which the money would be cut off. The hallway and offices down the hall would go dark. Senate security guards and staff in the other place would be laid off. This would be most unfortunate for our House colleagues who have offices in the east block.

We would not notice any serious changes until the fall, when Parliament would return from the summer recess. It is then that the legislative backup would begin.

Section 55 of the Constitution Act—meaning it cannot be changed by this Parliament alone—states:

Where a Bill passed by the Houses of the Parliament is presented to the Governor General for the Queen's Assent...

et cetera, et cetera.

The Constitution says the bill has to be passed by both Houses of Parliament. If the NDP gets rid of the Senate, we could not pass any legislation, and that includes money bills, supply bills. In layman's terms, we need the consent of both Houses of Parliament to enact legislation. There is no way around it except through a constitutional amendment.

As opposition MPs, neither Liberals nor New Democrats may have that big of a problem with the government's not being able to get its ideological agenda through. However, private members' business would also grind to a halt and supply bills would cease to pass.

This would be a good opportunity to explain to my NDP colleagues exactly how the Government of Canada spends money, as they do not seem to understand the process very well.

Any expenditure must be authorized by a law passed by both Houses of Parliament. The only exception is during a general election, and only during a general election, when the government may use a Governor General's special warrant. This is the only exception.

The authorizations for spending, known as an appropriation, come one of two ways: either there is an existing statute that provides an ongoing authorization to spend funds or the appropriation comes from the annual supply bills that we pass.

My colleagues may be more familiar with the supply bills processes, as those bills are supported by the estimates that we review periodically in this House and in committee. In fact, we are dealing with two supply bills this evening.

● (1710)

It is important to consider what spending has to be authorized each and every year by Parliament, as I do not think the NDP has given any thought to this aspect.

Voted spending, meaning the appropriations we have to approve every year, fund the operations of the government. Funding for civil service salaries, power and heating bills and printer paper all need to be authorized every year. None of this could be authorized with a defunded Senate.

This brings me back to April 1, 2014, the date the NDP want the Government of Canada to shut down completely. That is the beginning of the next fiscal year. All the funding we have approved this year expires on March 31. It does not matter if government departments scrimp and save in anticipation of the shutdown; the appropriations simply expire.

This would be somewhat similar to the situation when Newt Gingrich forced the U.S. government to shut down in 1995 and 1996. However, it turns out the U.S. is prepared for such an eventuality. The Antideficiency Act allows for some government employees to remain paid and employed so that certain entitlement programs, such as social security and public safety operations, continue during a government shutdown.

Business of Supply

Canada has no such contingency.

Under the NDP plan, April 1, 2014, would be a dark day in Canadian history. The Canadian Armed Forces would shut down. The RCMP would cease to be paid. The Correctional Service of Canada would shutter. Canadians would be worried about these events, but if they turned to the CBC for information on what was going on, they would be sorely disappointed, because the CBC relies heavily on annual appropriations. Canadians could call the government to register their concerns, but government phone lines would also go unanswered. The phones would ring, but no one would be there to answer them.

Automatic processes would continue for a little while. According to Hydro Ottawa, we would have about 40 days to pay the bill before the power would be cut off. Without the ability to pay rent, many departments would be evicted from their office buildings across the country.

Almost certainly, other countries would want to offer assistance to the suddenly governmentless Canadians; however, all of our embassies abroad would be closed. Here in Ottawa, the Department of Foreign Affairs would be dark.

Canadians are a resilient group of people. We would adapt. I am sure many Canadians would enjoy the now unfettered access to cross-border shopping. Let us remember that CBSA would not be functional anymore.

Luckily, many services Canadians rely on, such as health and education, are delivered by our provincial governments. However, almost every province depends on the CRA to collect their income taxes. Provinces that have HST rely on the CRA to collect that as well. Provincial governments also rely on billions in transfer payments from the federal government for health care, education, housing and other social services. These payments would stop because there would be no staff to administer them. Provincial governments would be left scrambling to find enough funding to deliver the services Canadians rely on from them. They would have no choice but to run massive deficits.

Did the New Democrats consult with the premiers about this? How would the NDP premiers of Nova Scotia and Manitoba feel about their federal party's plan? Let us remember that Canadians would need that provincial health care, as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency would also be completely de-funded. There would be no more food inspections.

Canadians should also be rightly concerned about what would happen to their CPP, their EI and their OAS and GIS under this plan. The funding for those transfer payments are statutory in nature and do not need annual renewal, but there would be no one to administer those programs. There would be no civil service left. We simply do not know how long those programs would last; maybe it would be until their hydro was cut off. We do know that if anyone had a problem with these services, they would be out of luck.

These are the problems that Canadians would immediately face. There would be nothing for the granting councils or the Canada Council for the Arts. Government research in investment would cease to exist.

This is not a worst-case scenario; this would be the outcome of the NDP motion.

I was shocked yesterday to read in an interview with the New Democratic treasury board critic that he expected the Senate staff should simply volunteer their time to pass bills. It is as if none of the hard-working staff of the Senate has a family to feed.

It was always the contention of the NDP that it was the party of labour. How does it justify throwing 400 people out of work and then telling them that instead of finding new work, they need to show up and volunteer their time? Not only that, this army of 400 volunteers would have to spend their own money to print such things as the order paper and *Hansard* just to keep the place running.

● (1715)

We are left with three possible explanations for today's NDP motion, none of which are particularly comforting.

The first possibility is that this is nothing but a cynical political ploy.

The second, as I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, is that maybe the NDP just does not understand how our government works.

The third explanation is the most concerning. It is that maybe we are witnessing the NDP's version of federalism. By reducing the Senate's appropriations to zero, the NDP would be dropping an atom bomb into the middle of federal-provincial relations. The provinces would be forced either to consent to the NDP's abolition plan or be faced with no tax money and no transfers on April 1.

I think I have said enough to demonstrate that this motion is entirely idiotic. Not only does it fail to respect the Supreme Court and the provinces, not only does it let the government off the hook in terms of the debate about the role of the PMO in the \$90,000, but it is insane. It is idiotic. It is stupid. It is farcical. It would result in the complete shutdown of the federal government and many of the provincial governments.

It obviously shows the NDP is not fit to govern. The best advice I can give to sensible NDP members of Parliament is to vote against their own ridiculous motion.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. speaker, I think it obvious that when the Liberals were in power, they could not clean that House. The Conservatives cannot clean that House now either.

Let me read something that one of my constituents wrote. This is from Marg McMillan from White River:

Constituents in our neck of the woods are extremely disappointed with the government that the 3 known individuals as there may be more who have scammed the people and are not being fired. Even though the funds upon audit are repaid that does not excuse the theft—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has a point of order.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, did we not just all learn in question period that we, under the big green book, are not able to bring specific constituency examples into this House?

Business of Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre for her intervention. I will take a look at that. Earlier today I think the reference was made by the hon. government House leader in respect to questions during oral questions.

Having said that, I do recall that the practice of citing specific references and/or quotations from individual constituents or Canadians is not something that is encouraged in the House.

I will look into that and get back to the House as may be necessary.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, if we are not here to represent our constituents and bring their views, and say what they are telling us, then who the heck are we here for?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I think that is probably just adding to the same point.

As I said, we will get back to the House as may be necessary on the question.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mr. Speaker, she goes on to say:

They cannot explain this theft away with "I did not understand"...it was a fully knowledgeable theft. Personally I will check out exactly what these overpaid politicians do in the Senate.. it is some sort of retirement position I think. The entire government in my mind look like fools not demanding firing.

On that note, the issue before us is to not fund the Senate. As for dealing with the Constitution after that, we are prepared to deal with that after the fact. This is the biggest piece that we have here.

On this specific note, when someone is caught red-handed, as Mr. Duffy and some other senators have been, is it the opinion of the Liberals that such people should not be above the law? Do they think they should also be charged by the police?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, of course we think that people should pay the money back, and then it is up to the authorities to decide whether or not to lay criminal charges.

However, I wonder if the hon. member was listening to my speech. I tried to explain in very simple language that this is a ridiculous motion, the effect of which would be to close down the whole federal government.

I do not know how any of the NDP members can continue to support their own motion, which would have disastrous effects on this country and which would never have been put by anybody who had the slightest understanding of how the government works.

• (1720)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. I just want to advise hon. members that there is a great deal of interest in questions and comments today. I would ask hon. members to keep their interventions to no more than a minute. That also applies to those who are responding.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the comments from the hon. member for Markham—Unionville. Specifically, I have two questions for this gentleman, who is a lawyer and has a lot of background.

It is somewhat alarming that the motion put forward by the NDP today is not constitutional. We heard earlier from the hon. minister that even a five-year-old child has to be told about process and the importance of process.

Therefore, my first question for the hon. member is, could he comment on the process, because I personally found the speech somewhat alarming?

As for the second question, when there was a coalition being considered in 2008, as the member would know very clearly, the New Democrats were already naming whom they would appoint to the Senate. Could he enlighten us on that issue?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I do not take this as an insult, but I am not a lawyer; I am an economist.

The process was described in that long quote I had from my colleague as "one sensible process". This motion is just ridiculous, as I said earlier, but we cannot really do anything on the process until we hear from the Supreme Court. We had recommended a year ago to refer to the Supreme Court and finally the government has. Therefore, I do not think there is much point in having big discussions on Senate reform until we hear from the Supreme Court, because that will tell us the legitimate constitutional paths.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed the speech by the member for Markham—Unionville. He posed a question that I would like to hear the answer to.

He indicated that this motion is grounded in one of three possibilities: it is a cynical political stunt, it reflects a misunderstanding on the part of the NDP as to how government works or it reflects the New Democrats' idea of federalism.

The member left it as an open question. I would invite him to answer it.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I would say it is all of the above, particularly one and two; I am not so sure about three. It is certainly a political stunt because the New Democrats realize the Senate is unpopular these days so they want that message out. As I indicated in my speech, it certainly reflects a total misunderstanding of how the government works.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable for an experienced member to make such comments. They are patronizing, almost colonial comments. It is unacceptable to say that it is impossible to carry out modern parliamentary reforms. The people are seeing all the scandals that have unfolded in the past two weeks, or in the past few years in the case of the Liberals. It is possible to carry out reforms.

As for effectiveness, the Senate rates a zero. If its activities were included in Canada's GDP, we would be one of the worst countries in the world. The Senate is not effective in the least, it has a high absenteeism rate and we do not get our money's worth. The member just said that everything would shut down if we stopped funding the Senate. If they truly want to serve their country, senators should volunteer their time. In any event, they were elected by the Liberals and the Conservatives.

Business of Supply

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, what is completely unacceptable is the NDP's ridiculous motion. The NDP should know that there are certain rules. We have a Constitution and we must abide by it. We have no choice. We will have to wait for the Supreme Court decision to find out the details. However, most experts believe that the consent of all the provinces and the federal government is needed to abolish the Senate. It cannot be done with just an NDP motion. It would take the approval of at least the majority of the provinces, if not all of them.

• (1725)

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not a serious proposal from the opposition. This is great for grandstanding in the House of Commons in the Ottawa bubble, but this is not a serious motion.

The NDP wants to abolish the Senate, but it knows that it does not have the support to do that in this country. Whether we believe it requires the 7/50 amending formula or it requires the unanimity of 11 legislatures in this country, the NDP realizes it does not have the support for that.

Not to mention that a majority of its Quebec caucus has not responded as to whether or not the province of Quebec would demand its Meech Lake five demands: the recognition of Quebec's nationhood, appointments to the Supreme Court, vetoes for all provinces, opt-out provisions and control of immigration by provincial governments. They have not responded as to whether the province of Quebec would demand that ahead of any abolition of the Senate.

Instead, what the NDP is trying to do is something through the back door that it cannot accomplish through the front door. It reminds me of the tactics, frankly, of what the Republicans are doing in the United States. The affordable care act, otherwise known as Obamacare, passed in the legislature. Instead of ensuring the successful implementation of the act, the GOP has decided to starve it of its funds so as to not allow it to operate.

Clearly, this motion is nothing more than political grandstanding. It is not a serious proposal from a government that is supposed to be in-waiting.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I agree with what my colleague said. However, I also think that the government's current plan is not serious. It is also trying to do things through the back door by avoiding the Constitution.

If we have an elected Senate, which is what the government wants, but we have no change in the distribution of seats, it would be grossly unfair to British Columbia and Alberta, which only have 6 seats each versus New Brunswick, which has 10, P.E.I., which has 4, and so on. If we are going to have an elected Senate which is more powerful, we have to first deal with the distribution of the seats. The current government appears not to be willing to do that.

However, again, we will have to see what the Supreme Court says.
[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Halifax.

Josée gets up very early in the morning and takes her child to daycare. She has been working in a grocery store for 15 years. She has no pension and is not unionized.

Roger, my neighbour in Saint-Jérôme, rises at 5:30 in the morning and gets in his car. He used to work at Air Canada, but was later transferred to Aveos. Aveos closed. Now he is forced to commute from Saint-Jérôme to work in the east end. He is on the road for an hour and a half every morning.

Denise is 75 years old. She has health problems. She goes to the hospital and waits 15 hours in the emergency room. She has trouble getting the health care she needs. She has no support at home.

While this goes on, what is Parliament doing? What is being done by the people sitting in front of me and next to me—the people who were elected to run this country? We are busy discussing people who were not elected and use a lot of taxpayers' money illegally. When Josée, Roger and Denise come home in the evening, they turn on the radio and hear about Duffy, Wallin, Brazeau and Harb, and they are fed up with politics.

There is a moral and social crisis in Canada regarding the political elite. It starts with the municipalities. People are disgusted by what is happening at the municipal level. They are disgusted by what is happening at the provincial level. At the federal level, it is more than people can stomach. It is incredible that there can be such an abuse of funds, especially since these people are not legitimately appointed. Who are these people in the Senate?

Before the scandals broke, I was not really interested in who sits in the Senate. However, I recently looked up the senators and why they are there. It is despicable.

We cannot accept that a political instrument such as the Senate is used to reward fundraisers. It is unbelievable. The list is long. Liberal and Conservative fundraisers have equal representation. They are obviously friends. A buddy is a buddy. I look at the list of people who have been appointed to the Senate by the Conservative Party and I just cannot believe it.

I will start with the Liberals' friends. David Smith is a chair of the national fundraising campaign. James Cowan was vice-chair of the Nova Scotia fundraising campaign. I have a couple of examples for the Conservatives. Irving Gerstein was a party fundraiser. Judith Seidman was co-chair of the leadership campaign. Other buddies include Donald Neil Plett, president of the Conservative Party, and David Braley, a major donor. The list goes on. It is a cushy job for party cronies. We cannot accept that. It is an incredible situation.

Can someone in this House tell me why Jacques Demers is a senator? I like the man. I liked him as a hockey coach. However, he is now behind the bench of a team that is asleep at the switch. What is Josée Verner doing there? People did not vote for her. She is a failed candidate. Right after the election they sent her to the Senate. That is just incredible. It is outrageous. People are fed up. They are disgusted with politics. They do not want to vote any more, and that has been brought about by the people who are governing this country in a totalitarian and, I dare say, unethical manner. It has come to this.

Business of Supply

My ancestors fought in Lower Canada for the 92 resolutions, for responsible government, for elected individuals who would be accountable to a parliament for making laws and administering them and who would be accountable to the electorate. My ancestors were hanged for that.

● (1730)

Here we have a situation where people can overturn the decisions of the public's elected representatives without being accountable to anyone. That is unacceptable.

The Liberals are scaring people. They are saying that our motion will paralyze Parliament and that we will not be able to pass any more laws. They have spent the past 30 years scaring Quebec and the rest of Canada. It is unacceptable that they are standing and trying to ridicule us when, basically, they are the ridiculous ones in the eyes of history.

They forced the Constitution down our throats even though Quebec did not sign it. Now, they are saying that this is unconstitutional and so on. Where was their respect for the democratic process when the Constitution was signed in 1982? They had no respect. I am getting carried away, but I believe that things need to change.

Moving on to the subject of volunteering, I have worked with exceptional men and women in the community over the past 15 years. Every day, hundreds of people are working for causes they believe in, whether it is supporting abused women, women's groups or food banks. Every day, hundreds of people give of their time to food banks to help people living in poverty and isolation.

I am told that the politics could never attract volunteers to improve the country's situation. I do not believe it. I have seen people work hard, raise money, go into hospitals and go into schools to help children. Why would such volunteerism not be appropriate in politics?

I have seen people get involved in protecting wetlands and fighting against oil development projects that threatened the environment. I have seen volunteers get involved in sports organizations across the country. It is not ridiculous to propose that senators not be paid. It is an idea that I really like.

When we talk about the amending formula, we must remember that Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Chrétien patriated the Constitution without Quebec's consent, obviously, and imposed an unworkable amending formula on us. They locked the Constitution up tight, and now that we are trying to make reforms, we are being told that changes require the support of 50% of the population and seven of the provinces, yet Quebec did not support this amending formula. In fact, people do not agree with the Constitution.

Was the Constitution ratified at the national level? Was a vote held on it? People are discouraged and fed up with the situation. In that regard, today's debate is moving things forward. I am talking primarily to the people who are watching at home. I am not trying to convince the people in power, because they are cynics. They use their power for their own purposes.

If Canadians want responsible MPs who will improve the political situation in Canada, they should vote for the NDP.

● (1735)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we go to questions and comments, the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate taking place on this motion and it concerns me a great deal that we are bringing disrespect on Parliament and the Senate. I would ask, through you Mr. Speaker, that members of this House show respect for this institution as it is structured in the Constitution of this country, the basic law of the land.

For reference, pages 614 and 615 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, say: "Disrespectful reflections on Parliament as a whole, or on the House and the Senate individually are not permitted. Members of the House and the Senate are also protected by this rule".

It goes on to say, on page 615, that: "it is out of order to question a Senator's integrity, honesty or character".

I think it is clear what the rules of this chamber are, and I ask, through you Mr. Speaker, that all members respect the rules of this place, the rule of law, and that we all follow that as this debate unfolds over the rest of this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills for his intervention in this matter. Members will be reminded that when they are compelled to attribute characterizations or descriptions of other hon. members, be they members here in the House or otherwise, that is an area that should be used with extreme care and caution, as the member for Wellington—Halton Hills has pointed out. It is a long-standing practice of the House that while members can bring strong arguments in terms of the specific question they have to present, they should avoid these kinds of characterizations because they can quickly move into the area of unparliamentary debate. Of course, as members know, that would be ruled out of order. I thank hon. members for their attention and thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for his comments on the matter.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans.

● (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord. I listened carefully to his speech. However, I am not sure whether he himself paid attention to what he was saying. He was getting really agitated, practically tearing his hair out. At some point he could not even understand why I was applauding him.

I was applauding to show my support for the May 2, 2011 election result in the Louis-Saint-Laurent riding. I respect this result. I would like him to respect all the other results, including those that legitimately allowed the government currently in power to sit to the right of the Speaker.

Business of Supply

In his speech he ranted about all kinds of issues under provincial jurisdiction, over which we have no authority whatsoever. The issue of the day is his proposal to abolish the Senate. I would like him to tell us what legal mechanism he intends to use to do that.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Mr. Speaker, I do feel strongly about the Senate and the use of public funds by unelected individuals who were appointed so they could take advantage of these privileges. We are not proposing to abolish the Senate.

Here is what the motion says: “That all funding should cease to be provided to the Senate...”.

We are not talking about abolishing the Senate. That is not what the motion is about. We want to ensure that senators do not receive different treatment than most Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member on constitutionality in terms of what the New Democratic Party has before us today. If we look at the substance of the motion and the debate, it would appear that the New Democrats do not understand the way in which our process works in Canada and that there are some constitutionally challenged ideas that are being talked about by the NDP. Do New Democrats have any form of legal opinions that would support their position that we can take every nickel or dime away from the Senate and that it would allow us to be in compliance with our Constitution?

Does the member have a list of provinces that support what the New Democrats are proposing, given that there is a 7/50 rule across Canada in terms of constitutional change?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Conservative government has increased the Senate's budget and decreased the budget of the House of Commons. Since the Senate's budget has been increased, it can logically also be decreased. I do not see how that is connected to the Constitution in any way.

The Liberal Party's constitutional experts are the same ones who patriated the Constitution and shoved it down Quebecers' throats. They did so without Quebec's approval.

I do not think this is a constitutional matter. This is about logic, pure and simple.

People might be prepared to give their time to reflect on our country's future without being paid and without an unlimited budget.

[*English*]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak to this. I have been listening to the debate in the House and I heard the member for Markham—Unionville say in his speech that the motion was poorly worded. I want to challenge that because I think it is not a poorly worded motion; the motion is quite beautiful. It is beautifully worded and it is elegant in its simplicity. It says:

That all funding should cease to be provided to the Senate beginning on July 1, 2013.

● (1745)

I do think it is beautiful in its simplicity. We need to do something about the Senate. Look at the situation we are in right now when it comes to the Senate.

What are the facts? What do we know? We are constantly being told that the Senate offers us this house of sober second thought. I think that is debatable. I will return to the sober second thought part.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills pointed out that we need to speak respectfully about Parliament. That includes the Senate, the other place. I would argue that it is the senators who are bringing disrespect to Parliament, not us who are here in this chamber. They are the ones who are bringing disrespect to Parliament.

This so-called house of sober second thought, these sober second thinkers, are also filing false expense claims. We know that to be true. They are also misleading the public and Parliament about where they live. We know that they are abusing public funds. We know that they find the forms that ask them where they live to be confusing and difficult to understand. We also know that they are driving around with expired licence plates.

I think that Canadians have paid enough money for this undemocratic institution and it is time that we stop spending millions of taxpayer dollars on this institution. The Senate is costing taxpayers \$92.5 million a year. Frankly, that is \$92.5 million too much.

The member for Markham—Unionville said that this motion is idiotic. Tell that to the British House of Lords because they do not get paid as a right. They do not get paid for being lords. They do not have a salary in the House of Lords. Those folks get paid sort of a per diem for showing up. I would ask this question. Is that an idiotic way of doing things?

The Liberals and Conservatives insist that we cannot do anything about the Senate. They say it is too big a constitutional issue, and once we open up the Pandora's box of constitutional issues no one will ever agree. We will go into this dark abyss of constitutional pandemonium, never to escape. Give me a break.

The NDP does not believe this. That is why we are talking to Canadians first. That is the first step, talking to Canadians. I have been going door-to-door quite a bit at home, and at every single door people are asking if I can tell them what is going on with the Senate. This is what folks are talking about. We want to tap into that and see what people are saying. The NDP has launched our petition to roll up the red carpet, which people can sign, saying that this institution is outdated and it is time to get rid of it.

After talking to Canadians, we need to start talking with the provinces. It is not that difficult. We can start with these baby steps. Let us talk to the provinces. Unfortunately, we have a Prime Minister who refuses to meet with the provinces. He has not been to the Council of the Federation. I cannot remember when he was there last, or if he was even there.

Business of Supply

The Liberals and Conservatives are insisting that they cannot do anything, that it is sad and unfortunate but their hands are bound. This is it. It is lovely. It is simple. It is elegant. Here is a solution. Let us pass this motion. There is nothing stopping us from doing this.

I have heard some comments about the constitutionality of this motion. It is not unconstitutional to adopt a motion saying that the Senate should be defunded. The constitutionality of any subsequent legislation is a separate issue. This in itself is no problem. The sole purpose of this motion is the signal that it sends that the Senate is an illegitimate drain on the public purse.

Let us do it. Let us move to the House of Lords model. Those guys are doing just fine. I do not think what they are doing is idiotic. There is not a lot of response to that. The cat has their tongues, the Liberals and Conservatives, because I do not think they treat the Senate as a house of sober second thought. They treat it as a fundraising arm for their parties. They want to keep appointing senators so they can go out and raise money for their parties on the taxpayer's dime.

Let us look at who is in the Senate. There are David Smith and James Cowan, and they are the co-chairs of the Liberal campaign. They are campaign directors. I get along with James Cowan. I have worked with him. He is a nice guy. We are both from Nova Scotia and we have done some work together. We get along because we have a lot in common and we both like politics. I also get along with the Halifax Federal Liberal Riding Association president, Layton Dorey. He and I have a lot in common. We like to talk politics and we can shoot the breeze. I get along with these folks, but there is a big difference between Layton Dorey and James Cowan, because Layton Dorey is not being paid by taxpayers to do the work that he is doing for the Liberal Party.

Let us look at the Conservatives. The chief fundraiser and chair of the Conservative Fund Canada is a senator. They should go for it, fill their boots, do all the fundraising they want to do, but they should not be able to do it on the taxpayer's dime. We should not be paying for a fundraising arm of these political parties. Let us remember that they are being paid, in total, \$92.5 million. Senators are campaigning for the Conservatives and Liberals, while being paid by taxpayers and I do not think that is what Canadians are paying them for. If they are doing useful work for those parties, then those parties should be paying them out of their own coffers as fundraisers.

The *raison d'être* of the Senate, when it was formed at Confederation, was one of sober second thought, with representatives from the provinces bringing regional interests to Parliament in doing that kind of political analysis on policy debates. Senators were supposed to be an integral part of our democracy, but we have seen anything but in the past 146 years. Fundraisers, failed candidates and senior party staffers have all been appointed time and time again to the upper chamber and the reality is that senators appointed by partisan prime ministers have a poor record of defending our regional interests.

When I first arrived here, I spoke with our then democratic reform critic from Hamilton Centre and told him that I was from Nova Scotia, that there were Nova Scotian senators and I was conflicted about our position on abolishing the Senate. He asked when was the

last time a senator ever stood up for Nova Scotia. I realized that they did not, they just did what their parties told them to do.

Here is what they are told to do. The Climate Change Accountability Act passed in the House by a majority of democratically-elected members of Parliament. We acted on the will of the people and the will of the people was to pass climate change accountability legislation. When it got to the other place, it was voted down. This is what Marjory LeBreton, the Conservative Senate house leader, stated:

We were as surprised as anyone else that the Liberals forced a vote on second reading of this bill. But once the Liberals presented us with an opportunity to defeat the bill, we of course were going to take it and defeat the bill because the government does not support this bill. The fact of the matter is this was not part of a strategy, this was something that landed in our laps. It was an opportunity to defeat the bill and we took the opportunity.

That evening I was upstairs in this very place with Jack Layton, our then NDP leader. I had never seen him so angry. I had never heard him yell. He was beside himself with rage about how a bill in the House of Commons could be passed by democratically-elected MPs and when it got to the Senate, the senators said it was gone. It was unbelievable. It is \$92.5 million too much.

● (1750)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have spent a number of years in the House and, to be quite frank, I have never seen a motion from the opposition that is so absolutely ludicrous. It shows that the New Democrats have no respect for our Constitution or they do not understand.

We know we have to make changes to the Senate. We are going through a process and have referred it to the Supreme Court. We heard some great words from some of the Liberals in terms of what would actually happen if this motion passed. She needs to explain to Canadians how she could be so irresponsible as to speak to this motion.

● (1755)

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I go back to the beginning of my speech, where I pointed out that this was the situation in the House of Lords. It is not unheard of. It is not silly. It is not some crazy concept. This is the way it is in England. They get their *per diem* if they show up and do the work, but it is not a salary as a right.

If we de-fund the Senate, this is the first step. What the heck? There would be a lot of Canadians out there who would be pretty interested in volunteering in Parliament. They actually care about what is going on in Parliament. They want to see good legislation pass. If we had volunteers, they would not go across the country fundraising for the folks in here.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested when the member said she was here with Jack Layton and she went on to say something. I presume that she would have said something like he kicked something.

Business of Supply

I remember the late Mr. Layton when he was on the city council in Toronto. We talk about people at the trough, we talk about people who are getting \$90,000 and all that kind of stuff. If I remember correctly, was it not Jack Layton who was living in co-op housing when he and his spouse were city councillors? Is that not being at the trough?

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, if you find this unparliamentary, that is fine, but that is a gross question.

The member knows full well that Jack Layton was living in co-operative housing. It is co-operative housing, not low-income housing. He was paying according to his income. That is a Liberal smear campaign against Jack Layton. It is one of the grossest things I have heard in the House.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Halifax for speaking about our late leader, Jack Layton. Quite frankly, with regards to the member for Scarborough—Agincourt, it was absolutely contemptible that he would actually stand and say what he did.

Besides all of that, it is clear to me, although it is not as clear to my colleague down there. Then again, they are Liberals and I would not expect it to be clear. That is why they are like flags on a flag pole, whichever way the wind blows today, they will blow that way too.

The bottom line is that there are many folks who would be more than pleased to come here and serve their country. In fact, I could name five people in Welland for the member for Halifax. I have heard Senators say that is why they are there. They are there to serve our country. Let them come and serve, and we will give them per diem. However, they do not need to get paid. If the parliamentary secretary says that the only reason they come is because they get a salary, perhaps that is not who we want to have in there in the first place.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Welland for that perspective and for talking about his constituents, who would be proud to serve.

We are forced to do this because of the inaction of the other two parties over all this time. They keep insisting we cannot do anything. The Conservatives are saying that we need to reform the Senate. They need to show it to us. What are they doing? We have had no action on this. The Prime Minister campaigned on this, yet there is no action from the Conservatives.

If the Conservatives are actually serious about reform, show it to us. However, they have not, so here we are. We are offering a simple scalpel-like opportunity to drain the senators of funding so we can all move on, end of story.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the NDP's motion to de-fund the Senate.

Our government and our party have always been clear about our commitment to bring reform to the Senate chamber. We pledged to do this in 2011 and we have taken real action toward achieving this goal. While this process is long and we wait to hear from the

Supreme Court regarding our reference, we are confident that our reforms have moved the ball forward.

We have proposed term limits because we believe that the legitimacy of the Senate suffers when its membership can be appointed for up to 45 years. We have also proposed a selection mechanism for Senate nominees, so that willing provinces and territories can give Canadians a say on who serves as their representative in the upper chamber. Taken together, these modest reforms represent a positive development in building a modern, representative democracy that has faith in its institutions.

Our government has long believed that the Senate status quo is not acceptable and must change in order to reach its full potential, as an accountable and democratic institution. With that understood, I have two goals for my remarks today, and I will address each in turn.

First, I will defend our government's plan for Senate reform for what it is: a practical effort to make the Senate democratically legitimate. Second, I will address the opposition motion and refute it. Not because the members are from a different party, but because their short motion represents everything wrong with their Senate reform position. We have a duty to point out those problems for the record. I believe that our reforms are sound, pragmatic and achievable and that they would lead to a fundamentally more accountable and effective upper chamber.

I am honoured to share my thoughts with members today, so let us begin.

I have said our government has long been committed to Senate reform. The Senate must change and we intend to make it happen. By referring questions to the Supreme Court, we have signalled that it is time for action that concludes the commitment we made to Canadians during the last federal election. We look forward to the opinion of the Supreme Court on these questions, as they will give Canadians certainty about what is possible and how reform must be done.

The rules should be clear for all to see. Our government believes that Senate reform is needed now and we are committed to pushing a practical, reasonable approach to reform that we believe would help restore effectiveness and legitimacy in the upper chamber. If we have learned anything from the history of the 1980s or 1990s, we know Canadians do not want another long constitutional battle that flares tempers and detracts from the government's top priority, which is the economy.

Through the reforms that our government has tabled since we have been in government, we have demonstrated that we are willing to take concrete action to fulfill our commitments to Canadians. As we said, our reforms aim to accomplish two things.

First, we are in favour of a democratic Senate. We support establishing a framework for provinces and territories to establish democratic consultation processes to give Canadians a say in who represents them in the Senate.

Second, we support term limits for senators. We have consistently supported legislation to introduce term limits for new and recently appointed senators, which would ensure the Senate would be refreshed with new ideas on a regular basis.

Business of Supply

With respect to the first change, we believe prime ministers should have to consider the names of anyone selected using democratic processes. This is a good idea worthy of support. Why? The process would be entirely optional and inherently co-operative. It would allow the provinces to opt in and tailor their rules to fit their provinces' circumstances and the desires of their people. Alberta has been doing this since the 1980s, and our reforms would encourage other provinces to develop their own set of selection processes to give their citizens a greater voice in selecting their representatives.

● (1800)

Second, we have consistently said that we believe that the system is constitutional. Under section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982, Parliament has the legislative authority to amend the Constitution in relation to the Senate. By allowing the provinces to choose a democratic process for senate nominations, we are being open and co-operative. Our plan gives different communities the freedom to find different solutions to their representation challenges.

The other major initiative of our position is the imposition of Senate term limits. When we first approached this problem, we saw that the status quo was clearly problematic. Terms in the upper chamber could span several decades, and there were few mechanisms for removing senators from office once they had been appointed.

Polls have consistently shown that over 70% of Canadians support limiting senators' terms, but this goes beyond the obvious accountability reasons for limiting term length. Allowing a greater turnover of senators actually makes for a more representative Senate, one that reflects national minorities and current regional opinions. When senators have to be replaced every nine years, there will not be a representative body that looks like Canada did 50 years ago. This reform would increase accountability and make for a more relevant and representative Senate. These are changes we can support.

We have always believed that like the change in Senate terms from life to age 65, limiting the terms of senators is an amendment Parliament can make itself.

We have indicated previously that the property requirements should be examined due to the way property is dealt with in our northern areas and as a look toward modernizing the Senate.

Ultimately, we believe that the Senate must be reformed or else must be abolished. The Prime Minister has said this many times. The minister has said this many times, and I will repeat it many times. The Senate needs to reform, or it should be abolished. It is very simple. That is why we have referred questions to the Supreme Court of Canada on abolition. It is because we need certainty, if we can get it, on how to go about abolishing the Senate if it cannot be reformed. However, we are optimistic on this side of the House that the Senate can and should be reformed. We think Canadians agree with us that the Senate should be reformed and that politicians can come together to agree on that too.

If it is not possible, if the Senate cannot be reformed, because senators will not co-operate or because politicians cannot work together to solve a national problem, then it needs to go. It would need to go, because the status quo is unacceptable. That is something we all agree on, but our party, our government, is the only one with

an actual plan. We are the only ones who have put forward concrete steps to move toward a defined goal. The other parties just talk about ideas, but we have a plan.

The other parties just want to say the easy things. They say to just appoint better people. That is easy to say. They say to just make a better appointment process, but they do not suggest a better process. That is easy to say. They say to just get rid of it. That is easy to say and is very hard to do. The opposition is just taking the easy way out and saying what it thinks people want to hear.

This is what I think. I think Canadians want a government with a plan. I think Canadians want a government willing to deal with the hard questions and willing to work across the country to find a way to solve the problems of the Senate. It is very clear that the opposition parties will not do that and cannot do that. They just want to take the easy way out. Our approach is much better.

Our government is the only party to put forward a plan, and we have asked the Supreme Court to set out some of the rules to make sure that we can deliver on our promises to Canadians.

Let us look at what the NDP is offering Canadians. I think they will be disappointed.

● (1805)

The NDP proposes to de-fund the Senate rather than go through any hard work. I can only guess that it hopes that this path produces a de facto abolition of the upper chamber, since it would lack the funds to do anything. Senators and the Senate would still exist, of course, but they would be starved of money. The Senate would lack the ability to pay senators, fund their travel, or deal with expenses, which we have seen can be a bit of a mess.

The NDP motion would do more than that. The member for Pontiac, who introduced the motion, acknowledged that it would do more in an interview he did with *iPolitics*, just yesterday.

It would stop the funding for translators. It would stop the funding for research and committee support staff. It would stop the funding for administrative staff and perhaps even the security staff. Many people would be out of work, over 400 or so, and on Canada Day, no less.

Let us be clear. The member for Pontiac actually said that the Senate staff of public servants could "do some volunteer work". I am not sure that those people would see it the same way. Perhaps the Senate support staff could ask Ontario public servants about the days under the member for Toronto Centre and their experiences when they were de-funded, when the member, now in the Liberal caucus, was running Ontario as an NDP premier.

Business of Supply

The NDP motion is not a serious proposal. It is not a serious plan. It is simply a communications exercise. The New Democrats want stories about how they want to cut off the Senate but the other parties just stand in their way. However, their motion is not a serious plan.

When something is broken, the first thing one does is see if it can be fixed and maybe made better and stronger. The NDP wants to skip straight to the trash bin. That is where the NDP motion should have gone, because the NDP motion is not a serious plan, and because the members know it cannot work, and because it was done simply as a communications exercise, I would call it a gimmick. The NDP is pulling a gimmick today.

Do not get me wrong. I know that the member for Winnipeg Centre will want to object. The New Democrats are following the rules, yes. They say that they want to debate funding of the Senate, which they are doing right now. Yes, having a debate about how Parliament spends taxpayer dollars is important. It is probably the single most important thing we can do in the House. The reason they proposed this motion was as a communications gimmick. That is what I am saying, and I think it is clear to everyone paying attention.

For all the NDP's talk about democracy and accountability to Canadians and consulting with Canadians, it is just doing this to get more media attention. Regardless of the merits of the Senate, it is part of this institution and this Parliament and is part of the fabric of our constitution. Our institutions and our constitution deserve better than the NDP's attempt to score a few more media points.

If I recall correctly, just a few weeks ago, the NDP leader announced his grand plan to go across Canada to consult Canadians and convince them that the NDP's position is a plan. Is he done already? Is the NDP's nationwide consultation process finished after a couple of weeks? Has he forgotten about the Supreme Court of Canada and the reference it is considering this fall? Do the opinions of the Supreme Court, the provinces and Canadians across the country matter to the NDP? If its idea of a comprehensive consultation process is a press conference, then a gimmick motion in the House, I am not sure it cares about what anyone else thinks at all.

● (1810)

Again, the NDP is taking the easy way out and is ducking the hard work. To them, it is better to give up than to work together. That is what this motion says. It says that they are the NDP and they give up. This is the best they can come up with, and they are not even going to go through with their promise of a national consultation.

De-funding is not a plan. It is resignation and a declaration of failure. It is an admission that Canadians cannot be trusted if they are asked what they want to do with the Senate and that the provinces do not deserve to have a say in who represents their unique interests.

To take away the Senate, without significant other reforms, would seriously damage the representation of a large section of our country in our Parliament. If we abolish or de-fund the Senate without doing the hard work of consultation and negotiation, we lose this representation too. While according to polls, many Canadians might want the Senate abolished, just as many Canadians want the Senate reformed.

Our position is that the Senate should be reformed. If it cannot be reformed, then we should consider abolition. However, we should have enough respect for our institutions and our democracy to work toward the improvement of an institution in need of repair before turning to the proverbial wrecking ball.

We in this House owe it to Canadians to do better than what the NDP is asking for. I ask my colleagues to support our government's plan to move forward and become part of the solution.

In 2006, the Prime Minister sat before the Senate special committee on Senate reform to speak in favour of adopting Bill S-4, one of our government's first attempts at Senate reform. At the end of his presentation, he shared a short quote from a book he had recently reviewed. It said:

Probably on no other public question in Canada has there been such unanimity of opinion as on that of the necessity for Senate reform.

The book he quoted was entitled, *The Unreformed Senate Of Canada*, by Robert A. Mackay. It was written in 1926. I do not think I can make it any more clear how vital these reforms are. We need change in the Senate, but not the sort the NDP proposes.

The way forward is one that addresses the institution's shortcomings but strengthens it. That is what our government believes. That is what I believe. That is why I am proud to support our vision for Senate reform.

Our government believes that Senate reform is needed now, and we are committed to pursuing a practical, reasonable approach to reform. Improving our democratic institution is a significant responsibility. I am privileged to work alongside my hon. colleagues to meet this common objective. I encourage everyone to work towards achieving these reforms and giving Canadians a stronger voice in determining who represents them in the Senate.

Our plan is reasonable and achievable, and we are eagerly awaiting the opinion of the Supreme Court so we can move forward, confident in the legitimacy of our efforts.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, through our motion to cut off funding to the Senate, it is clear that we, the NDP, are trying to do what is best for the taxpayers by saving them \$92 million a year.

Can my Conservative colleague tell us why the Liberals are in favour of the status quo and why the Conservatives are still standing behind dishonest senators?

[*English*]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned saving money.

We have a Constitution, and we need to respect our Constitution. We need to have a process in place if we want to reform and change things. The NDP motion put forward on de-funding the Senate is not a solution. I am an engineer. This is failure.

Business of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. Here we have a motion that, I agree, is a bit of a gimmick. A joke of a motion, I think, summarizes it quite well.

We have many different issues before us. Here we are in the last days prior to the summer break with the last opposition motion. We could be dealing with things that are related to jobs, health care or a litany of issues. Question period after question period was on the Prime Minister's Office and the \$90,000 that was given to a particular senator. However, the NDP come up with a deceptive motion that really makes no sense whatsoever.

If the New Democrats wanted to be honest with Canadians they would realize that what they are proposing is just not viable, it is not doable. Recognizing that this motion attempts to do something that is impossible to implement, even if it passes, not only shows that the New Democrats do not understand the process of administration but it also highlights the fact that they do not understand that there is a constitutional requirement in order to—

● (1820)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have a Constitution, and we need to respect it.

I think that our proposal to the Supreme Court is a great proposal. The Supreme Court can provide us with a ruling on how to reform or abolish the Senate.

The Supreme Court is part of our democratic institutions. Let us find out what it has to say and not go the easy way of playing gimmicks and communication exercises, which does not serve Canadians.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Pickering—Scarborough East for a very articulate and well thought out speech in terms of what the responsibilities are, what the Constitution demands and where our government is planning to go.

I would like to ask the member this: if we were as irresponsible as the NDP and actually voted for this motion, what would the practical outcomes be and how would this actually completely impede the ability of our government and our country to continue to do the important work we need to do?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, what would happen if we supported the NDP motion? We would create unemployment as there are 400 people who are supporting the Senate. They would be unemployed. Is it the policy of the NDP to lose jobs instead of creating jobs?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Welland.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have listened, quite frankly, ad nauseam to the job creation plans of this government, but this is the first time I have ever heard that the Senate is a job creation plan. However, there is no question in my mind that it is. There is no doubt about it, when the Conservatives have been

jamming them in there like there is no tomorrow. I guess if that is job creation, then they can add those 60-odd members to the number that they make up all the time.

To my friend down the end for Winnipeg North, he has to get with the 21st century. The bottom line is, the Senate is an archaic institution. If they are not paid as of July 1, if they go on strike, the government can do what it has done to everyone else who went on strike in the public service and legislate them back to work. Let us see if they can do that. Let us see if they can manage that. If that is what you want to do—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Thank you Mr. Speaker. To the member, thank you for the question and the passion you are showing for the Senate. The fact that you would like to do something—

The Deputy Speaker: I caution the member to direct his comments to the Chair and not to the individual member.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Here we are and we are serious. We have a proposal. We have a plan. The NDP has a plan to de-fund the Senate. What kind of plan is this? I am just asking the hon. member to answer this question for Canadians. We are not here to make communication and to have a *Muppet Show*. We are serious here. We are elected by people to do things by the Constitution as was written.

● (1825)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to Bill C-7 and what is being described in this chamber as though it is Senate reform. I think it is actually a series of half measures that make a dog's breakfast and we cannot call that Senate reform. It would mandate provinces with no help for their expenses to hold elections for senators.

The rules, for instance, for campaign financing would vary from province to province. Senator by senator would have different rules on which their election was run. Municipal elections were also considered, but in municipal elections people can vote if they have a property inside the city limit, but they might have a residence somewhere else, so it forces the province to try to eliminate people who might vote twice for a senator of choice. At the end of all this mess, there would be a list from which the Prime Minister may or may not, at his discretion, pick someone or not. It is not reform, it is just public relations.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that our government has a plan. The NDP only criticizes. It does not have a plan. Its plan is to de-fund the Senate, throw staff and so on out of work. New Democrats do not care. We have a plan.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans. We only have a little over a minute, so a 30-second question.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I was not rising on questions and comments, sir. I was rising on a point of order, so I will wait my turn.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board.

*Business of Supply**And five or more members having risen:*

• (1830)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred until later today.

* * *

[English]

MAIN ESTIMATES 2013-14

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—THE SENATE

Hon. Tim Uppal (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved:

That Vote 1, in the amount of \$58,169,816, under PARLIAMENT — The Senate — Program expenditures, in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, reform of the Senate has been debated in the House of Commons and around kitchen tables in homes across the country since shortly after the Fathers of Confederation met to decide how Canada would be governed. All of us here today who have the privilege to take our seats in Canada's House of Commons, representing our constituents and voting on decisions that will make our country stronger, should think about them and give them our thanks. I know there were those who said it could not be done, or many said it should not be done, but there were enough who could see past the challenges and were willing to stake out bold policy challenges to create Canada.

We are still a young country, but if the Fathers of Confederation could see us now they would be proud. They would see that their bold efforts against the status quo have led to a strong stable nation, which is the envy of the world, and a beacon of peace, security and economic prosperity. However, what they would also see is a country that has changed since the soot-filled candlelit debates that the first MPs would have had in the House of Commons. Things have changed. Canada has changed. However, our Senate has not changed.

Throughout our history, there have been those on the side of reforming the Senate and those who have wanted to protect the status quo. It disappoints me to say that the protectors of the Senate have most often won that day. I do not know why, and I am not sure if Canadians know why either. When the only Senate reform measure we can point to throughout our nation's history is a reduction from lifetime appointments to a maximum term of 45 years, members can appreciate the difficulties that Senate reformers have faced. For me, it only gives me more resolve to take the first steps to reform the Senate. It is the right thing to do, and it is what Canadians want us to do.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to just comment that when the member for Markham—Unionville talked earlier and he called this motion embarrassing, farcical and idiotic, he was dead-on. I do not think in the 12 years that I have been here I have ever seen anything so asinine. When I had the opportunity to hear—

The Deputy Speaker: There has already been one ruling from the Chair about the language in the House at this time. I would caution all members to stay within parliamentary language. We have hardly any time left. Could I have a question so the member can respond?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I was not referring to any individual member or their behaviour here. I was talking about a motion in the House of Commons. When the member for Markham—Unionville went through the list of consequences of this motion, Canadians could not reach any other conclusion but this is ridiculous. My colleague talked about this being a media stunt. I would like him to address the issue. How could any journalist with any integrity see this as anything but ludicrous?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, I will say only a couple of words from Cicero:

[Member spoke in Latin, as follows:]

Quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend you for the admonition that you gave to my colleague from Pickering—Scarborough East. Of course, when he speaks he should address the Chair and only the Chair and should never use the second person, only the third person, but if it is true for him, it is also true for the member for Welland who had spoken only instants before and without any admonition. There should be a single standard for all members on both sides of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: I can assure the member for Ottawa—Orléans that I and all other occupants of this chair treat everybody equally. If the member for Welland did in fact use the individual “you”, I did not hear it, because there was a lot of noise in the House at that time.

It being 6:30 p.m., and today being the final supply day in the period ending June, 23, 2013, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and to put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the opposition motion.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

Business of Supply

The status quo in the Senate is not acceptable. We have heard from Canadians that they want the Senate to change. Our government recognizes that the Senate as it stands today must either change or, like the upper Houses of our provinces, vanish. Canadians know that the Conservative Party is the only one that has a real plan to make the changes that are so desperately needed. Senate reform is fundamental to our party. It is at our core. Our government has long believed that the Senate's status quo is unacceptable and therefore it must change in order to reach its full potential as an accountable and democratic institution.

The alternative is the continuation of a situation where senators are appointed for long terms without any democratic mandate. We have said "enough", and Canadians are with us in saying no to the status quo in the Senate. It is our government that has put forward proposals to elect senators and to limit their term to nine years, as well as measures to ensure tough spending oversight. These measures would immediately increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of our upper chamber. They would drag the Senate into the 21st century. Our proposals would deliver meaningful change within Parliament's authority to act now. Our new measures would make the upper chamber more accountable, more legitimate and more democratic.

Term limits in the Senate would also work hand in hand with our efforts to make government more representative. When senators have to be replaced every nine years, we would not have a representative body that looks like Canada did fifty years ago. These are the most recent of the practical changes that we propose in order to make our democratic institutions serve Canadians better.

However, change cannot come slowly enough for the Liberals and the New Democrats. Through nearly 20 hours of debate, over 7 days, we have heard opposition member after opposition member tell us why reforming the Senate was not possible. This is despite the fact that our government has received a strong mandate from Canadians to reform the Senate and, in fact, already have hard-working elected senators representing their provinces in the Senate.

•(1835)

All we learned from those seven days of debate was that the NDP and the Liberals would use any tactic to maintain the status quo and to block the reform that Canadians have been demanding.

We believe that encouraging provinces to elect senators and setting nine-year term limits are both reasonable measures that can be enacted within Parliament's authority. We have a plan. We have meaningful legislation. We have the support of Canadians.

What we did not have was an opposition who shared our urgent belief that Senate reform is critically necessary and immediately possible. Let us be clear. Our reforms are reasonable and achievable, and they lead us on the path to further reforms. The Prime Minister has been clear. The Senate must be reformed or it must be abolished.

While we are committed to debating the merits of Senate reform and specific proposals in actual legislation, the NDP and the Liberals are committed to telling us why they think our actions are unconstitutional. It is not that they have a plan themselves. They did not have a plan and they still do not have a plan. We are the only party with a plan.

To prove our commitment to either fixing or ridding ourselves of the Senate, we decided to ask the Supreme Court of Canada for an opinion on Parliament's authority to make these meaningful changes. For the first time in a generation, we asked the Supreme Court's opinion on what is required to reform the Senate and what is required to abolish the Senate. The aim in seeking a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada is to accelerate the pace of Senate reform and to lay the foundation for further reform to the Senate. It sends a strong signal to Canadians that we are ready to move forward, confident in the legitimacy and strength of our reforms.

The questions referred to the Supreme Court reflect the government's position that meaningful change to the Senate can be achieved within Parliament's authority. As I have said before, the Senate must reform or vanish. The questions asked of the Supreme Court seek legal certainty on the constitutional amending procedure for term limits for senators, democratic selection of senate nominees, net worth and property qualifications for senators, and abolition of the Senate. We are eagerly waiting the Supreme Court's opinion on these important issues. We said we would reform the Senate, and we will deliver.

Until the Supreme Court returns its opinion, we will continue to bring forward measures to strengthen the accountability of senators to taxpayers, including when the Senate adopted eleven tough new accountability rules governing travel and expenses that were put forward last week by Conservative senators. These strong new measures will improve accountability and prevent abuse.

We said we would fix the Senate's rules governing travel and expenses, and we delivered. Yesterday the Leader of the Government in the Senate introduced a motion asking the Auditor General of Canada to conduct a comprehensive audit of Senate expenses. These are strong measures that will protect taxpayers, and I outlined these improvements earlier today.

I spoke earlier about the protectors of the Senate, those who want the status quo; those who say it should not be done or it cannot be done. While we have been moving Senate reform forward with meaningful proposals, a reference to seek clarity from the Supreme Court and a tough new accountability rules, the Liberal leader and his party have once again staked the claim as the champion of the status quo in the Senate.

The Liberals go so far as to demand that the Senate remain unelected and unaccountable because it is an advantage for Quebec. This has come after 13 years of inaction, where the Liberal Party took every opportunity to protect the Senate from any and all reform. Actually, it is probably closer to a hundred years. The Liberals have abused the Senate in its current form for the past three generations.

Business of Supply

● (1840)

I can see why the Liberals are attracted to the status quo, but they certainly had an option. In all their years in office, they could have taken the initiative to correct the Senate. They could have admitted that it was wrong for Canada and Canadians, and tackled this democratic deficit. They had an option to stand up, but they chose to say yes to the old attitudes and the entrenched entitlements of the Liberal Party. It is time for the Liberal Party to stop protecting the status quo and to support our efforts for a more accountable, democratic, and representative upper house.

The Conservative plan to reform the Senate is clear and real. Our government wants to see changes in the Senate. The Liberals only seem to want it to remain the same. While the Liberals continue to stake out and vigorously defend the position of the status quo, the opportunistic NDP has shown, once more, that there is no plan too risky for it.

While Conservative members have been squarely focused on what matters to Canadians, jobs, growth and long-term prosperity, the NDP has decided to advance a gimmicky proposal to unilaterally defund the Senate.

To really appreciate the NDP's logic, I think it is worth reviewing the statements made by the NDP's senior treasury board critic, the member for Pontiac, just yesterday. When asked about the constitutional requirement to have the Senate pass legislation, he said:

There's no reason why the Senate can't do its job without funds. It's not an issue of constitutionality.

Listening to the NDP say that the Constitution is no big deal is also concerning. Canadians are learning every day how risky the NDP and its ideas really are. To him the upper chamber is rotten to the core, as the member has stated, casting a very wide net. The member for Pontiac is even willing to strip the jobs of some 400 Senate employees, who have absolutely nothing to do with recent events in the Senate.

To the NDP, it seems that the end always justifies the means. Better yet, when the member opposite was called out by his interviewer for being heavy-handed, he said that employees and senators could do some volunteer work. He expects our Senate employees to come to work but not get paid. Ask the member for Toronto Centre how that went for them.

The NDP knows that its motion is a gimmick and it will not work. Canadians are more than smart enough to see through the NDP's opportunism. It should trouble Canadians that the NDP has chosen to debate this gimmick that it knows will not work instead of important issues like job creation and economic growth. However, we should perhaps not be surprised that the NDP does not want to talk about the risky tax plan.

Our government's priorities are unchanged. The economy remains our top priority. Our Conservative government is focused on what matters to Canadians: jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity. We are proud of our record. Thanks to Canada's economic action plan, under our watch Canada has created over 900,000 net new jobs since the depths of the global recession. That is the best job creation record in the G7.

However, we can see where the NDP's priorities are. It could have chosen to use its debate time today on the important economic issues that Canadians continue to care about, such as, indexing tax fund payments to better support job-creating infrastructure in municipalities right across the country, reforming the temporary foreign worker program to ensure Canadians are given the first crack at available jobs, expanding tax relief for home care services to better meet the health care needs of Canadians, and removing tariffs on important imports of baby clothing and certain sports and athletic equipment.

While we are focused on growing the Canadian economy and jobs in the face of ongoing global economic challenges, the NDP keeps pushing job-killing carbon taxes and picking constitutional fights.

Canadians know full well that the NDP's claim that it wants to abolish the Senate is nothing more than a gimmick. The NDP has never brought forward a serious proposal, and Canadians know that it has no intention of ever doing so. They know its position is unrealistic and that the NDP is making it up as it goes along.

● (1845)

I am surprised that the NDP chose to debate its real record on the Senate today. Here are the facts.

In 2008, the NDP worked out a deal to appoint its own senators when it conspired with the Liberals and the Bloc to form a coalition.

The Leader of the Opposition has claimed to support abolition, yet introduced a bill to give the Senate more powers.

The NDP democratic reform critic, the member for Toronto—Danforth, provided further proof of the NDP's lack of sincerity when he said that the NDP is open to any kind of reasonable Senate reform.

On March 4, 2013, the NDP brought forward a motion calling on the government to consult with the provinces and territories on the steps necessary to abolish the Senate.

Two weeks ago, the NDP launched a website and said it would start a discussion with the provinces on whether there was support, as required by the Constitution, for abolition.

In January of this last year, the leader of the NDP said that abolition of the Senate would be a profound constitutional change and that his party and country had other priorities before opening up a constitutional debate.

The NDP record on Senate reform can be summed up in four points.

First, it claims it will abolish the place.

Second, the NDP repeatedly acknowledges that it does not have the constitutionally required support to actually abolish the Senate.

Third, it obstructs every government effort to bring accountability and transparency to a reformed Senate.

Fourth, it proposes gimmicky motions that it knows will not work.

Business of Supply

The NDP has frequently admitted that it needs the support of the provinces and territories to abolish the Senate, support that it knows it does not have.

The NDP's grand consultation with Canadians and the provinces was announced just two weeks ago. Is that grand consultation finished already? Did it take just two weeks? Did the NDP members even talk to anyone? Perhaps they have abandoned that consultation because they did not hear what they wanted to hear. We can only guess, as it took so little time.

Whatever the reason, it shows that the NDP is just not serious when it talks about the Senate. It does not matter whether it is talking about consultations or funding or anything else; it is just not serious. That is why it has never put forward a legitimate plan to reform the Senate.

We must then ask ourselves this simple question: is the status quo good enough?

It is clear that while there may be different approaches to solving the problem, we know that the status quo is not in the interests of Canadians. Our government believes that Senate reform is needed now. Canadians deserve better.

In closing, we are the only party with a real plan to reform the Senate. My constituents tell me that they want change. Canadians want change.

• (1850)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary's comments would be marginally more plausible if it were not for the fact that he serves under the most profligate and prolific abuser of the powers of the Senate in Canadian history.

He should be willing to admit that he and his party are part of the problem, not part of the solution. It would be almost comical, if it were not so sad, to watch successive Conservative and Liberal members of Parliament stand up here and squirm, wriggle and tie themselves in knots trying to defend the indefensible, when it is as plain as the nose on one's face that the Senate of Canada is beyond redemption.

I have not been here that long, but I have been here for 16 years and I have been watching these attempts to reform the Senate. Since 1972, there have been 28 significant attempts to constitutionally reform the Senate, and 28 times they have failed.

The position of our party has been consistent since 1933. In fact, the second term in our founding constitution, the second item for both the CCF and the NDP, is to abolish the Senate. We have been consistent.

My colleague is correct that back in 1867, working people immediately objected to the creation of a House of Lords. The founding fathers believed Canada needed an aristocracy because we had none, so they created an imitation of the House of Lords to make sure that the great unwashed did not pass any bills that might inadvertently share the wealth of the nation. They needed to—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of State for Democratic Reform.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the member talks about a solution and says that the Senate must change. Well, we also say that the Senate must change. Unfortunately, the member and his party have brought forward no real plan to change anything in the Senate. They bring forward a political stunt, a gimmick. It is deceptive and it is clearly unconstitutional.

The member just said that he has been here for 16 years. I will give him the benefit of the doubt that he knows that what they have brought forward is unconstitutional. He knows it will not work. The NDP is just being deceptive and not being honest with Canadians.

The fact is that we as a government, as a party, have a real plan to reform the Senate. It would include elections, term limits so that we can regularly refresh the Senate and tough new spending accountability rules.

We have a plan. Unfortunately, all the NDP has is a gimmick.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with many parts of the minister's presentation. Some I thought were unnecessary. If a minister wants to be taken seriously about advancing legislation, to withdraw rhetoric out of comments is, I think, important.

That said, he understands fully that if there to be significant change brought upon the Senate, it would require the support of provinces. That is why you identify this motion as a gimmick, and I do not discount your comment on it.

If I could just come shortly to my question—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The member is again repeating what we have had three times already in less than an hour. He is addressing comments to another member of the House rather than through the Chair.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, the past minister of intergovernmental affairs, Peter Penashue, would have been charged with the responsibility to deal with provinces on such issues. I cannot ask him that question because he is no longer here.

However, would he have been charged with consulting with the provinces? Would he have had the opportunity to meet with the provinces? Indeed, if those types of meetings took place, would the minister share with us where the provinces are with this issue?

• (1855)

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the member took objection to something in my speech. I suspect it was that I raised the issue that the leader of the Liberal Party said he supports the status quo in the Senate because it is better for Quebec. I do take great offence to that comment, and that is why I raised it.

Right across the country, we do have support for Senate reform. Coming from Alberta, I am very proud to say that our province holds elections for senators. We give Albertans an opportunity to have a say in who represents them in the Senate. British Columbia has looked at legislation. Saskatchewan has passed legislation. We are seeing out east in the Maritimes as well that New Brunswick is now putting forward legislation to have elections, so we do have support.

However, what we really need is a serious plan. What we see today from the NDP is not a serious plan. Again, it is a gimmick.

We have a serious plan that we put forward to Parliament, a bill. Unfortunately, that was delayed and stalled by the opposition. We have now put forward some questions to the Supreme Court to get clarity on Parliament's authority to make these changes.

The Prime Minister has been clear that if we cannot reform the Senate, it must be abolished, and that is what we are going to do.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for again clearly articulating our position on moving forward with Senate reform. It has certainly been a long-standing commitment. No one ever said it would be an easy task. I suppose that if it were an easy task, it would be done.

We have talked about the NDP and what was really a very gimmicky approach. I cannot think it was a very serious approach.

However, as a westerner, I have to say I was most offended by the comments of the Liberal leader on why we should maintain the status quo.

I would ask the minister to contrast the Liberal approach to the Senate versus our plan to move forward. It is not an easy task, but we are moving forward.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right. I was quite taken aback as well. For the Liberal leader to come forward and say that the Liberals support the status quo because it is of benefit to Quebec is just unfortunate and has no place here. The leader pits one part of the country against another. It is just not responsible.

Therein lies the challenge with Senate reform itself. The challenge for close to 100 years has been people who support the status quo, people who want to see the Senate continue the way it is today.

We as a government, as a party, have been very clear. We want to reform the Senate to be more democratic and more accountable. We put forward plans for elections to allow Canadians to have a say in who represents them in the Senate and plans for implementing term limits for senators so that we can regularly refresh the Senate. We have also presented tough new spending rules so that there is more Senate accountability to taxpayers.

We have a plan and we are moving forward with that plan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the mayors in my riding work hard every day. Only 21 of the mayors of these 23 municipalities receive a salary. These people truly represent the riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. They work hard for no pay. They receive an optional salary of roughly \$17,000 or \$20,000. That is not much for those who do real work on the ground.

The minister says this is a gimmick. I think it is a pretty clear plan. We will stop providing money to the Senate in order to address other priorities in the country. It is possible to reduce the amount of money that goes to the Senate.

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate that the NDP would consider what they have put forward today a real plan. This

Business of Supply

goes right back to the NDP's economic policies. They are not real plans, and it is obvious that the New Democrats are just not ready to govern.

We cannot just turn off the tap. We cannot just change the fundamental characteristic of the Senate without making some amendments to the Constitution and without consulting the provinces.

Their leader has said that before, and now, today, more or less because of opportunity, they are putting this measure forward.

I would have a lot more respect for the NDP if they wanted to debate such things as economic bills today. There is crime legislation we could debate. There are many other issues that are important to Canadians that we could be debating today instead of this silly gimmick that they have put forward.

• (1900)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of clarity and just to keep people posted on what is really going on tonight, we had a debate earlier on an opposition day motion put forward by the NDP. What we are debating now, and we should not confuse the two, is that we were asked, in the course of approving the main estimates, the instrument of supply for the Government of Canada, to vote to approve \$58,169,816 funding for the Senate.

I put forward a motion to pull that money out of the main estimates and consider it as a separate vote so we might consider, on behalf of the constituents that we represent, if this chamber really wanted tonight to vote for and approve another \$58,169,816 for the Senate of Canada. I wish it was a larger figure. I wish we could vote tonight at 10 o'clock on the whole amount that this money pit sucks up every year, but \$58 million, sadly, is the only amount that we deal with as a voted appropriation. The rest is statutory. That is what we are faced with tonight.

This is the debate we are having on behalf of our constituents. Do we, or do we not, want to keep shovelling wheelbarrows full of money down the hallway and dumping it into that black hole, that money pit of the Senate. That place is insatiable. It will gobble up every nickel we put there and there will be nothing to show for it except for a bunch of high flying, globe trotting, semi diplomat senators. The only thing they like doing more than fundraising for the parties they represent is flying around the world on the taxpayers' dollar as some kind of a quasi diplomat.

I will be the first to concede that it is difficult to abolish the Senate by constitutional amendment. That would take a referendum put to the people of Canada. Perhaps in the 2015 election it might be a good addition to ask the people of Canada what their wishes are at that point in time. However, one thing we can do tonight is cut off its blood supply. We can throttle it. We can shake it up. We can tell it in no uncertain terms that we are sick and tired of the shenanigans in the other place.

Business of Supply

I come from a time when we were not allowed to say the word Senate in the House of Commons. You, Mr. Speaker, would have called me out of order if I used the word Senate, never mind criticizing it. That place has fallen into such disrepute right across the country that even that rule is now out the window. The whole country is universally condemning and shouting it from the rooftops that they have had enough. They will not tolerate it anymore. They are sick of shovelling money into the Senate. It has gone from an impediment to democracy to an expensive nuisance to a national disgrace, and that is where we are right now.

Frankly, the monkey business around a few expense accounts is the least of the problem here, because there is absolutely nothing new about senators fudging expense accounts and wasting their dough.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have been listening to this debate for the last number of hours, both the previous debate on the motion put by the opposition and the debate currently on vote 1 of the estimates. Clearly, we need to be respectful of this institution of Parliament, which includes the Queen, the House of Commons and the Senate.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I ask for your guidance on this, but I quote from page 614 of the rules of the House, from O'Brien and Bosc. It says:

Disrespectful reflections on Parliament as a whole, or on the House and the Senate individually are not permitted.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to ask members in the chamber during this debate on the vote to exercise restraint in their reflections on this institution.

• (1905)

The Deputy Speaker: I think the difficulty we are having from the Chair, and this is the second time it has been raised in the House today in terms of language being used vis-à-vis the other House, is that although we have clear historical rulings, the reality has been that the practice with regard to comments regarding the other House have been allowed to expand quite dramatically over the last decade in this House.

However, I would caution the member for Winnipeg Centre to try to moderate the tone and at least stay within some reasonable parameters, understanding the emotion that this issue is generating.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that consideration. I would just remind my colleague of the doctrine of estoppel, but he can look that up later.

The monkey business around misbehaviour by senators is the least of the problems with the Senate. There is nothing new about senators misbehaving.

I remember a time when the Reform Party and the Canadian Alliance guys brought a Mexican mariachi band and a bunch of straw hats in front of the Senate and were doing a Mexican hat dance to protest the behaviour of one senator who had established himself on a beach in Mexico and was pulling down a Senate salary. That was Randy White, Monte Solberg, the current Minister of Immigration, Rahim Jaffer. Those guys were a lot of fun, and they were right at that time.

I remember when Deborah Grey bought 50 plastic pigs and placed them on the lawn in front of the Senate. The imagery I think she was trying to invoke, and correct me if I am wrong, was probably pigs at the trough. It is an unkind comparison perhaps, but it was her way of graphically illustrating what the Canadian public was feeling. That goes back 15 years. There is nothing new about that kind of misbehaviour.

However, the expense scandals pale in comparison to what is really wrong with the Senate and that is why the NDP, the CCF before it and the Independent Labour Party before that when J.S. Woodsworth was elected in 1921, were consistent in that they wanted the Senate abolished. It was a party of the people. It is natural that the party of the people would oppose the Senate.

As I said in earlier comments, one of the main reasons for establishing the Senate in 1867 was that the ruling class realized that they needed an equivalent of the House of Lords. We had no established aristocracy so one would have to be created to ensure that the great unwashed, that the working people of Canada, did not pass any legislation that might interfere with their ability to line their pockets with the resources of this great nation and they used their veto extensively.

In those early days, fully 10% of all legislation passed by the House of Commons was vetoed. Fully, 25% of it was amended significantly by the other chamber before it was allowed to succeed. It managed to gut and veto anything that might have been of benefit to the ordinary, freely-elected representatives of the people in the House of Commons. That was why it was created. It is no wonder we were opposed to it and objected to it. Believe me, that attitude and atmosphere continues to this day.

In the interest of full disclosure, I am one of the few New Democrats who was in favour of Senate reform instead of Senate abolition as a young parliamentarian. I took part in something called the Charlottetown accord constituent assemblies in 1992. I answered a letter to *The Globe and Mail* as a working carpenter, as an ordinary Canadian, to see if I would be interested in this. There were 160 Canadians chosen from all walks of life. We visited six different cities over six months and studied the Constitution and the Senate in great deal with the leading constitutional experts of the day. For six months, we were fully immersed in all the complexities and nuances of intergovernmental affairs, the jurisdictional powers of the Senate and the House, the configuration of the Senate and whether the Senate should succeed.

At that time, I believed the Senate could be reformed and it had merit, not because of the merit or the virtues of it but for one simple reason, and that being that in 1993 my party lost official party status, the party to which that I actively belonged. We were reduced to nine seats.

The Conservative Party of Canada suffered its worst defeat in Canadian history. It was reduced to two seats. Its caucus—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who is bad-mouthing me over there, but whomever it is has a lot of lip and a lot of nerve too. The member might get a fat lip by the time it is finished. No, I would not say that.

Business of Supply

The Conservative Party of Canada was reduced to two seats, but its caucus was 50 people because it had 48 senators and all their staff, resources and travel abilities. That is like 100 people fully salaried and fully staffed able to rebuild—

● (1910)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I take umbrage with what my colleague is saying. Clearly, his revisionist sense of history is not being genuine with this chamber.

The Conservative Party of Canada was founded upon two political parties, the Reform Party of Canada and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. In that particular election, I think the cumulative effect of those two numbers was far greater than two.

The Deputy Speaker: That was not a point of order. It is a point for debate, perhaps challenging some of the analysis of the member for Winnipeg Centre.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order—

The Deputy Speaker: It is not a point of order. We will resume debate with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, it was the Progressive Conservative Party that was defeated, from 202 seats down to 2. It was the worst defeat in Canadian history.

However, their caucus remained at roughly 50 people, because they had all these senators. I said to myself, “Self, it would not have hurt if we had a dozen or so senators in the other chamber to help us live through those dark years when we were reduced to nine seats”.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I'll give you some.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, again, we are getting some cheeky lip from behind me. You might want to call them to order at some point during my remarks. If you do not, I will.

I had an open mind when in 2006, the Prime Minister introduced their first Senate reform amendments. I actually attended the Senate with him. We were wearing the same tie that day, and I remember it quite well.

I was interested to see if Senate reform was possible. We had done our research. We knew that 28 times since 1972, significant attempts had been made to constitutionally amend the Senate, all of which failed.

For me, that same Prime Minister, who I actually had some confidence might take a shot at the Senate, let us down so profoundly that he was responsible for my joining the prevailing attitude of the party to which I belong.

The turning point for me was twofold.

First, the Prime Minister, in a petulant huff, decided that if he could not beat them, he would join them. As I said earlier, he became the most profligate serial offender in Canadian history in terms of stacking the Senate with his party hacks and flaks and bagmen and failed candidates. He appointed the president of the Conservative Party. He appointed the chief campaign manager of the Conservative Party. He appointed the communications director of the Conservative Party. He appointed the senior bagman of the Conservative Party. The whole Conservative war room was now fully staffed and funded by the Canadian taxpayer with not only their salary, but with their

four employees and with their travel privileges, doing full-time partisan work out of the Senate.

That offended the sensibilities of anybody who considered themselves a democrat. It should rattle the very foundations of confidence in our democratic institutions. There has been no more profligate abuse of the Senate. The whole war room was now chocked full.

He was not finished there. The Prime Minister has appointed some 50 senators. He was thumbing his nose. We now have full-time party fundraisers criss-crossing the country on the taxpayers' dime, engaged in purely partisan political activity. If there was any justification for a Senate, that was forgotten long ago.

The Liberals are no better. Both the chair and the co-chair of their national campaign happen to be senators. I will not name them. The Conservative that ran the entire Manitoba provincial election was a sitting senator. His salary should go against the spending limits of those other members of Parliament running.

Let us face it, the Duffy affair was only the tip of the iceberg. That is what really drew the public's attention. That was the catalyst that helped us focus down on what was really wrong here. This \$90,000 soft landing was not really about making him whole, because of the money he had to shell out. It was to keep his mouth shut for the extent of the political interference by senators in election campaigns, which was widespread throughout the country.

While I am on that point, if people here really believe that Nigel Wright dug into his own pocket and gave \$90,000 of his after-tax earnings to Mike Duffy, they are nuttier than a porta-potty at a peanut farm. Anybody with any common sense would know that that money will come from the Conservative fund of which Nigel Wright was a director for seven years and Senator Irv Gerstein is the other director.

That was it for me. I was absolutely fed up with this notion. I believe it is fitting and appropriate and maybe even poetic justice that the Prime Minister's monumental hypocrisy associated with the Senate is the one thing that has finally come to bite him in the what rhymes with gas.

This is the first thing that turned me off the Senate forever.

The second thing, though, was the direct political interference by the unelected, undemocratic Senate with the work and activity of the elected chamber where we as an elected House of Commons and representative of people passed the only piece of climate change legislation in the 39th, 40th or the 41st Parliament.

● (1915)

It was two years of negotiating and pushing by the former leader of the NDP, Jack Layton, that finally got this bill through, that finally got the approval of all the parties in the House of Commons. It wound up in the Senate, and without a single hour of debate or a single witness heard at committee, senators vetoed it and killed that bill. Now Canada, to its great shame, has no national climate change policy whatsoever.

Business of Supply

Even worse, just to add insult to injury, and what compounds the offence, in my view, is that the other bill the senators unilaterally and arbitrarily vetoed was the HIV-AIDS drugs for Africa bill. That was a real classy choice. They had no right to unilaterally and arbitrarily block and interfere with the will of the democratically elected members of the House of Commons. No one elected them to make legislation. No one gave them a mandate or the legitimacy to undermine democracy and act as stooges for the PMO. The Senate is not a chamber of any kind of thought, never mind sober thought.

In the same vein, more and more pieces of legislation are originating in the Senate. As I say, I this is my sixth term. I have seen a lot of legislation come and go. It used to be a very rare thing when a bill would come to the House of Commons labelled S-10, S-11, S-12, S-13. Now the Senate is cranking them out like there is no tomorrow. Half the legislation we deal with originates in the other chamber. The stuff we get to deal with is lumped together in an omnibus bill, 60 or 70 pieces of legislation all packed into one, on which we get a few hours of debate and a few witnesses at committee. The substantive material is all being generated in the Senate. Again, no one elected senators to make legislation. No one gave them the authority or mandate to make legislation. It offends the sensibilities of any person who considers him or herself a democrat.

When senators are not cranking out bills, they are gadding about the world like a bunch of globe-trotting quasi-diplomats. They have never seen a junket they did not like. They are always chock full of senators. We cannot afford that. We are broke. In case people forget, this is \$58 million we have to borrow to shovel over there another wheelbarrow full of money. The Black Rod is going to knock on the door and ask for his dough pretty soon, and these guys will dutifully trudge down there and deliver to keep their political machine bankrolled and funded, like an unfair competitive advantage, by the Canadian taxpayer. Can people not see what is wrong with that? It is enough to drive a person crazy.

One thing that really bugs me about the senators is that they are allowed to sit on boards of directors. The Senate of Canada is one big institutionalized conflict of interest. Let us look at one example. Senator Trevor Eyton, a Conservative senator, is CEO and president of one of the largest corporations in Canada, Brascan, which has been renamed Brookfield Asset Management. It happens to own Royal LePage. By some happy coincidence, it keeps winning the relocation contract for the military and the RCMP. It is a multi-billion dollar contract.

The Auditor General looked at it and said that the bid had been rigged to give the contract to Royal LePage. It was offensive to everyone's sensibilities. Then the court looked at and said that the bid had been rigged and awarded \$40 million in damages to the low bidder that should have won it, Envoy. Then, by some happy coincidence again, for a third time, in 2009, the cabinet got directly involved and made sure that Royal LePage, the very company this guy was CEO of and for which he continued to be the chairman of the board of directors into his Senate tenure, made sure that his company—let us face it; he has stock options in that company—got the same contract again. That should offend one's sensibilities.

If there were no other reason to deny it any money, it is that inherent conflict of interest that comes from what I call an institutionalized conflict that is the Senate of Canada.

• (1920)

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friend's remarks with a mixture of amusement and serious concern about the content of his remarks and the purpose of his motion.

Like many members, I was in this House on March 7 when the member for Winnipeg Centre rose in this House on a question of privilege in relation to laws, bills or motions before this House potentially being unconstitutional. It offended his privilege, yet we are debating a motion brought by the same member today that is clearly unconstitutional and ultra vires.

Leaving aside the personal slights and slugging the member has done here, I would like him to reflect on his question of privilege from March 7 and ask if his motion today is not violating the very privilege he raised on March 7.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague for Durham is new here, but I challenge him to find what is unconstitutional about moving a motion to have vote 1 pulled from the main estimates to be debated and voted on separately. That is all my motion aspires to do. It is to have a separate vote on the money allocated for the Senate of Canada, the \$58 million. I think he is the one who should maybe re-read what is constitutional and what is not.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I like the member for Winnipeg Centre. He is chair of our committee. I would say that we are friends, but we do not necessarily agree on everything. I would characterize his motion and the NDP motion of today as nothing less than idiotic, and that is being generous—

The Deputy Speaker: This is now the fourth time. It is the third time I have been up and the fourth time someone in this chair has been up. We are trying to control the language within this House, and the use of the term “idiotic” is simply not acceptable when one is describing legislation. I would ask all members, including the current member who is on his feet, to please temper their language.

• (1925)

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but I want to be clear. I was not referring to the member with that adjective but rather to his motion. Shall we say, “foolish”, or “not a good motion”?

I wonder if the member understands that according to Canada's Constitution, every bill, including supply bills, in order to become law, must be passed by both Houses of Parliament. If the Senate no longer exists, these laws cannot be passed, which would mean that, as of April 1 of next year, the federal government would shut down. There would be no more civil servants, and similarly, since the CRA collects the taxes for most provinces, many of the provinces would have to shut down. Is this a sensible idea?

Business of Supply

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague came in late and maybe does not realize the content of my motion, which is that we vote against and do not approve the \$58 million of the voted appropriation. There is statutory funding for the Senate that we have no control over, and it will flow no matter how we go about tonight's motion.

However, the member should consider the efficacy of the Senate. I have a lot of respect for my colleague as well. However, does he really think it is right to have this taxpayer-supported, partisan political machine over there, which is now running roughshod over his group too, because they are in the minority, and which is controlled by the PMO?

In whose interest is it to give this unfair competitive advantage to those two parties with their 50 or 60 salaried political fundraisers gallivanting around the country? Really, when we reflect on the matter, that is what is ridiculous and idiotic, in my view.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has mentioned a couple of bills that have been in the Senate that were not passed but were passed in the House of Commons.

Bill C-290, a single sports betting bill, was passed in the House of Commons unanimously on Friday. A number of members on the Conservative side chose not to speak to the bill or stand up against it, but when the bill went to the Senate, they actually tried to undermine it. Now we have a situation where organized crime and offshore betting sources will have support against a bill that would balance the system.

I would like my hon. member's opinion on the fact that we have a bill that was passed in the House of Commons, with no objection, because no member stood up and voted against it, but it still has not passed the Senate.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I am sympathetic to the situation my colleague is in, but he has to understand that the Senate has become an extension of the PMO. It operates under a shroud of darkness, essentially. Nobody really pays any attention to what goes on over there. That is where meritorious bills from the opposition go to die. That is why they send them there, and that is where they abuse them and misuse them.

I am the first to admit that there is room for and maybe even a benefit to some sort of consideration by some kind of council of elders. Douglas Cuthand is an aboriginal writer and leader who wrote a very thoughtful piece in the Calgary newspaper suggesting that we might want to model ourselves on the way aboriginal people view their elders. A Mohawk leader named Rarihokwats wrote a very thoughtful consideration that perhaps the Companions of the Order of Canada might be a suitable list where we might start looking for a council of elders to give advice and counsel on policy issues if we feel it is needed.

There is nothing the Senate has ever done that could not be done as well or better by others. There is nothing magical about the reports senators give or the policy investigations they write.

Mr. Bernard Trotter (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for his comments. I have a certain level of respect for him. He is a

very capable committee chair on the government operations committee.

Whether or not this motion is constitutional, it is a backdoor way of getting constitutional change. We starve an institution of funds, we basically abolish the institution.

My question for the member is about the nature of bicameralism. Big countries in the world, especially federations, whether it is the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Australia, India or Brazil, all have two Houses of Parliament. The only countries that do not are small countries. Federations, especially, have two Houses in their parliaments. The only big countries in the world that do not have second Houses are China and Iran.

Is the member suggesting that Canada should become more like China or Iran and have just a single House in Parliament?

• (1930)

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, the love of my life, Jenni, is from New Zealand. I think that is a sensible little country, which does, in fact, have a unicameral system.

The Province of Manitoba abolished its Senate in 1876, and others were not far behind: Nova Scotia in 1928; Quebec in 1968. Never mind having a Senate for the sake of having a Senate. What is it hoping to achieve?

The idea of regional representation has kind of been put to bed as more powers have gone to the provinces. Capable, competent provincial legislatures now very capably and competently represent the interests of their regions. We do not need this vestigial organ, as the leader of my party calls it. It is an expensive nuisance, and certainly, since it has been compromised and misused and abused to such a great extent, it is an impediment to democracy and does not enhance democracy.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Winnipeg. He mentioned Nova Scotia. The Premier of Nova Scotia is NDP, and I am sure that the Premier of Nova Scotia will not agree with the motion put forward tonight. Nova Scotians will want to look at it, assess it and ensure that there is equal representation right across the country, especially for the small province of Nova Scotia.

Why have the member and his leader not talked to some of the NDP premiers about what they think about the Senate?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, Premier Darrell Dexter favours Senate abolition and spoke to the matter just recently. The Province of Manitoba favours abolition. The Premier of B.C. favours abolition. The Premier of Saskatchewan favours abolition. The former Liberal premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, clearly came out in favour of abolition. I could go on. There are actually quite a few premiers who favour abolition, including both majority NDP governments in the country.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak again on this motion, which is similar to the motion on which I spoke earlier today.

Business of Supply

I have several points. My main point is that it does not make any sense, because it would close down the Government of Canada and many provincial governments. In Canada's Constitution, there is a provision that laws of Canada have to be passed by both Houses of Parliament. That means that we could not vote on supply bills, on which we will be voting later tonight, that provide the money for the coming year if the Senate did not approve them.

If all of the Senate's money were taken away, the Senate would not be able to approve this legislation. As of April 1 next year, the Government of Canada would be deprived of money. It would not be deprived of statutory programs, but money for the entire public service. We would have no CRA, for example, because nobody could be employed there. What does the CRA do? It collects the taxes not only at the federal level, but for all of the provinces as well, except for Quebec. It collects income tax, corporate income tax and HST for those provinces that have it. Not only would the federal government run out of money as of April 1, nine provinces would have a huge chunk of their revenues taken away by this action.

As a result, the whole Government of Canada would grind to a halt. We must think of that. Do we want to find out what is going on through CBC? CBC gets huge subsidies, so it would not be able to continue. We would not have food inspection. We would not have all of the things that Canadians rely on. We would not even have employment insurance, OAS or things of that nature. While those monies would be protected, because they are statutory, the people to administer them would all be gone because there would be no civil service left.

If foreigners wanted to help Canada in this government-less state, they could not go to our embassies abroad because we would not have any embassies. All of the lights would be turned out in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

I am not sure the NDP has thought through how government really works. The NDP is not a party that favours zero government. If anything, the NDP is the party of big government, yet the effect of its proposal would be to eliminate government.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

For these reasons, I think this is not a good message. It is not a good idea to do something that would eliminate the federal government and many of the provincial governments.

[*English*]

For those reasons alone, we are certainly not going to support this crazy idea.

There are other things that I would like to mention as well. I think that this is disrespectful to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is in the process of considering a long overdue reference by the federal government. We have been recommending such a reference for a year or more and the government did it just recently, thereby wasting a lot of time. Had it done it a year ago, the Supreme Court probably would have decided by now and we could proceed. It is highly disrespectful of the Supreme Court.

We have to obey our Constitution. The law says that the Senate and the House of Commons have to approve. It is not just a federal

law, it is a constitutional law. It would require at least seven provinces and the federal government to change it. We have to wait before we proceed in a meaningful way to hear what the Supreme Court of Canada says.

This is also highly disrespectful towards the provinces. At least seven of the provinces, ten in certain cases, have to give approval for constitutional changes in the Senate. For the NDP to simply present a motion to starve the Senate of its funds and think that will do it does not respect provincial rights. The Senate is supposed to be a body that represents provincial interests and the provinces are central to the determination of the makeup and rules governing the Senate.

It really does not make sense to have a motion that disrespects the Supreme Court and the provinces.

The third problem is that this motion benefits the government because it is a debate about the Senate and the government does not mind that. The government quite likes that. The government has no problems with that. What the government does not want to do is to debate the role of the Prime Minister and the role of the Prime Minister's Office in the transfer of the \$90,000 by Nigel Wright to Senator Duffy. A motion that dealt with that, like calling for documents on this transfer of funds, would have been much more interesting from an opposition party's point of view than a harmless debate about the Senate. A debate about the Senate right now is not really useful before we hear from the Supreme Court as to what we are allowed to do. We will not hear from the Supreme Court for some time.

Lastly, it has been erroneously stated that Liberals are for the status quo in the Senate. That is not at all true. I would like to describe what our democratic critic, the former leader of the Liberal Party, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, thinks about Senate reform.

First of all, we have to recognize that the distribution of Senate seats is highly unbalanced. Alberta and British Columbia have six seats each. New Brunswick has 10, so the original provinces, the Maritimes, and Quebec and Ontario hugely benefit in the distribution of seats compared with Alberta and British Columbia. If we move to an elected Senate, that means that the Senate would become more powerful. It might become as powerful as the House of Commons. If that were to happen, it would be hugely unfair to British Columbia and Alberta, so I do not know what the Prime Minister is trying to do with his proposed elected senators, without any return to the Constitution and without talking about the distribution of Senate seats. The Prime Minister comes from Alberta. He would be disadvantaging his own province whose proportion in the Senate is far less than its proportion of the population of Canada.

Business of Supply

My colleague said that the first thing one would have to do to move toward an elected Senate would be to have a negotiation involving the distribution of Senate seats to make it fairer and more in line with today's population. If one could achieve that, then one could move constitutionally toward an elected Senate. He also said we would have to have some division of interests, so that the Senate and the House of Commons would be complementary in their activities rather than being a recipe for deadlock between the two. We see in the United States and perhaps in Italy that the House of Representatives and the Senate cannot agree and there is a deadlock. We want to avoid that.

It is a complicated business. That is one approach that could be taken, which my colleague thinks is a good idea and which I think might be a good idea, but we should not underestimate the difficulty of that approach as we know from our own history. It is at least a principled approach to Senate reform, as opposed to this proposal that we have today of starving it of funds, which is a recipe not only for shutting down the Senate, but for shutting down the whole Government of Canada and the governments of many provinces as well.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

In closing, my main argument is that this approach by the NDP does not make sense because the NDP is a party that favours government. It does not make sense to eliminate the government if you are in favour of government, but their proposal would do exactly that: eliminate the federal government and many of the provincial governments.

This does not jibe with the Constitution or the Supreme Court. It is absolutely not the right approach.

[*English*]

What it does show is that the NDP is certainly not ready for government. I would think the most principled action by the more sensible members of Parliament for the NDP would be to vote against their own crazy motion.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of inflammatory language about our motion. I think we are upsetting the status quo. That is sometimes why we are here, to upset the status quo.

Members opposite have not thought through everything. There is no reason why we cannot stop funding the Senate, take the Senate staff, and we are not talking about the partisan staff, and put them with the rest of the public servants. Then any other bill that came forward that had a constitutional nature because of the ramifications of not funding the Senate, could be dealt with at that time.

What we are saying is that we should have a debate on whether or not it is actually appropriate at this time to fund the Senate at a cost of \$92.5 million when senators and the Senate itself are not even capable of ensuring the basic respect needed for taxpayers.

I would hope that the hon. member, who actually sits on the same committee as me, would be as worried about taxpayers' money and the abuse of it as I am.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid my hon. colleague confuses two things. We could have a good, wholesome debate about whether or not the Senate should be abolished, whether it is worth the \$90 million, whether Canadians get good value out of it, whether it should be abolished or whether it should be reformed, et cetera.

What we cannot do is simply cut off the funding and expect this federal government to continue with business as usual. As I have explained in two speeches in one day, the effect of doing that would be to cut all the civil servants out and to cut out all the operating expenditures of the government. There would be no lights on in this room or in the other chamber down the hall. Nothing would happen. All of the Senate staff would be fired. The government could not get things through the Senate. The only statutory expenditure, which the member for Winnipeg Centre mentioned, for the Senate, is the salaries of senators.

Is the NDP suggesting that the Senate should have nothing to do, but the senators should continue to be paid? Is that their idea?

• (1945)

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday our leader did say, after being questioned by that member's leader, that he left the Senate vacancies unfilled. In that period when he was trying to get those filled by elected people, the Liberal Party and other parties got together and tried to fill those Senate vacancies with their own people.

The member speaking tonight, talking about what he does know about the Constitution and how important the Senate is, could probably validate how hypocritical the NDP members have been on this issue, because they did want to fill the Senate. He would know. He was here at the time when his own leader was trying to cut a deal with the Bloc Québécois and the NDP to fill those vacancies with their own. At that time they certainly had no qualms about the Senate. In fact, they already had all their positions filled.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the NDP members are probably very happy with what I have said today. I would say in response that the Conservative record is not the greatest either, because the Prime Minister went for many months without appointing a single senator because he wanted senators to be elected. He found he could not do that, and all of a sudden he appointed a huge whack of senators, 18, including Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin and so on.

He found that he could not function as a government without an effective Senate. If that silly NDP motion passed, we would find that out in spades. Both actions by the government and the proposed actions by the NDP say that under our existing Constitution, we do need the Senate to function in a workable way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to comments from both sides of the House. Members will not be surprised to hear that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of the motion to stop funding the Senate. I would even suggest that members of the House be able to sit in the Senate while the House of Commons is being renovated. That would help us save money.

Business of Supply

The one thing we do know for sure is that the public needs to hear the truth. When the NDP talks about abolishing the Senate, it is careful not to mention that this would require opening up the Constitution. The Conservatives and the Liberals are against abolishing the Senate, an archaic institution that serves no purpose and is undemocratic, because they appointed their friends to this institution. They at least admit that we would have to open up the Constitution.

I do not want to speak on behalf of the Government of Quebec, but I can say that if the federal government ever chooses the excellent solution of cutting funding to the Senate and then abolishing it, we will have all kinds of things to ask the federal government for and all kinds of things to patriate.

Could my Liberal colleague explain why he thinks the NDP chooses not to mention that we would have to open up the Constitution?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the NDP, but I can say that I am not surprised that the Bloc Québécois will support this motion.

The Bloc thinks that the only provincial government that will not be affected by the motion is Quebec's. The federal agency does not collect Quebec's taxes, but it does for all the other provinces. It would be the end of the federal government and the end of the provincial governments, except for Quebec's. It may sound like a good idea to the Bloc Québécois, but it certainly is not a good idea for Quebecers and Canadians.

• (1950)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member voted in favour of Bill C-290, the sports betting bill, which has been languishing in the Senate for more than one and a half years.

Why has the bill not been passed by the Senate when the House of Commons passed it unanimously with no dissent, no objections, and no one speaking from the opposition? Why has the bill not been passed?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I do not know the answer to that. I think the Senate these days is controlled by the Conservatives.

However, one possible answer is that we in the House of Commons proceeded too rapidly, or perhaps incorrectly, and the Senate is carrying out its traditional role as the chamber of sober second thought. Or, there perhaps is a more nefarious reason.

However, I do not know the answer to that question.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about a gridlock that would happen here with people getting paid. Anybody who has seen what has happened in the United States over the last winter could see what might happen if we had that gridlock.

We would have hoped that there would have been some sort of motion coming from the NDP or the PMO on how it deals with picking senators, and then perhaps we could have had a better debate here.

My question for the member is on what changes he thinks should be made with respect to the Prime Minister's power on selecting senators.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, neighbour and colleague. We are both members of the 2000 cohort. There are only four of us left now. I thank him for his very good question.

I think that is something we would have to give a lot of thought to. I do not have a direct answer. However, obviously—

Hon. Scott Brison: Just economists.

Hon. John McCallum: Having just economists is one idea.

However, it would appear that the Prime Minister has made some bad choices recently. I will not name names, but some members might guess some of those names.

I think there could be a case made for some sort of blue ribbon committee or advisory committee that would advise the Prime Minister and give recommendations or summaries of what it thought of the qualifications of certain people. Constitutionally, I think the Prime Minister has to have the last word, so he would not have to necessarily accept that advice. However, I think there could be a case made for that.

I also think we cannot determine this with any finality before we hear the position of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have the chance to speak tonight. As you may remember, I enjoy speaking about the Senate, and I am glad to have this opportunity to share more of my thoughts tonight.

I am going to discuss a number of things on the motion that has been brought forward by the NDP. The first issue I want to cover is something I have heard a lot about in the House today and it is whether this is truly the best use of our time. When we talk to people in St. Thomas or Aylmer, or other places around the riding in southern Ontario, they do not think it is. They ask me why we spend hours debating motions like this rather than budgets and things that will help create and maintain jobs. They think we should be using our time more effectively, working for them. I agree. My constituents are very wise and very good at selecting members. I am very thankful for the wise people in the riding who keep sending me back here to do their work.

We should be here talking about jobs and the economy. I certainly have that conversation a lot in the riding. My constituents ask me what are we doing in Ottawa to help create jobs and prosperity. They do not ask me about the Senate much because it does not affect their lives. If a discussion of the Senate ever comes up, it is probably because I bring it up. I might do that because the Senate sometimes affects my work as the chair of the procedure and house affairs committee, which is where we talk about the Senate. That is usually the only reason it ever comes up back home. The real questions are about jobs and the economy.

Business of Supply

Our government and our Prime Minister have proven that we can multi-task, that we can do a number of things at once. Here we are sharing in that multi-tasking, covering off a topic that does not seem to be of much use to us today. What matters to Canadians and the Canadians in my riding are the economy, creating jobs and maintaining jobs, and building a growing prosperity for the people we represent.

Since we are debating a motion on the main estimates, the fundamental appropriations for our government, we have an obligation to talk about financial matters and how they relate to the performance of our government and the economy in general. I say this in order to contrast our economic plan, something that is of paramount importance, and the NDP gimmick today, which my constituents do not think should be high on our priority list.

Let us talk about what matters back home. We have the lowest tax rate in new business investment in the G7. That is something we set out to do and we have accomplished that. That helps create and sustain jobs back home in the riding. We are saving the average family of four more than \$3,100 a year in taxes. That includes reducing the GST twice, and many other tax reductions. That helps families back home in the riding.

We have also provided tax relief in other ways, such as, the registered disability savings plan, the working income tax benefit, pension income splitting for seniors, and tax-free savings accounts, which eight million Canadians already have. All of these things help families in my riding. These things matter to them.

We have signed free trade agreements with nine countries since 2006, and negotiations are ongoing with 60 other countries, including the European Union and Asia-Pacific countries. Other areas that are important for jobs and growth are innovation, research and development, and capital formation, which are fundamental to stimulating business investment, including new high-quality jobs. They equip our country for success in the future. We have taken numerous actions on this file, and the positive results are there to see.

On infrastructure, post-secondary education and jobs training, we have taken positive steps to help Canadians and our economy. Just last week, Statistics Canada announced that Canada's economy grew 2.5% in the first quarter of 2013. This represents the strongest quarterly growth in nearly two years. Additionally, Statistics Canada positively revised its economic growth for the fourth quarter of 2012, up from 0.6% to 0.9%. This is the seventh straight quarter of positive growth, and that is another sign that Canada's economy and our government remain on the right track.

• (1955)

Those are good results. They are good indicators that our focus on jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity is bearing fruit for Canadians.

We have seen over 900,000 net new jobs created in Canada since the depths of the global recession. Over 90% of them are full-time and nearly 75% of them are in the private sector. It represents the best job growth record in the entire G7. Constituents back home appreciate that kind of good economic news. It shows them that we have a good plan for the economy, and it contrasts with the lack of plan on the part of our opposition parties.

Speaking of a lack of a plan, we will come back to the NDP and the Senate. Since this motion on estimates does deal with the Senate, I will relent and spend some time talking about it. It is only polite. We are here at 8 o'clock at night, after all.

However, when we get to Senate reform, we cannot talk about the NDP because it has no plan. Luckily, our government does have a plan. We have been clear for many years that we favour reform first. We are willing to consider a number of options, but we want to work at reforming the Senate first and foremost.

For many years, our party and our government has supported the idea of term limits for Senators. The Prime Minister himself even appeared at a special Senate committee to speak about the bill on Senate reform, something that has never happened before. We have also been consistent in our support of provinces, undertaking democratic processes to suggest nominees for appointment to the Senate. One province has made these recommendations, and this Prime Minister has appointed those people who were recommended by the Province of Alberta. That is something we can be proud of. I hope that other provinces will follow Alberta's lead and let their people make the recommendations, after a democratic process.

That has been our plan. We have been clear and we have been consistent. The Prime Minister has been equally as clear that we support the reform of the Senate, but that if it cannot be reformed, it should be abolished. However, our side of the House has the proper respect for our Constitution, our institutions, regardless of their failings or the failings of their members, and respect for our provincial partners.

Our government recognizes that abolishing the Senate would be tough work. It would require co-operation across the country. With our Constitution, as venerable as it is, it is not entirely clear how Canadians might go about abolishing the Senate. Therefore, our government has done the reasonable thing, something that I think my constituents would endorse. Our government has asked the Supreme Court for its opinion on how we might go about abolishing the Senate.

Let us talk about what has been referred to the Supreme Court. The first thing we have asked the Supreme Court about is simple; we have asked about term limits. What term would be appropriate for senators, if indeed they had term limits? Can Parliament alone limit the terms of senators? How much could we limit them? Is there a point at which Parliament could act alone? We have suggested nine years in one piece of legislation, but we have asked the Supreme Court to give us an opinion on a number of different terms. Those are reasonable questions and I hope the court will provide some clarity, something that I recall the NDP opposes.

I might be mixing up my issues, though. I know that in the past the retirement date was changed, from appointment for life down to age 75. In that respect, we are more likely to get some clarity, which I support. I believe that in the last study I read at committee, the average length of time served by a senator in the House was between nine and ten years. This is how we got the number for a nine-year term. It is the average that a senator currently sits, so we are on the right track.

Business of Supply

● (2000)

The next thing is about the democratic selection of the Senate and nominees to the Senate.

Our government has proposed a few different ways to hold democratic processes to recommend Senate nominees, so we have put those questions to the Supreme Court. We have asked whether we can ask provinces to determine themselves who they would like their senators to be. If that happens, they would then be appointed to the Senate by the Prime Minister, as we have already shown in the case of Alberta.

As I have mentioned, Alberta has already chosen to do this. There are senators now who have been elected by the people of Alberta to represent the province of Alberta in the Senate, and they have been appointed by the Prime Minister. That process is in our latest bill, so we are asking the Supreme Court about that. We have also asked about a national process that we proposed previously.

We have also asked the Supreme Court for a couple of opinions. One of them has to do with the net worth of senators.

The requirements in the Constitution on this question are from another age. The Fathers of Confederation in Canada drew up a Constitution in 1867. That was a long time ago. That document has lasted this long, but there are many questions about it.

Very late last Wednesday night there was talk about a time in the 1800s, around the time the Constitution was written. A story was told about an elephant in St. Thomas getting hit by a train. I have had some requests to bring it back, so there it is. I have talked about the elephant in the 1800s in St. Thomas again.

We should consider visiting these rules from another age, from a long time ago. My constituents would agree with doing that.

The last set of questions has to do with what we are talking about today: the abolition of the Senate.

We are asking the opinion of the Supreme Court on this very topic, and our approach reflects well on the government. It shows just how out of its depth the opposition is on this question. We have put a number of specific questions to the Supreme Court because the Constitution is specific.

Amending our Constitution is a weighty matter, so we need take care to ensure that we get the answers we need, but care is not something I detect in today's motion from the NDP. The party opposite knows the Supreme Court has been asked for its opinions on these topics, yet what is its motion today? Let us spend a whole day talking about a backdoor way to vandalize our institutions, bypass our Constitution and use a gimmick to maybe get a few media hits.

That frustrates our constituents. We could respect the Supreme Court of Canada and Canadians, but instead of spending our time talking about important matters like jobs and the economy, we are talking about a topic that New Democrats believe will add some political oomph. It is just a gimmick to allow them to crow about their complete lack of a plan, which I find strange and wasteful of our time and energy.

That is what New Democrats really care about when it comes to taking the Senate out of this place. They just want to hear themselves talk. They have spoken at length on our most recent Senate reform bill. They put up about 40 speakers on that bill, and they all said the same things over and over again.

As the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which has seen its own fair share of filibustering on Senate reform, I can tell the House that this is filibustering. I know it when I see it. New Democrats are not debating anything; they are just hijacking the House to ensure that Senate reform cannot move forward. They are clogging the zone, as we say in hockey.

Back when I could, I was a stay-at-home defenceman when I played hockey. I see the member for Cape Breton—Canso—

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Now you just stay at home.

Mr. Joe Preston: Many of the fans yelled the same thing, sir.

People may not be able to tell by my appearance, but in hockey I seldom got past centre ice. My coach thought I was a far better defenceman than I was a goal scorer. Therefore, I know when players are delaying the game. I know what it looks like when players are not rushing the puck. I would suggest that the party opposite has gone even further than just not rushing the puck.

● (2005)

We have debated Senate reform legislation for over 18 hours in this House, and the NDP just keeps talking and talking. We could be spending that time examining the bill in committee or talking about other important things in the House, such as the economy and jobs.

It is a filibuster, despite their protests. We broke that logjam by referring the bill's subject matter, along with other important questions, to the Supreme Court of Canada. We await their opinion. I know I am interested to hear what they have to say.

As I mentioned before, the Prime Minister has made it clear that the Senate must be reformed or be abolished. We will await the opinion of the Supreme Court. We will examine that opinion when it arrives, and we will take action based on it, as we have promised to do. We will pursue reform, and if that cannot be accomplished, we will pursue abolition.

The aim in seeking the reference to the Supreme Court of Canada was to accelerate the pace of Senate reform and to lay the foundation for further reform to the Senate. That is exactly what it will do. We will receive clarity on the steps that we must take to move forward, and then we will move forward.

In the meantime, we will continue to bring forward measures to strengthen the accountability of senators to taxpayers. We will do what can be done.

Last week the Senate adopted 11 tough new accountability rules governing travel and expenses that were put forward by Conservative senators. I think Canadians would think the rules are reasonable.

They removed the principle from the senate administrative rules that stated that a senator is presumed to act honourably with respect to expenses.

Business of Supply

They clarify and make consistent the terminology surrounding residency for the purposes of expense claims.

They require a senator to provide a specific purpose for travel when claiming expenses. They require senators to maintain mileage logs for the purpose of claiming mileage.

They require that taxi receipts be provided when claiming taxi expenses, and they restrict per diems in Ottawa to days the Senate sits, days the senators attend committee meetings and up to 20 additional days while on approved Senate business.

They amend the 64-point travel system to limit senators to 12 trips that are not between Ottawa and the senator's provincial residence, restrict a senator's designated traveller to a spouse or partner and require administration to provide internal economy with monthly reports on travel patterns.

● (2010)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is recording commentary into his iPhone or BlackBerry, and it is very distracting in the House of Commons. I do not think we are supposed to be using those devices to record audible messages.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Windsor West for his intervention. I know this issue has come up in the House before. I will have to go back and see if there are particular rulings that one should abide by.

Of course all members are aware that the use of telephones and other devices in the House is typically not allowed. If members have to use those devices, they are certainly welcome to do it out in the lobby.

We will have a look at that and get back to the House should it be necessary.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London has the floor.

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Windsor West for giving me a bit of break during that extremely thrilling and exciting speech. I can see why he would want to pop up and break the momentum there. Again, to use a hockey analogy, he is trying to get the momentum to go the other way.

I know it was just members recording what a great speech they were hearing in the House so they could ensure that their constituents back home would have a record of it too.

I was reading the rules and I think all these rules make pretty good sense. These strong new measure will improve accountability and prevent abuse. We said we would fix the Senate rules governing travel expenses; we have delivered. At least we have made some progress to make things better.

It is unfortunate the rules were broken so badly that we needed to tighten them. It is unfortunate that some people decided not to follow the rules. That is what happened, and we are dealing with it to make sure it does not happen again.

We are dealing with taxpayers' money. That is the most important thing to remember. To go further to ensure that taxpayers' money is being cared for properly, this week the Leader of the Government in the Senate introduced a motion asking the Auditor General of Canada to conduct a comprehensive audit of Senate expenses.

Again, this is a strong measure that will protect taxpayers. We have demonstrated that we have a plan and that we will take action when abuses come to light.

That contrasts us with the opposition parties, because they have no plan. They did not have a plan in the past and they still do not have one today. They want to take the easy way out: hold a press conference here, make a speech there and move motions to circumvent our Constitution and our institutions in their free time, instead of talking about things that are important to Canadians, such as the economy. They do not have a plan.

We have a plan. We support reasonable reforms and we will move toward abolition. It is very simple, but our plan's simplicity respects our institutions and our Constitution.

However, we are optimistic on this side of the House that the Senate can and should be reformed. We think Canadians agree that the Senate should be reformed and that politicians can come together and agree on that. If it is not possible and the Senate cannot be reformed because senators will not co-operate or because politicians cannot work together to solve a national problem, then it needs to go.

It would need to go because the status quo is unacceptable. I think that is something we can all agree with.

● (2015)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform, who spoke a bit earlier, and this member talked about strengthening the responsibilities of the Senate, which is not very effective. Why have they done nothing about this since 2006, when they came to power?

The Conservatives said in 2004 that they would not appoint anyone else to the Senate. Why then has the Prime Minister made 57 Senate appointments since 2006, and mostly patronage or partisan appointments at that?

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my speech, we did talk a lot about reform for a number of years here. As the chair of the procedure and House affairs committee, I can say that we have certainly talked about democratic reform and reform of the Senate. We talked about it over and over, and then we have talked about it in here for a bit, and then we talked about it back there for a bit.

I find it a bit over the top that the member talked about how much we have tried to move toward reform. When we found that the delaying tactics were the way they were, we made a reference to the Supreme Court to try to have those answers clarified. When the answers come back from the Supreme Court, we will see how fast we can work on the reform of the Senate.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from London, home of the London Knights. It is a good team that of course lost to the Halifax Mooseheads in the Memorial Cup this year.

Business of Supply

I have been here 13 years and I have heard a lot of speeches in this House. That was certainly one of them. I have been able to join in on a great number of debates on a lot of topics, but I have never seen a motion brought forward before that lit up the political universe.

On Twitter I am following all the journalists and people who like to weigh in with a political opinion. They are commenting on just how flaky this particular motion is. “Flaky” should not be offensive to anyone, but I would like my friend to comment on that.

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to all the flakes out there, I guess. However, I tend to agree with one of my favourite members.

First, I would like to handle the question on my London Knights, who won the Memorial Cup two years in a row and will be hosting it next year, which will be three years in a row. Find me another Canadian team that has done this three years in a row, or at least has been to the Memorial Cup. Halifax should bring its team to London next year.

This may give me an answer to the second part of the member's question.

It is great to be to stand and talk about one's hometown hockey team, or elephants that have been hit by trains in one's hometown, or a number of things like that, but the real answer here is that we are wasting the time of this place. We should be here talking about the jobs, growth and prosperity of the economy and the taxes that we have already cut. However, to use the member's word, we are talking about the “flaky” issues that are out there. I am afraid the people at home are tuned into the hockey game and not into the CPAC channel to watch us speak of this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Just a reminder to all hon. members that through the course of this debate on today's motion there have been a lot of interesting questions and comments, but I would ask all hon. members, as well as those responding, to keep their interventions no more than one minute.

Questions and comments, the hon. for Kildonan—St. Paul.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was very insightful and beneficial. I appreciated it very much.

As we all know, there are so many wonderful senators in the Senate who work very hard and do pay very close attention to what they are doing. Unfortunately, we now have to take a second look because there are some real issues that need to be addressed at the Senate for accountability.

I would like my colleague to comment on what he feels is the most important focus that we need to have on the Senate to reform it and improve it as quickly as possible.

• (2020)

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, it would be hard to tell now, but we used to be seatmates. As members can see what happens in this place, one can switch from one end to the other, and I see her very rarely now. She is way down at the other end.

To answer her question, the most important thing has already been done. We have referred the matter of the reform of the Senate to the Supreme Court. We have referred the matter of Senate term limits to

the Supreme Court. We have referred the matter of the democratic process to be used to select senators to the Supreme Court. We have also, in that same reference to the Supreme Court, referred the matter of abolition of the Senate and how might it be done.

As I said in one of my speeches quite a few years ago, 140 years ago the country was founded and a Constitution was written. It is very tough for us to crack that open and make these changes.

Let us ask the court of this land, before anybody else puts forward a law suit, ahead of time about how we do these things. That is the most important thing, which has been done by the Prime Minister and this government. We are awaiting the answer. When we get the answer, we will go right to work.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question regarding Bill C-290, which is a bill he supported and voted for in the House of Commons.

The Conservatives supported Bill C-290, but it has been stalled in the Senate for more than a year and a half. The democratic will of the House of Commons passed this bill with no dissension. No Conservative spoke or voted against the bill. However, it was moved to the Senate and it has not gone forward in a year plus.

The bill was in regard to the nefarious operations of organized crime overseas and would have ensured that we had legalized single-sport betting under the rule of government.

Where does the member stand on that with regard to the Senate that has not passed this bill in one and a half years?

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, it is quite unique. The member has asked this question of a couple of speakers tonight on where this bill is in the Senate and how the Senate working on it.

I am sorry, I have not followed the bill religiously through the Senate. As a member of Parliament, we barely had a chance to follow it here. It was passed unanimously when most of the members were not here one day.

Therefore, to use the trick to talk about the changing the Senate and then to use the trick to talk about a bill to try to make his point, sounds like those members are pretty consistent on that side.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hockey fan colleagues that the Halifax Mooseheads play in the Quebec major junior hockey league. We are very proud of winning the Memorial Cup for the third straight year.

I have a more serious question for the member, who, much like his Conservative colleagues in this debate tonight, is sitting on the fence. The Conservatives are trying to have it both ways. Maybe because things are not going too well in the Senate, suddenly there is the possibility of abolishing the Senate, although the Conservatives' rhetoric since they came to power in 2006 has centred on Senate reform. Even the Minister of State for Democratic Reform focused on this quite a bit this evening.

Business of Supply

Are the Conservatives suddenly talking about the possibility of abolishing the Senate because of all the underhanded shenanigans going on there? Are they opposing the abolition of the Senate to protect the friends they appointed to the Senate to help the Conservative Party? It is either one or the other.

[English]

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, I am not certain where the member has been. I hold in my hand a fact sheet about the reference to the Supreme Court of Canada, which mentions all of the things that I mentioned in my speech, including all the parts that he just asked in his question.

Yes, we have talked about reforming the Senate. We have moved forward to ask, as Alberta has done, that provinces select their senators and other provinces have even expressed some interest in that. We have talked about the term limits for senators, and that was a piece of the reform package that we talked about.

However, in the reference to the Supreme Court, we also asked it tell us if some of these other things were not possible, if we could not move forward to improving the Senate in Canada. We asked the Supreme Court to give us some rules and some answers on how abolition might take place. It has been a number of months now since that has taken place.

• (2025)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all across our great country, Canadians are struggling and going through financial hardships. Living pay cheque to pay cheque and relying on credit cards to make ends meet has become the reality for thousands of Canadians under the current government.

I would also like to say that I am splitting my time with the amazing member for Trinity—Spadina.

Yet here we are debating whether the Conservative government should give \$58 million of taxpayer money to the unelected, unaccountable and undemocratic Senate. This does not represent the best interests of Canadians, which we are here to do.

The Fathers of Confederation envisioned the Senate to be an academic, non-partisan body of sober second thought. Instead, it has been turned into a tool of patronage for Liberals and Conservatives alike.

I would like to share with the House that my political awakening as a teenager, when I was 13, was the 1984 federal election. For those members of the House who remember that, it was Brian Mulroney versus John Turner. It was Brian Mulroney of the Progressive Conservatives, which no longer exist, they are now, I would say, the regressive Conservatives. In the televised debate of that federal election, Brian Mulroney, who was a Conservative, lambasted John Turner for doing a raft of patronage appointments that were asked of him by the former Prime Minister Trudeau. Conservatives at that time said that the Liberals had the option of not doing it.

However, in the past 30 years we have seen that Conservatives and Liberals alike have used the Senate as their patronage dumping ground, at the expense of the taxpayer. All we are asking tonight is to take pause and reflect. Does that chamber deserve the money that the

taxpayers are paying for it? We just want to pause and reflect, and see if the money is being well spent over there. As Canadians have seen over the past couple of weeks, I think they would agree with most of the members of the NDP that it is not being spent well, that taxpayer funds are being misused.

That election in 1984 started off with Brian Mulroney riding into Ottawa on a white horse to clean up Ottawa, to get rid of the patronage appointments and it ended in 1993 with two members of the Progressive Conservatives remaining in the House, with division in the country. The same thing is going to happen in 2015. After nine years of power, the current government is going to end up a small rump, if anything, in the House, with a New Democratic government in power.

The Senate is an institution full of scandal and lies and it is a stain on Canadian democracy. I am proud to say that I am a New Democrat and I am proud to say that I am part of a party that does now and has always called for even when—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member may know that his reference to the word “lies” in particular, since it suggests intent, is not a word that is customarily used in the House, or the other place for that matter. It has always been considered in the category of unparliamentary language. Therefore, I would seek the hon. member's suggestion that he may wish to rephrase that particular segment of his remarks.

The hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, I should have referred to the other place as sometimes misleading and sometimes deviating from proper oversight.

Our party has always called for abolition of the Senate, even when we were the CCF and the ILA even before that. We have been calling for the abolition of this unelected and accountable body known as the Senate.

Just last week in my riding I was talking to a Ms. Martin, a single mother who lives in my riding who is working two jobs and still struggling to make ends meet. Her difficulties are hard but sadly not unique to Canadians. From coast to coast to coast, Canadians are struggling in this economic climate. What is the government doing to help Canadians? What is it doing to help lower unemployment rates? What is the government doing to help Ms. Martin spend less time worrying about how she will pay her bills and spend more time at home with her children?

Instead of fixing these problems, the Prime Minister and the Conservative government are writing a cheque for \$58 million to the unelected, unaccountable senators who work just 71 days a year on average. It does not make sense. It is not giving enough for hard-working Canadians to collect EI when they need it. However, it does have enough to give to the Senate to give senators a nice salary and pension.

The Conservative government, like its Liberal predecessors, would rather protect its party bagmen, party hacks and failed candidates in the Senate than protect the thousands of Canadians who are struggling every day.

Business of Supply

At its purest form, the Senate is a place for senators to come together and represent and fight for their constituents. As we can see, this noble cause is lost in the upper chamber. Could this be because they are not elected and held accountable by their constituents? Could this be because they are not appointed based on their community work, but rather because of their backroom partisan work?

Enough is enough. The Canadian people need to be the first priority of the government and it has to stop funnelling money to the unaccountable, unelected Senate.

In a recent Ipsos poll it was found that 43% of Canadians agreed with the NDP that the Senate should be abolished, 45% of Canadians believed that at the very least the Senate needed to be reformed and a small 13% of Canadians, including the Liberal leader, agreed with the Liberal leader's and Conservatives' record, that the status quo worked and nothing needed to be changed.

Nevertheless, it is not just Canadians and the NDP who want the Senate abolished. The premiers of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan all believe that the Senate is an archaic, wasteful, undemocratic institution that has no place in Canada's government. Every province in Canada has done away with their upper chamber and have all thrived after doing so.

Canadians want and deserve better from their government. It is time to end the gravy train, stop the funding and start using taxpayer dollars to make their lives better and more affordable.

● (2030)

[Translation]

It is not just Canadians who know that something is not right in the Senate. During the 2005 election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to reform the Senate so that it would be equal, elected and effective. If he had to do it all over, he would probably add "ethical" to his list. He forgot the fourth *e*.

During their seven years in power, the Conservatives have introduced various bills that have never amounted to anything or been high on the list of priorities. Even worse, although the Prime Minister himself had promised that he would not appoint senators, he has appointed 59 since coming to power. This is a new record in Canada's history.

Not only did they break their promise, but the Prime Minister and the Conservatives perpetuated the Liberal tradition of using the Senate to reward the party faithful.

There is the appointment of failed candidates such as Josée Verner and Larry Smith and the appointment of Conservative cronies such as Irving Gerstein, Judith Seidman, Donald Plett and David Braley. Before he was appointed to the Senate, David Braley donated a total of \$86,000 to the Conservative Party and the Prime Minister.

The NDP has always spoken out about these practices. We were against this archaic, undemocratic institution at the time of the Liberals, who behaved the same way the Conservatives are behaving now.

It is not surprising that the leader of the Liberal Party is against abolishing the Senate. Just think of all the Liberal senators who are

benefiting from this institution. They include David Smith, James Cowan, Fernand Robichaud and Grant Mitchell, who are all friends of the party. All of them have used Canadians' money, public funds, to quietly campaign, when they are supposed to be working to ensure that taxpayers' money is spent more wisely.

When it comes to using taxpayers' money more wisely, 23 mayors in my riding are paid very little for all the hard work they do. I am talking about Géraldine Quesnel, Marc Roy, Marie-Claude Nichols, Guy Pilon, Robert Grimaudo, Yvan Cardinal, Michael Elliott, Manon Trudel, Robert Sauvé, Maryse Sauvé, Marc-André Léger, Réal Boisvert, Jean-Pierre Daoust, Réal Brazeau, Patrick Bousez, Nicole Loiselle, Jean-Yves Poirier, Yvon Bériault, Gaétane Legault, Patricia Domingos, Aline Guillotte, Jean Lalonde and Claude Pilon.

Personally, I would rather see these millions of dollars given to elected officials who do their job properly and work tirelessly to represent my region than to senators who do nothing.

● (2035)

[English]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of times during the debate about the vote 1 for Senate funding, the issue of Bill C-290 has been raised. I want to put on the record that the Senate should review this bill, and in my view should defeat this bill.

That bill, when it was in front of this House of Commons, did not receive a standing vote at second reading. In fact, what transpired on Friday, March 2, 2012, was that the House leaders worked together to force debate to collapse before the full two hours of third reading had transpired, preventing members like me from "standing five" to request a full standing division on that piece of legislation.

That bill did not receive sufficient scrutiny in this House of Commons. It went through one hour of hearing at committee with the Canadian gaming commission. That is the reason for which we have a Senate. It is the chamber of sober second thought that ensures the decisions made by this House are double-checked by the upper chamber.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, I respect this member very much, but if he wants to talk about not having the opportunity to stand up in this House and do his part, he should talk to his House leader for invoking closure in debate 40 times in this House. It is a total affront to our democracy.

If the hon. member wants to talk about not being able to stand in his place and represent his constituents, I would tell him to talk to his House leader so that this place can function properly.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member. He mentioned 1984 and what happened to the Progressive Conservatives. I am wondering if he has any comments about what happened between 1984 and 1988-89. When the prime minister needed to push more senators, he automatically brought in a whole slew of them and they were placed in the House.

If the roles were reversed and they had to pass legislation, would it not have been the same?

Business of Supply

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, this is the problem, and we have seen this since the beginning of Confederation. The party in power uses the Senate to stack people with patronage appointments in that place.

It does not actually function as a chamber of sober second thought. It functions as a parking place for party bagmen, partisan campaigners and the like. We saw that after the 1984 election when Brian Mulroney took power. He used the Senate in exactly the way for which he has denounced the previous Trudeau administration. We see that with the current Prime Minister using it in the same way that the Chrétien administration used it.

This has to come to an end. We have to get rid of the other place. This is a good first step, talking and having a debate about whether we should be giving these millions of dollars to it.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who decided not to speak on Bill C-290 and did not want to vote on it. The bill was actually passed on a voice vote in the House of Commons because there were not five Conservatives who wanted to stand in this place to force a vote. The vote never took place because five Conservatives did not want to be here. I would like to ask my hon. colleague about that.

The bill was unanimously sent from the House to the Senate, and now it languishes there. The bill would fight against organized crime and offshore betting establishments, and would provide a revenue stream and jobs for provinces. It would help places like Windsor, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Nova Scotia.

Why should he support the Senate when a bill from the democratically elected people, who actually chose this bill—

• (2040)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the money being spent there is not working. It could be put to better use.

As I have already said, there are 21 municipalities represented by democratically elected men and women in my riding. Those people work hard in the interests of their constituents. They live in their city, not elsewhere, and they work for a laughable salary. Many of them have to get a second job to make ends meet.

When it comes to funding the Senate, I think that we could be paying far less than what we are now, for the same work.

[*English*]

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this debate tonight is not about a few bad apples in a barrel; it is about the fact that the entire barrel is a pork barrel. The entire barrel is rotten, and it needs to be fixed.

The people of Canada have lost confidence in the Senate, which is neither democratic nor accountable. The people of Canada are looking to this House to show leadership.

This motion seeks to force reform and to get the barrel fixed, which is much more important than just going after a few bad apples. Of course, they are not all bad apples. There is no question that there

are some senators who are outstanding citizens and who have contributed a great deal to our country in their careers. There is also no question that there are many individual senators who work hard in the red chamber and who seek to serve the country well. They have done nothing wrong.

However, even if all the senators were in that league and none of their colleagues were a Conservative or a Liberal crony, helping themselves to public funds while doing the bidding of their patrons is unacceptable. Even if they are all working hard, we should still fight to stop funding the Senate and force reform.

This motion is not about those cronies who are abusing their appointed positions. It is about the institution that has become degraded and corrupted by its political masters. The prime ministers, whether they were Liberal or Conservative, have loaded it up with cronies for their own ends. Through patronage appointments and supporting the Senate, they have undermined democracy. The only way we can stop this degradation and abuse of public funds and trust is to cut off the funds.

As hon. members on the Conservative benches and the Liberal benches have pointed out, abolishing the Senate will require constitutional change. However, cleaning up the act in the meantime can be done. That is what this motion is about.

Cutting the funding is something we can do in this House to stop the abuse and force reform. We, the democratically elected members of this House, have an opportunity to force the issue by stopping funding. We have an opportunity to force the issue so that this House can debate, and the country can contemplate, democratic institutions.

We have an opportunity. More than that, all those here who believe in democracy have a responsibility to uphold democratic principles and principles of good governance. This is about democracy. This is about transparency. This is about accountability. This is about good governance.

All members of this House must agree that the Senate is not democratic. It has not been transparent. It is clearly not accountable. That is not the fault of individual senators. The problem is the institution itself, which has become nothing but a creature of the government in power.

The current Prime Minister spent his earlier career in politics railing against this institution of patronage. He spent his career crying out for reform and for a triple-E Senate: equal, effective, elected. Remember that, Mr. Speaker? He campaigned on that when leading the Reform Party.

Now is the chance. Where is the Prime Minister on this? The current Prime Minister cried out when former prime ministers Mulroney and Chrétien and Martin loaded the Senate with patronage appointments. He cried out for reform. He cried out and campaigned for reform for years, until he finally got in the position to do something about it. What did he do? He started larding the pork barrel with patronage appointments, blatantly and cynically, so that he could overwhelm the Liberal majority in the Senate.

Business of Supply

● (2045)

As a result, excellent legislation for sending affordable drugs to African kids was killed. A bill dealing with climate change was waived out of hand.

While he was larding it up, he claimed, in the most cynical way, that he was making appointments to facilitate Senate reform; this while he was bloating the institution with more senators than ever, all getting public funds, which was a clear abuse of public funds.

Rather than reforming the senate, he has undermined democracy. He did not appoint just cronies and media personalities and celebrities. He appointed failed Conservative candidates, failed candidates for this House. He appointed candidates for Parliament who had been defeated in their own ridings. They had been rejected by voters. They could not get elected. The current Prime Minister, the long-time spokesperson for democratic reform, whose former party was called Reform, made these cynical and undemocratic patronage appointments.

In one of those cynical, undemocratic—in fact, anti-democratic—appointments, he appointed a defeated candidate to cabinet. It was someone who had been rejected by the electorate, someone who could not get elected. That undemocratically appointed senator became a cabinet minister. That was not democratic. That was a slap in the face of democracy. In fact, it was a slap in the face of this House.

With that appointment, the Prime Minister was not just further degrading the Senate; he was further degrading this House of Commons and he was further degrading democracy.

Who has been served by these patronage appointments? It is clearly not the people of Canada, who have no say in the matter. The Conservative Party has been served and the Prime Minister has been served.

The two senators now under scrutiny for abuse of public funds and public trust worked very hard to get their appointments, not for the people of Canada but for the Conservative Party.

What we have here is an institution that is an extension of the Conservative and Liberal parties' election machines. That cannot be fair. That cannot be just.

Why was the \$92 million spent on the Senate not shown in the election spending reports? We know for sure that they were fundraising. They were campaigning.

I have no doubt that if the Prime Minister were still in opposition and the bad apples of the day were all Liberals, he would be crying out for reform. He would have been leading the charge with this motion. He would have been looking to stop this waste.

Instead, the Prime Minister has been making the pork barrel even worse. He has even put more pork into the barrel. He has not been accountable. He abandoned his principled pursuit of a triple-E Senate as soon as he had the chance to mould that Senate to his own ends.

He has forgotten that we were elected to serve the public trust, not to abuse it. He has undermined democracy. It is the responsibility of

every democratically elected member of Parliament to stop the abuse, force reform, fix the barrel and stop feeding pork into it. Empty it, get rid of the rot, and vote for this NDP motion to stop funding the Senate.

● (2050)

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Trinity—Spadina talked a lot about democracy in her speech. Actually, a lot of it was just lip service to democracy, if one thinks about it. She is talking about basically abolishing the Senate through a backdoor mechanism, i.e., cutting off the funding, which is really not constitutional.

If she really had some respect for democracy and our Constitution, she would actually be more up front and support a true motion, yet the NDP has never put a motion forward. It has talked about it. It has never supported any form of democratic reform of the Senate.

She should admit, while she is at it, that it is only this Prime Minister who has ever nominated democratically elected senators. He is the only prime minister in Canadian history to do so.

I would like to hear her comments on why she thinks it is democratic and constitutional to cut off funding for an institution of Parliament that is established in the Constitution. Why does she think it is all right for her party to move that kind of motion forward.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Speaker, perhaps my friend was not here when the former leader of the New Democrats and I moved a motion to ban partisan fundraising by senators of all parties and to institute a cooling-off period for appointments of party insiders and failed candidates. In fact, I am reading from that motion, which the member did not realize had been debated in the House. We voted on it.

While New Democrats were making reasonable proposals, what did the Conservatives do? Conservatives only made Senate reform suggestions that would never pass. They have been spending time doing nothing all these years, because their goal, ultimately, is to play political games rather than bring greater accountability to the Senate. They claimed to want an elected Senate, then appointed senators in record numbers. They said they wanted to clean up the Senate, then refused to beef up the Senate ethics code. They said that taxpayers should not subsidize political parties, then had taxpayer-funded senators working on fundraising for the party.

I could go on, but we certainly have debated that motion, and we have had many proposals in the House in the past.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not in the last election, but in the previous one, two members of Parliament were invited to be honoured at a Burmese temple. One of the members arrived in a limo. The limo number was livery number six. I even know the guy who drove the member there. The husband of the member said that his wife had to have RCMP support.

Would the member now like to come clean and talk about pork-barrelling in all the other parties and admit that she was using a livery that day when she went to be awarded in a Burmese temple? Come clean now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I am not sure that question is relevant to the question before the House.

Business of Supply

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Windsor West.

• (2055)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question with regard to Bill C-290, the single sports betting bill, which was passed in the House of Commons, without objection and without speeches against it, to the Senate. It has been languishing there for a year.

In Toronto, during this past Super Bowl, there was a bust of illegal game betting of \$2 million. What does the hon. member think about this bill, because it works against organized crime and it works against some of the offshore betting that is taking place? It makes sure that those funds go back to the public institutions we support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Again, I appreciate the hon. member's attempts to try to connect that issue to the question before the House. It is a bill that is before the other place. I see that the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina was on her feet. If she wishes to answer it, we will let that go.

The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I can think of lots of things to do with \$92 million. I can imagine how many buses that would purchase. I can imagine how many child care spaces we could create each year. I can imagine how many hours of home care support and how many seniors could be served with \$92 million. As to the bill that is stuck, I do not understand why we need a Senate. The best way to deal with it, of course, is to stop funding it.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on vote 1 before us, which concerns the funding for Senate operations. We should take a look at how much it actually costs to run the Senate. It costs about \$90 million a year to run the Senate of Canada, but let us take a step back and actually put that into perspective. Let us see how much it costs to run the House of Commons in a year. The House of Commons costs more than three times that amount. In fact, it costs almost four times that amount to run the House each and every year. It costs some \$350 million a year. Using the logic that many have used in the House during this debate that it costs too much money to run the Senate of Canada, perhaps we should abolish the House of Commons.

Clearly, that is a trite argument that is nonsensical and something that most Canadians would see as absurd.

There has been a lot of controversy and debate about the Senate. That is why we are talking about vote 1 and why we previously had a debate on the motion to abolish the Senate. There are certainly a number of parliamentarians who are under investigation right now. We should allow those processes to unfold. We, as all people in this country, should believe in due process and the rule of law.

If members of Parliament, whether here or in the other place, are found to have expensed items that are inappropriate, then those parliamentarians should be held to account and the expenses repaid. However, let us not take four ongoing investigations of four senators and paint the rest of the 101 senators with the same brush. That is unfair to the people involved. It is unfair, in particular, because they are not able to attend this place and speak in their own defence, so I am speaking today in defence of the work they do.

I want to highlight the four reasons I believe we should fund the Senate and why I believe the Senate should exist.

The Senate serves as a counterweight, a check and balance, to the majoritarianism of this place. This place is representative of the Canadian population. In fact, we are increasing the number of ridings in Canada, because Canada's population is growing. This place reflects majority rule, and that is why we have elections, where members of Parliament represent their constituents. This place has a tendency toward majoritarianism. That is why we need an upper chamber. The upper chamber serves as a counterweight and counterbalance to the majoritarianism of this place.

Let us take a look at whether the Senate is truly an archaic place that is not reflective of the Canadian population. In fact, if we look at the statistics, the Senate is more reflective of the new Canada than is the House of Commons. According to recent Statistics Canada census data, 20% of Canada's population is visible minority. Only half of that number is in the House of Commons. Less than 10% of the House of Commons is visible minority. There are a greater number of visible minorities in the Senate of Canada than there are in the House of Commons. The Senate better reflects the makeup of this country when it comes to visible minority representation.

Let us look at the number of women. Clearly, in Canada, 50% of the population is female, but in this place, only 25% of parliamentarians are female. In the Senate, 38% of senators are female. There, again, the Senate is more reflective of the makeup of this country.

The Senate and its makeup is not the archaic institution many members in this place would have people believe. It actually better reflects what this country is and what it is turning into in the coming decades as we become more diverse and more pluralistic. That is why the Senate serves a useful function. It serves to counterbalance the majoritarianism of this place, which under-represents minorities and ensures that the minority voices of women and visible minorities are heard in Parliament and here in Ottawa.

There is a second reason the Senate serves an important function. It serves as a chamber of sober second thought. It serves as a useful

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• (2100)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. Throughout the course of the debate, members have paid respect to those who have had the floor during the course of their remarks. I realize that from time to time, members will heckle, but members need to respect the fact that another one of their colleagues has the floor, and I would ask, if they have to make these kinds of outbursts, that perhaps they should take it outside and discuss it among their other colleagues.

The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, the Senate serves as a chamber of sober second thought to review legislation. I just want to highlight three pieces of legislation that have gone through this House over the years that the Senate has defeated, amended or reviewed.

Business of Supply

For example, setting aside one's views on the difficult issue of abortion, let us look at what happened to Bill C-43 during the time of Mr. Mulroney's government. It was defeated in the Senate. It was the bill that would have restricted abortion in this country. The Senate defeated Bill C-43. Otherwise, today in Canada we would have had restrictions on abortion. Therefore, I would ask members opposite who have strongly held convictions on this whether that was a role that they would have seen as useful as played by the Senate.

More recently, after the last election, the government introduced, as part of its electoral commitment, Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act. It sailed through this House of Commons, and it got to the Senate. Suddenly the members of government and the senators realized that there were problems with respect to national security in the bill. Therefore, the Senate introduced an amendment which then forced the bill back to this House. The amendment was adopted by this House, the legislation received royal assent. That gap, that shortfall in the bill, was addressed by the Senate of Canada.

More recently, as I mentioned before, Bill C-290, that did not receive a standing vote in this House of Commons and received only one witness at committee, the very proponent of the bill, did not receive sufficient scrutiny and oversight. The Senate is currently doing its work in that regard.

Those are just three examples of the important work that the Senate has done over the years in its role as a chamber of sober second thought to review legislation.

There is another reason why the Senate serves a useful function. That is, its role as an investigative and research and deliberative body. In the history of the Senate back to the 1960s and 1970s, the investigative work of the Senate into social policy became integral to the development of Canada's modern social safety welfare net. The development of the Canada pension plan and the Canada Health Act and the development of policies involving social transfers to the provinces for health care, education, post-secondary research and development were all influenced by the work that the Senate did over the years. More recently, the work that the Senate did on mental health influenced government and House of Commons decisions on legislation, policy and funding for mental health concerns. The Senate does the same thing as royal commissions, public inquiries and external task forces, but it does so at a lesser cost than those royal commissions and in a much quicker and more timely manner.

There is yet another reason why the Senate serves a useful function. It is the same reason why in over 50 states around the world there are bicameral legislatures: the Senate serves to provide a check and balance, not just on the majoritarianism of the lower chamber in this House of Commons, but also on the executive branch of government.

I would like to quote Sir Clifford Sifton. He was a Canadian minister at the turn of the 20th century who helped open up western Canada for the waves of immigration that settled the great Prairies and produced the powerhouse of energy and agriculture that we see today. Here is what Clifford Sifton said in the book *The New Era in Canada* in 1917:

No nation should be under unchecked, single-chamber government.... It must also be remembered that, under our system, the power of the Cabinet tends to grow at the expense of the House of Commons.... The Senate is not so much a check on the

House of Commons as it is upon the Cabinet, and there can be no doubt that its influence in this respect is salutary.

The check that the upper chamber provides on the executive branch of government, something that many Canadians have been increasingly concerned about over the last 30 or 40 years, is a useful function. In fact, modern North American institutions are based on Montesquieu's doctrine of the division of powers as a way to best achieve outcomes in society, and the way to best achieve justness and fairness in society.

• (2105)

His division of powers principle is quite simple. We needed to move away from the error of the absolute rights of kings and dictators, where they held all the power, to a system of government where power was diffused. We needed a system where power was not concentrated in a single place, in the Prime Minister's Office, the cabinet or the executive branch of government, but diffused among the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

The Senate, in a bicameral system of government, serves that end of the division of power. It serves that end of diffusion of power. It serves that end to provide a check and balance on the concentration of power in one place. That is why, as I said earlier, there are 50 countries around the world with bicameral legislatures.

In addition to these reasons why the Senate serves a useful function, let us talk about the practical, political realities of abolishing the Senate. The reality is that Canada exists today in part because of the Senate. It was the deal that brought the provinces and colonies before Confederation into the federation.

In fact, when we read the *Debates* on Confederation, it is clear that colonies like Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec would never have joined this federation had it not been for the Senate. They made it clear they were worried about the rapidly growing populations in Canada West, now Ontario. They were worried about being subsumed by the majoritarianism of a rising Ontario. That is why they wanted the upper chamber to serve as a protector of their interests, whether they were regional in nature, reflecting smaller populations, or linguistic, reflecting the francophone realities in many parts of the country.

Many of those provinces, legislatures and national assemblies would not agree to the abolition of the Senate. They would see it as a diminution of their voice here in our nation's capital.

Business of Supply

The political and practical reality is that abolition of the Senate is not something that is going to happen. It is not something that we could easily reopen without addressing the other demands that were made during the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords, those divisive debates of the late 1980s and early 1990s. There are many more things on the table. If we went to a Dominion-provincial conference on first ministers to talk about the abolition of the Senate and whether or not we believe that would require the 7/50 amending formula or unanimity amongst Canada's 11 legislatures, the point is this: it would be opening a can of worms that no one in the House would want to open.

In particular, I ask members from Quebec on both sides of the House what they would expect the Province of Quebec to demand, with respect to the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society or the recognition of Quebec's nationhood. What would they expect in terms of the demand for a veto on the part of provinces for any future changes to the Constitution? What would they expect when terms of the original Meech Lake demand completely devolve immigration to the provinces and relinquish federal control about who comes into our country and who is accepted to be a citizen?

It would reopen the debate about who gets the power of appointment to the Supreme Court of Canada. There are all the sorts of issues that certainly would be reopened for those who advocate the abolition of the Senate. Therefore, for a practical reason, abolition is not really something that we can pursue, nor is it something that I support. It is also something that we cannot do through the back door.

The Constitution of this country, with its written and unwritten aspects as they have been interpreted by rulings of the Supreme Court, is the basic law of this country and we must respect that Constitution. We must respect the way it needs to be amended. We should wait until the Supreme Court renders its judgment in the reference case that the government has asked it to consider.

● (2110)

Mr. Speaker, while I believe in a bicameral Parliament, while I believe that we need a lower and upper chamber for the reasons I have just outlined, I also believe that the Senate needs to be reformed. We need to have term limits. My suggestion to my fellow parliamentarians is that we should have term limits based on the life of a Parliament. Therefore, instead of setting a fixed term limit of eight or nine years, we should base it on a Parliament. When a Parliament is dissolved for the purposes of a general election, that is when senators should seek re-election. We might want to go to a system where a senator serves for the life of two or three Parliaments before seeking re-election, but I strongly believe that we need to have a system where there is a limit on the length of time a senator can serve. I am hopeful that the Supreme Court will give us some guidance in that respect.

I also believe that we need to have popular consultations or elections of senators. That is incredibly important. That way we can provide Canadian citizens the accountability they are seeking for the upper chamber.

We need to do this thoughtfully. We cannot do it willy-nilly. There are unintended consequences if we proceed too rapidly and too rashly. If we are to proceed with term limits and an election of

senators based on the court's ruling, then we also need to strengthen this very House of Commons.

In Ontario, the province from which I come, we have 24 senators. In Ontario, unlike Quebec where senators serve at large, if 24 senators run in province-wide elections we could see up to six million or more voters voting for a senatorial candidate. In that situation it is not inconceivable that a single Senate candidate could win an election with four million, five million or more votes, dwarfing the number of voters and constituents that members of this chamber represent. Accordingly, when those senators who have the legitimacy of being elected with some three million to four million votes confront the House about what should be done with certain pieces of legislation, we need to think about strengthening this House of Commons to ensure that the increase in the power of the Senate, because of term limits and elections, is reflected also in an increase in power of this part of the legislature, the House of Commons. This would ensure that the people's place that is represented by 308 members here today has an effective and continued voice as the primary centre of power in our nation's capital.

For all those reasons I believe the Senate serves a useful role. I believe members should vote to ensure its continued operation. While the institution is not perfect, and while those who have made mistakes should be held to account, let us ensure that our institutions remain strong to respond to the future challenges that Canada faces.

● (2115)

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member's speech. Some of the comments I made during his speech were in favour of some of what he was saying because I did detect a dedication to democratic principles in his speech, which I fundamentally share. I think that on both sides of the House we can recognize when a democrat stands up, but we may disagree.

Where I fundamentally disagree is that if we were to look at the Senate today, because of its partisan nature, it is not functioning as that second House necessary to ensure checks and balances. There is a contradiction between the way it has been created, in that it is unelected, and that it is partisan.

Therefore, how can the member, as the democrat that I know he is, stand up to defend that institution that really does not do its constitutional job?

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that there are challenges in our Parliament. I acknowledge that there is a need to reform certain aspects of our institutions. We have challenges in this House as does the Senate. However, I do not think the solution is to either abolish the Senate or to seek to do through the back door what we are unable to accomplish through the front door, which is to starve the upper chamber of the funds it needs to operate.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat sad to see in the dying days of this session prior to summer break that we are spending the time talking about the Senate and Senate reform when there are so many real issues.

Here we are in debate on our main estimates. People are concerned about our middle class, the jobs, economy, taxes and health care. There is so much more that we could be talking about.

Business of Supply

Instead, the NDP, not using very much wisdom, has decided to allocate today to be all about the Senate, knowing full well that no matter what we decide here today absolutely nothing is going to have an impact in terms of the future of the Senate because it requires constitutional changes.

Given that the NDP persists in the discussion of constitutional change, which is what it has chosen to talk about today, can the member indicate whether there has been any interest from any of the provinces in having a constitutional discussion about changes to the Senate.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I think it is public record that there have been no first ministers conferences on constitutional change. I actually believe that is good thing.

We need to remain focused on what Canadians are telling us, which is that they are concerned about jobs and economic growth. We, as parliamentarians, need to be focused on those issues and not get sidetracked by debate about reopening the Constitution, which I think would be incredibly divisive and distracting.

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the hon. member is both someone who takes his role as a parliamentarian seriously and one who has truly elevated the debate here tonight by bringing in the historic tone.

That elevation has been important because we are all working late in the chamber. I was disappointed by the earlier remarks from my law school colleague, the member for Halifax, in trying to dance around some of the twin absurd motions we have before Parliament that are clearly unconstitutional and clearly ultra vires.

I would like to ask the member for Wellington—Halton Hills to talk about how both of the motions we have seen tonight, from the member for Pontiac and the member for Winnipeg Centre, are unconstitutional at their core and distract from the real debate of Senate reform that our government has been advancing.

• (2120)

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is an incredibly important document. It is the basic law of this country.

It provides for the protection of minority rights, whether it is through the bicameral structure of Parliament or through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It provides for the governance and the structures of governance of this country.

It is very difficult to amend. That was done purposely, to ensure that rash and poorly thought-out decisions were not taken to change things in the heat of the moment. For that reason, I think we need to respect the Constitution. We should not try to do through the back door what cannot be accomplished through the front door of constitutional change.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about a point of great interest to me, namely women and the Constitution, women and the Senate.

As the member knows, women were not always eligible to sit in the Senate. Indeed, they were not admitted until 1930, and only after fighting for this right. They won after a hard-fought battle, primarily

led by five women. It was under Mackenzie King that women finally took their place in the Senate.

It was not the Senate that handed women their victory. Indeed, according to the Senate, women were not persons, and being a person was one of the qualifications required to serve in the Senate. This is still true today under the Constitution. This case, which was settled in 1930, was known as the “Persons Case”.

I raised this point because the member mentioned it. If he had not, I might not have talked about it. As we are well aware, it was a private committee, not the Senate or the Supreme Court of Canada, that ruled in favour of women. That committee was known at the time as the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council.

To conclude, I would like to say that I am very pleased that the member spoke about this.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I thank the NDP member for her comments.

I agree with the member. It was the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the United Kingdom that declared that women were persons.

[English]

I agree with the member. It was the Judicial Committee of The Privy Council that ruled that women were persons for the purposes of election. I think we still have a long way to go to ensure proper representation of women in Parliament, and that is why I strongly support the increased representation of women in this chamber. It is something that I will always support.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I echo the comments of the hon. member for Durham that the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills has indeed elevated the debate. As a former member of the cabinet for intergovernmental affairs, he knows the file well and he is a passionate defender of democracy. Therefore, I hate to have to disagree with him.

In the past, I have always supported the Senate, but what I have seen transpire in the last few years has shaken my confidence to the core. Rather than it being a house of sober second thought, we have a chamber of partisan clout with no respect for democracy. It was prepared to take Bill C-311, which was passed democratically by this House, and defeat it without allowing it to go committee for hearings. This was the climate bill that had been passed here.

I fear that a future democratically elected House of Commons could have remnant Conservative senators appointed by the Prime Minister continuing to do the former prime minister's bidding against a newly elected House of Commons with different views. I think we are in trouble, and the only solution may be abolition, although not the current proposal before us.

Business of Supply

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe, as I have outlined before, that we need to check the majoritarianism of the House of Commons. We need to provide a check on the role of the executive branch of government. We need a place of sober second thought to review legislation and to do its investigative and research work. For all those reasons, I think the Senate of Canada has a role to play in our system of governance, which is why I believe we need to have a bicameral legislature.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not think that I would ever say this, but I agree with much of what the hon. member has had to say, especially with respect to the check on majoritarianism. It is particularly relevant in my small province of Prince Edward Island. Since the Conservative government has come to power, we have seen the withdrawal of front-line services for immigrants, taxpayers and veterans. There needs to be some sort of a check on this majoritarianism.

However, the member did say that he has some difficulty with there being a reopening of federal-provincial negotiations with respect to Senate reform. Does he not agree, given the long delay that the government went through before sending this to the Supreme Court of Canada, that the result of the reference to the Supreme Court of Canada will inevitably be those federal-provincial discussions that the Prime Minister seems to abhor?

• (2125)

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member about his point on Prince Edward Island. However, Prince Edward Island did not join Confederation in 1867. It said “no thank you”. It was not until the offer was sweetened by the newly formed Dominion of Canada that Prince Edward Island joined, in 1873.

With respect to his question, I would say we should avoid reopening the Constitution because I think it is going to open issues far greater than just reform of the Senate. What we could accomplish after the Supreme Court rules, through non-constitutional means, would be a preferable course of action.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I should say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

This evening we are discussing a motion, a notice of opposition to a specific budget item. In fact, it is the role of the House to decide what sort of money to give out here and there. As everyone can see, there is one question and three answers. Do we need an upper chamber? Some will want to stick to the status quo, some will say that reform is in order and others will say that the Senate must be abolished.

The Senate as we know it today is an historic compromise that was made when this country was born. It is a hybrid of the British House of Lords and the U.S. Senate when it comes to its values and what its founders really wanted it to achieve. In fact, this was a matter of great debate during the Charlottetown Conference and the Quebec Conference in 1864. This is what was said at the time:

Senators are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Senators represent regions and provinces in order to balance the representation in the House of Commons. Less populated regions have a stronger voice in the Senate so as to ensure representation for regional and minority interests.

Is that really so? Has that ever been the case on any given day? I doubt it.

At the time, only the elite could be members of the Senate. There were two main conditions. We have to go back to the 19th century. To be a senator, a person had to be over 30 and own property worth at least \$4,000, which was a lot of money at the time.

Governments of all stripes immediately saw a partisan advantage to appointing senators, and the problems began. It was supposed to be a chamber of people who could make wise decisions, a chamber of sober second thought. Has it ever been that? Not often enough for our liking, because if it were truly working well, then we would not be against it. Unfortunately, history tells us that year after year, decade after decade, there have been problems with that chamber.

Allow me to quote George Brown, who said at the time that the Senate was the key to federation,

...the very essence of our compact. Our Lower Canadian friends have agreed to give us representation by population in the Lower House, on the express condition that they would have equality in the Upper House. On no other condition could we have advanced a step.

At the time, it was a founding element of Canada and the intentions were noble. However, reality soon caught up. Do I really need to talk about Senators Harb, Brazeau, Wallin and Duffy? I do not have to talk about them any more in this place, because everyone knows all about it.

At the beginning of my speech, I said that there were three options. One of them is to maintain the status quo. That is obviously unacceptable, although some still believe in it. For all sorts of reasons, they try to instill fear in us, but all they really want is to go back to the way things were and appoint people who will do their bidding. The second option is reform. Do you believe it, Mr. Speaker? Do you know in what year the first attempt to reform the Senate took place? It was in 1874. We have been talking about Senate reform for almost 140 years. Has anything happened during that time? Not really.

More recently, attempts were made in 1980 and 1990. There was the Molgat-Cosgrove committee in 1984, the Macdonald commission in 1985, and even the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee in 1992. Did anything happen? On this side of the House, we believe that the only possible solution, in light of the Senate's history, is to abolish it.

• (2130)

However, that is not what we are talking about this evening. I would like to remind hon. members that the Senate has two types of budgets. Even if our motion is adopted tonight, the Senate will still have a \$32 million budget under laws enacted by Parliament. We tend to forget that.

Do we need a bicameral system? The provinces decided a long time ago that such a system was unnecessary, and it did not bring about an apocalypse as some people claim.

Business of Supply

British constitutional expert Walter Bagehot once commented about the British parliamentary system that, if we had an ideal House of Commons, we would not need a higher chamber. I believe that we need to look at how we work together for the good of this country.

Is the motion unconstitutional? Some have suggested that that is the case. I would like to point out to my colleagues that one of the privileges of this House is passing a budget. Part of the Senate's budget is granted by the House of Commons. It is therefore our prerogative to move this type of motion.

As I was saying earlier, part of the upper chamber's budget is statutory. I would like to once again remind hon. members that the Senate has a statutory budget of \$32 million, which is not exactly peanuts.

The problem right now is that the Prime Minister appoints people and then he washes his hands of them. There is a serious problem with accountability. The Prime Minister cannot appoint people left and right or appoint just anyone and then, when they do something wrong, say that he is not responsible and that those people will pay back the money. That is not how it works.

The Conservative government has managed to do even worse than its Liberal predecessors when it comes to political partisanship in the upper chamber. That is why we are having this debate tonight. The situation is going from bad to worse. The more time passes, the less people see the relevance of this institution. What is its purpose?

I certainly do not want to paint all senators with the same brush. It is not my intention or the intention of the members on this side of the House to say that everyone is cheating. That is not our objective. The point is that the system is not working. We have been trying to change things for a long time. There are always problems, but they never get solved. In the end, we are always left with the status quo, which everyone in the House finds unacceptable, I hope. I hope that no one in the House still believes in the status quo, otherwise we have a problem.

To conclude, I would like to quote someone people here know, Michael Fortier, a former Conservative senator. On March 2, 2013, he said:

I was very naive...I thought it would be a different place than the one I found. [In fact, he shared the idyllic view of the Senate at the time.] I found it to be extremely partisan...on both sides, including my own. And it was very annoying because these people were trying to be members of parliament and they weren't.

If I had to choose today, I would say that I'm probably closer to closing the place down. I just don't see the usefulness.

More and more Canadians feel that the Senate has no place in our system, not because it does not have a defined role, but because it does not fulfill its role the way it should. Throughout history, the Senate has been manipulated for strictly partisan purposes.

• (2135)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague across the way for adding some very important points to the debate.

The previous speaker pointed out that the Senate is one of the institutions of Parliament. The founding of Canada was partly based on the fact that there would be regional representation that would

allow some of the smaller areas, such as the Maritimes, to feel that they had adequate representation. That has been part of our system.

I would say that most Canadians would agree that this is a great country, in part because of the Senate, which is one institution among many that are important.

The NDP continues to muse about the abolition of the Senate. What would be the effect on the Maritimes if they did not have the Senate floor, the guarantee that they will receive as many seats in the Senate as they will here in the House of Commons? Has the member considered that policy and its implications for other areas of the country that would then be under the threat of under-representation?

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I mentioned in my speech, the notion of equality was a factor when the Senate was initially created. It was designed to provide increased representation for regions that do not have large populations. We all understand that.

However, although the original intent was a good one, the institution no longer works, and it is partisan. Instead of trying to repeat what we have done over the past 140 years by trying to reform an institution that does not work, the House should have the courage to look at other solutions.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to my colleague's speech, which was rather restrained, compared to the speeches other members of his party made today.

I understand that we need to have a debate on the Senate and start looking at ways to solve what has become somewhat of a problem.

Does my colleague not think they are misleading Canadians by trying to make them think we can abolish the Senate by waving a magic wand or that by depriving it of funding we can solve the problem?

Does the member not agree that if the Senate is not operational, under our democratic system, we would not be able to pass laws, since any law must go through the Senate to receive royal assent? Is the NDP's motion not overly simplistic?

• (2140)

Mr. Denis Blanchette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

On this side of the House, we have never said that we could resolve this issue by just snapping our fingers or waving a magic wand. We have always said that the institution is dysfunctional and that we will have to roll up our sleeves and find other solutions.

However, as I pointed out twice in my speech, the motion does not state that all the Senate's money will disappear, but only the portion voted by the House of Commons. The other portion, which is statutory, nevertheless amounts to \$32 million. I think they can do a thing or two with that money.

Business of Supply

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to participate in the debate on this important concurrence motion.

It is a belief of mine, as it is of the rest of my colleagues and many Canadians across the country, that the funding of \$58,169,816 under the Senate program expenditures in the main estimates allocated for the funding of the Senate under vote 1 should cease to be provided to the Senate.

We are in the midst of a democratic crisis in this country, and Canadians across the country agree that there is no place for an unelected, unaccountable Senate in our democracy.

The origins of the Senate date back to Confederation. The members of the red chamber were asked to review and scrutinize legislation passed by the House of Commons. It was intended to ensure the representation of minorities and of provinces and regions in the federal legislative process.

As the member for Timmins—James Bay clearly articulated earlier, at the time that the Senate was created, these minorities were the wealthy people of this country. They were concerned that the interests of the wealthy few in this country might not be represented sufficiently in the elected House of Commons and wanted to make sure that people were appointed to represent the interests of the wealthy.

It was also intended to be less partisan. However, the Senate has never really played this role, as senators vote according to the party they represent rather than according to the interests of the regions they are supposed to be representing.

In the past few months, information has come to light about certain Liberal and Conservative senators that raises many questions and concerns about the use of public funds granted to those senators. Constituents and Canadians across the country are wondering about Mike Duffy and his \$90,000. Fortunately, we have the Leader of the Opposition asking all the right questions, and Canadians are looking for real answers from the government.

Canadians deserve to know the details surrounding the \$90,000 loan from former PMO chief of staff Nigel Wright to Mr. Duffy to repay housing allowances he falsely claimed. Despite his permanent residence being clearly in Ontario, Mr. Duffy declared that he lives in Prince Edward Island, where he owns a cottage. The \$90,000 loan allowed Mr. Duffy to repay Canadians, and he now no longer participates in the audit. Mr. Duffy left the Conservative caucus, and on May 19 Nigel Wright also resigned for his actions. This transaction between Mr. Wright and Senator Duffy is now with the Ethics Commissioner to evaluate whether there was a violation of the Conflict of Interest Act. The RCMP is also investigating Mike Duffy's expenses.

Then we have Ms. Pamela Wallin, who is supposedly a representative from Saskatchewan, yet primarily resides in Toronto. Since 2010 Senator Wallin has claimed \$300,000 worth of travel expenses not related to travel to her province of origin and has been seen at numerous Conservative fundraising events. The senator left the Conservative caucus and chose to sit as an independent as of May 17 of this year.

Then we have Mr. Patrick Brazeau, an even bigger embarrassment, who found himself in the middle of many controversies, including repeated absences from the Senate, an allegation of abuse of his housing allowance and charges of sexual assault. In 2012 Mr. Patrick Brazeau declared that his primary residence was in in Maniwaki, Quebec, which enabled him to receive a housing allowance for a secondary residence in the national capital region. However, we have all learned that media reports indicate the Maniwaki residence is actually the home of Patrick Brazeau's father. On May 9, Deloitte's audit and the report of the Senate committee on the internal economy ordered Patrick Brazeau to repay \$48,000 in unjustifiable claims. The senator resigned from the Conservative caucus. We are seeing a trend here.

Abuse of privileges does not rest only with the Conservative caucus but with Liberal senators as well.

These are only some of the abuses of power that we are aware of at the moment. We do not know what else is to come. While we certainly need an independent audit of residency requirements, housing allowances and travel expenses in order to find out whether certain senators are abusing public funds, at the end of the day we need to abolish an institution that no longer serves Canadians.

In any other Canadian workplace, this type of behaviour and lack of responsibility and accountability would result in disciplinary action and, quite possibly, the cessation of the employment relationship, but here what we see are senators stepping away from caucus while maintaining all of their other privileges.

● (2145)

It is outrageous that according to Conservatives, senators are presumed innocent, but unemployed Canadians are guilty by default. It is clear that the Senate is incapable of rectifying its own problems.

While the Senate asked Deloitte to review the expenses of former Conservative Senator Mike Duffy, former Conservative Senator Pamela Wallin, Liberal Senator Mac Harb and former Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau, the firm is still in the process of completing its audit.

The leader of the government in the Senate has stated that the Senate would make the audit public, but we know there is no guarantee that this will actually happen. Moreover, the Senate committee on internal economy removed paragraphs in its report that criticized Mike Duffy because he had reimbursed the amount he owed. It is clear that all public funding for this institution must end.

In 2005, the current Prime Minister campaigned on a promise to reform the Senate, to make it the three Es, equal, elected and effective. He went on to table several bills on Senate reform on behalf of this so-called commitment from his government for change, yet the bills went nowhere. They never rose to the top of the priority list. Even further, the Prime Minister broke his promise not to appoint senators and in fact appointed a whopping 59 senators.

Business of Supply

The Senate is a fundamentally undemocratic institution, used by both the Liberals and Conservatives to thank their friends, defeated candidates and donors. They are appointed not because of merit, but as a reward for loyal service to the party in power. The Prime Minister's so-called Senate reform is without a doubt, a complete failure. Like the Liberals, the Conservatives are only part of the problem.

It was not until February 1, that the Prime Minister referred the issue to the Supreme Court of Canada. The court will give its legal opinion on the processes to follow under the constitution to limit the terms of senators, elect senators, eliminate the requirements for senators to have a residence in the province that they represent and, of course, the abolishment of the Senate. The Supreme Court decision may take years to come, but Canadians want and Canadians deserve action today.

While the Conservatives and Liberals rise in their places to defend the status quo and their senators, the NDP is proud to stand up for Canadians and their tax dollars.

The Senate is outdated and fundamentally anti-democratic. We have senators who abuse the public purse. Also, that place is supposed to be the place of sober second thought. However, in fact, it is allowing partisan lines, as well as blocking legislation that is passed in the House of Commons a number of times, such as the NDP bill, Bill C-311, which would have ensured responsibility and action from Canada to prevent climate change. It passed the House of Commons, but the Senate stopped it.

Premiers, including Saskatchewan's Brad Wall, and many Canadians across the country, agree with us. It costs \$92.5 million a year to run the Senate, over \$90 million a year to cover the costs of salaries and travel for political organizers and people responsible for raising funds for the Liberals and the Conservatives. This is outrageous. The Senate is an archaic institution with appointed senators, some of whom, as we know, abuse their privileges and do not represent the interests or values of Canadians.

I know in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River, this is a lot of money that could be put to much better use, yet it will take the annual taxes of over 8,000 average families to pay the Senate's tab. Senator Duffy will be collecting another \$1.3 million in salary, while Patrick Brazeau will be collecting \$7 million over the course of the remainder of his appointment.

There are many residents of Scarborough—Rouge River struggling to provide for themselves and their families. There are much more important uses for our taxpayer money. Youth unemployment in the GTA is double that of the national average. Where is the real job creation strategy? Canadians across the country are in need of affordable housing. Investments in housing are what Canadians are looking for. In my riding, greater investment for the crumbling infrastructure and investment in public transit services are needed. This \$90 million could go very far in investment in public transit in Scarborough.

Neither the Conservatives, nor the Liberals, are taking this issue seriously.

● (2150)

On one hand, we have the Conservatives' so-called reform that is going nowhere. On the other hand, the Liberals are supporting the status quo. Fortunately—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The member's time has expired. Before we go to questions and comments, the hon. government House leader is rising on a point.

* * *

[Translation]

SAFE DRINKING WATER FOR FIRST NATIONS ACT

BILL S-8—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the House that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to third reading stage of Bill S-8, An Act respecting the safety of drinking water on First Nation lands.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3) I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage of the said bill.

* * *

EXPANSION AND CONSERVATION OF CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS ACT

BILL S-15—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the House that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to second reading stage of Bill S-15, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to the Canada Shipping Act, 2001.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3) I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage of the said bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I am sure that the House appreciates this notice from the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

* * *

[English]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2013-14

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—THE SENATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some attention to the address by the member for Scarborough—Rouge River tonight.

Business of Supply

She takes issue with the Prime Minister appointing some 50 senators, having said that he would not do so. She said that the Conservatives and the Liberals had not taken this issue seriously.

The member, if she were listening to the debate in the House tonight, would know that we cannot abolish the Senate simply by cutting funding. It is part of the constitution and we simply cannot ignore it.

On the issue of appointing senators, would the member not acknowledge that the era when the Prime Minister had left about 18 seats vacant, hoping to appoint senators who were elected, like the ones from Alberta, after a coalition of NDP, Liberal and Bloc leaders proposed to appoint their own senators, the Prime Minister acted to fill those positions so they would not be used that way.

Will the member not admit that the motion today is just a gimmick. Although we are all upset about abuses in the Senate, we are seriously trying to make—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member for Nanaimo—Alberni of some of Canada's history.

When Canada was formed, five of our provinces had senates, had upper Houses. The first thing Manitoba did, for example, was get rid of the senate. In 1876, Manitoba's upper House was abolished. In 1892, New Brunswick abolished its senate. In 1893, Prince Edward Island abolished its senate. Then Nova Scotia and Quebec followed and abolished their senates.

All of these provinces that did abolish their upper House had no constitutional problem. They are not having any problems. There is a way to do it. The Constitution does allow for it and if Canadians have the will, we will accomplish that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (2155)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. I would ask all hon. members, when another of their colleagues has the floor, they really need to keep the noise down. I am sure there are other colleagues who wish to hear the comments and questions from others. Please keep the noise down.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have noticed over my two years here that when women members of the House stand to speak, the heckling is usually much worse than when male members stand to speak.

The member for Calgary would probably—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I do not think that is a point of order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the member's speech, especially those parts that delved into the constitutional complexities of modifying the Senate.

If the NDP were serious about the issue, if it wanted to look at the issue rigorously and substantively instead of engaging in partisan rhetoric, why did NDP months ago not suggest that the matter be

brought to the Supreme Court before the government even took that route?

The most responsible way to go about changing the Senate would be to, first, get an opinion from the highest court in the land. I wonder why the NDP did not propose that when it had the chance?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, once again, this is another bit of NDP history I can share with everybody in the House. For decades, the NDP has consistently voted against funding for the Senate and voted to abolish it. It has been in support of abolishing the Senate for decades.

I am very happy that I have had the opportunity to make that clear yet once again to all the members of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River for her speech.

Is it not rather strange that after the Senate was created at the request of the provinces, they discovered it was not useful? That is rather strange.

I would like my colleague to talk about the work that needs to be done and specifically what we could do that would be better than a partisan Senate.

[*English*]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for looking for some constructive criticism so we can actually do some positive work moving forward.

As he mentioned and as I mentioned earlier, the five provinces in Canada that did have an upper House, as quickly as they could, started abolishing them because they did not feel an upper House was very useful.

What can we do with the dollars that are being put toward the Senate?

As I mentioned, we could be investing in housing, transit, creating jobs for our youth, ensuring that our communities are safe. There is so much that can be done. There is absolutely no place for an unelected, unaccountable Senate in our democracy. It is time to roll up the red carpet and close down the Senate. Let us abolish the Senate.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—THE SENATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion,

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 10 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (2240)

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

*Business of Supply**(Division No. 730)***YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseauit	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scott
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel— 95	

NAYS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anderson
Andrews	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Bélangier	Bennett
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Casey
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cotler	Crockatt
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert

Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Foote
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Holder	Hsu
James	Jean
Jones	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)
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKenzie	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Pacetti	Paradis
Payne	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Regan
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Seeback	Sgro
Shea	Shiple
Shory (or)	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-)
Smith	Sopuck
Stanton	St-Denis
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
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— 182

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

MAIN ESTIMATES 2013-14

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—THE SENATE

The Speaker: The next question is on opposed vote No. 1.

Business of Supply

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:

● (2250)

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

(Division No. 731)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anderson
Andrews	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Bélanger	Bennett
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Casey
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cotler	Crockatt
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Foote
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Holder	Hsu
James	Jean
Jones	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon

Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKenzie	May
Mayer	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Pacetti	Paradis
Payne	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Regan
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Seaback	Sgro
Shea	Shimley
Shory sor)	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-)
Smith	Sopuck
Stanton	St-Denis
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
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 — 182

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon

Business of Supply

Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Rousseau
Sandhu
Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel — 95

Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Saganash
Scott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay

Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Raiitt
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 153

Crockatt
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fast
Flaherty
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
Mayes
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Norlock
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rajotte
Richards
Ritz
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC) moved:

That the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, except any vote disposed of earlier today and less the amounts voted in Interim Supply, be concurred in.

[English]

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 yeas have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

● (2255)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 732)

YEAS

Members

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong

Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezant
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Blanchette
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau
Caron
Cash
Chisholm
Chow
Cleary
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Bennett
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boulerice
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dionne Labelle

Business of Supply

Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Freeman
Garrison
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Jacob
Julian
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel

Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Fortin
Fry
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Grogouhé
Hsu
Hyer
Jones
Karygiannis
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mourani
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valerioté — 126

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Hon. Tony Clement moved for leave to introduce Bill C-63, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2014.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that Bill C-63, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I think you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote, and we will vote against the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals agree to apply and will vote no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois will also be voting against the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, Thunder Bay—Superior North votes no.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party also votes no.

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 733*)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
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	Crockett
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
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	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukivski	Lunney
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon

Business of Supply

Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
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 — 153	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseauit
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguché
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Jones
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat

Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Toone	Tremblay
Turnel	Valeriote — 126

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion adopted.

Accordingly this bill stands referred to a committee of the whole and I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)

(On clause 2)

• (2300)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Chair, it is my duty to ask the President of the Treasury Board if the estimates bill is in its usual form.

(On clause 2)

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Chair, yes, the presentation of this bill is identical to that used during the previous supply period.

[*English*]**The Chair:** Shall clause 2 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**An hon. member:** On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**An hon. member:** On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**An hon. member:** On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**An hon. member:** On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**An hon. member:** On division.

Business of Supply

(Clause 6 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill, be concurred in.

[*English*]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find agreement to apply the results of the previous concurrence motion to this motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Chair, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and we will vote no.

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, Liberals agree to apply and will vote no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Chair, the Bloc Québécois votes no.

[*English*]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, Thunder Bay—Superior North votes no.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party votes no.

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

(*Division No. 734*)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
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	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
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	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies

Business of Supply

Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
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 — 153	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brison
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Chariton
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Jones
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls

Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valeriote — 126

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Hon. Tony Clement** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you seek it, I believe you will agreement to apply the results from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.**The Speaker:** Is there consent to proceed in this fashion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Turmel: Mr. Chair, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and we are still voting no.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals agree to apply and will vote no.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Chair, the Bloc Québécois is voting no.

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, Thunder Bay—Superior North votes no.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, the Green Party votes no.

● (2305)

[English]

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

(Division No. 735)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Amblar
Ambrose	Anders

Business of Supply

Anderson
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer— 153

Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Crockatt
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fast
Flaherty
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
Mayes
McLeod
Menzies
Miller

Norlock
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rajotte
Richards
Ritz
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to

Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

Blanchette
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chisholm
Chow
Cleary
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Freeman
Garrison
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Jacob
Julian
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinity
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Turnel

Blanchette-Lamothe
Boulerice
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Fortin
Fry
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Grogue
Hsu
Hyer
Jones
Karygiannis
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mourani
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-

Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valeriote— 126

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A)

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC)
moved:

That the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014,
be concurred in.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett

Business of Supply

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (2310)

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

(Division No. 736)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
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	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	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
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt

Rajotte	Reid
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	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 — 152

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg	Boulterice
Boutin-Sweet	Brisson
Brousseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguié
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Jones
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Pécelet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah

Business of Supply

Sgro
sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Tummel

Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valerioté — 126

Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukivski
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 153

Flaherty
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
Mayes
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Norlock
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rajotte
Richards
Ritz
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Tony Clement moved that Bill C-64, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2014 be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

● (2320)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 737*)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
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	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast

NAYS

Members

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

Business of Supply

Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Jones
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinity	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valerioté — 126

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went in committee thereon, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)

(On clause 2)

[*English*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Chair, it is my duty to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether or not this bill is in its usual form.

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Chair, I can attest to the fact that the form of this bill is the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be concurred in.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, If you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the previous concurrence motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and it will vote no.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals agree to apply and will vote no.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois votes no.

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, Thunder Bay—Superior North votes no.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party votes no.

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

(Division No. 738)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
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	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
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	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
Nicholson	O'Connor
Obhrai	O'Neill Gordon
Oliver	O'Toole
Opitz	Payne
Paradis	Preston
Poillievre	Rajotte
Raitt	

Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 153

Business of Supply

Richards
Ritz
Seeback
Shiple
Smith
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boulerice
Brison
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Eyking
Fortin
Fry
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Grogue
Hsu
Hyer
Jones
Karygiannis
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mourani
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah

Business of Supply

Sgro
sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel

Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valerioté — 126

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be read a third time and passed.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the results from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and it will vote no.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals agree to apply and will vote no.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois votes no.

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, Thunder Bay—Superior North votes no.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party votes no.

● (2325)

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

(Division No. 739)

YEAS

Members

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement

Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Crockatt

Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
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Shory
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James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
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Lobb
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Preston
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Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boulerice
Brison
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Christopherson
Comartin
Côté
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre

Business of Supply

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 sor)
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
 (Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[Translation]

YALE FIRST NATION FINAL AGREEMENT ACT

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC) moved that Bill C-62, An Act to give effect to the Yale First Nation Final Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts be read a second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to lead off our discussion of Bill C-62, the Yale First Nation Final Agreement Act.

[English]

On April 11, 2013, I had the privilege to be in Vancouver to sign the Yale First Nation Final Agreement along with Chief Robert Hope of Yale First Nation and the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation for the Province of British Columbia.

The final agreement brings certainty to the ownership and use of lands and resources in the area. It creates opportunities for the Yale First Nation and provides predictability for continued development

and growth in the province. The introduction of this legislation marks the culmination of almost 20 years of discussion to reach a comprehensive treaty and bring about the bill in front of us tonight.

Now this was no small feat. Before I go any further I want to take a few moments to thank those who made it possible for us to be in a position to consider Bill C-62.

● (2330)

[Translation]

I want to thank the First Nation and the negotiators for their tireless efforts. I also want to thank the chief commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission, Sophie Pierre, as well as Premier Clark and Minister Chong for standing firmly behind the B.C. treaty process.

Most of all, I want to thank the men and women of Yale First Nation for their staunch support of the final agreement. For, in the end, this agreement and this bill are about them, their families and the future of their community.

[English]

No one deserves more credit for this final agreement than Yale First Nation Chief Robert Hope. Simply put, we are here today discussing Bill C-62 because of the vision and steadfast commitment of Chief Robert Hope. We must also credit his father, the late Chief Lawrence Hope, whose practical wisdom and quiet strength guided negotiators and continues to do so even after his passing.

I strongly believe that this agreement provides the people of Yale First Nation with a strong foundation on which to build a stable, accountable government and an economically prosperous, culturally vibrant community.

If any member of this House was in doubt of its merit, I am sure that my brief description of the five key areas of the agreement will convince them.

The first of these key areas is its financial components. As part of this comprehensive treaty, Yale First Nation will receive a capital transfer of \$10.7 million. The community will also receive \$2 million to promote economic development. Canada will also provide Yale First Nation with a one-time funding of \$1.4 million and annual funding of some \$1.25 million to implement the agreement and provide key programs and services.

[Translation]

The second key area of the agreement is land. As a result of the final agreement, Yale First Nation will own and control nearly 2,000 hectares of treaty settlement land located within the Fraser Valley Regional District just north of the town of Hope.

In addition, 23 hectares of provincial land transferred to Yale First Nation will retain their designation as part of the agricultural land reserve. If any land designated as agricultural land reserve is added to Yale First Nation in the future, this land will also retain its designation as agricultural.

What is more, 233 hectares of Yale First Nation land known as Frozen Lakes will be accessible to the public.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

*Business of Supply**[English]*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. Could members either be quiet or leave the chamber? I am having a hard time hearing, and I am sitting very close to the minister.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

[Translation]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, 233 hectares of Yale First Nation land known as Frozen Lakes will be accessible to the public for temporary non-commercial and recreational purposes, such as hunting and fishing.

With respect to the land, I should also point out that the parties sought to accommodate the interests of several neighbouring first nation communities whose traditional territories overlap with Yale First Nation's land.

To be precise, the agreement makes it possible for the public, including members of other first nations, to request access to Yale First Nation lands in order to fish, hunt and carry out other recreational activities as well as first nations traditional activities.

This unique provision also sets out that these requests must all be considered by the Yale First Nation and may only be refused on reasonable grounds.

[English]

The third key area of this agreement is access to and control over natural resources. In other words, all Yale First Nation land, that is, all 2,000 hectares of treaty settlement land, would be fee simple or private land subject to provincial and federal laws. Yale First Nation would control mineral rights on its land. Yale First Nation would own any forest on its land, and Yale First Nation community members would enjoy the right to fish and harvest wildlife and migratory birds for non-commercial purposes on its land. In addition, members of Yale First Nation would have the right to gather plants for food, social and ceremonial purposes and to harvest natural resources in provincial parks within Yale's defined harvest area, with the exception of the protected area, the Yale Garry Oak Ecological Reserve.

The final agreement would also make it possible for Yale First Nation to exercise control over water reserves, subject to federal and provincial laws, and to derive hydroelectric power from designated waterways on Yale First Nation Land.

The fourth key area of this agreement covers fishing. In fact, a harvest agreement that is separate from but related to the final agreement provides for fishing licences to be issued to Yale First Nation by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The term of this harvest agreement is 25 years, and Yale First Nation can renew it every 15 years after the initial term expires. The terms and conditions of commercial licences issued to Yale will be comparable to those of licences issued to other commercial fishers.

• (2335)

[Translation]

Those are the key provisions of the Yale First Nation Final Agreement, the agreement that Bill C-62 will enshrine in Canadian

law. Clearly this bill will empower the Yale First Nation to make its own decisions and become more vibrant, prosperous and self-reliant.

For these reasons, I ask honourable members to adopt Bill C-62. In doing so, we will build a stronger Canada for all of us.

[English]

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, I am rising to speak to Bill C-62, An Act to give effect to the Yale First Nation Final Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. The bill we are debating is the final step in the ratification process. This is the bringing into force of the Yale First Nation Final Agreement.

This has been a very long process. In fact, the Yale First Nation was formally accepted into the British Columbia treaty process on April 26, 1994. In 1996, the BC Treaty Commission declared the Yale First Nation treaty table ready to begin negotiations on February 8, 1996, and the provincial bill received royal assent on June 2, 2011. Of course, it has taken two years for Canada to bring the bill forward for debate. Unfortunately, we are debating it at nearly midnight in June, when surely we could have been talking about this bill many months ago.

The minister outlined some of the key provisions in the bill. I am not going to cover that same ground. I need to declare that New Democrats will be supporting this bill, and I look forward to considering this bill at committee shortly.

There are a couple of issues that I think are going to present ongoing challenges. One of the issues that continues to not be resolved both in the Yale treaty and the B.C. treaty process is the issue of overlap.

One of the background papers provided to the aboriginal affairs committee members noted that the Supreme Court, in a variety of court decisions, has indicated that the Crown has an obligation to consult with, and where appropriate, to accommodate the interests of first nations claiming aboriginal rights and title over areas subject to a treaty or final agreement.

The paper went on to indicate that it is desirable to have first nations resolve overlap issues among themselves. Canada and British Columbia have continued to encourage Yale First Nation efforts to discuss or resolve any shared territory issues with neighbouring first nations. In fact, there is certainly a dispute over shared territory with the Sto:lo Nation. As a result of some of the discussions that were going back and forth, the Yale First Nation Final Agreement was amended to allow reasonable public access to Yale First Nation land, by request, for non-commercial recreational purposes, such as hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. Such requests cannot be unreasonably refused by Yale First Nation.

Business of Supply

As a measure of that, Yale First Nation Chief Robert Hope has entered into five written access protocols with Sto:lo individuals and has indicated that he is willing to do so with individual fishers or first nations bands to clarify and streamline the process for seeking access to fishing and cultural sites. There are non-exhaustive objective criteria for the refusal of access under the reasonable access provision. However, that measure has not been satisfactory to Sto:lo.

The challenge of the issue of overlap and shared territories is a critical one that must be dealt with, as well as implementation. There is an implementation plan in the agreement, and one would hope that this implementation plan goes more smoothly than other implementation plans with other land claims agreements, as the Land Claims Agreements Coalition will note.

With regard to the overlap, I want to touch on a couple of points. One goes back to the mission statement of the BC Treaty Commission. On January 28, 1991, representatives of the governments of Canada, British Columbia and the First Nations Summit put their signatures to the report of the British Columbia Claims Task Force. It made a number of recommendations, and one was that first nations resolve issues related to overlapping traditional territories among themselves. The analysis in the task force report as it relates to this recommendation is that first nations must discuss overlaps with neighbouring first nations preparing for negotiations, a process for resolving overlaps should be in place before a treaty is concluded, and the BC Treaty Commission can provide advice on dispute resolution and services.

We heard from the BC Treaty Commission in a pre-study in anticipation of this bill coming forward. Chief commissioner Sophie Pierre indicated that, in her view, best efforts had been made by all parties in the dispute over shared territories. Her strong recommendation was that the House adopt Bill C-62.

• (2340)

I also want to refer to the Lornie report from November 3, 2011, with regard to recommendations on shared territory dispute avoidance and resolution. The reason I am raising this issue is I want to encourage the government to look for opportunities to put together a better mechanism so we do not have final agreements coming before the House with unresolved issues around shared territories.

I can point to other agreements like the Tsawwassen agreement, in which there still was unresolved issues by the time we came to the House to debate Tsawwassen. It did pass, but there were issues with the Sencot'en Alliance, Penelakut and Cowichan peoples around some of the fishing rights.

With regard to the Lornie report, it recommended that there should be provided resources to support effective dispute resolution and resolution options for all first nations affected by potential conflicts relating to shared territories and overlap issues arising out of treaties, whether or not those first nations were participating in the B.C. treaty process.

There were a number of examples pointed out in the Lornie report of how these overlap issues were not getting resolved and how it was creating challenges within communities. The Lornie report went on to indicate that some overlap disputes appeared to be virtually

irreconcilable through discussions and a few first nations had resorted to the courts to attempt to protect their interests. It said that the courts system, however, was expensive and time consuming and typically delivered either an all or nothing outcome, or sent the parties back to negotiate an agreement.

I do not think it is in the best interests of the nations involved in these disputes or the communities at large to have these unresolved issues going forward as we enter into final agreements.

Mrs. Jean Teillet, chief negotiator and legal counsel of the Sto:lo Nation, did indicate that in the past the government had provided a road map forward. She cited a number of cases. One was the Tlicho in the Northwest Territories, just north of Great Slave Lake, which borders on Nunavut, borders on Saulteau territory and on the bottom it borders on a people called the Akaitcho people.

I was in the House when the Tlicho agreement came forward. Because the government had taken a leadership role in working and setting some parameters for Tlicho to move forward on resolving the issues around the shared territories and the overlaps, by the time the agreement came to the House, we were able to pass that agreement at all stages because there were no issues around disputes over that shared territory.

This was one example that was provided. There were a number of others, including the 1975 agreement with James Bay and the Northern Quebec agreement, where there were islands in James Bay that were hotly in dispute.

Ms. Teillet indicated that the government, working with the first nations that were negotiating, was carving out those islands. They were pulled out of the agreement and then the government said that it would give them all the rest of the agreement, it would sign it, but it would take this disputed area out of the agreement for now, it would give them the whole agreement, then it would come back when they had solved that overlap problem and it would figure out how to put it back in their treaty.

She also talked about the Nunavik agreement signed in 2006 and the Nunavut agreement in 1993.

Therefore, there are a number of examples where there have been either the resources or the parameters put in place to encourage the nations involved to sort out those overlapped and shared territory disputes before the final agreement is signed. It is unfortunate that we do not have that kind of agreement before us in the House today.

However, having said that, the Yale First Nations negotiated a treaty in good faith. It went through the B.C. Treaty Commission process and met the various stages that had been outlined that nations in British Columbia agreed to back in 1991. Therefore, what we have before us is a treaty negotiated in good faith that the New Democrats will support.

• (2345)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with some concern that I rise today to speak to Bill C-62, the Yale First Nation Final Agreement act.

Business of Supply

Resolving outstanding issues of first nations' rights through the negotiation implementation of treaties has important benefits for both first nations and non-first nations communities, not the least of which is a solid legal basis for future economic development. It also reflects the modern commitment to move forward in a spirit of partnership, respect and the co-operation for mutual benefit that characterized our original relationship. Two hundred and fifty years ago the royal proclamation laid out how the richness of this land would be fairly shared. Unfortunately, for many that vision has yet to be realized.

To put it simply, the process for settling first nations land claims is needlessly slow and burdensome for first nations seeking fair settlements to outstanding grievances. The comprehensive claims or modern treaties deal with the unfinished business of treaty making in Canada, where first nations rights have not been dealt with by historical treaties or other legal means. Bill C-62 deals with the ratification of such a modern treaty.

[*Translation*]

To date, the government has signed 24 comprehensive claims agreements with first nations in Canada, and two self-government agreements. Most of these agreements were signed under Liberal governments.

[*English*]

As of September 2012, there were still 93 active self-government and comprehensive land claim negotiation tables across the country. The frequent delays and increased costs associated with federal negotiators having to constantly return to Ottawa to revise unnecessarily narrow negotiating mandates is grinding the process to a standstill.

Federal negotiators simply do not have the sufficient flexibility and authority to engage in open, genuine and interest-based negotiations with first nations. This must change if we are to make significant further progress. On average, it takes 15 years to reach a final agreement. In September 2012, the government acknowledged its approach was not working by announcing a new "results-based approach" to self-government negotiations. However, the government has yet to publicly describe the details of this new approach.

There are grave concerns that the government is planning to use this new approach to simply withdraw from certain negotiations and pursue only those it believes will be settled in a manner agreeable to the government. In fact, the government seems now to be pursuing a take-it-or-leave-it approach with first nations, suggesting that if they are not willing to accept the government's final offer, they can pursue the matter through the courts.

This approach is fundamentally misguided and will not only be more expensive for the government in the long run, it will cost both first nations and the Canadian economy in terms of potential economic development and better paying jobs for first nations and non-first nations alike.

In terms of this agreement, although the Yale First Nation, and provincial and federal governments have been able to come together, there are still concerns that the narrow Department of Justice "strength of claim" analysis contributed to this final agreement failing to resolve disputed overlapping territory.

The Yale First Nation entered into tripartite negotiations with the federal and British Columbia governments for the settlement of their comprehensive land claim in 1994.

This modern treaty has been negotiated in good faith over almost 20 years through the B.C. treaty process and agreed to by the governments of Canada and British Columbia and the people of the Yale First Nation. The final agreement has already been ratified in March 2011, by members of the Yale First Nation with 68% support and in June 2011, by the British Columbia Legislative Assembly.

It deals with Yale First Nation's rights and responsibilities in areas such as governance, culture and heritage, natural resources, community infrastructure, financing and environmental protection. It will provide the Yale First Nation with full settlement of aboriginal rights and title and provides a modern framework for Canada, British Columbia and the Yale First Nation to move forward toward a more prosperous common future.

• (2350)

However, it is important to note that the Stó:lō Nation and the Stó:lō Tribal Council have expressed great concern with this agreement. They claim that the Yale treaty violates Stó:lō rights and contend that they will no longer be able to engage in traditional practices that would require passage over Yale territory.

While this agreement fails to resolve all outstanding overlapping claims, we recognize that according to current practice this does not preclude ratifying the treaty. According to the Government of Canada comprehensive claims policy, "Ideally, competing Aboriginal claims over a territory should be resolved before reaching an AIP, but this is not a compulsory requirement".

Although, according to section 2.4, the final agreement deals with aboriginal rights and title with respect to the Yale First Nation only, and does not affect the rights of other aboriginal peoples, it is regrettable that the parties were unable to resolve their differences before this final stage of the process.

Liberals hope that the Yale and Stó:lō first nations will resolve any outstanding overlapping claims through ongoing good faith negotiations and can resolve their differences in the spirit of co-operation and respect. However, the issue of overlapping claims and current deficiencies in how we address those claims is a matter with far broader implications than this specific agreement.

We must develop a better process to facilitate first nations resolving disputes on overlapping claims as part of the treaty process. While we recognize that it is for first nations to resolve these issues, we must be ready and willing to provide assistance where warranted and requested.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

In addition, the Liberal Party urges the government to respond to the requests of the British Columbia Treaty Commission as well as the recent recommendations of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples to provide the Commission with any necessary resources that would enable it to help first nations resolve their overlapping claims disputes.

The Liberal Party believes that this is essential to the success of the treaty process in British Columbia.

• (2355)

[English]

Further, the failure of the government to develop a coherent approach to implementing treaties not only undermines new treaty negotiations but has led to great frustration from first nations under the 70 historical treaties.

Recently, National Chief Shawn Atleo reflected that frustration when he said:

Treaty regions have been signalling for far too long the need for high-level discussions on Treaty implementation. They want to see the establishment of a process for them to sit down with their Treaty partner, the Crown in right of Canada, to implement the Treaties according to their true spirit and intent, as the Indigenous Nations understand them.

The right to self-determination and self-government must mean something real and tangible for first nations across Canada.

As Bill C-62 meets the current rules, we will be supporting the bill, but we implore the government to get on with the letter as sent from the BC Treaty Commission, with its four recommendations, and to fix this problem.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased rise this evening to speak to Bill C-62, the Yale First Nation Final Agreement Act, which concerns the Yale First Nation in British Columbia.

Almost 40 years ago now, the governments of Quebec and Canada signed an important agreement with the Cree and Inuit nations: the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. This was the first major modern-day agreement negotiated in Quebec and Canada. Signed in 1975, it laid the foundation for the social, economic and administrative organization of a significant part of Quebec's aboriginal population.

The agreement covered all aspects of the lives of the Cree and Inuit people, who received 10,400 km² in land holdings. Quebec also gave them exclusive hunting, fishing and trapping rights on category II lands and on all of the territory covered by the agreement.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement paved the way for collaborative agreements in Canada, such as the Yale First Nation Final Agreement. Quebec decided to take a different approach to its dealings with aboriginal people in the 1970s.

The Bloc Québécois recognizes aboriginal peoples as distinct peoples entitled to the culture, language, customs and traditions that are key to the development of their identity. In so doing, it is respecting the direction taken by René Lévesque, a staunch defender

of aboriginal peoples, who made Quebec the first nation in the Americas to recognize the aboriginal nations in its midst.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the future does not lie in pointless opposition, but rather in constructive partnerships that respect the legitimate interests of all parties. The Bloc Québécois's political position allows it to move the current debate forward, generate new ideas and provide a broad outline for what could be the renewal of the relationship between the first nations and Quebecers. The Bloc Québécois stands behind aboriginal peoples in their quest for justice and the recognition of their rights.

For example, we believe that the entire first nations education system is underfunded. A 2% cap on increases in federal funding for education in aboriginal communities has been in place since 1996, yet given the rise in the cost of living and the tremendous growth in the first nations population, an annual increase of 6.2% is needed. That is not currently happening.

That is why the Bloc Québécois had the courage to introduce Bill C-599 during the previous Parliament. This bill had to do with the implementation of a first nations education funding plan, and its goal was to force the government to increase education funding for aboriginals and to develop a long-term funding plan.

Young people represent hope and the future of the first nations. We must focus on education and academic success, essential assets that must be seen as investments that will pave the way to the future.

The future does not lie in pointless opposition, but rather in constructive partnerships that respect the legitimate interests of all parties. The Bloc Québécois recognizes that aboriginal peoples make a significant contribution to Quebec society. This contribution is made possible because of the wealth of culture and knowledge of the aboriginal peoples.

The Bloc Québécois supports protecting these fundamental aspects of the collective identity of aboriginal peoples, as well as maintaining their languages. With regard to future relations between the government and aboriginal peoples, we feel it is important to support a more comprehensive approach that recognizes the aspirations of aboriginal peoples and favours negotiating agreements nation to nation.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of sending the bill on the Yale First Nation Final Agreement to be studied in committee, since it was the result of respectful negotiations with the Government of Canada, the Government of British Columbia and the Yale First Nation. In addition, this agreement will enable the Yale First Nation to exercise self-government over its land, resources and members.

Respect is what allows us to build sustainable connections between peoples.

• (2400)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, June 4, Bill C-62, An Act to give effect to the Yale First Nation Final Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, is deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Adjournment Proceedings

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I ask that you see the clock at 12:24 a.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am taking the time to follow up on a question I raised in the House. We feel that the response the government gave Canadians is absolutely pathetic.

As I recall, I was talking about a case in New Brunswick and who can or cannot be an employee of the public service. The parliamentary secretary responded that they had put forward employment insurance reforms to better connect Canadians with available jobs, which had absolutely nothing to do with the question I asked.

Canadians expect their administrative tribunals to be just, fair and accessible, not a haven for defeated Conservative candidates and party donors who pocket fat salaries paid with taxpayers' hard-earned money.

However, instead of having an employment insurance system that is accessible and an appeal system that workers can trust, the Conservatives are completely destroying the legitimacy of appeal bodies by obviously stacking them with their best friends.

Among the candidates appointed so far to the Social Security Tribunal we have Valerie Parker, who donated \$1,450 to the Conservative Party; Leroy Legere, a former MP and provincial Conservative minister in Nova Scotia; Pierre Lafontaine, a defeated Conservative candidate in Jeanne-Le Ber in the 2011 election; Jean-Philippe Payment, a defeated Conservative candidate in Terrebonne—Blainville in 2011; Claude Durand, a defeated candidate in Trois-Rivières in 2008, Alcide Boudreault, a defeated candidate in Chicoutimi—Le Fjord in 2004 and 2006; Shane Parker, who fought for the Conservative nomination in Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar in 2008; Kelley Sherwood, a Reform Party activist since 1997; Mr. Provo, a former provincial Conservative candidate in Nova Scotia during the 2006 and 2009 elections.

I could go on like that until the end of my speech, but I would run out of time. All these people are now working for a tidy figure somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$100,000, courtesy of the Canadian taxpayers.

How can the minister explain the so-called merit on which these appointments to the Social Security Tribunal are based? We want justice for employment insurance claimants at a time when the

training people are being asked to take has nothing to do with the work they are being asked to do.

Other than contributing to the Conservative Party coffers, what merit do these people have?

• (2405)

[*English*]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me just start by saying we want to encourage people to look for jobs and reward them for doing so. For that reason, we have removed disincentives to work from employment insurance and for this we have been criticized.

The opposition parties have been recklessly misleading Canadians. I would like to assure the hon. member it is not our intention to punish EI claimants or to harm any of our regional economies. On the contrary, and this is something we have been saying all along, we want all Canadians who want to work to be able to work.

We have increased funding to programs that help young people and people with disabilities get work experience so they can develop and make use of their skills and meet employer needs. We are enhancing learning and labour market information so people can make better, more informed education and career choices. We offer apprenticeship grants and tax credits to encourage students to pursue careers in the skilled trades. We provide significant support to increase the labour market participation of people with disabilities, youth, aboriginal people and older workers. We invest over \$10 billion annually to support post-secondary education.

I think it is time that the opposition stops misleading Canadians about the facts regarding skills training and employment insurance reform.

Since 2006, this government has stayed focused on what matters most to Canadians, that being jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, we have a dichotomy here because we seem to be talking about two different subjects.

The minister is convinced that these people have the qualifications needed to fulfill their role on the Social Security Tribunal. They were appointed publicly, and we would like the minister to commit publicly to providing us with copies of the test.

The response that the Conservatives have jobs to offer and that they want to connect EI claimants with employers has nothing to do with what we are talking about here. People have been appointed to the Social Security Tribunal. They are party friends and donors. They took tests and exams, and we would like to see those tests as proof that these people are truly competent.

We at least want the Conservatives to admit that these were partisan appointments. We would also like the minister to assure Canadians that they will have the right to a fair appeal process. We know that, in the previous process, unemployed workers were represented by members of a board made up of three people, whereas now just one person will make the decisions.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, let me just say what we would like to focus on.

In a fragile economy, it is the EI changes that will connect Canadians with available jobs. The hon. member seems to forget that EI reforms are there to help workers, not hamper them. We have removed disincentives to ensure people are required to find jobs and find them more easily, and that they are rewarded for their efforts. We fully sympathize with Canadians who have lost their jobs and are making a genuine effort to find employment in the region but are unable to obtain it. These Canadians can be certain that EI will continue to be there for them. This is a priority for the government.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I realize the hour is late, but I appreciate the opportunity to follow up on my earlier questions for the government regarding science in Canada.

My question for the Conservatives is this. Where is their national science policy and what goals and objectives does this policy contain?

These are important questions and we need answers for them. The Conservatives are making massive changes to how we approach and fund science in this country, without any idea, I fear, of what they are doing and how they are hurting the pursuit of knowledge in this country.

Let us zoom out to specifics. Since coming to power in 2006, the Conservatives have reduced the overall amount of funding they provide to science and technology in this country. While they spout about having spent \$9 billion since 2006, this figure is deceitful and misleading. It is deceitful because the Conservatives do not include inflation in their calculations. This is a very basic accounting practice. When we speak of funding over time, we must include inflation in the calculations and present the figures in real dollars. Therefore, calculations made by the Library of Parliament experts, using numbers provided by Statistics Canada, show that between 2006 and 2013 overall funding for science and technology has actually declined by almost 2.5%.

That is right. In addition to getting rid of the long form census, muzzling scientists and mangling the National Research Council, the current government has cut funding by almost 2.5% since coming to power. This 2.5% may not seem like much, but when it is applied at the national level, it means labs, libraries and other facilities closing, and scientists and researchers losing their jobs. This is exactly what is happening.

The news gets worse. The recently released “State of the Nation 2012” report by the Conservative-created Science, Technology and Innovation Council shows that Canada's gross domestic expenditure on R and D has seriously declined under the current government. In contrast, R and D investment in most other countries has been increasing. In fact, Canada has dropped from 16th in 2006, to 23rd in 2011, when it comes to overall R and D investment. Therefore, the Conservatives do not have a plan for Canada's knowledge economy, and they flail about on this file while inflicting serious damage.

In contrast, the NDP policy in this area is positive and robust. It is worth reading verbatim a policy resolution passed unanimously at our recent policy convention:

Whereas science requires sustained, consistent and predictable investment, and failing to do so undermines long-term innovative potential;

Whereas science includes all major scientific fields of inquiry, including engineering, the social sciences and humanities;

Be it resolved that the NDP consult widely with scientists, researchers, businesses, post-secondary institutions, provincial, territorial and First Nations leaders to reverse the damage done by Conservative policies and cuts...and [develop] a Made in Canada National Science Strategy;

Be it further resolved that the NDP move to match the percentage of GDP invested by the public and private sectors in research and development...as found in other global leading countries such as the United States.

Therefore, my challenge for the Conservatives is to produce such a policy or resolution here tonight and tell Canadians what their targets are.

● (2410)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is extremely proud of the world-class work that our scientists and researchers do. They help us achieve key social goals, such as improving public health, ensuring the safety of food and products, building strong and vibrant economies all across the nation and ensuring a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

Since the Prime Minister launched our country's science and technology strategy starting in 2007, we have made substantial investments to strengthen Canada's research advantage. In fact, since 2006, our government has provided more than \$9 billion in new resources to support science, technology and the growth of innovative businesses. These investments have helped to attract and retain talent, support excellence in science, bring discoveries and innovation to the marketplace and build science and technology infrastructure.

Now I will point to recent successes.

Last fall, the National Research Council of Canada flew the world's first civilian jet powered 100% with biofuel. Last year, Canada's National Laboratory for Particle and Nuclear Physics played a role in supporting the discovery of the Higgs Boson subatomic particle. This year, Astronaut Chris Hadfield became the first Canadian to take command of the International Space Station.

These achievements have made headlines at home and around the world. They represent just a few of the many Canadian scientific accomplishments of which we can all be proud. However, we know that good science cannot exist in a vacuum. It must be effectively communicated and shared with Canadians and the greater scientific community, and we do this in many ways.

Adjournment Proceedings

Each year, scientists at federal departments and agencies publish thousands of peer-reviewed articles, research reports and data sets. These materials are available to other scientists, Canadians and to the scientific community around the world. These findings are shared at scientific conferences at home and abroad.

Federal departments and agencies also participate in thousands of media interviews each year. Through our action plan of an open government, we have committed to engage Canadians through open information, open data and open dialogue. We recently launched the Government of Canada open data portal, which provides a one-stop shop for federal government data, making thousands of federal data sets freely available to the public. Open communication of science provides evidence on the results of Canadian federal investments.

Canada's world-class federal scientists and researchers have pushed forward the frontiers of knowledge and improved development for Canadians. Communication of their work plays a crucial role in achieving these goals.

• (2415)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, well, we did hear the famous \$9-billion figure. However, as I just said in my previous comments, this figure is not adjusted for inflation at all. In fact, it is a false figure.

The Conservative government is claiming to have increased funding for science, but basic accounting principles and, as expressed by the Library of Parliament and Statistics Canada, show that we have had a decrease in funding since the government came to power in 2006 by just about 2.5%.

I guess my question to the minister would be this. Does his \$9-billion figure include an adjustment for inflation or not?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, let me repeat what I just said.

Since 2006, our government has provided more than \$9 billion in new resources to support science, technology and the growth of innovative businesses.

Our government is extremely proud of the world-class work our scientists and researchers do. However, we recognize that good science cannot exist in a vacuum. It must be effectively communicated and shared with Canadians and the greater scientific community, and we do this in many ways.

Our government has supported new initiatives that highlight the work of federal scientists and make that widely available to the Canadian public. Canada's federal scientists also publish thousands of peer-reviewed reports and articles and participate in interviews directly with the media.

Our government will continue to support our scientists and researchers to ensure that the benefit of federally performed science is fully realized by all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, May 22 the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:16 a.m.)

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